

Africa in Scotland, Scotland in Africa

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# Africa in Scotland, Scotland in Africa

*Historical Legacies and Contemporary Hybridities*

*Edited by*

Afe Adogame  
Andrew Lawrence



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# Africa-Scotland

*Exploring Historical and Contemporary Relations in Global Contexts*

*Afe Adogame and Andrew Lawrence*

From Robert Burns' sesquicentennial on 25 January 2009, to St. Andrew's Day, 30 November, 2009, corporate event planners, EventScotland and VisitScotland, organized the first 'Homecoming Scotland' at the behest of the Scottish National Party (SNP)-led Scottish Government. In addition to Burns-related events, the other four themes of the Homecoming were Scotland's 'culture and heritage', 'great Scottish minds and innovations', and golf and whisky. The campaign-cum-tourism draw, funded in part by the European Regional Development Fund, was a series of events designed, in its words, 'to attract people of Scottish ancestry to visit Scotland'. In what was perhaps the campaign's sole instance of undue modesty, it claimed that 'for every single Scot in their native land, there are thought to be at least five more overseas who can claim Scottish ancestry'.

The substantial undercount of the population that can claim Scottish ancestry is related to a dimension of 'culture and heritage', if not innovation, that Homecoming Scotland did not recognize, let alone explore. This is well illustrated by Robert Burns' plans to sail from Greenock on 10 August 1786 on board the *Nancy*, a brig that participated in the triangle trade across the Atlantic from the Clyde to the Caribbean and back, laden with personnel and freight, including sugar, to and from the slave plantations.<sup>1</sup> Fleeing his chronic paternity woes as well as seeking his fortune, it was evidently only his literary success that deterred Burns from ultimately taking this voyage. His poem 'On a Scotch Bard Gone to the West Indies' completed earlier that year anticipates the voyage in remarkably naïve and unironic terms:

Jamaica bodies, use him weel,  
An' hap him in a cozie biel:  
An' fou o' glee  
He wad na wrang the vera Diel  
That's owre the sea.

<sup>1</sup> These observations, and the following excerpt, are indebted to Gerard Carruthers, 2008. 'Robert Burns and Slavery', *The Drouth*, Winter 2008, Issue 26: 21–26.

Burns shows no moral qualms about planning on joining the enterprise that, in its own light, 'uses Jamaica bodies well' but does not see itself thereby as doing wrong to 'the very Devil that's over the sea'. The 'Jamaica bodies' that the poet asks to be employed by refer, no doubt, to the plantation owners, rather than to their unpaid but indispensable workforce.

Homecoming Scotland did not see fit to advertise its campaign in the Caribbean or more tropical latitudes elsewhere around the globe, as these target populations did not fit its business model. To the extent that it is representative of current Scottish nationalist identity, it would appear that something of Burns' naïve lack of self-awareness (if not his poetic *esprit*) lives on to this day. We convened an international conference in 2009 on the theme of 'Africa in Scotland, Scotland in Africa' to address this myopia. We have prepared this volume in part, comprising peer-reviewed essays from the conference, to serve as an interdisciplinary corrective lens, through which past and present histories and identities may be perceived more critically. In so doing, we have specifically focused on the context of sub-Saharan Africa, and have also privileged the inclusion of African and diaspora voices, and scholars based in Africa – together, the majority of our contributing authors – in recounting these revised narratives.<sup>2</sup>

The book's chapters explore the impact of colonialism on African countries, the Caribbean and other African diasporas, highlighting the role played by the Scots within the British imperial regime. The volume critically evaluates these encounters and links from a variety of perspectives – historical, political, religious, ideological, and cultural – and assesses the mutual implications for past, present and future relationships. It explores ways of strengthening existing ties and creating new channels of understanding and cooperation between Africa and Scotland in particular, but also with the United Kingdom, Europe, and the 'Global North' more generally.

The postcolonial relationship between Scotland and Africa – evaluated in terms of political geography, as that between a continent (Africa) and a country/region (Scotland) – rests on the palimpsest of the earlier, imperial relation between a (sub-)centre and periphery. The loss of sovereignty as British colonial subjects is an experience shared by many Scots and most African

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2 The literature on Scottish-South African connections, and British-African relations more generally, is of course better established. See e.g. David Livingstone [1858] 2010. *Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa: Including a Sketch of Sixteen Years' Residence in the Interior of Africa*. Kessinger Publishing; John MacDonald MacKenzie, with Nigel R. Dalziel, 2007. *The Scots in South Africa: Ethnicity, Identity, Gender and Race, 1772–1914*. Manchester University Press; R.H.W. Shepherd, 1940. *Lovedale, South Africa: the Story of a Century, 1841–1941*. The Lovedale Press; Richard Elphick and Rodney Davenport, 1997. *Christianity in South Africa: A Political, Social, and Cultural History*. University of California Press, *passim*.

countries at different historical periods. The nexus between Scotland and Africa is however incomplete without considering its wider relationship with the British empire as a whole. Scholars such as John MacKenzie and Tom Devine vividly show the extraordinary influence that innumerable, mostly anonymous Scots exercised in the British Empire.<sup>3</sup> They point out that as administrators, settlers, temporary residents, professionals, plantation owners, and as military personnel, Scots were prominent in North America, the Caribbean, Australasia, South Africa, India, and colonies in South-East Asia and Africa. Throughout these regions they brought to bear distinctive Scottish experience as well as particular educational, economic, cultural, and religious influences. Moreover, the relationship between Scots and the British Empire had a profound effect upon many aspects of Scottish society. Mackenzie and Devine contend that an understanding of the profoundly inter-active relationship between Scotland and the British Empire is vital to understanding the histories of both Scotland as well as of many territories of the British Empire.

Indeed, durable transformations of Scottish identity, today as is the past, both depend upon, and influence, transformations of the identities of the former subject peoples of the postcolonial world. The extent of these interconnections, and the several lessons to be learned from them, has scarcely begun to be explored. While Scotland hosted key figures in the early history of Pan Africanism, it has yet to follow the siren call of Kwame Nkrumah in “seeking first the political kingdom” apart from the United Kingdom.<sup>4</sup>

Yet with the asymmetries of geographic scale between the British regional and African continental entities comes a greater plasticity of African compared to Scottish identity, despite sharing the possibility of achieving postnational identities, which may or may not coincide with postcolonial (African) or postimperial (Scottish) ones.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, the subject of African identities is as vast as the continent itself. The choices entailed in defining ‘Africa’ affect how we identify and analyze African identities, ethnicities, and religious cultures, not to mention the African diaspora.

This asymmetry in definitional scope is arguably related to a deeper one implying different means of expressing relations, exchanges and correspondences between subjective identities and the broader world. A common trope

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3 John M. MacKenzie & T.M. Devine eds., 2011. *Scotland and the British Empire*. Oxford University Press.

4 On Scotland's role in the Pan Africanist movement, see Chapter 5 in this volume by Marika Sherwood.

5 On these variable temporalities, see Kwame Anthony Appiah, 1991. ‘Is the Post-in Post-modernism the Post-in Postcolonial?’ *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 17, No. 2 (Winter, 1991): 336–357.

among African cosmologies presumes a commonality of being among the individual and both the human as well as the nonhuman worlds.<sup>6</sup> Fantasies of cultural purity and dominance over nature are comparatively rare in discourses and practices of everyday African cultural life. African modernities bear few traces of either dreams or fears of Weberian rationalization.

Thus in discussing Africa and Scotland together, we can follow Edward Said's critique of 'otherness' without engaging in any essentializing or totalizing about the place of either in the world. We can follow V.Y. Mudimbe in identifying 'cultural characteristics' and 'values that contribute to the reality of Africa as a continent and its civilizations as constituting a totality different from those of, say, Asia and Europe' without condemning all representations or 'inventions' of Africa as equally pointless, hopeless, or suspect.<sup>7</sup> If Europe played an indispensable role in defining the African landmass and informing Africans that they were 'African', the more significant contestations and constructions of the content of this identity have been, and continue to be, performed by Africans themselves.

In fact, trans-cultural encounters and exchanges between Africa and Europe long predate the era of slavery and colonialism, even if this era remains the most defining for these relations. While the history of the 'Black Kings of Scotland' (such as Kenneth III (997–1005), also known as 'Kenneth the Niger' or 'King Kenneth Dubh', a surname which means 'the black man') remains a matter of debate, it parallels African roots within Scottish-Celtic history linked to the migration of 'seafaring North African warriors via Iberia into Europe, [who] joined in many cultures and held power and position'.<sup>8</sup> Giles Foden's movie

6 See e.g. Jacob K. Olupona (ed.) *African Spirituality, Forms, Meanings and Expressions*, New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2000.

7 Edward W. Said, 1979. *Orientalism*. New York: Pantheon and idem., 1993. *Culture and Imperialism*. New York: Knopf; Valentin Y. Mudimbe, 1988. *The Invention of Africa. Gnosis, Philosophy, and the Order of Knowledge*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press. For discussions, see esp. Neil Lazarus, 2011. *The Postcolonial Unconscious*. Cambridge University Press: 127–130, 183–203; and Ali Mazrui, 2005. "The Re-Invention of Africa: Edward Said, V. Y. Mudimbe, and beyond," *Research in African Literatures*, 36, 3: 68–82; and Paul Tiyambe Zeleza, 2006. "The Inventions of African Identities and Languages: The Discursive and Developmental Implications" in Olaoba F. Arasanyin and Michael A. Pemberton (eds), *Selected Proceedings of the 36th Annual Conference on African Linguistics: Shifting the Center of Africanism in Language Politics and Economic Globalization*. Somerville, MA: Cascadia: 14–26.

8 See for instance: Joel A. Rogers, 1970. *Sex and Race: The Old World*. Volume 1 of *Sex and Race: Negro-Caucasian Mixing in All Ages and All Lands*. Helga M. Rogers; A.A.M. Duncan, 2002. *The Kingship of the Scots 842–1292: Succession and Independence*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 2002;

‘The Last King of Scotland’ based on factual aspects of the Amin dictatorship, epitomises another narrative exploration of the (post)colonial connections between Scotland (Britain) and Uganda (Africa).

The legacy of the slave trade in Scotland, given impetus by the 1707 Act of Union, is discernible in significant landmarks in Scottish history and contemporary society.<sup>9</sup> While the Scottish merchant class was a prime beneficiary of the transatlantic slave trade and contributed to the abiding legacy of poverty and inequality in African and Caribbean countries, a smaller number of Scottish activists also championed the 1807 UK Parliament Bill that abolished the slave trade (if not slavery) in the British Empire.<sup>10</sup> However, this reform did not deter decades-long agitation for overseas colonies as settlement areas, sources of raw materials, and markets for manufactured goods, which preceded the colonial politics of the 1880s and subsequent bisecting of Africa into artificial geographical zones of European influence, exploitation, and expropriation. The Royal Scottish Geographical Society, founded in the four centres of Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dundee and Aberdeen in 1884–1885, were centrally engaged in mapping the intellectual and economic relationships between Scotland and Africa and later promoted wider imperial connections.

Scots settled in significant numbers in such countries as South Africa, Nigeria, Egypt and Malawi. Perhaps the most famous pioneer of this movement, David Livingstone, is today better remembered for his explorations than his missionary work. But in the century following his first journey through eastern Africa, hundreds of Scots missionaries followed in his footsteps, such as Mary Slessor and Hope Waddell in Nigeria, Lovedale in South Africa, and Livingstonia in Malawi. The overall missionary aim was often mixed with their other vocations as professional doctors, teachers, artisans and traders. Scots’ role in British colonial enterprise played out more significantly through the activities of individuals working under the Scottish Presbyterian missions rather than as settlers. Indeed, both the bible and gunpowder were

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Alfred P. Smyth, 1984. *Warlords and Holy Men: Scotland ad 80–1000*. Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh; P. Fryer, 1984. *Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain*, London; and P. Edwards and J. Walvin, 1983. *Black Personalities in the Era of the Slave Trade*, London and Basingstoke. See also: [http://www.clans.org.uk/hist\\_5.html](http://www.clans.org.uk/hist_5.html) (accessed on 12 March 2008).

9 See for instance, Iain Whyte, 2006. *Scotland and the Abolition of Black Slavery 1756–1838*, and Geoff Palmer, 2007. *The Enlightenment Abolished*.

10 See The National Trust for Scotland, 2011. *Scotland and the Slave Trade. The 2007 Bicentenary of the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act*. Edinburgh: Scottish Executive.

indispensible to British imperial expansion in Africa.<sup>11</sup> Even when David Livingstone is celebrated for finding the travel route that opened the flood-gates for European imperialism, economic exploitation and mission, this development had repercussions of a political, economic, cultural, religious and strategic nature for the entire continent and its diaspora. As such, it contained sufficient contradictions to allow for contestation within its practices and terms of discourse. While missionary initiatives collided with other interests in encouraging trade and opening up the continent to imperial expansion, Scots men and women such as Livingstone and Slessor in the long run joined voices with others to change deeply entrenched imperial policies, notions, and attitudes towards Africa.

The Clydesdale<sup>12</sup> Bank's pictorial rendition of famous Scots in commemorative banknotes illustrates this historical, strategic relationship between Scotland and Africa. Two famous Scots who received this recognition were Livingstone and Slessor, particularly owing to their work in Africa. The £10 notes issued from 1971 bore an image of Scottish explorer David Livingstone with palm tree leaves and an illustration of African 'tribesmen' on the back.<sup>13</sup> A later issue showed Livingstone against a background graphic of a map of Livingstone's Zambezi expedition, showing the River Zambezi, Victoria Falls, Lake Nyasa and Blantyre, Malawi; on the reverse, the African figures were replaced with an image of Livingstone's birthplace in Blantyre. In 1997, another £10 note was issued to commemorate the work of Mary Slessor in Nigeria. The note featured Slessor on the front and a vignette of a map of Calabar and African missionary scenes on the back (see book front cover illustration). The importance of these notes go beyond any aesthetic value; their current use underscores a complex relationship, serving as both reminders of Britain's imperial-financial nexus as well as of Scotland's subordinate role therein. But they also commemorate the work of many individuals in the ongoing process of developing these relations.

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11 See for instance, Tom M. Devine, 1999. *The Scottish Nation, 1700–2000*, Penguin: London; Tom M. Devine, 2003. *Scotland's Empire*, Penguin: London.

12 Occasionally the Clydesdale Bank issues special commemorative banknotes to mark particular occasions or to celebrate famous people. These notes are much sought-after by collectors and they rarely remain long in circulation. The Clydesdale Bank currently has two series of banknotes in circulation: the World Heritage Series and the Famous Scots Series.

13 See: [http://www.scotbanks.org.uk/banknotes\\_current\\_clydesdale\\_bank.php](http://www.scotbanks.org.uk/banknotes_current_clydesdale_bank.php) bank note design features; and [http://www.scotbanks.org.uk/banknoteapp/CLYDE\\_10.html](http://www.scotbanks.org.uk/banknoteapp/CLYDE_10.html) (accessed 20/10/2008).

The historical links between Scotland and Nigeria are hardly limited to the work and legacies of Mary Slessor. From the heightening of Britain's economic relations in the mid-nineteenth century, to the unification of Southern and Northern Nigeria into a colony and protectorate in 1914 and Nigeria's political independence in 1960, Scots played a conspicuous role. Sir Lord Frederick Lugard became Nigeria's first Governor-General and ruled till 1919.<sup>14</sup> The last two of the eight Governors and Governors-General of the Colony and Protectorate of Nigeria between 1914 and 1960 were Scottish-born. Sir James Wilson Robertson was the last British Governor-General of Nigeria from 15 June 1955 to 16 November 1960, and handed over to a Nigerian successor, Nnamdi Azikiwe in November.<sup>15</sup> His predecessor, Sir John McPherson<sup>16</sup> (1948–1954) was also a Scot. He served first as Principal Assistant Secretary, Nigeria (1937–1939) then as Governor of Nigeria (1948–1954) and Governor-General of the Federation of Nigeria (1954–1955).

The Scottish presence in South Africa – with similar roots in missionary work – has been, if anything, even more influential. By 1800, the London Missionary Society (LMS) had sent two groups of missionaries to the Cape Colony, including William Anderson, son of an Aberdeen silk merchant. Soon thereafter, in 1816, the LMS sent Ormiston-born Robert Moffat, future father-in-law of Livingstone, to work in the Cape. In 1821, the Glasgow Missionary Society was also established in the Cape region, where it combined education with missionary work, most prominently in founding Lovedale Academy in the Eastern Cape in 1824, which would play a prominent role in providing formal education to the first generation of leadership of the South African Native National Congress.

14 Flora Shaw (the future wife of Lugard) wrote in the *London Times* of January 8, 1897, suggesting the name Nigeria which, “applying to no other part of Africa, may without offence to any neighbours be accepted as co-extensive with the territories over which the Royal Niger Company has extended British influence, and may serve to differentiate them equally from the colonies of Lagos and the Niger Protectorate on the coast and from the French territories of the Upper Niger.”

15 See, Sir James Robertson, *A Memoir. Africa in Transition: From Direct Rule to Independence*, London: Hurst, 1974. In his Memoir, Robertson reflects on his nearly-40 years in Africa. This engaging narrative provides detail on both his administrative life and personal observations. Graham F. Thomas (ed.), 1994. *The Last of the Proconsuls. Letters of Sir James Robertson*, London and New York: Radcliffe Press.

See also Kirk-Greene, A.H.M. (eds), 1979. *The transfer of power: the colonial administrator in the age of decolonization*. Oxford: Inter-Faculty Committee for African Studies.

16 Sir John Stuart Macpherson was born on the 25 August 1898 and educated at George Watson's College, Edinburgh and Edinburgh University.



South Africa was an understandably popular choice for Scots migrants in the nineteenth century, owing to its temperate climate. The Cape Town Highlanders Regiment is a reserve infantry regiment of the South African Army formed in 1885 by descendants of Scottish immigrants to South Africa.<sup>17</sup> Scots were among the British soldiers who fought in the two Boer wars that saw Britain take possession of the Dutch colonies to create the country of South Africa, as well as settle extensively in the region. In the mid-nineteenth century, the community of New Scotland was established in Swaziland by the McCorkindales, the Forbeses and scores of other families transplanted from Glasgow.<sup>18</sup>

In the *'The Scottish World'*, Billy Kay highlights diverse and transregional Scottish influence on communities and cultures in trade and commerce, literature and music, and politics, diplomacy and war.<sup>19</sup> The history of rugby union matches between Scotland and South Africa is indicative of other forms of connection besides politics and economics.<sup>20</sup> The national rugby union teams of Scotland and South Africa (the Springboks) have been played each other in twenty-three Test matches between 1906 (South Africa's first official international rugby tour, on which the Springbok nickname was coined) and 2013.

The documentary "Afro-Kilt: The Thread That Binds" unravels the interwoven ties connecting Nigeria and Scotland through trade and textiles.<sup>21</sup> The J&P Coats Company is the tie that binds these two countries in an interesting history of trade and textiles. The Glasgow Archives chronicle the evolution of J&P Coats from a small family-owned company in the 1800s to a dominant global industry. The complete history of Coats trade with Africa and the impact their products made on the continent have yet to be entirely unraveled.

17 Colonel D.E. Peddle, 1972. 'The Silver Highlander', *Military History Journal*, Vol. 2, No. 4, December. See also: <http://www.cthighlanders.co.za/cth/cthfi.htm> (accessed 14/03/2009).

18 Huw M. Jones, 1999. 'Neutrality compromised: Swaziland and the Anglo-Boer War, 1899–1902', *Military History Journal*, Vol. 11, No. 3/4 – October.

19 Billy Kay, 2006. *The Scottish World: A Journey into the Scottish Diaspora*. Edinburgh and London: Mainstream Publishing.

20 See: [http://www.rugbyfootballhistory.com/south\\_africa.html](http://www.rugbyfootballhistory.com/south_africa.html) (accessed 23/07/10).

21 See: Sally Volkmann, "Afro-Kilt: The Thread That Binds" Documentary, available at: <http://www.kickstarter.com/projects/safarisal/afro-kilt-the-thread-that-binds-documentary> (accessed 10/04/13). "Afro-Kilt: The Thread That Binds" is a feature-length documentary exploring the connections between Africa and Scotland through textiles—specifically, the role of Anchor thread, an embroidery thread with a unique versatility of color and texture. Anchor thread originates from Scotland's oldest thread manufacturer, J&P Coats, and is found in contemporary Nigerian embroidered robes.



As Geoff Palmer aptly remarks, the Scottish-Caribbean link is centuries old, but grew rapidly from the early 18th century with the slave trade.<sup>22</sup> By the late 18th century, Britain dominated the West Indies and along with other European countries had developed a system to transport black African slaves to work the plantations of this New World. Scottish slave masters and slave owners played a significant part in British slavery. Jamaica was important to the British Empire. Pitt, the British Prime Minister, said in 1800 that Jamaica provided Britain with most of the money “acquired” from the Empire. She was a primary producer of sugar, coffee, rum and spices and large quantities of these products came to Greenock, Port Glasgow and Leith.<sup>23</sup> Against this backdrop, Caribbean slavery transformed the Scottish economy in the 18th century and its profits helped develop many Scottish cities. These multiple encounters between Scotland, the British Empire, different African countries and the Caribbean raise complex issues about power, identity, culture, mission, globalization and transnationalism discussed in greater detail in the chapters that follow.

The first section of the book, in turn, maps this complex history. Esther Breitenbach reminds us how deeply appealing the discourse of the ‘civilizing mission’ was to nineteenth century Scots in particular. A common narrative thread to the travel writings of Livingstone, Park, Slessor and their cohort represented Africa as exotic, unknown, and dangerous, if also amenable to the civilizing effects of Scottish enlightenment science and religion. To the extent they represented their relations as reciprocal – ‘capitalism’s ideology of itself’ in Mary Louise Pratt’s perceptive phrase – they did so in terms that would graft the civilizing mission to the conquest of territories and peoples.

But if religion served as a ready handmaiden to empire in this instance, it also occasionally played a role in the movement for decolonization, as John McCracken details in the case of Malawi in the 1950s and 1960s. Here, it was primarily the younger, more ‘Africanized’ Scottish missionaries who quietly rebelled against hierarchy, conservatism and tradition to support popular protests against Rhodesian settler interests and in favour of independence. They were able to do so as much or more by opposing plans for Federation with Northern and Southern Rhodesia as by supporting the independence movements, but also succeeded in shaping British perceptions of Hastings Banda as less of a barbaric menace than Jomo Kenyatta had been portrayed in the British

22 See Geoff Palmer, ‘The Forgotten Diaspora’, available online at: <http://www.scotland.org/features/the-forgotten-diaspora>; Geoff Palmer, 2007. *The Enlightenment Abolished: Citizens of Britishness*. Penicuik, Edinburgh: Henry Publishing.

23 Cited in Palmer 2007.

press. Sadly, in Malawi's case, solidarity did not extend beyond the level of support for elite leaders such as Banda, a political challenge that the Church of Scotland activists' successor organization, the Scotland-Malawi Partnership, continues to wrestle with to this day (as further detailed by Kenneth Ross's chapter in this volume).

The next section focuses more closely on the connections between medicine and mission in Scottish activities from the colonial period. Markku Hokkanen illustrates the 'Livingstone' effect – inspiring generations of doctors and missionaries to serve for extended periods of time in Africa – through an examination of the lives of four of the most famous Scottish exemplars, John Kirk, Robert Laws, Jane Waterston and Neil Macvicar. As the sole woman among this quartet, Waterston faced singular challenges, not least a tendentious lack of recognition and respect for her significant medical knowledge and experience, particularly while based at Livingstonia under Laws' directorship. At the same time, however, it was the context of Empire that enabled her to escape the narrow strictures of her provincial and deeply traditional childhood context and achieve medical qualification in the first place. Macvicar, too, experienced liberation of sorts – from stultifying church doctrine – in order not only to excel medically, but also begin to challenge white supremacist assumptions about the place of Africans in medical practice.

Olutayo Adesina provides similar narrative for West African contemporaries of these doctors, Isaac Ladipo Oluwole and Oladele Adebayo Ajose, who between them laid the groundwork for Nigeria's medical establishment. While African forerunners had studied medicine before in the UK – including Africanus Beale Horton<sup>24</sup> (the first African graduate of the University of Edinburgh (1859) – a surgeon, scientist, soldier and a political thinker who worked toward African independence a century before it occurred), William Broughton Davies (together with Horton, the first Nigerians to qualify in medicine, in 1858), Nathaniel King (1874), Obadiah Johnson (1884), John K. Randle (1888), Orisadipe Obasa (1891), Akinsiku Leigh-Sodiye (1892), and Oguntola Sapara (1895) – individual circumstance and imperial policy prevented them from building a medical practice in Nigeria. Oluwole and Ajose struggled against deeply engrained racism, segregation, and a chronic lack of funds in the course of indigenizing Nigerian medical study and practice. As in Malawi, their degree of success in so doing must be weighed against the abiding limits that colonialism imposed, still in evidence today.

Indeed, the cure for many of colonial Africa's social no less than medical ills was political, as much or more than medical. The book's next section focuses

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24 See book front cover image.

on some of the activists, visionaries, and artists, whose campaigns, training, and identities were informed by Scottish as well as African sources. It is of no surprise that many early African political leaders had medical training, including Hastings Banda, Dr Orisadipe Obasa (co-founder of Nigeria's first political party, the People's Union), Obasa's co-founder Dr Randle, and Richard Akinwande Savage, the likely source of inspiration for Neil Macvicar's non-racialism, and father of Agnes Yewanda Smith Bowie, who in 1929 became perhaps the first African female medical graduate.

It is the role of Randle and Savage in articulating and pursuing Pan-Africanism that is the topic of Marika Sherwood's wide-ranging chapter. She sets the stage by reminding readers of the multiple dimensions of Scottish backwardness that accentuated its role in Empire, and that Randle and Savage would have encountered during their time in Edinburgh. It is conceivable, for example, that a Scottish collier's son, born into serfdom (indeed, *de facto* slavery) in the eighteenth century, could grow up to become an active participant of the transatlantic trade.

As well, the nineteenth century regression toward white supremacist tendencies found its peculiar expression among Edinburgh's medical and political elite, such as Robert Combe and Robert Knox, who taught polygenesis and phrenology as scientific fact, and Lord Rosebery, among others. The University of Edinburgh's late nineteenth century leaders argued that it was uniquely placed to foster the imperial mission and encourage the imperial ethos among its students, for whom placement in Africa constituted the second most likely career among all alumni. In different ways, Randle and Savage articulated the problematic of Pan-Africanism whose echoes are discernible today: it criticized the injustice of foreign imperial policies, and highlighted the inadequacies of foreign-imposed political boundaries, while struggling to create a viable alternative to these limitations. The institution they help found, the National Council of British West Africa (NCBWA), became an important forerunner of Nkrumah's Pan Africanism during the era of decolonization.

Pioneering feminist and journalist Ida B. Wells, of roughly the same generation as Randle and Savage, pursued a different transnational activism at around the same time that Pan-Africanism developed in London and West Africa. As Caroline Bressey details, her interaction with activists in Scotland is a comparatively unknown chapter in the story of her tireless campaigns against lynching and racial repression in the United States. She had an immense impact on British public debates about lynching and race relations in the United States and succeeded in markedly increasing British sympathy for the plight of African Americans. Yet, just as the early years of Pan-Africanism remain under-researched, Bressey emphasizes that we still know little about

how Wells's campaigns may have influenced subsequent British civil rights campaigns and anti-racist movements more generally, notwithstanding the clear interrelations among the women's, socialist, and labour movements.

Janice Mclean highlights the contribution and legacy of a Scottish pioneer in the sphere of Jamaican education – the Scottish Missionary, Rev Dr Lewis Davidson, founder of Knox College high school, an elite secondary school catering to the country's students of colour. As an alumna of Knox, Mclean is well positioned to evaluate both the principles that Davidson articulated for the school, some of the particular features that constitute the educational system he devised, as well as the experiences and reflections of several of the school's alumni. While amply succeeding in creating a postcolonial elite, Mclean argues, Knox is still struggling to promote an inclusive pedagogical context, one that is geared to both serving and transforming its wider community.

The Editors express their deep appreciation to The Carnegie Trust for the Universities of Scotland for their generous Carnegie Research Grant towards the publication of the (8) Illustrations in Chapter 8.

The remaining chapter of this section, by Everlyn Nicodemus and Kristian Romaine, highlights the life and artistic contribution of yet another global pioneer Robert S. Duncanson, whose Scottish and African descent informs his aesthetic influences and thematic concerns. As the first African-American painter of international repute, his work draws with singular imagination upon the Romantic traditions of the Hudson River and Scottish Highlands schools of landscape painting.

While the list of Scottish-African connections could no doubt be extended indefinitely, no survey would be complete without examining Scotland's missionary societies and their legacies, the focus of the next section. Their missionaries stressed the imperial field as a means of articulating a distinctively Scots Presbyterian duty. No figure exemplifies this characteristic more fully than Mary Slessor, as Oluwakemi Adesina and Elijah Obinna's chapter details. Her missionary activities in Calabar, Nigeria, earned her the status as one of the principal heroines of missionary endeavour in Africa, as this account demonstrates; yet she often struggled to assert her independence from Church hierarchy, while combating the inequities she perceived in the treatment of Nigerian women in particular.

Less well known are the activities and legacies of Presbyterian missionaries in Kenya, Ghana, and central Nigeria – lacunae that are addressed by the contributions from Damaris Seleina Parsitau, Kweku Michael Okyerefo, and Musa Gaiya and Jordan Rengshwat, respectively, detail. Parsitau shows how in Kenya, a Presbyterian-inspired Manichean superstition and fear of the Other enables political discourse to be expressed in religious terms, in a manner more reminiscent of the contemporary U.S. evangelical movement than any significant

current Scottish tendency. She speculates that, in this instance at least, African Christianity is approaching an epochal break with its European roots. At the same time, as Vicky Khasandi-Telewa shows, Scottish missionaries were instrumental in developing a vernacular identity in worship and education within Kenya's Kikuyu territories. But far from signally a total break with Europe, this practice has become syncretized in metropolitan areas such as London, where cosmopolitan and mixed African-diaspora congregations worship in languages often quite alien from their mother tongues.

In the case of central Nigeria, however, the outcome of a total break from missionary roots might be more desired than in evidence. Musa Gaiya and Jordan Rengshwat observe that as a direct consequence of Presbyterian missionary strategies in northern Nigeria, Christians in the Middle Belt are confused between, the ideal of privatization of religion, and the practice of bestowing Christianity with a public role of creating political cleavages. A further contrast is to be found in Ghana, as Kweku Okyerefo shows. While the entrenchment of the role of the General Assembly and the Synod of Presbyters in the churches, emphasising *presbyteroi* rather than *episcopoi*, is clearly attributable to Scottish influence, today, this Church takes a distant third place to the Bremen and Basel missions in the collective memories of the laity.

The final section explores the different ways in which the abiding legacy of their British imperial experience in Africa has contributed to the development of Scottish nationalism and cultural identity, one that ironically often shares a sense of victimhood with postcolonial Africa. This tendency is still resilient in the early twenty-first century with the Scottish sense of duty, rapprochement and an often-paternalistic posture towards erstwhile colonies evident in many Scottish institutions, from aid organizations donating crude tools to rural African communities to cultural and educational institutions. At its worst, a nascent Scottish nationalist 'development' community views independence as a means of getting a piece of the aid action and bypassing the more experienced, and better resourced, British organizations.

But as Kenneth Ross argues in his review of the Scotland-Malawi Partnership, what began as an expression of paternalistic noblesse oblige among some Scottish participants, and an expectation of material assistance among their Malawian counterparts, has become a more open-ended, qualitative and potentially more far-reaching – even 'radical' – endeavor. With modest budgets, the Partnership's distinctive contribution is in emphasizing grassroots 'twinning' of participants from the two countries, and the importance of dialogue. At the same time, he rightly cautions that there has been all too little progress in reversing the widening of the divide between rich and poor, within as well as between these partner regions. The outstanding challenge at this

stage remains 'to attain balance, equity, and reciprocity between the two sides'. Arguably, the extent to which it pursues solidaristic goals of benefit to the less well off in both countries may become the measure of its future success.

Cultural exchange, however, is inevitable, in ways that are inevitably unpredictable. This fact is penetratingly detailed in Magnus Echtler's concluding chapter on the syncretic nature of 'Scottish dancers' in South Africa. He shows that contending scholarly accounts of the use of Scottish dance attire in the Nazareth Baptist Church are no more settled than current contrasting explanations by participants. His analysis echoes and often parallels accounts of the unstable ideology of chieftancy that colonial officials in Zululand, from Theophilus Shepstone (who assumed for himself the title of chief) onwards, adopted, only to have this ideology appropriated by such contemporary political entrepreneurs as Mangosotho Buthelezi and Jacob Zuma.<sup>25</sup> But while the practice might have roots in a disposition subversive of colonial power at the beginning of the twentieth century, the Scottish dancing at the beginning of the twenty-first century, Echtler shows, has become subversive of church authority and orthodoxy. Beyond this, however, in testing of the limits of creative freedom, the *isikoshi* establishes its own aesthetic autonomy, as well as beauty. This example shows the possibility of radically transcending instrumental paradigms of development by asserting the intrinsic value of syncretic transcultural creativity.

Finally, the spirit of syncretic transcultural interchange between Scotland and its African diaspora, including its new immigrants harkening from Africa, is both explored and exemplified by Geoff Palmer, professor emeritus at Herriott Watt University. His poignant reminiscences of his UK upbringing, marked by forced separation from his parents, are sharpened by his clear-sighted critique of the current inequalities rooted in past exploitation. He rightly observes that the practice of slavery in the West Indies (as elsewhere) began to end when slaves' revolts made it a more risky endeavor, and a similar solution may yet beckon for the millions currently enslaved in debt. Long a principal source of Scotland's and Britain's wealth, Africa and its diaspora may yet show the way to a more general emancipation.

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25 See e.g. the brilliant analysis of this phenomenon in Jason Myers, 2008. *Indirect Rule in South Africa: Tradition, Modernity, and the Costuming of Political Power*, University of Rochester Press.

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## *Historical Underpinnings*





# Scottish Encounters with Africa in the Nineteenth Century

*Accounts of Explorers, Travellers, and Missionaries*

*Esther Breitenbach*

By the late nineteenth century, there had developed in Scotland a wide public interest in Africa, and in the role of Scots in contributing to the ‘civilising mission’ of the British empire in Africa. Scots had been prominent as travellers and explorers in Africa from the days of James Bruce and Mungo Park, in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, while Scots missions were established in parts of Africa by the early nineteenth century, extending their scope and influence over time. Exploration, science, and missionary enterprise notably combined in the figure of David Livingstone, though other lesser figures, both missionary and secular, actively participated in the construction of imperial ‘knowledge’ of Africa. This chapter aims to explore the nature and popularity of accounts of encounters with Africa in nineteenth-century Scotland, focussing, in particular, on examples of explorers’ accounts and missionary narratives. Writings of this kind by Scots were, of course, not restricted to Africa, with travel narratives being published also about India, Afghanistan, the Caribbean, and Canada, for example. However, narratives of exploration of African territories appear to have been more common, and were to enjoy a high profile in nineteenth-century Scotland.

There was a considerable overlap between missionary accounts and those of exploration—on the one hand, because missionaries could also be explorers, and on the other hand, because explorers often demonstrated an interest in furthering foreign missions. There was, then, some coincidence of interests between these groups, both of which regarded themselves as contributing to the development of scientific knowledge about Africa, and both of which, for the most part, endorsed the role of empire in bringing the ‘civilising mission’ to Africa. Despite a coincidence of interests, distinctions can be made between different types of accounts. Narratives of exploration typically provided just that—a narrative of a journey, accompanied by observations of peoples encountered, of natural phenomena, judgements about commercial possibilities, and scientific data. Some missionaries (most famously, Livingstone) produced narratives of this kind, while others wrote scientific papers, or gave

accounts of expeditions and journeys in literature which was disseminated to missionary supporters at home. The genre of missionary biographies, which developed later in the nineteenth century, might also include accounts of travels and expeditions, accompanied by depictions of African peoples, habitats, and natural phenomena. Literature that was regularly produced for missionary supporters at home (for example, the periodicals of the various Presbyterian denominations and missionary societies) provided accounts of missionary work, and those necessarily involved descriptions of the peoples with whom missionaries worked, of their ways of life, and of missionaries' efforts to Christianise them.

It is important, however, to see the types of accounts discussed here in the wider context of the many representations and accounts of Africa circulating in nineteenth-century Scotland. There was a variety of ways in which Scots might learn about Africa: through literature published by philanthropic and religious organisations, military memoirs, medical and scientific papers and journals, fiction, personal accounts of journeys, game hunting expeditions, letters from soldiers to their families at home, letters from emigrants, private and public communications from colonial administrators, and so on. Furthermore, as exploration of Africa developed in the course of the nineteenth century, the impact of explorers' accounts made itself felt in fiction, with adventure stories set in Africa becoming increasingly popular as enthusiasm for imperialist expansion grew. Newspapers, too, regularly reported on the imperialist engagement with Africa, whether explorers' exploits, colonial wars, or the acquisition of new territories. Africa was not the only object of interest to the reading public—India, too, had a high profile—but it can plausibly be argued that Africa came to occupy centre stage in Scotland, in terms of public interest in empire. Though discussion here is confined to texts, there were also many visual representations of Africa in circulation, from illustrations in explorers' narratives and missionary journals, to exhibitions, maps, photographs, and magic lantern slides.

Consumption of these representations occurred in a variety of sites—missionary societies, churches, scientific and learned societies, museums and public institutions, universities, and so on—and was not just a matter of privatised personal reading. Rather, it often took place in social spaces, where people were gathered together for the specific purpose of hearing about the encounter with Africa, or in which their attention was being directed to particular aspects or understandings of this encounter—for example, exhortations from the pulpit to support missionaries' interventions in African societies, in order to Christianise them.

## Narratives of Exploration

When tracing the record of Scots exploration in Africa, the starting point is the late eighteenth century. James Bruce's account of his travels in Abyssinia, first published in 1790, became an overnight bestseller, with further editions published in 1805 and 1820. At the time of publication, much of Bruce's account was considered unbelievable, and he was subjected to ridicule—though subsequently, his account has been judged to be a largely accurate representation of what he experienced.<sup>1</sup> This was to be followed shortly by Mungo Park's *Travels in the Interior of Africa*, published in 1799 and issued thereafter in numerous editions throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.<sup>2</sup> Park was later the subject of a biography by the explorer Joseph Thomson published in 1890 as part of the series *The World's Great Explorers* edited by J. Scott Keltie, the librarian of the Royal Geographical Society.<sup>3</sup>

Similarly, Livingstone's "first great best-seller,"<sup>4</sup> *Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa*, first published by John Murray in 1857, went through numerous editions, and Livingstone was the subject of over a hundred biographies in the period between the 1870s and the 1950s.<sup>5</sup> Several others have been published since then. The reading public for these works was not, of course, exclusively Scottish. They were read widely not just in Britain, but in other parts of the English-speaking world—as the existence of North American editions indicates. Other accounts of exploration by Scots were popular in their time, as well, and some also had a long lifespan (although they did not attract such enduring interest as the works of Park and Livingstone). These include works by Alexander Gordon Laing, William Balfour Baikie, James Augustus Grant, and Joseph Thomson.<sup>6</sup>

1 Miles Bredin, *The Pale Abyssinian: A Life of James Bruce, African Explorer* (London: Flamingo, 2001).

2 See introduction by John Keay to Mungo Park, *Travels in the Interior of Africa* (London: Folio Society Edition, 1984).

3 Joseph Thomson, *Mungo Park and the Niger* (London and Liverpool: George Philip and Son, 1890).

4 John M. MacKenzie, 'David Livingstone: The Construction of the Myth', in Graham Walker and Tom Gallagher (eds), *Sermons and battle hymns: Protestant culture in modern Scotland* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1990), p. 34.

5 John M. MacKenzie, 'Heroic Myths of Empire', in J.M. Mackenzie (ed), *Popular Imperialism and the Military, 1850–1950* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992), pp. 109–137.

6 Alexander Gordon Laing, *Travels in the Timanee, Kooranko, and Soolima Countries in Western Africa* (London: John Murray, 1825); William Balfour Baikie, *Narrative of an Exploring Voyage*

That interest in Africa was a growing phenomenon in the early nineteenth century is indicated by Hugh Murray's *Discoveries and Travels in Africa* (1817).<sup>7</sup> Murray, a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, based his book on the work of the Scottish poet and 'orientalist' Dr John Leyden, who had travelled widely in the East, including to Batavia and Java, where he died. The book aimed to summarise what was known about Africa from travellers' accounts, from ancient times onwards, and it emphasised the desire of Europeans to extend their knowledge of Africa in the name of science:

This immense Continent contains in its bosom a number of extensive, populous, and even civilized kingdoms, all of them imperfectly known, and of some of which even the names have not yet reached Europeans. Equally remarkable is the obscurity which involves the grandest features of its physical geography. Africa, therefore, is still humbling to that pride of knowledge, which Europe very justly indulges, with regard to other quarters of the globe. An extraordinary zeal, however, to remove this reproach, has been for some time manifested in this country; and seconded and aided as that zeal now is by government, a series of splendid discoveries may be expected to be the result; so that it is more than probable, that, in the course of fifteen or twenty years, Africa will lose its place in the list of unknown regions.<sup>8</sup>

In fact, the process of European 'discovery' of Africa was to take much longer than fifteen or twenty years, but the "zeal" that Murray noted continued throughout the nineteenth century. In his summarising of all that was known of Africa, Murray was also to set a pattern that was to be repeated in later writings, such as Grant's *Comparative Sketch* of 1881.<sup>9</sup> The foundation of the Royal Scottish Geographical Society in 1885 was to provide a vehicle for both the

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*up the rivers Kwo'ra and Bi'nue (commonly known as the Niger and Tsadda) in 1854 with a map and appendices* (London: John Murray, 1856); James Augustus Grant *A Walk Across Africa, or Domestic Scenes from My Nile Journal* (Edinburgh: Blackwood and Sons, 1864); Joseph Thomson, *To the Central African Lakes and Back: The Narrative of the Royal Geographical Society's East Central African Expedition, 1878–1880* (London, Sampson Low, Marston, Searle and Rivington, 1881).

7 Hugh Murray, *Discoveries and Travels in Africa, by the late John Leyden MD* (Edinburgh: Constable, and London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme and Brown, 1817).

8 Murray, *Discoveries and Travels*, p. vii–viii.

9 James Augustus Grant, *Comparative Sketch of What Was Known of Africa in 1830 with What Is Known Now*, Paper presented to the Geographical Section of the British Association, York, September 6, 1881.

wider dissemination of such 'knowledge' of Africa and the celebration of Scots' contribution to its development.

Broadly speaking, the exploration of Africa by Europeans began with expeditions in North and West Africa in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. Various expeditions to the Niger took place up until the 1850s, when they began to be successful in achieving their objectives, whereas earlier expeditions had often ended in the death or serious illness of the participants. Livingstone's explorations of southern and central Africa began in the 1850s and continued until his death in 1873. The aim of discovering the source of the Nile had been the primary motive for James Bruce's expedition to Abyssinia, and this was also a motive for some of Livingstone's explorations. It was to become an obsession of Victorian explorers, with successive expeditions by Burton and Speke, Speke and Grant, and others. Speke and Grant finally achieved this feat in 1862. Eastern and central Africa continued to be a focus of interest, as exemplified by Henry Morton Stanley's expeditions to the Congo and Joseph Thomson's expeditions to Kenya. Smaller-scale expeditions were carried out by others, including missionaries, and reported in scientific papers and journals. Cartography also formed part of the scientific appropriation of Africa by Europeans. Edinburgh map-making firms were among the producers of maps and atlases delineating Britain's expanding empire and the growing European knowledge of Africa.<sup>10</sup> Keith Johnston, for example, a highly regarded Edinburgh cartographer, took part in an expedition to central Africa, on which he was to die.<sup>11</sup>

While many expeditions to various parts of Africa had scientific objectives as their primary motivation, the accounts published of such expeditions were not necessarily dry scientific treatises confining themselves only to systematic observations of natural phenomena or the nature of the societies encountered. And although there was a process of professionalisation of science occurring in the course of the nineteenth century, providing fora for the circulation and discussion of ideas and findings of a more technical scientific nature, explorers also continued to produce popular accounts for the wider public. The preface to the 1820 abridged edition of James Bruce's *Travels to discover the source of the Nile* noted that Bruce

had to struggle with a variety of difficulties and dangers; he was involved in many extraordinary adventures, and enjoyed an opportunity of

10 Charles Withers, *Geography, Science and National Identity: Scotland since 1520* (Cambridge University Press, 2001).

11 James McCarthy, *Journey into Africa: The Life and Death of Keith Johnston, Scottish Cartographer and Explorer, 1844–79* (Latheronwheel: Whittles Publishing, 2004).

witnessing the most singular, and before unheard-of manners, habits, and customs: these subjects, blended with the useful information which his work conveys, alternately excite sympathy and horror, astonishment, indignation, and delight; and diffuse throughout his narrative a charm which must ever secure it deserved popularity.<sup>12</sup>

This provides a summary not only of the character of Bruce's narrative, and anticipates the reactions it was likely to elicit from its readers, but serves as a description of the classic explorer's narrative. Accounts of dangers, whether from people, animals, or natural phenomena, were typical elements of this type of narrative, as were descriptions of peoples encountered, their mode of dress, customs and beliefs, and social organisation. Scientific observation and recording of flora and fauna, geology, and other phenomena also were typical elements. Often, these were mixed together in the narrative of the journey, rather than being separately organised.

Narratives of exploration thus often conveyed a sense of adventure, excitement, danger, and risk, all likely to be of interest to the reading public. The death of explorers in Africa seems to have added to public interest, and in certain cases it was a contributory factor to their subsequent celebrity, with such deaths often represented as heroic sacrifices in the service of bringing 'civilisation' to Africa. Among the anecdotes and incidents which constituted the narrative of the journey, certain themes commonly emerged. Many explorers commented on trading activities and the possibility of further commercial activity; they commented on the slave trade and slavery, discussing causes and possible solutions; they often commented on the benefits that Christianity might bring and on the role of missions; and last, but not least, they both described and made judgments upon African peoples.

Some writers were keen to stress the veracity of their accounts, indicating an expectation that people at home might find them hard to believe. Mungo Park declared that his story

has nothing to recommend it but the *truth*. It is a plain unvarnished tale, without pretensions of any kind, except that it claims to enlarge, in some degree, the circle of African geography.<sup>13</sup>

12 James Bruce, *Travels between the Years 1765 and 1773 through Part of Africa, Syria, Egypt, and Arabia, into Abyssinia, to Discover the Source of the Nile* (London: James Robins and Co, 1820), p. iii–iv.

13 Mungo Park, *Travels in the Interior of Africa* (first published 1799) (London: Folio Society Edition, 1984), p. xxi.



Grant, writing in the 1860s, also emphasised that details he related might appear “trifling,” but that “they are at least *true*” and will help “render my countrymen more familiar with the interior life of Africa.”<sup>14</sup>

### *Commerce and Commercial Opportunities*

While the purposes and objectives of expeditions and journeys were often several and varied, possible commercial opportunities were often present and sometimes prominent among them. Bruce, for example, made observations on goods traded and on trading practices he encountered, and his account of Abyssinia was to foster other expeditions, undertaken in the hope that they might lead to

commercial intercourse with a large portion of the African continent, and create a new market for the accumulated produce of some of our manufactures.<sup>15</sup>

In West African exploration the investigation of commercial possibilities was an explicit objective. Mungo Park described the “commercial intercourse” he witnessed, with the goods exported to the Gambia from Europe including, among other things, “fire-arms and ammunition, ironware, spirituous liquors, tobacco, cotton caps, a small quantity of broad cloth, and a few articles of the manufacture of Manchester.”<sup>16</sup> In exchange for these goods Europeans took “slaves, gold dust, ivory, bees-wax, and hides.” Slaves were “the chief article.”<sup>17</sup> Alexander Laing was charged with promoting the cultivation of white rice and assessing “the sentiments of the natives regarding the abolition of the slave-trade,” alternative forms of trade being seen as essential to doing this effectively.<sup>18</sup> Laing personally advised the merchant, Kenneth Macaulay, of Sierra Leone, to open up trading routes into the interior, advice which quickly produced roads “thronged by the trading caravans from Foulah and Bambara.”<sup>19</sup>

Commercial opportunities motivated the Scottish shipbuilder Macgregor Laird<sup>20</sup> and others from the Liverpool merchant community to which his

14 Grant, *A Walk Across Africa*, p. x.

15 Bruce, *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile*, p. iv.

16 Park, *Travels in the Interior of Africa*, p. 13.

17 *Ibid.*, p. 13.

18 Laing, *Travels in the Timanee*, p. 3.

19 Laing, *Travels in the Timanee*, p. 30.

20 Macgregor Laird was a member of a Scottish family who established themselves as shipbuilders in Liverpool. Laird had previously undertaken an expedition in West Africa

family belonged both to finance and carry out expeditions in the region of the Niger. The expedition of which Baikie became the leader “had points of interest for the utilitarian, the commercial man, the man of science, and the philanthropist.”<sup>21</sup> Commercial possibilities were positively evaluated, since the expedition encountered African peoples who were “endowed by nature with... the commercial faculty” and were ready to trade with Europeans, “eagerly bartering their raw cotton, their vegetable oils, and their ivory, for our calicoes and cloths.”<sup>22</sup> Livingstone famously urged the development of commerce in Africa, along with Christianity, ending his address at Cambridge in December 1857 with these words: “I go back to Africa to try make an open path for commerce and Christianity. Do you carry out the work which I have begun; I leave it with you.”<sup>23</sup> Like others, Livingstone saw the employment of African peoples in trade and commerce, and the production of goods for such purposes, as a necessary replacement for the slave trade, and without which it would not be defeated. By stimulating “the natives” to cultivate crops such as cotton, he argued, “we may engender a feeling of mutual dependence between them and ourselves.”<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, he continued, “We ought to encourage the Africans to cultivate for our markets, as the most effectual means, next to the gospel, of their elevation.”<sup>25</sup> Scottish missionary activity in Africa following Livingstone’s death very explicitly addressed these aims,<sup>26</sup> though it was not the first missionary activity in Africa to include training in artisanal skills—this having already been undertaken by the United Presbyterians in Old Calabar.<sup>27</sup>

Of all those explorers and travellers commenting on prospects for commercial and economic development, Joseph Thomson was perhaps the most

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in 1832–1834, and he supported Baikie’s expedition, and subsequently designed and built the *Ma Robert* for Livingstone’s expedition to the Zambesi in 1858.

21 Baikie, *Narrative of an Exploring Voyage*, p. 385.

22 Ibid., p. 386.

23 Quoted in James Johnston, *Dr Laws of Livingstonia* (London: Partridge and Co, 1909), p. 23.

24 David Livingstone, *Travels and Researches in South Africa* (Philadelphia: J.W. Bradley, 1858), p. 426.

25 Ibid., p. 426.

26 See for example, James Wells, *Stewart of Lovedale: The Life of James Stewart* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1908); James Johnston, *Dr Laws of Livingstonia* (London: Partridge and Co, 1909); John McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi 1875–1940: The Impact of the Livingstonia Mission in the Northern Province* (Cambridge University Press, 1977); H.W. Macmillan, *The Origins and Development of the African Lakes Company, 1878–1908* (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1970).

27 See *Missions of the United Presbyterian Church described in a Series of Stories* (Edinburgh: Offices of the United Presbyterian Church, 1896).

sceptical. He satirised the views of “imaginative” travellers, who saw Africa as an economic “prop” to Britain, “ready to take unlimited quantities of calicoes from Manchester, of nicknacks from Birmingham, and of cutlery from Sheffield,” and to be “a very El Dorado to all traders enterprising enough to enter and establish themselves.”<sup>28</sup> Views as to what people might get in return for these goods were, in his view, equally imaginative, with Stanley, in particular being singled out for “giving free play to his brilliant imaginative genius.”<sup>29</sup> Exempted from such criticism, however, was the “more cautious and sober” Livingstone, who conveyed the impression that central Africa was “more for the missionary and the philanthropist than for the trader.”<sup>30</sup> Thomson’s cautionary note was, however, the exception, not the rule, and among Scots explorers, enthusiasm for commercial development was widespread. While in some cases, participants in or supporters of expeditions might have thereby furthered their own business interests, interest in commerce was almost always accompanied by the notion that this would be good for the peoples inhabiting the territories that were the object of exploration. In both western and eastern Africa, proposed commercial developments were invariably seen in the context of attempts to extirpate slave trading.

### *Slavery and the Slave Trade*

In Scotland the anti-slavery movement had commanded widespread support, both in its first phase in the 1790s and in its second phase, which arose in the 1820s and 1830s.<sup>31</sup> Scots continued to take part in campaigns to stop people of other nationalities engaging in the slave trade, campaigns which were a feature of British philanthropy throughout the nineteenth century—for example, against slavery in the United States and against Arab slave traders in east and central Africa. Explorers and travellers commented in various ways on slavery and slave trading, almost always denouncing the trade, but not always denouncing all forms of slavery.

Among the Scots explorers discussed here, Mungo Park stands out as not condemning slavery or the slave trade. He described the scenes of slavery that he witnessed, put forward his theories of the origins and causes of slavery, and

28 Thomson, *To the Central African Lakes*, p. 279.

29 Ibid., p. 279.

30 Ibid., p. 280.

31 See C. Duncan Rice, *The Scots Abolitionists* (Louisiana: Louisiana State University Press, 1981); Clare Midgley, *Women Against Slavery: the British Campaign, 1780–1870* (London: Routledge, 1992); Iain Whyte, *Scotland and the Abolition of Black Slavery, 1756–1838* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006).

concluded that it was inevitable. Park had travelled on an American slave ship from the Gambia to Antigua on his way back to Britain, and he recorded the medical assistance that he rendered to a number of slaves. Notwithstanding this direct experience of the cruelties of the slave trade, he expressed scepticism as to the benefits of its abolition, since the effect of this “on the manners of the natives” would “in the present unenlightened state of their minds” be neither “so extensive or beneficial as many wise and worthy persons fondly expect.”<sup>32</sup> Park’s views were, in part, a reflection of the time at which he was writing, though they were later to become the object of criticism. Thomson lamented, regarding Park’s account, that “We seek in vain for a word of condemnation” of “this horrible trade,” or for “the indication of a consciousness that there was any iniquity in it.”<sup>33</sup>

However, by 1825 Alexander Laing was praising Britain’s efforts in assisting economic development in Sierra Leone for liberated slaves,<sup>34</sup> while in the 1850s Baikie argued that it was necessary to convince African peoples that they would derive more benefit from commerce and cultivation that would strike at the root of the supply of slaves, and that it was “absurd to hear the defences of slavery which are from time to time offered to the public.”<sup>35</sup> Livingstone’s attacks on the slave trade conducted by Arab traders in east and central Africa are well known, and it was his desire to find a way of ending this that led him to support economic development of Africa through the intervention of Europeans. Grant reported encounters with slave traders in the 1860s, regretting that there was no system of policing to stop the slave trade on the upper Nile. Subsequent to his expeditions he became an active supporter of missionary work in Uganda, and he was a member of the East Africa Slave Trade Committee.<sup>36</sup> Thomson, too, recorded encounters with parties of slaves. While denouncing slavery and slave trading, Thomson reminded his readers that Britain had historically played a role in the trade: “It is difficult to realise that less than a century ago we ourselves were the chief traffickers in human flesh and blood.”<sup>37</sup> Reflecting the changes in the moral consciousness of British society, explorers of African territories, from the early decades of the nineteenth century onwards, typically denounced slavery. They also often explicitly

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32 Park, *Travels in the Interior of Africa*, p. 160.

33 Thomson, *Mungo Park and the Niger*, p. 49.

34 Laing, *Travels in the Timanee*.

35 Baikie, *Narrative of an Exploring Voyage*, p. 393.

36 James Casada, ‘James A. Grant and the Introduction of Christianity in Uganda’, *Journal of Church and State*, Vol. 25, No. 3 (1983), pp. 507–522, p. 516.

37 Thomson, *Mungo Park and the Niger*, p. 49.

supported the efforts of British governments, merchants, and philanthropists to foster alternative forms of economic development in Africa and were frequently in favour of Christian missions.

### *Missionaries and Christianity*

Among white people encountered by explorers and travellers in Africa, missionaries featured prominently. By the time of Laing's expedition in the early 1820s, missionary activity was already underway in Sierra Leone, which had been established as a colony for the resettlement of freed slaves. The work of educating the resettled slaves as Christians was being undertaken by the Church of England's Church Missionary Society at this time, "benefits conferred on Africa by British interference and protection, of which an Englishman may well be proud."<sup>38</sup> By the time of Baikie's expedition to the Niger in 1854, the United Presbyterians had established their mission in Old Calabar, where the motivation for its establishment was specifically to work in an area where the impact of the slave trade had been particularly damaging.<sup>39</sup> Baikie referred to his encounters with the United Presbyterian missionaries, though his loyalties lay with the Church Missionary Society, whose representative, Samuel Crowther, was a member of his party. For Baikie, Crowther, who was of Yoruba origins, represented "the true African missionary," and he remarked, "were there only plenty of Mr Crowthers, the work of regeneration and improvement would doubtless progress."<sup>40</sup> Baikie gave a strong endorsement to missionary activity, overall, arguing that while the people with whom his party had had contact were unfortunately prey to "degrading superstitions and heathen practices," this meant that "a noble task is in store for those who will pioneer the way of civilization and Christianity."<sup>41</sup>

As both explorer and missionary, Livingstone has been claimed, as it were, by both camps—just as he has been claimed as both a British and a Scottish hero.<sup>42</sup> Although it has been argued that his fame as an explorer detracted from his influence as a missionary,<sup>43</sup> there is no doubt that his views on the

38 Laing, *Travels in the Timanee*, p. 282.

39 See *Missions of the United Presbyterian Church*.

40 Baikie, *Narrative of an Exploring Voyage*, p. 358.

41 *Ibid.*, p. 387.

42 MacKenzie, 'Heroic Myths of Empire'; MacKenzie, 'David Livingstone: the construction of the myth'.

43 Derek Alexander Dow, *Domestic Response and Reaction to the Foreign Missionary Enterprises of the Principal Scottish Presbyterian Churches, 1873–1929* (Unpublished Ph.D thesis, Edinburgh University, 1977).

need for missionary work in the territories in which he travelled in Africa, and on the way this work should be carried out, were influential. Thomson spoke in glowing terms of the Scottish missionaries he encountered, though judged Roman Catholic missionaries harshly for exciting the hostility of native people by their "secluded and exclusive habits."<sup>44</sup> The Protestant mission stations set up at Livingstonia and Blantyre in Nyasaland (Malawi), by contrast, were "faithfully carrying out the dreams and wishes of the great Apostle of Africa" by tackling slavery at "the fountainhead."<sup>45</sup> Such explorers' accounts thus endorsed the foreign mission enterprise, and indeed, in some cases expeditions united the objectives of exploration and promotion of Christianity.

Explorers and missionaries were not the only Scots travellers in Africa in the nineteenth century, though apparently, there were not many other Scots travellers during this period. While a distinction can be made between exploration and travel, in terms of their objectives, travel in Africa was not necessarily much easier to undertake in this period, as it was often accompanied by risks or dangers, albeit becoming more accessible for Europeans over time. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, the notion of a 'travelling public' who might tour India or hunt big game in Africa had emerged, though this 'public' tended to be a wealthy and elite one, and predominantly, but not exclusively male. James Grant, for example, noted in 1881, "So secure is the country round the Victoria Falls, that ladies have visited them, the natives offering no resistance to anyone."<sup>46</sup>

The travellers referred to here, Henry Drummond and Jane Moir, were supporters of the missionary enterprise. As an evangelical Christian and Professor at the Free Church College in Glasgow, Drummond's objectives in travelling included acquainting himself with the work being undertaken by missionaries and other Scots in Nyasaland, as well as pursuing scientific investigation. Not surprisingly, the missionaries received only praise from Drummond. Along with the trading Moir brothers of the African Lakes Company<sup>47</sup> and the

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44 Thomson, *To the Central African Lakes*, Vol. II, p. 171.

45 Ibid., p. 271.

46 James Augustus Grant, *Comparative Sketch of What Was Known in Africa in 1830 with What Is Known Now*. Paper presented to the Geographical Section of the British Association, York, September 6, 1881, p. 15.

47 The African Lakes Company, based in Glasgow, was founded by John and Frederick Moir in 1877, and subsequently became the African Lakes Corporation in 1894. In the twentieth century it was absorbed by the British South Africa Company. For an evaluation of the economic role of the African Lakes Company, see W. Thompson, *Glasgow and Africa, connexions and attitudes* (Unpublished Ph.D thesis, University of Strathclyde, 1970).

plantation-running Buchanan brothers, they had demonstrated the productive capacity of the land and had shown that the 'African native' could "be taught to work," allowing the people of Africa to join "even at this late day in the great march of civilisation."<sup>48</sup> Drummond's assessments of economic prospects in east and central Africa contrasted sharply in tone with those of Joseph Thomson. Thomson's misgivings about imperialist expansion were based on assessments of natural resources and climate, and of difficulties in transportation, and were not a judgment about the capacity of African peoples. By contrast, Drummond doubted the capability of African peoples to develop economically. Having set out to "penetrate this shopless and foodless land,"<sup>49</sup> he found that the African people he encountered were well supplied by nature and apparently happy: "primeval man," "the genuine child of nature...has practically no wants."<sup>50</sup> This, he declared, "will be a sad drawback to development."<sup>51</sup> Scottish missionaries, traders, and plantation managers, however, demonstrated with their works "the possibilities of civilisation and colonisation among an average African tribe living on an average African soil."<sup>52</sup>

Jane Moir, the wife of African Lakes Company director Frederick Moir, was intimately linked to Scots' efforts to follow Livingstone's injunction to develop economic activities in areas ravaged by the slave trade. She provides a rare example of a Scottish woman traveller who produced an account of her experiences. There is no Scottish equivalent of Mary Kingsley,<sup>53</sup> who travelled in West Africa, undertaking scientific observations, among other things, and befriending the Scottish missionary, Mary Slessor,<sup>54</sup> though there may be accounts by women awaiting discovery in the form of letters or unpublished journals. Indeed, the short book by Moir, *A Lady's Letters from Central Africa* (1891), consists of letters written to her family at home in Scotland about a journey she undertook with her husband in 1890 from the southern end of

48 Henry Drummond, *Tropical Africa* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1891), p. 66.

49 Ibid., p. 5.

50 Ibid., p. 55.

51 Ibid., p. 56.

52 Ibid., p. 25.

53 Mary Kingsley (1862–1900), sister of the author Charles Kingsley, became a traveller and writer. She travelled in West Africa between 1893 and 1895. She subsequently wrote and lectured extensively on West Africa. See entry in Oxford Dictionary of National Biography online: [www.oxforddnb.com](http://www.oxforddnb.com) (accessed 18 February, 2010).

54 See Cheryl McEwan, "The Mother of all the Peoples': geographical knowledge and the empowering of Mary Slessor", in Morag Bell, Robin Butlin, and Michael Heffernan (eds), *Geography and Imperialism, 1820–1940* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), pp. 125–150.



Lake Nyasa to Lake Tanganyika and back.<sup>55</sup> Described in the introduction, as “the first lady traveller in South Central Africa” and as a “woman pioneer,” Moir provides a lively and frank account of encounters with African peoples round Lake Nyasa and Lake Tanganyika, a visit to an Arab settlement at Ujiji, and another to a French Roman Catholic mission. Among other things, her narrative includes a description of a dramatic escape from an attack on Lake Tanganyika during which she had the good fortune to survive having a bullet shot through her hat, “so near that half-an-inch meant life or death.”<sup>56</sup>

Accounts of both exploration and travel included descriptions of and observations on the peoples encountered. The tone of these comments varied considerably, from the relatively dispassionate ‘scientific’ observation to those that explicitly compared African peoples with Europeans or ranked them in an ‘evolutionary’ hierarchy, reflecting the ‘scientific racism’ which became prevalent in nineteenth century Britain. Sometimes, comparisons or contrasts were implicit, though they also tended towards a ranking, if in a less stark and evidently ‘racialised’ way. It appears to be an almost invariable feature of such accounts that experiences of contact with African peoples were mixed and the responses of explorers were also mixed, usually containing both positive and negative comments. Frequently accounts attempted to sum up the character of particular peoples—inevitably, resulting in simplified and stereotypical representations. Thus, although African peoples were not uniformly represented in a negative light, the overall effect of explorers’ and travellers’ representations of Africans was to present them as ‘savages’, ‘primitive’, subject to ‘superstition’ and ‘cruelty’, ravaged by slavery, and certain to benefit from the ‘civilisation’ that Scots and other Europeans could bring.

There was an occasional questioning of the approaches of European imperialists: for example, Joseph Thomson’s criticisms of the unrealistic expectations of economic gain from exploitation of Africa, or of the Belgian approach as “militarism run mad.”<sup>57</sup> At the other extreme was Henry Drummond’s Social Darwinist view of Africans as “primeval man” living in “virgin simplicity,” though “possibly they may become what we are now.”<sup>58</sup> Jane Moir was rare in her expression of regret that changes were fast overtaking the way African peoples lived, and was even rarer among European women in not being shocked by African modes of dress.

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55 Jane F. Moir, *A Lady's Letters from Central Africa* (Glasgow: James Maclehose and Sons, 1891).

56 Moir, *A Lady's Letters*, p. 66–7.

57 Thomson, *To the Central African Lakes*, p. 183.

58 Drummond, *Tropical Africa*, p. 55.



### Missionary Accounts<sup>59</sup>

Missionary accounts of Africa and of African peoples complemented those of explorers and travellers. Missionary societies in Scotland had first come into existence in 1796, and an early attempt was made by the Scottish Missionary Society to establish a mission in Sierra Leone. While this was unsuccessful, South Africa was soon to become the site of Scottish missionary operations, and subsequently, Scots missions were to be established in Old Calabar (in what was to become Nigeria), in Nyasaland, and in Kenya. Furthermore, a number of the most prominent of London Missionary Society (LMS) missionaries—among them John Philip, Robert Moffat, David Livingstone and John Mackenzie—were Scots, and there was a ready audience in Scotland for accounts of their missionary work, publicised through the LMS auxiliary branches in Scotland and through missionary journals and their own writings.

The original missionary societies were non-denominational, and it took some time (until 1824) for the evangelical wing of the Church of Scotland to persuade the General Assembly to endorse foreign mission work. Its first missionary endeavours were in India, and there were to be more Scots missionaries in India than in Africa throughout the nineteenth century. However, missionary work in Africa was to come to have a higher profile in the latter part of the nineteenth century. This was a consequence of David Livingstone's celebrity and fame, of the Scottish missions established in Nyasaland following Livingstone's death—whose progress was followed with close attention by the Scottish public—of the high profile of other Scottish missionaries such as Robert Moffat (albeit LMS) and Mary Slessor, and of the wider context of the “scramble for Africa” among European imperialist powers—a context in which the missionary role in contributing to the ‘civilising mission’ of the British empire was advanced as an argument to support expansionist ambitions.

Missionary accounts of their encounters with other peoples, whether in India, Africa or the South Seas, were circulated in a number of forms, including letters, which were copied for wider circulation. That practice was initiated in the earliest days of foreign missions, and it appears to have persisted among some groups, such as supporters of the Ladies' Associations, formed in the 1830s. Periodicals—established initially on a non-denominational basis but published after the Disruption of 1843 along denominational lines were

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59 The section which follows draws from the findings discussed in my book, *Empire and Scottish Society: the impact of foreign missions at home, c. 1790–c. 1914* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009). Readers are directed to this publication for full details of primary sources.

another source, as were histories of missions, memoirs and biographies, and pamphlets of sermons, public addresses, or materials written for the promotion of particular causes. Some missionaries wrote their own accounts of their work—Robert Moffat and David Livingstone are notable examples of this—and from around the 1870s the genre of missionary biographies began to take off. David Livingstone was far and away the most popular subject of such biographies, but other missionaries such as Robert Moffat, Alexander Duff, and Mary Slessor also were the subjects of multiple biographies. It was through the periodicals, however, that people in Scotland were regularly informed of the progress of missionary work in Africa and elsewhere, while missionaries on furlough were also expected to travel the country addressing congregations and missionary meetings. Circulation of such ‘missionary intelligence’ was then an integral part of the institutional life of the Scottish Presbyterian churches throughout the nineteenth and well into the twentieth century.

In their representations of African peoples, missionary discourses privileged a number of tropes. The theme that Africans were in need of rescuing from the slave trade provided a motive for missionary work in west, east and central Africa. The slave trade was thought of as having been destructive of African societies and as leading to their degradation. At the same time, however, Africans were seen as being in need of ‘civilisation’. Many African peoples were described as savage, cruel, and superstitious. Indeed, African religions and belief systems were routinely denounced as ‘superstition’, and it was not until around the turn of the century that a more sympathetic and anthropologically influenced view of other belief systems began to be expressed by some missionaries, though they seem to have remained very few in number.

The absence of literacy in many African societies was regarded as a lack of civilisation. Since Presbyterianism emphasised literacy as essential to the capacity of the individual to read for himself or herself the word of God, education was as central as evangelising to missionary practice. Claims of missionary achievements or success thus related not only to numbers of converts, but to the role missionaries played in creating written languages in Africa and in translating the Bible into those languages.

Gender relations, that is the roles assigned to men and women in the division of labour, within the public sphere and within family life, including the conduct of sexual relations and systems of marriage, were a central concern of Christian missionaries everywhere, and this inevitably led to much criticism of African practices. Missionaries’ aim was to instill Christian morality in their converts entailing monogamy and sexual modesty; they also intended to structure gender relations in ways that adhered to the ideals of Victorian Scotland. Condemnation was showered upon polygamy, on modes of dress that Victorian

Scots deemed immodest, on initiation rites such as female circumcision, and on the gender division of labour in Africa, in which women carried out much agricultural work. These views also shaped missionary practice; thus, part of the work of supporters at home was to supply clothes for African converts or students of mission schools, while girls educated in mission schools, for example, were trained in domestic skills such as sewing and laundering.

Other civilising practices of missionaries included attempts to get Africans to abandon their forms of dancing and music, and to adopt a European work ethic and different working practices. This involved introducing them to different forms of cultivation and gardening, layout of settlements, and ways of building, the introduction of artisanal training, and the application of European technologies. As with their educational practices, these ways of working within missions effected a transposition of Scottish practices and norms on to African communities with whom the missionaries engaged. There is little sense in many of these accounts of an interaction or dialogue in which mutual learning and adaptation might be occurring. Rather, Africans were usually depicted as being acted upon, rather than as acting themselves. The more Africans assumed European ways of dressing, working, and thinking, the more they were valued by missionaries, since this was a tribute to their success, as they saw it, in introducing Christianity and 'civilisation' to African societies.

Much of the reporting in the missionary periodicals was of a relatively mundane nature, providing descriptions of the places in which missionaries worked, of their typical daily routines, sometimes enlivened with accounts of dramatic events or stories of individual conversions. Accounts of their work by missionaries such as Moffat or Livingstone also discussed their efforts at Christianisation, but additionally provided much in the way of incident and adventure that might appeal to a wider reading public.

It was, however, biographers of missionaries who tended to make the strongest claims for their achievements, and it is in these writers' description of missionary work that Africans were often most negatively depicted. Henry Drummond, a populariser of Social Darwinism, was most explicit in viewing Africans as being on a low rung on the ladder of racial hierarchy (Europeans being at the top) and speculating that Africans might one day rise up the ladder to approach the European level. Other Scots writers echoed these views.<sup>60</sup>

Of course, there were, within this literature, other discourses on the nature of the encounter with Africans. Some missionaries were prominent as defenders of the rights of African peoples, or were widely regarded as being humanitarian and egalitarian in their attitudes to Africans. John Philip, often regarded

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60 See for example, Wells, *Stewart of Lovedale*; Johnston, *Dr Laws of Livingstonia*.

as a troublesome radical by his white compatriots in South Africa, was an active advocate of the rights of the Khoi Khoi people.<sup>61</sup> Livingstone was claimed to have treated Africans as brothers and was admired for it. The missionary aim of counteracting the slave trade in central Africa was essentially humanitarian, and on occasion, missionaries also defended Africans against the encroachments of white settlers. Nonetheless, even among the humanitarians and egalitarians, there was an ambiguity in attitudes towards Africans. The notion of Africans as unruly 'children of nature' can be found, for example, in Livingstone's writings, and John Philip was capable of patronising remarks.<sup>62</sup> Donald Fraser, who defended the interests of Africans against white settlers in Nyasaland, was openly enthusiastic about imperialist expansion.<sup>63</sup>

A further dimension of the missionary encounter with Africa and African peoples was that of science. Missionaries played an active part in the production of the scientific forms of knowledge sponsored by imperialism.<sup>64</sup> For example, some took part in expeditions of exploration, others pursued interests in the fields of botany, zoology, geology, ethnography, linguistics, and so on. They often showed a keen interest in the potential for commercial development within African territories, initiating the cultivation of particular kinds of crops and investigating the presence of minerals for exploitation. Clearly, these kinds of interests often overlapped with those of explorers and members of scientific expeditions. Popular narratives by missionaries and by biographers gave some space to these scientific matters, but missionaries also published scientific papers and presented them to various scientific societies. Livingstone, for example, explicitly noted that in a popular account such as his *Travels*, references to scientific matters were limited, and that the details of the scientific

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61 Andrew Ross, *John Philip (1775–1851): missions, race and politics in South Africa* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1986); John M. MacKenzie, *The Scots in South Africa* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007).

62 David Livingstone, *Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa* (London: John Murray, 1857); John Philip, *Researches in South Africa* (London: J. Duncan, 1828).

63 See Clifton J. Phillips, 'Changing Attitudes in the Student Volunteer Movement of Great Britain and North America, 1886–1928', in Torben Christensen and William R. Hutchison (eds), *Missionary Ideologies in the Imperialist Era: 1880–1920* (Århus: Aros Publishers, 1982), pp. 131–45.

64 See John M. MacKenzie, 'Missionaries, Science and the Environment in Nineteenth-Century Africa', in Andrew Porter (ed.), *The Imperial Horizons of British Protestant Missions, 1880–1914* (Grand Rapids, Michigan and Cambridge, W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2003), pp. 106–130.

findings of his expedition had been presented elsewhere. The contribution that missionaries made to science added to their profile and acclaim within late-nineteenth-century Scotland, and it was in the representation of Scots as having played a major role in the 'discovery' of Africa that celebration of explorers and missionaries came together.

In 1874, following Livingstone's death, the claim of Scotland's special and disproportionate contribution to the discovery of Africa was already being advanced:

Scotland had even beyond proportion contributed men willing to engage in the enterprise of ascertaining more about Africa, and of relating Africa to the rest of the world.<sup>65</sup>

Remembering "Bruce and Mungo Park of old," it could be seen that "African enterprise was partly a transmitted Scotch work."<sup>66</sup> As noted above, the exploits of Scots explorers in Africa were to be much discussed within the Royal Scottish Geographical Society in the latter decades of the nineteenth century, and in the pages of its journal, the *Scottish Geographical Magazine*. In Africa Scotsmen had taken "the foremost share," with explorers from Bruce onwards being given their due. Livingstone, as might be expected, was most prominent in these accounts:

Livingstone's title to be considered the greatest of African travellers rests on the wonderful extent of the ground he covered, and on the practical value of his discoveries.<sup>67</sup>

Other missionary explorers acknowledged in the pages of the *Scottish Geographical Magazine* included Hope Waddell, John Campbell, Robert Moffat, and Bishop Mackenzie. The efforts of Scots missionaries in Africa also received acclaim, and especially, those who had established a 'Scotch colony' in Nyasaland. The World Missionary Conference of 1910 and the Livingstone Centenary of 1913 were to provide further occasions for the repetition of these claims of Scotland's role in opening up Africa. The Livingstone Centenary Exhibition at the Royal Scottish Museum showed how the 'Dark Continent' had changed since Livingstone arrived there in 1841, with the exhibits imprinting on the mind

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65 'Proposed statue to Dr Livingstone', *The Scotsman*, 15 April 1874.

66 Ibid.

67 'Scotland and Geographical Work', *Scottish Geographical Magazine*, Vol. 1, 1885, p. 22.

the representations of primitive tribal culture, the fruits of Christian mission work, the proofs of native education, of growing industrial efficiency and reliance upon civil order.<sup>68</sup>

### Conclusion

This chapter has aimed to illustrate the ways in which the encounter with Africa and Africans was represented by Scots to Scots at home in the nineteenth century. Africa was represented as exotic, unknown, and dangerous, as waiting to be discovered and as a place of adventure. Typically, Africans were represented as primitive and benefiting from the 'civilisation' that white men and women could bring. Attitudes towards Africans were not unmixed, however. Mary Louise Pratt has contrasted Mungo Park's narrative of exploration with previous scientific travel writing, arguing that it is characterised by reciprocity—that Park represented himself as being subjected to the scrutiny of Africans and as entering into dialogue and exchanges with Africans, and on occasion, being dependent on Africans for food and survival.<sup>69</sup> Pratt argues, on the one hand, that this is what has made Park's narrative so engaging to generations of readers, but on the other, she argues that "Reciprocity has always been capitalism's ideology of itself."<sup>70</sup> For her, Park represents the harbinger of the capitalist appropriation of Africa, which was to represent itself as the 'civilising mission'. Pratt is perhaps right to treat this apparent reciprocity as suspect. However, even this sense of reciprocity was not always present in the accounts of missionaries and travellers. Scots, as authors of such accounts for an audience at home, represented themselves as actively shaping the landscape and societies in which they had situated themselves, while African peoples were seldom afforded a sense of agency or recognition as participants in an exchange. Thus, many of the accounts being broadcast at home reduced the complexity of the experience of living or travelling in Africa, and of the interdependency of the relations between whites and Africans, putting the emphasis on the authors' own role in offering the gift of Christianity and civilisation. Such accounts were often characterised by discourses which conflicted with one another, with humanitarianism and egalitarianism competing with a view of racial hierarchy, in which Europeans occupied a higher place than Africans. Furthermore, over time there were shifts in the way Africa and

68 *A Guide to the Livingstone Centenary Exhibition* (Edinburgh: Scotch Education Department and Royal Scottish Museum, 1913), p. 3.

69 Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial eyes: travel writing and transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992).

70 Pratt, *Imperial eyes*, p. 84.

African peoples were represented, with an increasingly negative view coming to dominate as the century advanced and as 'scientific racism' began to exert an influence on attitudes toward Africa.

The forms of literature discussed here were influential on popular perceptions of Africa and Africans in nineteenth-century Scotland. There were, of course, differences among these forms of literature—in their aims, their readership, and their popularity. Most notably, perhaps, the ways in which authors projected themselves differed. Explorers' narratives privileged their own role, and even in the context of the demands of official or voluntary sponsorship, where there was an expectation of published accounts both popular and scientific, this was necessarily an exercise in self-presentation and sometimes in self-promotion. Livingstone's apparent discomfort with this task (he said that he "would rather cross the African continent again than undertake to write another book")<sup>71</sup> is, if we take this at face value, suggestive of the different perspective of missionaries, who rarely wrote autobiographical accounts. Indeed, as John MacKenzie 'has argued, it required the intervention of others to fashion Livingstone as an iconic and heroic figure.'<sup>72</sup> Some missionaries were prolific authors of texts on the missionary enterprise and other religious themes, while others also published scholarly treatises on various subjects. But it was not so much missionaries themselves, but their biographers, who projected their role as fearless pioneers. By contrast, the ephemeral periodical literature was typically more restrained in character. Nonetheless, despite such differences in the stance of authors and in tone, these forms of literature tended to complement and reinforce each other—both because of the mutual and overlapping themes addressed in them and because they reached substantial audiences in nineteenth-century Scotland.

Given the number and popularity of narratives of exploration, as well as the regular readership of missionary literature, it can be argued that the Scottish encounter with Africa was a continuous feature of nineteenth-century Scottish religious and cultural life. Repeated editions of works such as Park's *Travels*, the public appetite for lectures and exhibitions, and the Royal Scottish Geographical Society's promotion of the Scots record of exploration combined to make the exploits of explorers widely known. In terms of the audience for missionary literature, levels of church membership were high, and around one third of the members of the main Presbyterian denominations subscribed to missionary periodicals at the turn of the century, while ministers also celebrated missionary exploits in their sermons. Missionaries also came to be celebrated in the secular press—as shown by the *Scotsman's* coverage of the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh in 1910, and of the Livingstone centenary in 1913. By this period also,

71 Livingstone, *Travels and Researches in South Africa*, p. 17.

72 MacKenzie, 'Heroic Myths of Empire'.



youth organisations such as the Boys' Brigade were a regular feature of Scottish life, and they, too, provided an audience for tales of missionary heroism.

The late eighteenth century marked a critical moment in the story of British contact with Africa, a shift from the private sponsorship of leisured elites and landed gentry to an increasing church and state involvement in the 'discovery' of Africa.<sup>73</sup> This shift is well demonstrated by Scottish experience. However, the form of early narratives and the aspiration to acquisition of 'knowledge' of Africa articulated at this time were to establish the framework for what was to follow. The "zeal" for "discovery" remarked by Murray energised Scottish encounters with Africa for many decades, while the claim to 'truth' of Scots accounts continued to be asserted and endorsed by Scots elites. Park's remark that the 'truth' was the only recommendation for his tale was later echoed by many following in his footsteps. As Stern has noted, this claim to 'truth' required the validation of the sponsorship of the African Association, the 'gentlemanly' club founded in 1788<sup>74</sup>—the social status and power of the members of the Association acting as a guarantee. Similarly, the sponsorship of missions and explorations by powerful institutions such as the churches, the Royal Geographical Society, or the state subsequently served to validate claims to 'truth' in the production of 'knowledge' about Africa. In the later decades of the nineteenth century, the Royal Scottish Geographical Society came to occupy a central role in endorsing the scientific truth of African 'discovery' for a Scottish audience, and crucial to its success in doing so was the nexus of civic interests it brought together, illustrated, for example, by the founding membership of the Edinburgh branch, which included leading churchmen and foreign mission board members, civic leaders, university professors, and business interests. Both religious institutions and scientific bodies thus served to guarantee veracity in their different ways. Such claims to a privileged 'knowledge' of Africa and Africans underpinned both a worldview of racialised hierarchies and Scottish pride in the 'civilising mission' of empire in Africa. Among other things, then, Scottish encounters with Africa and the circulation of accounts of them at home fuelled the growth of racist ideologies which were not only prevalent in the late nineteenth century, but had a lasting legacy in the twentieth century. The reappraisal of both celebrated heroes of the nineteenth century and their attitudes to Africa and Africans has been a slow and gradual process

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73 Philip J. Stern "'Rescuing the age from a charge of ignorance': gentility, knowledge, and the British exploration of Africa in the later eighteenth century' in Kathleen Wilson (ed), *A new imperial history: culture, identity, and modernity in Britain and the Empire, 1660–1840* (Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 115–134.

74 Stern "Rescuing the age from a charge of ignorance."



in which a continuing engagement with Africa, through Scots missions and their legacy, has been an important contributory factor.

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# Missionaries and Nationalists

## *Scotland and the 1959 State of Emergency in Malawi*

*John McCracken*

### Introduction

Just after midnight on 3 March 1959, a state of emergency was declared in Nyasaland (colonial Malawi).<sup>1</sup> Responding to the growth of nationalist agitation throughout the country, the governor, Sir Robert Armitage, declared the Nyasaland African Congress an unlawful organisation and ordered the immediate detention of 208 of its leaders, starting with its president, Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda. In the House of Commons, British Colonial Secretary Alan Lennox-Boyd justified the governor's actions on the grounds that "plans had been made by Congress to carry out widespread violence and murder of Europeans, Asians and moderate Africans; that, in fact, a massacre was being planned."<sup>2</sup> The massacre that took place that day, however, was of nationalists and was committed by white Rhodesian soldiers. Operation Sunrise began smoothly with the peaceful arrest of Banda and several of his closest associates, but at Nkhata Bay troops of the Royal Rhodesian Regiment opened fire on an unarmed crowd, killing at least twenty-eight people (the official figure was twenty) in what, in some respects at least, can be seen as a prelude to the massacre of sixty-nine others at Sharpeville, South Africa, a year later.<sup>3</sup> In all, government forces killed more than sixty Malawians during the emergency, and thirteen hundred were detained without trial, many of them in oppressive conditions. Yet the end result was a massive boost to Malawian nationalism, as demonstrated by the release of Banda from prison on 1 April 1960 and his subsequent invitation to constitutional talks in London. Prior to the

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1 In many respects the best and most detailed account of the State of Emergency remains the *Report of the Nyasaland Commission of Inquiry* (the Devlin Report), Cmdn 814 (London, HMSO, 1959). See also Colin Baker, *State of Emergency: Crisis in Central Africa, Nyasaland 1959–1960* (London, 1997) and John McCracken, *A History of Malawi, 1859–1966* (James Currey, Woodbridge, 2012) pp. 336–35.

2 Speech by Lennox-Boyd in the House of Commons, 3 March 1959, PRO (Public Record Office) CO 1015–1515.

3 The updated figures were supplied to me by Professor Wiseman Chirwa, who is conducting research on the Emergency in the Nkhata Bay area.

emergency, the British government had been adamant that the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland was a permanent institution—the one to which British sovereignty in its Central African territories would ultimately be ceded. After the emergency it was clear to all but the most myopic that the Federation was doomed and that independence for Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia could not be delayed for long. What the future held for Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) remained another, deeply unsettling, matter.

Most discussions of the 1959 state of emergency have justifiably focused on its role in British decolonisation and on the rise of nationalism in Malawi.<sup>4</sup> In this chapter, however, I turn my attention to another issue: the relationship between Scottish missionaries and the Malawian nationalist movement.<sup>5</sup> Esther Breitenbach has argued persuasively that the impact of Scottish Presbyterian missions was broadly similar to that of other British Protestant missionary societies.<sup>6</sup> However, the question remains as to whether Scottish missionaries abroad and church people at home tended to respond more sympathetically to the demand for national liberation in Asia and Africa than did fellow-Christians from England. In particular, how deep was Scottish support in the 1950s for the aspirations of Malawian nationalists?

As David Maxwell has noted, Christian missions and churches did not play a significant part in the decolonisation of Africa.<sup>7</sup> Some missionaries, like Walter Carey in Kenya, during the Mau Mau emergency, “took up a line which can only be described as one of bitter hostility to current African aspirations.”<sup>8</sup> Others, like Bishop Thorne of the (Anglican) Universities’ Mission to Central Africa (UMCA) in Nyasaland, retreated from enlightened paternalism into

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4 In addition to the references given above, see John Darwin, “The Central African Emergency, 1959,” *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 21, 3 (1993); Andrew C. Ross, *Colonialism to Cabinet Crisis: A Political History of Malawi* (Kachere, Zomba, 2009); Robert I. Rotberg, *The Rise of Nationalism in Central Africa* (Harvard and Oxford, 1966).

5 See also John McCracken, “Church and State in Malawi: The Scottish Presbyterian Missions, 1875–1965,” in H.B. Hansen and Michael Twaddle, *Christian Missionaries and the State in the Third World* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 176–193; John Stuart, “Scottish Missionaries and the End of Empire: the case of Nyasaland,” *Historical Research*, 76, 193, 2003, pp. 411–430.

6 Esther Breitenbach, ‘Scots Churches and Missions’ in John M. Mackenzie and T.M. Devine, *Scotland and the British Empire* (Oxford History of the British Empire, Companion Series, Oxford, 2011), p. 221.

7 David Maxwell, ‘Decolonisation’ in Norman Etherington (ed), *Missions and Empire* (Oxford History of the British Empire Companion Series, Oxford, 2005), p. 285.

8 Adrian Hastings, *A History of African Christianity, 1950–1975* (Cambridge, 1979), p. 97.

political conservatism and an alliance with the colonial authorities.<sup>9</sup> In Kenya, and to a greater extent in South Africa, well-intentioned churchmen periodically drew attention to government brutality. However, only a few brave individuals, notably Michael Scott and Trevor Huddleston in South Africa and Guy Clutton-Brock in Southern Rhodesia, were prepared to commit themselves openly to the nationalist movement, and their actions were repudiated by senior figures in the Anglican Church. "I have no brief at all with Michael Scott," the Archbishop of Canterbury, Geoffrey Fisher, informed the Colonial Secretary following Scott's deportation from Nyasaland in 1953. "He is himself a saintly and loveable person, but unfortunately he has a desire for martyrdom strong upon him, and all unwittingly his lack of wisdom leads him far astray."<sup>10</sup> For his part, Trevor Huddleston was sent back to Britain from his Sophiatown parish in Johannesburg, a result of the intervention of the Archbishop of Cape Town, Geoffrey Clayton. Not until the struggle for liberation in British colonial Africa had been all but won did Archbishop Geoffrey Fisher significantly moderate his views.<sup>11</sup> Clutton-Brock was also thwarted in his aims: his interracial Christian cooperative, St Faith's Farm, was closed down following action by a local Anglican priest, Arthur Lewis, (later one of the leading Christian supporters of the Rhodesian Front).<sup>12</sup>

It is against this background of missionary ambivalence to nationalism, shading into hostility, that the role of Church of Scotland missionaries in Nyasaland should be studied. From at least the 1930s, most Scottish missionaries accommodated themselves comfortably to colonial society. As both Fergus Macpherson and, more recently, Anne Hepburn have demonstrated, virtually every shortcoming that had been detected in other missions, including paternalism bordering on racism and isolation from the wider African community, had its parallel at Blantyre and Livingstonia.<sup>13</sup> Yet, for a brief period around the time of the Declaration of an Emergency in Nyasaland in 1959, Scottish missionaries attached to the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP) won the official support of the socially conservative Church of Scotland for a campaign

9 James Tengtenga, "The Good Being the Enemy of the Best: The Politics of Bishop Frank Oswald Thorne in Nyasaland and the Federation, 1936–1961," *Religion in Malawi*, 1996, pp. 23–24.

10 Fisher to Oliver Lyttleton, 11 June 1953, PRO CO 1015/243.

11 Sarah Stockwell, "Splendidly Leading the Way? Archbishop Fisher and Decolonisation in British Africa," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 36, 3, 2008, pp. 545–564.

12 Hastings, *History of African Christianity*, p. 142.

13 Fergus Macpherson, *North of the Zambezi. A Modern Missionary Memoir* (Handsell Press, Edinburgh, 1998); Notes by Anne Hepburn for "Roots and Shoots Conference," Edinburgh, Nov. 2008.

that placed them unequivocally alongside Malawian nationalists and against the British government.

Even at the height of the campaign, superficial unity hid major divisions both in the mission and in the home church in Scotland. However, although these divisions muffled the missionary message, they did not seriously reduce its impact. In his report into the Nyasaland disturbances of 1959, Lord Devlin highlighted the unique contribution made by the Presbyterian Church in the campaign against the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland.<sup>14</sup> This view was shared by the British prime minister, Harold Macmillan, who informed Roy Welensky in 1960 that the “uncertainties in public opinion” in Britain concerning the Federation were “due largely perhaps to propaganda by the Church of Scotland and to the sympathies felt for the growth of national consciousness in Africa.”<sup>15</sup> Three senior cabinet ministers, Rab Butler, Lord Home, and Alec Lennox-Boyd, became actively involved in seeking to influence Scottish opinion. In Nyasaland, the governor, Sir Robert Armitage, approved production of a secret paper highly critical of the church that was selectively leaked to pro-Federation pressure groups and sympathetic journalists.<sup>16</sup> None of this detracts from the fact that the motor for political change was supplied by an exceptionally united and dynamic nationalist movement which the colonial government was unable to suppress. But the church’s role remained significant—not least in convincing an important section of British public opinion to reject the government’s claims that Dr. Banda and his colleagues were men of violence embroiled in a murder plot, who therefore could legitimately be detained without trial for an indefinite period of time.

### Scotland and Malawi

Scotland’s relationship with Malawi dates from David Livingstone’s expeditionary travels in the area between 1859 and 1863, although it is worth noting that throughout this period he operated within a largely British, rather than a narrowly Scottish, context. His 1857 appeal asking for missionaries to work in central Africa was answered by Anglicans from the universities of Cambridge

14 *Report of the Nyasaland Commission of Inquiry*, p. 23.

15 “Prime Minister’s African Tour,” Cabinet Paper, 5 April 1960: record of meetings and conversations, Salisbury, 19 Jan. 1960, PRO (Public Record Office) CAB 129/104.

16 See S Allan Keighley, British Council of Churches to Dougall, 22 June, 1959; Dougall to Keighley, 25 June, 1959, NLS Acc. 7548 B347; Booklet entitled “The Church of Central Africa Presbyterian,” Zomba, March 1956, RHL (Rhodes House Library, Oxford), Box 5.

and Oxford, rather than by Presbyterians in Edinburgh and Glasgow. Even his funeral was a great British imperial ceremony held at the very heart of empire in Westminster Abbey.<sup>17</sup> In the aftermath of his death, however, the Established and Free Churches of Scotland succeeded in appropriating his legacy to themselves through the creation of the Blantyre and Livingstonia missions. Thereafter Livingstone, “the Presbyterian saint,” became increasingly identified with the Malawi regions—particularly after the British annexation in 1891 of what subsequently became known as the Nyasaland Protectorate.<sup>18</sup>

Brought into being, in large part, through sustained pressure from the Scottish churches, and in the face of a potential Portuguese takeover, the Protectorate emerged as a fragile, landlocked state, starved of financial resources by its imperial master, for whom it lacked economic or strategic importance, and hence heavily dependent on the missionaries for access to Western education and medicine. One consequence of this was the readiness, in the 1890s, of Blantyre’s leading missionaries, David Clement Scott and Alexander Hetherwick, to defend African interests in a series of confrontations with the Protectorate’s early colonial rulers. Another was the creation at Blantyre and even more important, at Livingstonia under Robert Laws, of networks of schools connected to ambitious central training institutions. Out of those emerged a remarkable group of well-educated, well-travelled Malawian Christians, several of whom were to become pioneer religious and political leaders.<sup>19</sup>

By the early 1950s, however, the ambition and independence of mind associated with Laws and Scott had largely evaporated. In the early 1920s Laws had brought forward plans to create a University of Livingstonia attracting students from all over central Africa. But on his retirement these plans were abandoned as were more modest ones for the development of secondary education.<sup>20</sup> From the 1940s Malawians in search of a full secondary education were forced to leave their homeland.

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17 Recent discussions from rather different perspectives are provided by Timothy Holmes, *Journey to Livingstone. Explorations of an Imperial Myth* (Canongate Press, Edinburgh, 1993) and Andrew Ross, *David Livingstone. Mission and Empire* (Hambledon, London, 2002).

18 For Livingstone as Presbyterian saint see John M. Mackenzie, “David Livingstone: The Construction of the Myth,” in G. Walker and T. Gallagher, *Sermons and Battle Hymns* (Edinburgh, 1990), pp. 24–42.

19 John McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi, 1875–1940* (Cambridge, 1977, second edition, Blantyre, 2000); A.C. Ross, *Blantyre and the Making of Modern Malawi* (Blantyre, 1996).

20 McCracken, *Politics and Christianity*, second edition, pp. 277–288.

With the decline of ambition and reduction in resources went an increased isolation of missionaries from their Malawian colleagues and parishioners. Separate African and European congregations came into existence at Blantyre and Zomba; at Loudon, far from the influence of the settler community, the church was physically segregated, with seats in the chancel being reserved for Europeans.<sup>21</sup> By 1953, so the Blantyre Mission Council reported, conditions in the mission field were becoming precarious:<sup>22</sup>

We would be blinding ourselves to the facts if we did not acknowledge the effect that the shortage of staff and finance has had on the work and on the confidence of the Africans in the Church of Scotland. Through the years the Africans have seen a shrinkage of work, stations closed, staffing vacancies unfilled, male teacher training passing out of our hands, the number of schools diminishing and less and less vital contact between missionaries and village work because the former have been overburdened with administrative responsibilities.<sup>23</sup>

A few brave souls, among them Hamish Hepburn, working at Mulanje, and Anne Burton, the youthful headmistress of the Blantyre Girls School (they were to marry in 1954), bucked the prevailing trend by seeking to break down the social barriers separating them from their Malawian neighbours. But all too often Scottish missionaries, like missionaries elsewhere, remained embedded in colonial society, complicit in a tacit alliance with the colonial state.

Andrew Doig, a chaplain with the King's African Rifles during World War II and now missionary representative on the Nyasaland Legislative Council, was able to persuade the Blantyre Mission Council in 1952 to pass a cautiously worded resolution calling for the introduction of the much-hated Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland to be postponed.<sup>24</sup> But early in 1953 the British government gave its approval to the legislation establishing the Federation, and consequently, missionary opposition declined. "It seems quite clear that Federation will now be introduced, and there is nothing that can be done to stop it," wrote W.H. Watson from Livingstonia to a group of Malawian ministers.

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21 Macpherson, *North of the Zambezi*, p. 37.

22 Macpherson, *ibid.*

23 Blantyre Mission Council, Report of Church and Mission, 1953, NLS [National Library of Scotland] Acc. 7548/337B.

24 Extract from minutes of the Blantyre Mission Council, 9–12 Sep 1952, EUL [Edinburgh University Library], Kenneth Mackenzie Papers, Box 3.



That means that the time for negative statements is past, and instead, we must proceed to positive policy... There should be no restraint, no bitterness, but instead a strong desire on the part of Africans to work for their own self-advancement.<sup>25</sup>

School children at Blantyre and a few Malawian ministers in the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian demonstrated their opposition to Federation by boycotting the celebrations marking the Queen's coronation that year. However, over most of the synod, CCAAP ministers agreed to hold services if enough people gathered to worship. It was a very different response to that of the radical Anglican priest, Michael Scott who, a few weeks earlier, had joined Congress leaders in advocating non-violent civil disobedience.<sup>26</sup>

### From Apathy to Action

The transition within the CCAAP from the hesitant moderation of the early 1950s to the confident support for basic human rights displayed at the time of the Emergency had its origins in the reappraisal of mission-church and mission-state relationships that took place in the Church of Scotland from the 1940s. As late as 1938 the Foreign Missions Committee of the Church "rejoiced that it was enabled to show to the world that the prosperity of Empire ought not to be material but spiritual as well."<sup>27</sup> However, the Second World War, followed by the achievement of Indian independence and the victory of the Communists in China, forced mission officials to re-evaluate their position. In its report to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 1946, the Foreign Missions Committee of the Church of Scotland (FMC) warned:

[If] we have been building on the prestige of the white race, on the association of missionary work with the colonising and civilising activities of the West, ...we may be back again in an era of isolationism, with a cooling of enthusiasm and diminishing influence.<sup>28</sup>

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25 Watson to Rev. A.H. Kayira, 30 May 1953, MNA [Malawi National Archives], Livingstonia Papers, Box 6.

26 Political Intelligence Report, April 1953, PRO CO 1015/464; Michael Scott, *A Time to Speak* (London, 1958), pp. 279–284.

27 Quoted in At Ipenberg, *All Good Men, The Development of Lubwa Mission, Chinsali, Zambia, 1905–1967* (Frankfurt am Main, 1991), p. 138.

28 Quoted in Ipenberg, p. 138.



Communist influence was almost entirely nonexistent in Nyasaland in 1950, so missionaries reported to a special committee set up by the church to investigate its spread. Nevertheless, officials were concerned that, unless the Church reformed, its adherents would be seduced by antagonistic secular ideologies.<sup>29</sup>

Henceforth, in both Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia, the first tentative steps were taken to disengage from the colonial alliance and to shift the balance of responsibility from alien mission to indigenous church. Rooted opposition came from the European congregations in Zomba and Blantyre, who demanded their own separate Kirk Sessions with “different rules to govern European discipline” and resolutely refused, well into the 1960s, to merge with the African church.<sup>30</sup> At Blantyre, however, in 1956, the decision was taken in principle, and in the face of a good deal of opposition from older missionaries, to make their church genuinely self-governing by transferring financial responsibility for the upkeep of mission schools and other buildings from the mission to the synod. Delays followed over the next two years, but early in 1958 a joint council was established at Livingstonia, replacing the mission council with a body composed half of missionaries and half of African ministers and elders. In 1959 the General Assembly was formally requested to permit the transfer of authority from the two mission councils to the northern and southern synods of the CCAP. A year later the handover formally took place with missionaries at last coming under the jurisdiction of the synod in which they worked on an equal footing with their African colleagues.<sup>31</sup>

The transition from mission to church was accompanied by a growth in popular pressure from below. Malawians educated in Scottish Presbyterian schools had a long tradition of anticolonial political involvement, derived in part from skills of organisation and leadership learned through church service but also arising from the message of Christian equality and fraternity preached by missionaries although not always carried into practice. The biblically inspired idea of racial oppression as a “great burden of evil” influenced not only John Chilembwe and his followers in 1915, but prominent clergyman politicians such as Yesaya Zerenje Mwase and Charles Chinula in the 1930s and 40s.<sup>32</sup> Once Chinula withdrew from frontline politics, few Malawian clergymen continued to play leading roles in the nationalist movement. But many of

29 ‘Communism, 1959–1961’ NLS Acc. 7548/C139.

30 Clerk, Church of Scotland, Blantyre, 17 April 1959, enclosing minute of Zomba Kirk Session, 21 Feb 1952, NLS Acc. 7548/337B.

31 Bill Jackson, *Send Us Friends* (privately printed, 1997), pp. 172–173; Dougall to Joelson, 24 Dec 1958, NLS 7548/B337; Watt to Mzembe, 27 Oct 1959, NLS Acc 7548/A170.

32 McCracken, *Politics and Christianity*, pp. 267–94.

the young radicals who took their places were members of the CCAAP and had been educated in Scottish mission schools. It is hardly surprising that, as opposition to Federation grew, they looked to their Church for support and were bitterly disappointed when it was not forthcoming.

The unnerving experience of Fergus Macpherson (later to become principal at Livingstonia) at Lubwa Mission, Northern Rhodesia in January 1952 was repeated in variant forms at other mission stations. When he suggested, in a Sunday morning sermon of January 1952, that equal weight should be given to pro-federation and anti-federation arguments, Macpherson was subjected to the fiery remonstrations of the young Kenneth Kaunda and the mass walkout of his congregation.<sup>33</sup> At Livingstonia, in the same year, the moderator of the synod was the recipient of a blistering letter from Daniel Mkandawire, the brother of the institution's accountant, which claimed:

Federation is becoming a live issue for the people whom you came to save from slavery and you as Missionaries have *done nothing* to oppose the Government on this question but you secretly encourage settlers to react unfavourably upon people whom you came to protect.<sup>34</sup>

Passions subsided in the years immediately after the implementation of Federation but rose again from the mid-1950s, as a result of fears that the second (and last) prime minister of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, Roy Welensky, was hell-bent on creating an independent white-dominated state. This time Malawian churchmen entered the fray. On his visit to Nyasaland in 1957, Dr. James Dougall, the general secretary of the FMC, was handed a memorandum from the Blantyre Synod signed by Rev. Allan Thipa, the moderator, and F.S. Chintali, the junior clerk, complaining that

some missionaries have no spirit of Fellowship within them. Some show the evil influence of the ugly head of conservatism, anti-Africanism, all tempered by anti-Semitism and the unchristian Doctrine of apartheid.<sup>35</sup>

A year later, at a public meeting held at Blantyre addressed by the moderator of the Church of Scotland, George Macleod, the loudest applause was reserved for the question, "Were not the Missions the greatest enemy of the African

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33 Ipenberg, *All Good Men*, pp. 210–211.

34 Emphasis in the original. Daniel McEwan Mkandawire to the moderator, Nyasaland Synod, 24 June 1952, MNA Livingstonia Papers, Box 6.

35 Memorandum by CCAAP Synod (Blantyre) contained in Dr. Dougall's notes on his visit to Africa, 1957–1958, NLS Acc. 7548/C120.

today?" Macleod noted in his diary, "I answered pretty roundly, but was told later that missionaries present could not believe such a question would be asked, or could be."<sup>36</sup>

Increased pressures for the break-up of the Federation from within Malawi were accompanied by the gradual emergence within the Church in Scotland of new attitudes to economic and social injustice. During the 1930s the missionary establishment had tended to mirror the leadership of the Church of Scotland in its lack of a radical vision. In Scotland itself, however, the founding of the Iona Community in 1938 by the charismatic George Macleod, an upper-class Christian Socialist with an outstanding record in the Glasgow working-class parish of Govan, provided the impetus for a growing concern for social justice in a Christian setting.<sup>37</sup> At first, the focus was on the plight of the poor in Scotland but in the early 1950s an increasing number of the members and associates of the community began to turn their attention to southern Africa, where the growth of apartheid in South Africa and proposals for a Central African Federation were provoking alarm.

Given the Presbyterian Church's distinguished record in secondary and higher education in South Africa, it might have been expected that Scottish Presbyterians would focus their concerns on the decision of the Nationalist government to withdraw support from church schools and introduce segregated and inferior 'Bantu education'.<sup>38</sup> In practice, however, opposition to educational apartheid was left to inspirational Anglicans such as Bishop Ambrose Reeves and Trevor Huddleston—both of whom were heavily criticised for meddling in secular politics by the leading Scottish missionary in South Africa, Robert Shepherd. In a typically waspish comment, Shepherd wrote: "Our chief quarrel with such as Father Huddleston is that, on his own confession, his picture is one-sided, unfair to his own Church and other Churches and to thousands of individuals who are just as devoted as he, but who differ in their methods."<sup>39</sup> For Shepherd, the Nationalist government's takeover of Lovedale, one of the oldest and most influential centres of African education in South Africa, was a regrettable but ultimately inevitable act.

36 Diary of Rev. George Macleod on visit to Nyasaland, entry for 18 January 1958, NLS Acc. 9084/68.

37 Roland Ferguson, *George Macleod. Founder of the Iona Community* (Glasgow, 1990), esp. pp. 137–213.

38 A useful introduction to this policy can be found in the chapter by J. Hyslop in P. Bonner, P. Delius and D. Posel (eds), *Apartheid's Genesis, 1935–1962* (Johannesburg, 1993). For mission responses see Neil Overy, "'These Difficult Days': Mission Church Reactions to Bantu Education in South Africa 1949–1956", PhD, University of London, 2002.

39 Shepherd to Dougall, 27 June 1956, NLS Acc 7548/C120.

Not even the mass arrests and subsequent trial in 1956 of 156 nationalists (including Nelson Mandela) could stir the Presbyterian Church of South Africa into action. Churchmen of other denominations actively committed themselves to the Defence Fund organised in London by the Christian Action Group. On the advice of its South African missionaries, the Foreign Missions Committee of the Church of Scotland refused to become involved. John Watt, the Africa Secretary of the FMC explained:

We are advised to keep an open mind as to guilt or innocence. One of our senior missionaries at the very beginning indicated that a number of the accused were now getting what they had been asking for a long time and it was extraordinary that the Government had allowed them to go on for as long as they had.<sup>40</sup>

In the same year Scottish interest in South Africa was greatly stirred by the publication of Huddleston's bestseller, *Naught for Your Comfort*. However, Dougall doubted whether this would result in the recruitment of further missionary agents given the conservative character of the South African Presbyterian Church:

We would very much like to send you some people, but we find it difficult to convince the best of potential recruits that they will find a worthy field of service in South Africa.<sup>41</sup>

South Africa's loss proved to be Nyasaland's gain. Attempts to mobilise support in Scotland against Federation go back to 1952, when W.D. Cattenach, Secretary of the Edinburgh World Church Group, and the Northern Rhodesian missionary Kenneth Mackenzie (formerly of Blantyre) organised a number of protest meetings addressed by Hastings Kamuzu Banda and Julius Nyerere, among others. They suffered a setback in 1953, when conservative elements in the Church of Scotland, working in close alliance with the London Committee of the United Central African Federation (a front organisation masterminded by Roy Welensky), were successful in persuading the General Assembly to drop its opposition to Federation.<sup>42</sup> Over the next couple of years, however, Mackenzie

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<sup>40</sup> Watt to W Grant Anderson, 18 Sep 1958, NLS Acc. 7548/A169

<sup>41</sup> Dougall to Arnott, 18 May 1956, NLS Acc. 7548/C120.

<sup>42</sup> See Gavin A Ross, "European Support for and Opposition to Closer Union of the Rhodesias and Nyasaland with Special Reference to the Period 1945–1953," (Edinburgh University, M. Litt thesis, 1986), pp. 319–339.

and his allies continued to keep the Federation issue alive in Scotland against the express wishes of Watt and other members of the FMC. And by 1956, the year in which Mackenzie returned from Northern Rhodesia to take up a post at St Colm's College, they were beginning to see some return for their efforts.

Assisted by Mackenzie's detailed knowledge and firsthand experience of Central Africa, the Scottish Council for African Questions, founded in 1952, emerged as a trusted source of information on African affairs, with links to the Labour Party and to anti-apartheid pressure groups like Christian Action in England. Meanwhile, with the election of George Macleod as Moderator of the Church for 1957 to 1958, pressure for reform intensified. Macleod took the opportunity to visit Nyasaland, where he was deeply moved by what he saw as the failure of the Church to engage effectively with disillusioned young Malawian intellectuals such as the immensely impressive David Rubadiri, Malawi's first novelist of distinction.<sup>43</sup> Macleod's response, on his return to Scotland, was to persuade the Church to transfer responsibility for advising the General Assembly on Central African matters from the conservative Church and Nations Committee to a small body, the Committee anent Central Africa, chaired by Macleod and with Mackenzie as secretary. Over the next two years, this committee became the driving force for political change.<sup>44</sup>

Changes in the Church were mirrored by changes in the mission. In 1953 the Foreign Missions Committee made the long-overdue decision to force the retirement of a number of older missionaries at Blantyre, providing "an opportunity to make a new start with a largely new staff."<sup>45</sup> Watt was later to confide: "Personal relationships were so bad that [we felt] it would be better to let the old gang go and put in the best young men that we could find."<sup>46</sup>

Recruitment of new staff was an ever-present problem, as exemplified by the failure of the FMC to fill the vacant post of principal at Livingstonia between 1951 and 1956. But with Kenneth Mackenzie and George Macleod now actively encouraging like-minded Christians to turn their attention to Nyasaland, able young candidates came forward, including Tom Colvin and Richard Baxter, both members of the Iona Community. Colvin was youth secretary of the community, so his appointment, to Blantyre in 1954 was of particular importance in injecting a radical new element into missionary discourse. A committed

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43 Diary of Rev George Macleod, 18 Jan 1958, NLS Acc 9084/68. In an eventful career Rubadiri first became Malawi's ambassador to the United Nations, and then after many years in exile, vice-chancellor of the University of Malawi.

44 Macleod to Colvin, 16 July 1958, NLS Acc. 9084/68.

45 Watt to Colvin, 8 Dec 1953, NLS Acc 7548/337B.

46 Watt to Bernard, 24 Feb 1954, NLS Acc. 7548/337B.

Socialist and one-time vice president of the Communist-leaning World Federation of Democratic Youth, Colvin played an active part in the discussions resulting in the transfer of responsibility from the mission to the presbytery, while also encouraging the Church to take a more assertive political stance.<sup>47</sup> Over the next four years, he and Baxter were joined in Nyasaland by several others who supported the work and aims of the Iona Community, including Albert McAdam, the new master of works, Andrew Ross, a bright young working-class socialist who had spent a year working with the civil rights movement in Harlem, and Lindsay Robertson, a public-school-educated admirer of Guy Clutton-Brock's interracial farm community in Southern Rhodesia. They, in turn, established links with like-minded missionaries—among them Hamish and Anne Hepburn and Fergus Macpherson, the new Principal at Livingstonia. They also gained the cooperation of important members of the younger generation of nationalist leaders, including John Msonthi, David and Gertrude Rubadiri, and Willie Chokani, the headmaster of the Blantyre school.

All this and more went a considerable way in overcoming the social barriers that had previously divided most European missionaries from their Malawian colleagues. In 1957 Rev. Thipa and Rev. Chintali were scathing in their criticism of the “conservative and anti-African” attitudes of some Scottish missionaries but they emphasised that there were others:

for example, Rev. T.S. Colvin, more than any other people before...[who had] laboured hard day and night, brushed their shoulders with the African people, all meant to re-establish the confidence missionaries had been gradually losing.<sup>48</sup>

### Missionaries, Nationalists, and the State of Emergency

The growth of political agitation in Nyasaland, which dated from around the time of Dr. Banda's return to his homeland in July 1958, came as a major challenge to the Presbyterian Church. Congress was an exceptionally dynamic movement, drawing support across the country from both men and women and attracting to it idealists of all races. Yet it contained incipient authoritarian elements that made it increasingly intolerant of those Malawians who were not fully committed to the cause. Some missionaries and several brave

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47 Interview with Tom Colvin, Edinburgh, 14 Jan 1972; Nyasaland Political Intelligence Report, April 1956, MNA CO 1015/961.

48 Memo by CCAP Synod (Blantyre) to Dougall, NLS Acc. 7548/C120.

Malawian ministers (notably the Moderator of the Livingstonia Synod, Stephen Kauta Msisika) continued to distance themselves from politics, despite the threats and abuse to which they were subjected. However, the great majority of members of the CCAP were swept up in the anti-federation and pro-independence campaign, as were a limited number of missionaries.

Evidence of the new attitude appeared in March 1958, when the Livingstonia Synod of the CCAP issued a statement asserting that “in the minds of Nyasaland Africans Federation is equated with political subservience, and from it they seek early release.”<sup>49</sup> It was at Blantyre in May, however, that Presbyterian clergy indicated most clearly that they intended to enter the political fray. In an uncompromising statement, signed by the Moderator, Rev. Alan Thipa, but drafted by a committee chaired by Colvin, the Blantyre Synod declared itself “unanimously opposed to Federation.” It accused the British government of having betrayed Nyasaland, and asserted that “Federation...has produced a deep and widespread feeling of unrest which is like a poison among the people destroying race relations and leaving bitterness and hate.” The statement went on to criticise “the widespread employment of police informers directed against essentially law-abiding people” and deplored what it saw as the growth of racism and the erosion of human rights. It also rejected the guarded suspicion of nationalism prevalent in missionary circles in the 1950s, and advocated a more sympathetic response. In a striking passage the Synod declared:

There is a new spirit abroad which, if harnessed could become a mighty force for good and progress. Too often this is described as “black nationalism” and is looked upon as something to be feared and, if possible, destroyed.

In the final section, the Synod appealed “to the people of Scotland through the Church of Scotland to remember their various links with the people of this land and consider their political responsibilities towards us as exercised by the United Kingdom Government.”<sup>50</sup>

Writing to George Macleod, Colvin stressed, “If you think this statement is extreme realize that as Convenor of the Committee, I have had a hard battle to make it as moderate as it is.”<sup>51</sup> But that was not the view of Nyasaland settlers and officials. In the opening shots of what was soon to emerge as an undeclared war, the *Nyasaland Times* published a full-page article, described by

49 Livingstonia Synod statement, 28 March 1958, NLS acc. 7548/B304.

50 *Statement of the Synod of Blantyre of the C.A.P.P. concerning the present state of unrest in Nyasaland*, EUL Kenneth Mackenzie Papers, Box 1.

51 Colvin to George Macleod, no date [1958] NLS Acc. 9084/68.



Colvin as ‘pretty vicious and pompous stuff’, written by three European members of the Legislative Council, which took issue with the Synod statement line by line. At the same time the editor of the local African newspaper, *Bwalo*, was warned off publishing the statement on the grounds that the Government regarded it as seditious. In a letter to the editor of the Church of Scotland periodical, *Life and Work*, Colvin confessed: “we have earned a good deal of attack locally—some very bitter stuff too.” But he defended his actions on the grounds that the publication of the statement had acted as

a welcome relief of the tension that was growing up on the African side between the Church and Politicians. The statement was by no means strong enough for the Congress’s liking, but it has re-established relationships.<sup>52</sup>

The deteriorating relations between the CCAP and the Nyasaland Government can be traced through the increasingly testy political intelligence reports produced by the Special Branch of the Nyasaland Police. From April 1958 onwards hardly a month went by when the reports did not comment on “the irresponsible attitude” of the CCAP toward Federation or its readiness to support “political programmes in the name of religion.” Malawian and Scottish churchmen alike were accused of giving “encouragement to Africans to oppose Federation by unconstitutional means” and of permitting “political hatred” to be inculcated “in the minds of schoolchildren.” Livingstonia’s schools were said to be “positive breeding grounds for Congress leaders of the future.”<sup>53</sup> It was alleged that Dr. Banda, a personal friend of Fergus Macpherson, had been invited to preach political sermons in its churches. In a remarkable little episode—striking in its demonstration of the extent to which colonial rituals of loyalty had been undermined—Girl Guides at Livingstonia wearing Congress badges were said to have greeted the Governor-General of the Federation with shouts of “Kwacha” and “Get Out,” to the suppressed pleasure of the Principal.<sup>54</sup>

Meanwhile, at Blantyre anti-Federation songs were sung at a concert in the secondary school; African teachers—allegedly, in accordance with instructions from Colvin—refused to give Chinyanja lessons to Europeans.<sup>55</sup>

52 Colvin to J. W. Stevenson, editor, *Life and Work*, 30 July 1958, NLS Acc. 9084/68.

53 Nyasaland Intelligence Reports for April, May, August 1958, PRO CO 1015/1748.

54 Intelligence Report for August 1958, PRO CO 1015/1749. Macpherson has disputed the details of this incident while accepting that he shared the strong anti-Federation views of his pupils. See Ferguson, *North of the Zambezi*, pp. 203–205.

55 Intelligence report for September 1958, PRO CO 1015/1749.



In February 1959 police and pupils clashed in a highly publicised incident near Blantyre Church, resulting in claims of police brutality. (The Devlin Commission subsequently suggested that the students gave as good as they got.)<sup>56</sup> As tension mounted Flax Katoba Musopole, one of Malawi's very few genuinely radical politicians, led militant nationalists in the north in vandalizing mission property at Livingstonia, Ekwendeni and Loudon. At least two Livingstonia teachers were beaten. The house of another teacher, George Phiri, was stoned.<sup>57</sup>

The climax came in March 1959, with the declaration of the state of emergency and the mass arrest of detainees, including one minister, Henry Makwakwa, a former chaplain with the Kings African Rifles, and many members of the CCAp.<sup>58</sup> Faced by the outbreak of disturbances, quickly suppressed over most of Nyasaland but lasting several weeks in the north, where government authority virtually collapsed, missionaries and ministers alike struggled to find an appropriate response.

One missionary, Phil Petty, fled from his station at Loudon, but others remained—including, at Mulanje, Hamish and Anne Hepburn, who refused an offer of protection from the police.<sup>59</sup> On 4 March rumours that an armed mob was approaching the station at Livingstonia led the missionaries to take refuge in the Stone House, built for Dr. Laws. A proposal to evacuate European women and children was discussed next day but was dropped, following a plea from the minister, Stephen Kauta, that the Christian fellowship they shared should not be broken. When a military plane dropped a message giving instructions for European evacuation, Mackenzie and the other missionaries referred the pilot, though an arrangement of white stones, to Ephesians 2, verse 14, spelling out the message that they were “united here in Christ, black and white,” and were not prepared to “abandon the local community.”<sup>60</sup>

With the nationalist voice temporarily silenced during the incarceration in Gwelo Gaol of Banda and his principal lieutenants, it was the CCAp and its supporters in Scotland who took the lead in articulating opposition views. Armitage's strategy was heavily dependent on his ability to discredit Congress

56 *Report of the Nyasaland Commission of Inquiry*, p. 67.

57 *Ibid.*, pp. 58–60. T. Jack Thompson, ‘Breaking Down the Barriers: Unity and Tension at Livingstonia in 1959’, paper delivered at the conference on the Nyasaland State of Emergency, Zomba, 2009. For Musopole see John McCracken, “The Ambiguities of Nationalism: Flax Musopole and the Northern Factor in Malawian Politics, c. 1956–1966,” *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 28, 1 2002, pp. 67–87.

58 For Makwakwa see *Report of the Nyasaland Commission of Inquiry*, p. 98.

59 Watt to Greaves, 10 March 1959, NLS Acc. 7548/A170.

60 “Record of Events at Livingstonia from the Declaration of a State of Emergency in Nyasaland on Tuesday 3 March 1959,” MNA Livingstonia Papers, Box 1.

by painting Banda and his colleagues not as legitimate politicians but rather as men of violence embroiled in a murder plot. It was this theory that Lennox-Boyd had seized upon in justifying the arrests to Parliament. Therefore, the emergence of an alternative, well informed voice using firsthand evidence and able to mobilise national opinion in Scotland came as a peculiarly painful blow to the authorities, both in Nyasaland and Britain. Eyewitness accounts by missionaries complaining of brutality perpetrated by the police and military were printed in British newspapers and made use of in the House of Commons by opposition spokesmen.<sup>61</sup> Allegations of a murder plot were dismissed as “a fabrication by paid informers.”<sup>62</sup> In a circular letter sent to all presbyteries in Scotland, the Home Secretary of the Foreign Missions Committee asserted his belief in the basic morality of Congress, “amongst whose members,” he noted, “must be a large section of good Christian folk.”<sup>63</sup>

Andrew Doig, one-time nominated member of the Federal Parliament, reached a similar conclusion. In his submission to the Devlin Commission, set up by the British government late in March to inquire into the Nyasaland disturbances, he stated, “I just cannot conceive such things possible of the many among the detainees I know. My personal knowledge of Dr. Banda cannot fit him into the murder plot either.”<sup>64</sup>

One of several clergyman anxious to retain the good will of settlers and colonial officials, Doig was critical of hot-headed agents like Albert McAdam who risked undermining the special position of the Church of Scotland in Nyasaland though their open commitment to the nationalist cause. “Some of us will heave a sigh of relief when Albert returns north,” he wrote.

We are being steadily ignored in any appointments to public bodies and committees. The Romans are now put on such things where we would have always had our place in the past.<sup>65</sup>

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61 Letter by Albert McAdam in *Manchester Guardian*, 4 March 1959; Mary Benson writing to ‘Andrew’ [Doig], 4 March 1959, Kenneth Mackenzie Papers; letters by Andrew McAdam and Andrew Ross to *The Scotsman*, 10 March 1959, newspaper cuttings, Kenneth Mackenzie Papers, Box 1.

62 Tom Colvin, “Notes on the Present Position in Nyasaland and Causes of Disturbances,” [no date], EUL Kenneth Mackenzie Papers, Box 19.

63 Rev J. N. Hamilton to Convenors of all Presbyteries, 7 March 1959, EUL Kenneth Mackenzie Papers, Box 1.

64 Memo by Andrew Doig to the Devlin Commission, enclosed in Doig to Dougall, 7 May 1959, NLS Acc. 7548/B347.

65 Doig to Dougall, 7 May 1959, NLS Acc. 7548/B347.

While Doig and Neil Bernard, the FMC representative in central Africa, worked to restore relations with the colonial authorities, their younger colleagues looked to open the gap still wider. Andrew Ross informed George Macleod that he was convinced of the need for missionaries to speak out on behalf of their African friends, “even though it meant breaking the emergency regulations.”

It seems pretty important that we do get going, because the people are quiet but full of anger. If something is not done for them they will come again and then maybe it will be *Nkhondo* [war] with all whites the enemies.<sup>66</sup>

Ross added that if the nationalists did turn to violence he would not blame them.<sup>67</sup>

McAdam, a regular correspondent for *The Manchester Guardian*, was no less forthcoming:

Federation is finished. If the FMC want to give the CCAP a tonic they will have to make a bold demonstration. If no voice is heard the CCAP will suffer a great set back.<sup>68</sup>

Criticisms from the Church were matched by counter-allegations from the colonial authorities. On 20 March the Governor's Security Committee was informed that

the headmasters of a number of Church of Scotland schools in the Rumpi area had...led their children out on such tasks as destroying bridges and forming road blocks.<sup>69</sup>

This simply confirmed the Committee's view that the Livingstonia Mission was “an ‘abscess’ in the Henga valley” and that “there was no reason why Mission property should not be searched or people removed from it.”<sup>70</sup>

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66 Ross to Macleod, 5 July 1959, NLS Acc. 7548/337B.

67 Ross to Macleod, *ibid*.

68 McAdam to Dougall, March 1959, NLS Acc. 7548/B346.

69 “Vespers,” 20 March 1959, [minutes of Security Committee], RHL [Rhodes House Library, Oxford], Devlin Commission Papers, Box 5.

70 “Vespers,” 20 March 1959, RHL, Devlin Commission Papers, Box 5.

Scottish agents were not immune to the criticism. "The activities of certain members of the Livingstonia Mission must be carefully watched, and if necessary, controlled," a senior official reported in April 1959.

Their approach, although understandable in the light of their convictions, may amount to subversion if their views, which appear uncompromisingly rigid, are disseminated to an illiterate and highly susceptible African population at this time.<sup>71</sup>

Of particular concern was the favourable coverage given to the missionaries' complaints by a section of the press in Britain. Unused to criticisms of this type, the Nyasaland government responded by embarking on a clumsily conceived propaganda exercise aimed at undermining the reputation of the Church in the eyes of opinion makers in Britain. Officials in the Secretariat were set to work composing a booklet, innocuously entitled *The Church of Central African Presbyterian* and labelled, "confidential—not to be published."<sup>72</sup> Leaked to both selected journalists and representatives of the pro-Federation pressure group, The Rhodesia and Nyasaland Committee, the booklet contrasted the early achievements of the Scottish Mission with its present-day weakness.<sup>73</sup>

Control of the Church, it claimed, had fallen into the hands of men of "extreme left-wing political views." One of those (clearly, Colvin) was identified, wrongly, as being a Communist. Over the next few months, articles criticising the Church, taken almost word for word from this document, began to surface in the international press. One was published in the *Central African Examiner* in April; two others appeared as special supplements of the *Economist* in June.<sup>74</sup>

Government-inspired spin did little, however, to detract from the growing unease felt in Scotland concerning the direction of the Government's central African policies. Attendance at protest meetings organised by the Scottish Council rose from an average of forty before the Emergency was declared to

71 "Appreciation of the Internal Security Position in the Northern Province as at 9 April 1959," RHL, Devlin Commission Papers, Box 8.

72 A copy of the booklet, dated 26 March 1959, exists in RHL, Devlin Commission Papers, Box 5.

73 For further information on this pressure group, which was originally founded at the instigation of Roy Welensky, see Stuart, "Scottish Missionaries and the End of Empire," p. 421.

74 Minutes of fourteenth meeting of Committee anent Central Africa; Kenneth Mackenzie to members of the Central Africa Committee, 23 Nov 1959, NLS Acc 7548/B352.

more than a thousand afterwards. Remote rural presbyteries called on the Government to set up a commission of inquiry. In an unprecedented step, the Committee on Central Africa, made public, several weeks before the annual meeting of the General Assembly, a report highly critical of the government's actions.<sup>75</sup> In meeting after meeting Mackenzie and his allies justified Scottish intervention in Nyasaland's affairs by reference to the special contribution made by missionaries in the original creation of the Protectorate.<sup>76</sup> John Watt, the Africa Secretary noted:

Nearly all the Scottish papers, at least, are in favour of some radical revision of Federation, and quite a number are backing secession, With an election not very far distant the Government, I am sure, will realise that it will have to do something if it is not going to lose heavily in Scotland at least.<sup>77</sup>

As opposition intensified, the British and Federal Governments mounted a last-ditch attempt to swing moderate Scottish opinion in their favour, prior to the meeting of the General Assembly on 25 May at which the Committee on Central Africa's report was to be discussed. Today, with Church membership in free fall, resolutions passed by the General Assembly receive little or no attention from politicians or the press. In 1959, however, the Church of Scotland, with more than a million and a half members out of a total population of five million, was still a force to be recognised.

In an attempt "to prevent damaging resolutions emerging from the Assembly," Alan Lennox-Boyd, the Colonial Secretary and Lord Home, Secretary of State for Commonwealth Affairs, met secretly with John Fraser, the outgoing Moderator, who promised to do what he could "to curb the wild men."<sup>78</sup> Home, a strong supporter of the Federation who was to succeed Macmillan as Prime Minister in 1963, visited Edinburgh to rally support from Conservative sympathisers. Brigadier Bernard Fergusson, a distinguished former soldier

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75 A detailed account of this campaign is contained in the contemporary newspaper cuttings preserved in the Kenneth Mackenzie Papers, Box 1.

76 See Kenneth Mackenzie, "Our Brethren in Revolt: some notes on Nyasaland and Scotland," Kenneth Mackenzie Papers, Box 19.

77 Watt to "Friends," 13 March 1959, NLS Acc 7548/A170. In fact, there was something of a division between *The Scotsman*, which was strongly supportive of the campaign mounted by Macleod and Mackenzie, and *The Glasgow Herald*, which was much more sympathetic to the government.

78 Lennox-Boyd to Armitage, 12 May 1959, PRO CO 1015/1839.

(soon to be appointed Governor-General of New Zealand), volunteered to lead the opposition to Macleod in the General Assembly. Officials in the Colonial Office offered advice, as did members of the Rhodesia and Nyasaland Committee. What was required, Henry Grenfell, a committee member suggested, was to

put the Macleod faction on the defensive and to startle the older and more conservative members of the General Assembly so that they refused to be rushed into uncritical support of the attitude put forward by Macleod's Committee.<sup>79</sup>

This, the pro-federalists believed, could be achieved through the publication of two documents that were deeply critical of the Church of Scotland's stand in Nyasaland. One, entitled *Why Not be Fair?*, was a detailed refutation of the MacLeod report, written by Sir Gilbert Rennie, the Federal High Commissioner in London, and vetted by the Colonial Office. The other, *The Kirk's New Face in Africa*, a highly personal attack on the new generation of Scottish missionaries, was composed by members of the Rhodesia and Nyasaland Committee and was based on the Nyasaland Government's virulently anti-mission pamphlet. With the compliance of senior Church officials, both documents were placed in the pigeonholes of all delegates to the Assembly.<sup>80</sup>

The triumph of the opponents of Federation in the General Assembly debate marks a high point in Scottish Church involvement in Nyasaland's affairs. As John Stuart has noted, many delegates appear to have been repelled by the strong anti-mission tone of the document circulated by the Rhodesia and Nyasaland Committee and were in a mood to respond positively to Macleod's oratory.<sup>81</sup>

Macleod did not disappoint them. In one of his most effective speeches, he hammered home the message: "For the time being someone must speak for the Africans and that someone will be the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland." Fergusson's arguments were swept aside. When the vote was taken, all but fifty of the fifteen hundred delegates packed into the hall supported Macleod's resolution calling for "a daring and creative transfer of power" to the African people of Nyasaland. Tom Colvin's call for the

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79 Quoted in Stuart, "Scottish Missionaries," p. 424.

80 For an account of this process, see Watt to "Dear Friends," 26 May 1959, NLS Acc 7549/A170.

81 Stuart, "Scottish Missionaries," p. 425; Watt to "Dear Friends," 26 May 1959, NLS Acc 7548/A170.

detainees to be brought to trial or released immediately was passed with even less dissent.<sup>82</sup>

Press coverage of the speech, the next day, was extensive and almost entirely favourable. "My heart rang out when I read of Dr. MacLeod's success in the Assembly this week," declared Jo Grimond, the Liberal leader. "For millions of people, the Church of Scotland has spoken with the true voice of Christianity."<sup>83</sup> Writing in his diary on the eve of the debate, Prime Minister Harold Macmillan took an understandably more jaundiced view. "The Scottish Kirk Assembly," he noted, "has some dangerous and subtle agitators."<sup>84</sup>

### The End of the Affair

In the weeks of euphoria following the Assembly debate, it would have been easy to believe that the campaign pursued by George Macleod, Mackenzie, and their missionary supporters had resulted in an unproblematic victory for the interventionist tradition in the Church. The events of the next few months, starting with the publication of the Devlin Report, with its detailed repudiation of the 'murder plot', appeared to confirm the effectiveness of the Church's new stance. It was followed by the appointment in October of a new more flexible Colonial Secretary, Iain Macleod, one of whose first actions was to summon Fergus Macpherson for friendly talks in London, by the release of Dr. Banda on 1 April 1960, and by the opening of constitutional talks. Certainly, the comfortable victory of the Conservative Party in the October 1959 elections demonstrated the negligible impact of the Nyasaland crisis on domestic politics in Britain. Nevertheless, as John Hargreaves has noted, the central African issue probably played a part in the Conservatives' loss of four seats in Scotland.<sup>85</sup>

Short-term triumphs, however, masked long-term weaknesses. In the aftermath of the May triumph, the swing of the pendulum within the Church of

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82 Detailed accounts of the debate are contained in *The Scotsman*, 26 May 1959, which devotes nearly three pages to it, including nearly all of p. 1, and *The Times*, 26 May 1959, where it is reported over six columns. The full text of George MacLeod's speech can be found in the Kenneth Mackenzie Papers, Box 19.

83 Quoted in *The Manchester Guardian*, 30 May 1959.

84 Quoted in Harold Macmillan, *Pointing the Way* (London, 1972), p. 136.

85 John D. Hargreaves, *Decolonization in Africa* (London, 1996, second edition), p. 201. It is worth noting that the Conservatives were still a strong political force in Scotland throughout the 1950s and early 1960s, with around 46 per cent of the popular vote. See T.M. Devine, *The Scottish Nation, 1700–2000* (London, 1999), p. 569.



Scotland towards radical involvement in African politics was followed by a swing back to non-intervention. In a campaign that would have wrung admiration from the most Machiavellian of secular politicians, conservative churchmen manipulated the conciliar structure of the Church to isolate their more radical opponents.

A key figure was the South African-based missionary, Dr. Robert Shepherd, the elected Moderator of the Church for 1959–1960. A man of considerable intellectual qualities, Shepherd was a passionate paternalist, opposed to “giving Africans the vote except in very limited numbers” and highly critical of ‘political’ priests like Bishop Reeves who publicly rejected the policies of the ruling National Party.<sup>86</sup> Confronted in George MacLeod by someone who represented everything he disliked, Shepherd went on to the offensive in fiercely critical articles in *The Glasgow Herald* and on the floor of the General Assembly. There Shepherd stated: “I do not believe members of the Assembly are competent to tell Government on what political methods Central Africa should be run.” He contemptuously dismissed the “unpedigreed, mongrel mixture of belligerency and pacifism” contained in Macleod’s speeches and ended by criticising the Central African Committee’s reports as being one-sided, unbalanced and “too full of invective” and “propaganda.”<sup>87</sup>

With the Duke of Hamilton, Scotland’s premier peer, now adding his support to these criticisms, opposition to the pro-nationalist cause swiftly grew. In October 1959, Macleod succeeded, though with a much-reduced majority, in persuading the Assembly to support a resolution calling on the government to lift the emergency regulations and release Dr. Banda.<sup>88</sup> But when the Duke, Shepherd and Brigadier Fergusson returned to the attack in May 1960, Macleod’s report was narrowly rejected.<sup>89</sup>

The conservatives’ next target was the Central Africa Committee, widely regarded (with some justification) as Macleod’s and Mackenzie’s private weapon. After intense lobbying, the committee was doubled in size and packed with Macleod’s opponents, thus bringing its effectiveness to an end. Frustrated at every turn, Macleod resigned as Convener in 1961 following a barrage of criticism orchestrated by Dr. Melville Dinwiddie, former BBC Controller in

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86 John Summers to Dougall, 10 April 1957, NLS Acc 7548/C120. Summers wrote of Shepherd, “Unless his manner deceives me I would not say that he really likes being with Africans or coloureds in close personal contact though he is very good chairing meetings and so on (when he does not get roused).”

87 Cutting from *The Scotsman*, 22 May 1960, EUL Kenneth Mackenzie Papers, Box 1.

88 Cutting from *The Glasgow Herald*, 23 October, 1959, Kenneth Mackenzie Papers Box 1.

89 *The Scotsman*, 22 May 1960.



Scotland.<sup>90</sup> From then on, the Committee continued to produce reports, but only those of an entirely uncontroversial nature. The new Convenor, Robert Mackie, commented:

The preparation of the Main Report for the Assembly of 1962 has revealed confusion and uneasiness as to the specific contribution, which the Church can make and should make, on a public question such as the future of Central Africa.<sup>91</sup>

In a coded call for non-intervention, the members agreed to a proposal from the Duchess of Hamilton that the Committee should “indicate more fully how its Report is based on Biblical and theological understanding.”<sup>92</sup>

In Malawi the experiences of members of the Presbyterian Church were equally traumatic. For a few short years after 1959, their ideal of the Church working in close harmony with the soon-to-be created Malawian state appeared eminently achievable. As a self-designated “good Presbyterian,” Dr. Banda praised the missionary contribution on his visit to Scotland in April 1960 and expressed his determination to build a university at Livingstonia in honour of Dr. Laws.<sup>93</sup> Albert McAdam, whom Banda had entrusted with his personal papers on the eve of his arrest on 2 March, was one of the first people to meet him when he was released from prison.<sup>94</sup> McAdam and Andrew Ross both joined the newly formed Malawi Congress Party, as did Colin Cameron, a Blantyre-based lawyer and an active member of the Church. Some missionaries—among them Bill Jackson, a Northern Irish Protestant well versed in the potential dangers of mixing religion and politics—were concerned by the intimidation employed by MCP militants against Malawians who did not share their views.<sup>95</sup> Others, by contrast, impressed by the diligence and good will of leaders like the brothers Dunduzu and Yatuta Chisiza, committed themselves openly to the nationalist cause. Ross defied the disapproval of the FMC to stand, unsuccessfully, as an independent Upper Roll candidate

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90 Cuttings from *The Scotsman* and *The Glasgow Herald*, 26 May 1961, EUL Kenneth Mackenzie Papers, Box 2; Minutes of the Twenty-ninth Meeting of the Committee anent Central Africa, 19 April 1961; Macleod to Robert Mackie, 15 May 1961, NLS Acc. 7548/B353.

91 Report from Robert Mackie, 13 Sep 1962, NLS Acc. 7548/B354.

92 Report on the meeting of the Committee anent Central Africa, 13 Sep 1962, Ibid.

93 *The Glasgow Herald*, 28 April 1960.

94 McAdam to Macleod, 5 April 1960, NLS Acc 9084/68.

95 Jackson, *Send Us Friends*, pp. 147–152; 164–166.

supported by the MCP in the 1961 elections.<sup>96</sup> Cameron was elected. Shortly afterwards he became a member of Dr. Banda's first cabinet.

The cabinet crisis of August 1964 brought what had always been a fragile alliance to an end. On 29 July, less than a month after Malawi became independent, Colin Cameron resigned in protest against Banda's reintroduction of preventive detention. During the next month disagreements erupted between Banda and his remaining cabinet colleagues, resulting in the resignation or dismissal of six senior ministers, the temporary collapse of government authority in Zomba, and the emergence of Henry Masauko Chipembere as an unlikely Che Guevara-type guerrilla committed to overthrowing Banda by force.<sup>97</sup>

In the previous three years, mission agents like McAdam had become increasingly estranged from Dr. Banda, and now the division was made complete. As personal friends and political allies of several of these ministers—Chipembere and Yatuta Chisiza among them—the most politically engaged Scottish missionaries became targets of officially sanctioned abuse. Members of the Malawi Youth League surrounded McAdam's Blantyre house and chanted threats at him and his family.<sup>98</sup> Hamish and Anne Hepburn, on leave in Scotland prior to Hamish taking up the position of first Principal at the new lay training centre at Malosa, were warned against returning to Malawi.

In a speech in the Malawi Parliament, Banda made it clear that missionaries would no longer be entitled to criticise government actions:

I didn't interfere when I was in other countries—I abided by the law. So nobody must come here under the guise of exercising his freedom, siding with rebels, peoples who are traitors to the cause of this country. Chipembere is a traitor, Chiume is a traitor, Chirwa is a traitor, Chisiza is a traitor. Therefore anyone under the guise of being a missionary who supports these people has no right to be living in this country. Whatever Church, that Church must withdraw him from this country and send him back. And if the Churches do not send these people back then I will have to sign an order declaring them prohibited immigrants, because I must have peace of mind and I cannot have peace of mind if some missionaries interfere in our internal politics.

96 Interview with Ross, Edinburgh, 17 Jan 1992.

97 The most detailed account is provided by Colin Baker, *The Revolt of the Ministers* (London, 2001), but see also the pioneering analysis by Andrew Ross, "Some Reflections on the Malawi Cabinet Crisis, 1964–1965," *Religion in Malawi*, 7 (1997), pp. 3–12.

98 Baker, *Revolt of the Ministers*, p. 203.

He concluded to prolonged applause from his fellow parliamentarians: "Let missionaries stick to their preaching...and leave my politics alone."<sup>99</sup>

In an act of considerable courage, Jonathan Sangaya, the newly appointed General Secretary of the Synod, took the lead in arranging for McAdam and his family to leave the country. "Mr and Mrs McAdam and family are in a serious position with Malawians," he wrote. "I do not think the protection which is rendered by Police is safe enough where they move about in their daily life."<sup>100</sup>

Andrew Ross's fate took longer to unroll. A respected ally of Banda (who admired his remarkable fluency in Chinyanja, Malawi's national language), Ross was successful for a time in maintaining secret contacts with Chipembere while continuing in his official posts as Chairman of the Lands Tribunal and Vice-Chairman of the Tenders Board. In May 1965, however, he was warned by European Special Branch Officers that he was about to be arrested, and fled back to Britain with his family.<sup>101</sup>

There, in a final twist, he discovered that arrangements for the exiles' return were being made by Neil Bernard, the FMC representative in Central Africa for over a decade who had recently taken over from John Watt as Africa Secretary of the Church's newly-formed Overseas Committee. During his time in Blantyre, Bernard had worked unceasingly to keep the lines of communication open between the Church and the Colonial Government. In consequence he had tended to be unsympathetic to those like Ross who were more openly supportive of nationalist ambitions. Unlike the great majority of missionaries, Bernard had been privately opposed to the Central Africa Committee's recommendations that power should be transferred to Africans in Nyasaland and the detainees released.<sup>102</sup> He had also been disappointed by the Devlin Report, which he considered "not completely accurate in all respects."<sup>103</sup> It was with some relish that he told Phil Petty in November 1964: "For people who swallow[ed] without any criticism the statements made by Albert McAdam about Dr. Banda it is almost impossible to believe that he may well be deported within the next few days."<sup>104</sup>

Now, with the links between missionaries and nationalists strained, Bernard and other senior officials reverted to the classic Church posture of giving

99 Speech by Dr. Banda, *Proceedings of Malawi Parliament, Third Meeting, First Session, 28 Oct 1964* (Zomba, 1965), p. 253.

100 Bernard to Dougall, 4 Nov 1964, enclosing letter from Sangaya, NLS Acc 7548/A181.

101 Interview with Andrew Ross, 17 January 1992, Edinburgh.

102 Bernard to Dougall, 12 June 1959, NLS Acc 7548/B347.

103 Bernard to Dougall, 31 July 1959, NLS Acc 7548/B347.

104 Bernard to Petty, 3 Nov 1964, NLS Acc 7548/A181.

priority to its pastoral role while seeking to re-establish relations with the Malawian state along strictly non-political lines. Upon hearing of McAdam's departure, Bernard's first reaction was to cable Sangaya with the request, "Ensure no contacts on homeward journey."<sup>105</sup> To the greatest extent possible, former radical missionaries were to be silenced; in the future, they would be largely excluded from involvement in the Overseas Committee of the Church.<sup>106</sup> The dominant attitude, expressed by a leading member of the committee, was "to do and say nothing which would further embarrass or endanger the missionaries still there [Malawi], and their Christian brethren in the church."<sup>107</sup> Not until 1992 would the Church of Scotland, in association with the CCAP, seek to comment on social injustice in Malawi—and then only in response to the seven Malawian Roman Catholic bishops' pastoral letter criticizing the human rights record of the Banda government.

The last word should be left to Tom Colvin, the most influential (and by the colonial government, most feared) of all the Blantyre missionaries in the 1950s, yet also the one radical Scottish missionary who survived, untouched, well into the Banda era. After years of surveillance by the colonial authorities, the Federal Government declared Colvin a prohibited immigrant in 1959, shortly after his triumph at the General Assembly. Banned from Nyasaland, he was welcomed by the Presbyterian Church in Kwame Nkrumah's newly independent Ghana, though with the warning: "internal politics here are sometimes delicate. So it behoves missionaries to walk warily and quietly and be guided by the Church leaders as to public pronouncements." Some missionaries, he was informed,

are unhappy about things like the 'detentions'; but to press their views publicly just at the present moment would not do good in the long run, and would more likely bring the antagonism of certain political elements to the Church to a head.<sup>108</sup>

By the time of his return to Malawi in 1964, Colvin had concluded that the advice he had received was correct and that the role of missionaries in independent Africa should change. Turning aside from his earlier activism, he set to work as organizer of the Christian Service Committee, a body fostering rural

<sup>105</sup> Bernard to Dougall, 6 Nov 1964, NLS Acc 7548/A181.

<sup>106</sup> Interview with Ross, 17 Jan 1992; Anne Hepburn, Notes for 'Roots and Shoots Conference'.

<sup>107</sup> Rev Donald Mackay to Hamish Hepburn, 22 Jan 1965, Hepburn Papers, Edinburgh. I owe this reference to Anne Hepburn.

<sup>108</sup> David Elder to Watt from Accra, 9 Sep 1959, NLS Acc. 7548/B395.

self-help schemes at a village level, while consciously distancing himself from high-level political involvement.<sup>109</sup> His was a strategy shared with Malawian colleagues like Jonathan Sangaya, a man who combined rare wisdom and courage in leading the church with recognition of the need to avoid public confrontation with Dr. Banda and his government.

## Conclusion

What conclusions can be drawn from this account of the involvement of Church of Scotland missionaries in the decolonization of Nyasaland? One answer, given by John Stuart, is that the episode was essentially an exercise in ambiguity, a demonstration of the various strands of opinion that existed within the Church.<sup>110</sup> Caught up at a time of political fervor between the demands of militant nationalism and their concern for the maintenance of harmonious social and race relations, Scottish missionaries in 1959 divided into three main camps. A minority embraced nationalism in the belief that opposition to Federation was “a matter of principle touching the dignity of man.”<sup>111</sup> Others, most notably Archie Conn, an elected member of Blantyre’s Town Council, were strongly pro-Federation in their sympathies. The majority, while generally sympathetic to the nationalist cause, were apprehensive of anything approaching violence.

For a brief period, culminating in the meeting of the General Assembly in May 1959, the radicals and their supporters in Scotland were in the ascendancy. But by 1960 the withdrawal from political activism had begun, with greater emphasis being placed on the pastoral role of the Mission. Andrew Doig, who spent much of his career in legislative assemblies, was not alone in believing that it was this that ultimately mattered. Writing in 1961, he asserted: “We have earned a reputation for outspokenness on public issues, but we are open to serious criticism when it comes to getting on with our special services to body and soul.”<sup>112</sup>

To emphasise ambiguity, however, is to ignore tangible achievements, both personal and political. At a personal level the most remarkable feature of the period was the extent to which friendships forged between black and white Christians during the years of the emergency remained unbroken by the

109 Interview with Colvin, 14 Jan 1972.

110 Stuart, “Scottish Missionaries and the End of Empire.”

111 *Report of the Nyasaland Commission of Inquiry*, p. 23.

112 Doig to Miss B G Reid, 21 Sep 1961, NLS Acc 7548/B418.

political disturbances that followed. Activist missionaries whose lives had been disrupted by the cabinet crisis (though disrupted far less than were the lives of many thousands of Malawians) retained an active involvement with Malawi that reached fruition in the early 1990s, when several of them were able to return. The modern Scotland–Malawi Partnership has roots that go back beyond the intervention of Jack McConnell or the admirable initiatives of Strathclyde University to the alliances established around 1959.

Politically, the role of mission and church also was important. No one single factor can explain why in 1959 the Church of Scotland intervened so actively on the side of Malawian nationalists. One reason appears to be historical: the belief that Scotland had a special responsibility for the Nyasaland Protectorate as a result of the connection with Livingstone. Another reason concerns the terms in which the political debate was framed. For many Scots, outright support for African nationalism was still a controversial issue in the 1950s; opposition to the Federation was less contentious. Undoubtedly the considerable influence of the Iona Community among Scottish Nyasaland-based missionaries played a part. So too did the absence of large numbers of Scottish settlers in Nyasaland. One special, though controversial and ultimately embarrassing, factor was the close links forged by Dr. Hastings Banda with former missionaries during the years from 1938 to 1941 that he spent in Scotland.

Whatever the causes, the consequences of Scottish church involvement in the campaign against Federation are clear. The offensive mounted by Kenneth Mackenzie and his missionary allies in 1959 had little impact on British electoral politics or on the decision of the Conservative government to set up the Devlin Commission: the cabinet did, however, consider appointing a representative of the Church of Scotland to the commission before agreeing on Sir John Ure Primrose, a former Lord Provost of Perth.<sup>113</sup> Equally, the Nyasaland Government grossly exaggerated the extent to which Scottish missionaries were responsible for fomenting opposition to Federation (something that nationalists managed perfectly well for themselves), although Colvin, and to a lesser degree Macpherson, proved effective in articulating Malawian grievances and complaints.

The most significant feature, however—as Harold Macmillan was well aware—was the contribution made by the missionary campaign in shaping public and to some extent, political perceptions in Britain. In Kenya, during the early 1950s, British government propaganda largely succeeded in convincing the public that Jomo Kenyatta and his fellow-nationalists were members of

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113 Memo by Colonial Secretary, 16 Mar 1959, Cabinet Minutes, 23 March 1959, PRO CAB 128/33.

a barbaric, atavistic cult, rather than of a legitimate political movement. Thanks in no small part to the activities of the Church of Scotland, similar propaganda about nationalists in Nyasaland had little or no effect. The widespread view in Britain of Dr. Banda was of a somewhat eccentric yet essentially well-meaning figure, one who would have no truck with campaigns of violence. The result can be determined from a report on British public opinion made by the Deputy High Commissioner for the Federation in London during the height of the Emergency:

There is no appreciation of the reasons for keeping Nyasaland in the Federation and, as you know, self-determination is very popular in this country and is widely supported by Welshmen and Scotsmen who want self-government for their own countries. It is therefore true to say that the average man in the street again sees no reason whatever why, if Banda wants Nyasaland, he should not have it.<sup>114</sup>

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114 P.F. Barnett to 'Hugh', 1959, Zimbabwe National Archives F236 CX 27/3/1.



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## *Medicine and Mission*





# Missionaries, Agents of Empire, and Medical Educators

*Scottish Doctors in Late Nineteenth-Century Southern and East-Central Africa*

*Markku Hokkanen*

## The ‘Livingstone Effect’: Scottish Medicine, Missions, and African Empire

The Scottish explorer, physician, and missionary David Livingstone appealed to so many others of his kind in Africa in the nineteenth century: For them he was the epitome of a heroic and multifaceted African explorer. Livingstone was variously a missionary, explorer, doctor, scientist, hunter, and adventurer. He seemed to contribute effortlessly not only to geography, but also to ethnography, zoology, botany, and medicine in Africa. Those who read of his exploits and achievements thrilled at how he heroically faced daunting obstacles in the forms of illness, harsh climate, and encounters with wild beasts and potentially dangerous, exotic ‘natives’.

His ultimate sacrifice and martyrdom for his causes made him, as historians have noted, a somewhat paradoxical kind of Protestant saint. He held a broad appeal for Americans and Europeans (his works were soon translated into many languages, including the obscure Finnish) but the ‘Livingstone effect’ was felt particularly strongly in Scotland, and markedly within the Scottish medical profession.<sup>1</sup> This chapter explores the roles and activities of late

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1 On Livingstone, see, for example, Mackenzie, John M., “David Livingstone and the Worldly After-Life: Imperialism and Nationalism in Africa,” in *David Livingstone and the Victorian Encounter with Africa*. London, 1996. On Scottish medical missionaries in Africa, see Hokkanen, Markku, *Medicine and Scottish Missionaries in the Northern Malawi Region*,

nineteenth-century Scottish doctors in Africa by focusing on four physicians who, in one way or another, can be seen as Livingstone's followers: John Kirk, Robert Laws, Jane Waterston, and Neil Macvicar.

Livingstone was not the first influential Scottish doctor to arrive in Southern Africa. Mission expeditions and appointments were not the only route to Africa for those with medical and surgical training. Medical men employed by the British Army and Navy, the colonial administration, and other non-mission organizations, enterprises, and associations were also able to take on multiple roles as doctors, explorers, and scientists, including Mungo Park (1771–1806) in West Africa and Andrew Smith (1797–1872) in Southern Africa. Smith, a military surgeon in the Cape Colony, explored the interior, pioneered natural history, zoology, and anthropology and established the South African Museum of Natural History in Cape Town in 1825.<sup>2</sup>

One of those inspired by Livingstone as a young man was James Stewart (1831–1905), who was principal of the Lovedale Seminary in the Cape Colony and founder of the Livingstonia Mission. He studied both medicine and theology, a combination that was particularly common among Scottish missionaries. Following Livingstone's call, Stewart developed a plan to launch a Free Church of Scotland mission in the region of present-day Malawi. Stewart was drawn to Livingstone's ability to fill so many roles successfully, and although he lost faith in his idol during the troubled Zambesi expedition of the 1860s, he returned to his idea of a Scottish mission on Lake Malawi (then Nyasa) after Livingstone's death.<sup>3</sup>

Livingstone appealed strongly to the young, and many of his most ardent followers were recruited during childhood. His *Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa* contained rich tales of adventure alongside his ideas about spreading the Gospel, civilization, and science in Africa. Livingstone's books and the numerous stories about him were acceptable reading for children in many evangelical Scottish homes. Young Robert Laws, a cabinetmaker's son from Aberdeen, was particularly excited by stories of Livingstone's

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1875–1930: *Quests for Health in a Colonial Society*. Lewiston 2007; McCracken, John, "Scottish Medical Missionaries in Central Africa," *The Scottish Society of the History of Medicine*, XVII(2), 1973; Rennick, Agnes, *Church and Medicine: The role of medical missionaries in Malawi 1875–1914*. Ph.D. thesis, Department of History, University of Stirling, 2003; Ross, Andrew C., "The Scottish Missionary Doctor," in D.A. Dow (ed.), *The Influence of Scottish Medicine: An Historical Assessment of its International Impact*. London 1988.

2 For Smith, see Kirby, P.R., *Sir Andrew Smith, M.D., K.C.B.: His Life, Letters and Works*. Cape Town, 1965; Musselman, E.G., "Plant Knowledge at the Cape: A Study in African and European Collaboration," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 36(2), 2003.

3 Wells, James, *Stewart of Lovedale*. London, 1907.

Makololo, his African allies. At one point he regularly prayed, "O God, send me to the Makololo."<sup>4</sup>

Laws (1851–1934) also went on to study both medicine and theology. At this time, Scottish doctors had connections across the Empire, and as Douglas Haynes has illustrated in his biography of Patrick Manson, the Empire was crucial for the prospects of many late Victorian Scottish graduates. Of Manson's contemporaries, ten out of nineteen medical graduates at Aberdeen University went into imperial service.<sup>5</sup> At this point, Africa was still a minor field, and the 'Livingstone effect' of the late nineteenth century was most keenly felt by the more religious Scots who chose mission service. Even Laws, himself, had initially expected to travel to China. But, instead, in 1875 he travelled to Malawi as a medical missionary in the pioneer party that founded the Livingstonia Mission.<sup>6</sup>

### Medical Advisors of Colonialism? Sir John Kirk and Robert Laws

Of the four medical followers of Livingstone who will be discussed here, only one, Dr John Kirk (1832–1922), never became a mission doctor. Like Stewart, Kirk attended Livingstone's funeral in 1874. By this time, Kirk was forging an impressive career for himself in East Africa. He had been the medical officer of Livingstone's ill-fated Zambesi Expedition (1858–1864), an ambitious undertaking with the stated aim of opening up the Central African interior for both commerce and Christianity (thus undermining the slave trade).

Disease continued to hinder European colonial conquest of Africa until the late nineteenth century. It has been argued that quinine (along with steam power and the Maxim gun) was one of the crucial innovations that enabled the 'Scramble for Africa' during the last two decades of the century. This, of course, is a simplification, but issues of health were undoubtedly very pressing concerns for European colonialists in Africa. There was an ongoing debate about whether most of Africa could be colonized or whether it was even possible for Europeans to live there at all. Livingstone had been an early Scottish expert on

4 Livingstone, W.P., *Laws of Livingstonia*. London, 1921, 13–30; Macintosh, Hamish, *Robert Laws: Servant of Africa*. Carberry, 1993, 3–5; Hokkanen, *Medicine and Scottish Missionaries*, 127–130.

5 Haynes, Douglas M., *Imperial Medicine: Patrick Manson and the Conquest of Tropical Disease*. Philadelphia 2001, 14–20. Posts within the Army, the Navy, the Indian Medical Service, and, in Manson's case, the Imperial Chinese Maritime Customs Service opened up as a result of the Empire.

6 Livingstone, *Laws*; Macintosh, *Robert Laws*; Hokkanen, *Medicine and Scottish Missionaries*.

health in Africa, but his reputation had been tarnished by several deaths from 'fever' among members of both the Zambesi Expedition and the Universities' Mission to Central Africa. Livingstone had earlier downplayed the dangers posed by African fevers.<sup>7</sup>

Nevertheless, John Kirk emerged from the expedition as a recognized African explorer, physician, and botanist in his own right. On Livingstone's recommendation, Kirk obtained a triple position as surgeon, vice-consul, and assistant to the political officer in the Consulate of Zanzibar in 1866. Kirk's career advanced steadily: He went on to become the most important British official on the East African coast before he returned to Britain in 1887; he was awarded three knighthoods, a number of honorary titles, and awards; and he served as a director of the Imperial British East Africa Company, founded by William Mackinnon, Kirk's friend and a grand imperial Scottish magnate.<sup>8</sup>

Although Kirk's later career was predominantly political and diplomatic, his medical qualifications and experience ensured that he retained his authority as an expert on health in Africa. Furthermore, he played a significant part in disseminating knowledge about African natural resources and facilitating their appropriation. An outstanding example of this was the case of *strophanthus kombe*, a poisonous climbing plant that Kirk 'discovered' during the Zambesi expedition. *Kombe* was used as an arrow poison in South-Central Africa. It was thanks to Kirk, a network of Scottish missionaries and traders in the Malawi region, and, of course, local informants that Thomas Fraser, a medical scientist at Edinburgh University, was able to acquire *strophanthus kombe* seeds.

From *strophanthus* seeds, Fraser developed strophanthin, a cardiac drug resembling digitalis. Strophanthin drugs were first mass-produced by Burroughs Wellcome & Co. in London, who obtained the seeds with the help of Kirk and other Scots in Malawi. African medicinal and poisonous plants had been sent to Scotland for analysis and research before. One of Kirk's professors at Edinburgh University, Robert Christison, had experimented on poisonous beans obtained from Calabar in West Africa (also the site of a Scottish

7 Jeal, Tim, *Livingstone*. London, 1973; Headrick, Daniel, *Tools of Imperialism: Technology and European Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century*. New York, 1981. On the Zambesi expedition, see Dritsas, Lawrence, *Zambesi: David Livingstone and Expeditionary Science in Africa*. London, 2010.

8 On Kirk, see Coupland, Reginald, *Kirk on the Zambezi*, Oxford, 1928; Liebowitz, Daniel, *The Physician and the Slave Trade: John Kirk, the Livingstone Expeditions, and the Crusade Against Slavery in East Africa*. New York, 1999.



mission). Later, Fraser isolated the alkaloid eserine from the Calabar bean.<sup>9</sup> In early nineteenth-century Southern Africa, Andrew Smith, like other naturalists, had relied heavily on local informants when locating and studying African plants.<sup>10</sup>

As the 'Scramble for Africa' gathered momentum in the 1890s, Kirk was among the most prominent Scottish participants in discussions about the feasibility of colonization. He presented a paper, "The extent to which tropical Africa is suited for development by the white races, or under their superintendence," at the Sixth International Geographical Conference in London in 1895. The paper's title reveals the basic division that Kirk drew between "European colonies where families of white people may remain without marked deterioration of the race" and "settlements under European supervision" where whites could settle temporarily to rule or "to develop the country with the aid of the native races."<sup>11</sup> For Kirk, like many other Victorians, a true colony was a permanent, self-sufficient, and predominantly white country such as Canada or Australia. Kirk doubted whether many such colonies could exist in tropical Africa (as opposed to South Africa or the Maghreb). He believed, however, that conditions for a permanent colony existed in the region of Matabeleland (in present-day Zimbabwe), which had been claimed a few years earlier by Cecil Rhodes's British South Africa Company. Kirk also took a favourable view of the possibility of settlement in the uplands of British East Africa (Kenya), so long as they could be linked to the coast by railways.

Although he concluded that European *colonization* was possible only in a few isolated African localities, Kirk argued that European *settlement* was feasible almost everywhere in Africa. Bases in low-lying areas could be maintained so long as white men could secure a furlough in Europe after a few years of continuous service. Drawing upon British experience in India, Kirk believed that in the future visits to African sanatoriums in the "salubrious uplands" could replace such trips back to Europe. He believed that in many healthy

9 Hokkanen, Markku, "Imperial Networks, Colonial Bioprospecting and Burroughs Wellcome & Co.: The Case of *Strophanthus Kombe* from Malawi (1859–1915)". *Social History of Medicine*, Vol. 25, 2012, 589–607.

10 Musselman, "Plant Knowledge at the Cape."

11 Kirk, Sir John, "The extent to which tropical Africa is suited for development by the white races, or under their superintendence", *Report of the Sixth International Geographical Congress*, London 1896, 523. Kirk also outlined a third form of European influence in Africa which would extend beyond the immediate limits of the settlements for "conducting" Africans "in the path of progress, be taught to labour with the object of utilizing to the full the dormant resources of their country, and of exchanging them for the products of civilized countries."

regions that were too small or too isolated for “a proper colony,” Europeans could nevertheless bring their families and “reside on their own estates for prolonged periods.”<sup>12</sup>

Kirk also emphasized that in addition to securing adequate health, wealth, and logistics, European colonialists would have to form the majority of the population in such a colony. He pointed out that many of the healthy highlands were thinly populated because of raids by pastoralists and slavers (as well as the aftermath of waves of smallpox). Accordingly, he urged the British to secure both Matabeleland and Masailand and to ensure that African settlement in these areas would be encouraged only to the extent that it did not interfere with the plans of Europeans.<sup>13</sup>

Whilst Kirk considered European colonization in tropical Africa more generally, Dr Laws, who ran the Livingstonia Mission (arguably the best-known of the Livingstone memorial missions), struggled with the question of how Scottish missionaries were to survive in the Malawi region. Laws maintained his belief that the region was habitable for Europeans, but with a number of caveats. He acknowledged the dangers posed to Europeans by disease and was prepared to accept that some deaths were inevitable – especially during the pioneer phase of a settlement or colony. In fact, he viewed missionary graves as necessary “milestones for Christianity,” and fever as a piece of the “Devil’s artillery.”<sup>14</sup>

Although in his mind the evangelization of Africa was comparable to war and would require its own martyrs, Laws firmly believed that the dangers and the likely number of casualties ought to be minimized and that the task of the missionary doctor was to do his utmost to achieve that end. Livingstonia had among the highest ratio of qualified medics to patients, yet it lost almost a quarter of its Scottish staff between 1875 and 1915 to illness, and a number of others were invalided home. To combat disease Laws devised a holistic programme of hygiene that stressed Christian morality, careful but hard work, and abstinence from alcohol. Laws remained in Malawi for fifty years and became a respected missionary statesman in the Nyasaland Protectorate. As the most senior doctor and missionary in the Protectorate, he had important connections to the colonial administration, particularly in the Northern Province, and he served for a time in the Legislative Council of the Protectorate.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 529–531.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 533.

<sup>14</sup> Hokkanen, *Medicine and Scottish Missionaries*, 240–243.

<sup>15</sup> Hokkanen, *Medicine and Scottish Missionaries*; Livingstone, *Laws*.

### Missionary Mavericks? Jane Waterston and Neil Macvicar

Both Jane Waterston (1843–1932) and Neil Macvicar (1871–1949) first went to Malawi as missionaries, ran into difficulties there, and were forced to start anew in South Africa, where both doctors enjoyed long and distinguished careers. They could both be called ‘missionary mavericks’, because their personalities and views did not fit easily into Scottish missions in Malawi.

When Jane Waterston travelled to Livingstonia in 1879, she was thirty-six years old and had spent eight years teaching at the Lovedale Mission in the Cape Colony. As Caroline Knowles has argued, Waterston effectively used the social space provided by the British Empire to transform herself: first by leaving a middle-class home in Inverness, then by becoming a missionary teacher in Lovedale, and then using her status as a missionary to gain access to a medical education in Britain. (She was one of the first British women to become a doctor.)<sup>16</sup> Curiously, Knowles’s study of Waterston overlooks her brief period at Livingstonia, even though this would have highlighted the limitations that Waterston met with in the missionary terrain of healing because of her gender.

Waterston’s position and status as a medical professional within the mission was weak – both because she was a woman and because she had obtained her medical education in an unorthodox manner. The mission authorities in Scotland claimed that there was not enough medical practice in Livingstonia for two medical missionaries and decreed that she should take on the additional task of educating African women and girls. This seems to have been a move on the part of the male mission establishment to ensure that the medical side of the mission remained in the hands of Robert Laws. The lack of medical practice was not seen as a problem at this time, because it was taken for granted that in pioneer conditions all missionaries would undertake a number of different tasks. In recognition of Waterston’s medical qualifications, it was agreed that her medical practice should take precedence over her work as a teacher; nevertheless, in official mission sources, she is consistently referred to as “Miss Waterston,” not “Dr. Waterston.” For many late Victorians, *doctor*, like *missionary*, was a male noun: in this sense Waterston was doubly disturbing to her colleagues.

Waterston’s sphere of work was described as “the female, and the female medical department.” However, it seems that during her brief spell at Livingstonia, she treated both African men and women. Limitations were clearly placed on her European practice, though. As a rule, Laws treated all European patients and Waterston could take on European patients only with

16 Knowles, Caroline, “Home and Away: Maps of Territorial and Personal Expansion 1860–1897,” *The European Journal of Women’s Studies*, Vol. 7, 2000, 263–280.

Laws's permission or in his absence. In some cases she was not allowed to see European patients at all. Unlike African patients, who seemed to accept both male and female healers with little difficulty, many missionaries were reluctant to be treated by a woman.

Waterston resigned after only six months of service in Livingstonia. She described her feelings of professional frustration, her disagreements with mission policy towards Africans (which at this point included corporal punishment and imprisonment of Africans regarded as being under the mission's judicial authority), her disillusionment with mission reality at Livingstonia, and her personal conflicts with Robert Laws. She was particularly bitter that her medical experience and qualifications had been ignored.<sup>17</sup>

In the letter to Laws informing him of her resignation, Waterston emphasized, writing as one doctor to another, her absolute need to maintain her medical status. She argued that this would be lost if she had to continue in Livingstonia as a teacher: It had "cost [her] everything to get," and it was "all [she had]...to fall back on if invalidated home."<sup>18</sup> Choosing to ignore the fact that there were plenty of African patients coming to the mission dispensary, she now agreed with the official mission line that there was sufficient work for only one doctor at Livingstonia.

Waterston's resignation had lasting repercussions for mission recruitment policy. It would be fourteen years before the next single woman missionary (of any kind) was appointed to Livingstonia, and I would argue that the case of Waterston and the concomitant rise of Laws to the status of eminent Livingstonia leader and medical authority in the field were important reasons for this. Livingstonia certainly had no difficulty accepting medical men into the field in the intervening period.<sup>19</sup>

While Waterston's difficulties in Livingstonia stemmed largely from her controversial position as a single woman missionary doctor, Neil Macvicar's

17 Waterston to Stewart 11 December 1879 and 14 February 1880. Bean, L. & van Heyningen, E. (eds.), *The Letters of Jane Elizabeth Waterston, 1866–1905*. Cape Town, 1983, 151–152, 162, 168; Hokkanen, *Medicine and Scottish Missionaries*, 152–156.

18 Waterston to Laws 19 February 1880. Bean, L. & van Heyningen, E. (eds.), *The Letters of Jane Elizabeth Waterston, 1866–1905*. Cape Town, 1983, 171.

19 Hokkanen, *Medicine and Scottish Missionaries*. Towards the end of his long career, Robert Laws became more sympathetic to female doctors and in the 1910s, he discussed his medical cases in most detail with Agnes Fraser, the second female doctor in Livingstonia (who was not officially employed by the mission, but the wife of leading missionary Donald Fraser). Perhaps this was because at the time at least some of the younger missionary physicians considered Laws and his medical ideas to be obsolete. It is possible, however, that Laws may have had some sense of guilt about what happened between him and Waterston.

problems – in the neighbouring Blantyre Mission (Established Church of Scotland), twenty years later – were mainly theological. Macvicar, a son of the manse, was also inspired by Livingstone to become a doctor in Africa. At Edinburgh University he proved to be a brilliant medical student, and sometime after graduating he applied for a position at the Blantyre Mission. He successfully secured an appointment as a mission doctor, even though some members of the Mission Committee thought that Macvicar himself was actually in need of a missionary's care. Because Macvicar did not accept the doctrine of the Trinity and the Resurrection, and would not waver in his personal beliefs, he was appointed on the peculiar condition that he would not be involved in religious teaching at Blantyre. Thus, Macvicar was probably the first purely secular doctor to work in a Scottish mission hospital. Macvicar's secular status helped to make him a particularly effective doctor. Most of his medical missionary colleagues worked on many fronts (evangelical, educational and administrative) and were therefore only part-time doctors.<sup>20</sup>

Macvicar arrived in Blantyre in 1896 and soon founded the first permanent hospital – which he ran with a Scottish nurse, Jessie Samuels, the former acting matron of the Glasgow Western Infirmary. (They later married.) He also began the systematic training of African medical assistants, a pioneering scheme for African medical education that was in part inspired by his experiences as a medical student in Edinburgh. He was convinced that Africans were fully capable of studying medical science: One of the best medical students he had known in Edinburgh was a West African.<sup>21</sup> In this Macvicar – who in 1897 already envisioned a University of Blantyre comparable to the universities of Tokyo or Berlin – was way ahead of most of his contemporaries (and later colonial doctors), who doubted that Africans had the capacity to study medicine, insisted on keeping such African medical assistants as they had under close white supervision, and would often prevent them from treating white patients. Although Robert Laws, for example, shared Macvicar's enthusiasm for higher education for Africans, and himself planned a University of Livingstonia, he was determined to keep African medical assistants under close moral and physical scrutiny. Both Livingstonia and Blantyre missions had turned down offers of service from black doctors (who had graduated in West Indies and the US) in the 1880s.<sup>22</sup>

20 Shepherd, R.H.W. *A South African Medical Pioneer: The Life of Neil Macvicar*. Lovedale, 1952; Rennick, Church and Medicine; Ross, "The Scottish Missionary Doctor."

21 *Life and Work in British Central Africa*, May–July 1897.

22 Hokkanen, *Medicine and Scottish Missionaries*, 414–418; Lyons, Maryinez, "The Power to Heal: African Medical Auxiliaries in Colonial Belgian Congo and Uganda," in Engels, D.,

Macvicar's activities in Blantyre inspired other Scottish medical missionaries in Malawi: His example contributed to both the establishment of several permanent hospitals and the development of systematic medical education for African medical assistants and nurses at Blantyre and Livingstonia. His time at Blantyre was cut short, however, by continuing unease among other missionaries about his unconventional religious views. At the end of the 1890s, the leadership of Blantyre Mission passed from David Clement Scott (Macvicar's protector), to Alexander Hetherwick, a more conservative missionary, and Macvicar's position was weakened. In 1899 he left for a furlough and never returned. Instead, he took up a post in Lovedale, which had provided refuge for Waterston twenty years earlier. James Stewart, old now, took Macvicar under his wing, and he was appointed medical officer of the new Victoria Hospital at Lovedale, remaining there for thirty-five years. With Matron Mary Balmer he continued to develop African medical education. The focus was now on female African nurses, who were trained at the Victoria Hospital from 1903 onwards. Cecilia Makiwane, the first fully certified African nurse in South Africa, trained at Lovedale and was registered by the Cape Colony Medical Council in 1908. Macvicar also undertook serious medical research into both scurvy and tuberculosis. His daughter Shena followed in his footsteps, studying medicine in Edinburgh, and then joining him in Lovedale in 1927.<sup>23</sup>

### Conclusion

These case studies have illustrated how Scottish medical men and women made their careers in Southern and Central Africa, acting in various roles as missionaries, agents of empire, experts on medicine and health, and pioneers of Western medical education in Africa. Taken together, the four studies of Livingstone's 'followers' illustrate key themes of nineteenth-century connections between Scotland and Africa: exploration, colonization, and education. Quests for knowledge about places, people, materials, and health were common to all these themes. As a group, Scottish doctors were particularly well placed within imperial networks that connected Scotland with Africa

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and Marks, S. (eds.), *Contesting Colonial Hegemony: State and Society in Africa and India*. London, 1994; Rennick, Church and Medicine, 70–71.

23 Shephard, *A South African Medical Pioneer*; Digby, Anne, *Diversity and Division in Medicine: Health Care in South Africa from the 1800s*. Oxford, 2006.

(and the rest of the British Empire), and many made their names as producers and disseminators of imperial knowledge.<sup>24</sup>

At least two generations of Scots before the First World War felt the 'Livingstone effect' keenly: Some travelled to Africa as doctors – particularly missionary doctors, directly inspired by Livingstone. The case of Jane Waterston shows that although in the late nineteenth century it was still very difficult for Scottish women to pursue careers as independent missionaries and doctors, the African mission field was among the first arenas in which it was possible to do so. The career of Robert Laws illustrates how, despite appalling morbidity and mortality rates, it was possible to establish an expanding mission in Central Africa and develop a doctrine of healthy living based on a holistic conception of hygiene that combined Christianity and medicine. Laws succeeded in this and established himself as a respected mission statesman who advised the colonial authorities on numerous issues. For his part, John Kirk combined medicine and science with politics and business, and become an authority in matters of health in Africa during the 'Scramble'.

Neil Macvicar was at the forefront of modern Western medical education for African men and especially women: While in South Africa he pressed for official recognition of black nurses' qualifications. In Malawi, however, African medical assistants did not find a route to full medical education and equality with white physicians. Whereas African pastors gradually obtained more independence in Protestant churches, African practitioners of Western medicine in colonial Malawi (as elsewhere) remained under the control of white doctors.<sup>25</sup>

Malawians who wished to become doctors had to study abroad – the best-known early example being Hastings Banda, who graduated in the United States and pursued further studies in Edinburgh in late 1930s and early 1940s, but was not recruited as a doctor to colonial Malawi.<sup>26</sup> It could even be argued

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24 For a recent study of transnational networks and colonial medicine, see Neill, Deborah J., *Networks in Tropical Medicine: Internationalism, Colonialism, and the Rise of a Medical Speciality 1890–1930*. Stanford, 2012.

25 For the limitations of African involvement in missionary medicine in the colonial era, see, for example, Good, Charles, *The Steamer Parish: The Rise and Fall of Missionary Medicine on an African Frontier*. London, 2004; Kumwenda, Linda, *The Development of umca Medical Work in Northern Rhodesia, 1910–1950, with Special Reference to the African Medical Personnel*. Basel, 2000; Rennick, Church and Medicine.

26 Short, Phillip, *Banda*. London, 1974. According to Short, Banda's aspiration to become a missionary doctor with Livingstonia was thwarted by missionary nurses' reluctance to serve under a black doctor. Colonial Office sources suggest, however, that the reasons why Banda – whose services were, for a period, considered by both the colonial administration and the missionaries – was not recruited by were more complex. Hokkanen, Markku,



that this illustration of the racial and gendered structures of the colonial mission hospital had lasting consequences for Malawian history. If Macvicar had stayed at Blantyre, would he have created openings for African doctors in colonial Malawi? This kind of speculation about history is problematic. Nevertheless, Macvicar's respect for a West African medical student (possibly Richard Akiwande Savage) he met at Edinburgh University in the 1890s certainly seems to have had a real influence and impact on African medical education in both Malawi and South Africa.

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## Between Colonialism and Cultural Authenticity

*Isaac Ladipo Oluwole, Oladele Adebayo Ajose, Public Health Services in Nigeria, and the Glasgow Connection*

*Olutayo Charles Adesina*

### Introduction

A significant component of the ideas and doctrine that incubated Nigeria's public health strategies in the twentieth century derived from two medical doctors who received their medical trainings at the University of Glasgow, Scotland. To a remarkable extent the course of Nigeria's public health services would be set by Isaac Ladipo Oluwole, who was educated at the University of Glasgow and graduated with Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery [M.B. Ch.B] degree in 1918. Following closely on his heels was Oladele Adebayo Ajose, who obtained his Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery, from the University of Glasgow in 1932 and capped it with a Diploma in Public Health in 1935. These two gentlemen, living in an alien culture in Glasgow, came to cherish their Scottish experiences, with Oladele Ajose ending up marrying a Scottish woman. In this chapter, I have used a historico-biographical approach to highlight their contributions to the revolutionary and patriotic underpinnings of public health services in Nigeria and ultimately, to nation building there. It emphasises the intensity of their thoughts, actions, and practices, which would dominate Nigeria's public health services for more than four decades and into the future.

Modern public health service in Nigeria, broadly defined as the strategy and design for controlling environmental and health matters in the interest of the society, was the hand-maiden of British colonialism. From 1861, when Lagos became a Crown colony, up to 1914, when the Northern and Southern Protectorates of Nigeria were amalgamated into one country, the indigenous people had been subjected to various levels and layers of colonial incorporation, as well as structural and cultural alienation. Public health problems and issues as major concomitants of colonialism, among other things, also came to the front burner of British colonial social and environmental policies. Even though several indigenous communities had existed as urban formations in the pre-colonial period, and had their own strategies for attending to matters relating to public health, with colonialism, the social, economic and political

structures of the society became redefined as the pace of social change quickened across the country. The dramatic increase in urban migration and the clear exhibition of population diversity became the hallmarks of these new colonial cities. Two areas in which such changes were keenly felt involved the environment and sanitation. Health and sanitation issues had become problematic in the early days of colonial rule. By the 1890s the demand for wage labourers in the Lagos Colony had grown significantly (Mann, 2007:234). The robust influx of people into Lagos—workers, wives, and dependents—further expanded the population of the city and its environs. The result of colonialism was an increased form of pluralism, which brought in its wake overpopulation and environmental issues (Gale, 1981:497). Thus, in the process of colonization, the issue of residential segregation in Nigeria became important (Paden, 1970:244). Since most tropical diseases are endemic in Nigeria, the level of complexity this generated in twentieth century Nigeria ultimately provided the colonial masters with the *raison d'être*, in environmental and health matters, for separating Africans from Europeans living there. This became a determinant of group relations and formed the baseline for restratification and the classification of status and neighbourhoods—both in human terms and residential segregation.

The policy of residential segregation in twentieth century Lagos began with sanitary and town planning schemes. This contrasted sharply with the position of the colonial Governor of Lagos, Governor William Macgregor (1899–1904) who had earlier opposed the idea of segregation due to the racial animosity it would generate. But by 1910, British officials began to accord a top priority to residential segregation. According to Olukoju (2003:265):

The turning point in the adoption of racial residential segregation as official policy came in 1910 following the outbreak of a yellow fever epidemic on the Gold Coast. This high mortality of Europeans in this outbreak persuaded colonial administrators to embrace residential segregation long espoused by medical officers in the colonies. A Conference of Principal Medical Officers and Senior Sanitary Officers in Lagos in 1912 decided that residential quarters of Europeans should be completely separated from the nearest indigenous settlement by at least a quarter of a mile. No African, except domestic servants, would be permitted to reside in European Reservation.

With this new policy, indigenous Nigerians that had no reason for living within the township were encouraged to relocate to indigenous settlements beyond the pale of European settlements.

### Modern Medical Traditions and the New Elite in Nigeria: The Scottish Connection

Western, or orthodox, medicine made its appearance in Nigeria with the arrival of European explorers, adventurers, missionaries, and ultimately, the colonial regime. Although the borders of modern Nigeria were established in 1914 (Falola & Heaton, 2008:1), modern medicine had already exhibited a historical shift in the newly emerging social formation from an earlier period. By 1898, Rt. Hon. Joseph Chamberlain, secretary of state for the colonies, had addressed a circular to the General Medical Council and the leading medical schools in the United Kingdom, pointing out

the importance of ensuring that all medical officers selected for appointments in the tropics should enter on their careers with the expert knowledge requisite for dealing with such diseases as are prevalent in the tropics. And those future medical officers of the colonies should be given facilities in the various medical schools for obtaining some preliminary knowledge of the subject.

LIVERPOOL SCHOOL OF TROPICAL MEDICINE, 1920:5–6

But even before this period, several people in the area that became known as Nigeria had been privileged to receive medical training abroad. The formal institution to train medical doctors locally did not arrive until the 1930s, when the Yaba Medical School was established in Lagos (Osoba & Fajana, 1980:571–600). Prior to this, anyone desirous of medical training went abroad. The United Kingdom, of course, became the favourite training ground for Nigerians.

Specialist training in medicine in the U.K. began to create a generation of Nigerians who have had a lasting influence and impact of the medical field and public health. Africanus Beale Horton and William Broughton Davies were the first Nigerians to qualify in medicine. They were awarded the Member of the Royal College of Surgeons [M.R.C.S] of England at King's College, London, in 1858. But between 1858 and 1895, several other Nigerians were to graduate from medical schools in the United Kingdom. These were Nathaniel King (1874), Obadiah Johnson (1884), John K. Randle (1888), Orisadipe Obasa (1891), and Akinsiku Leigh-Sodiye (1892). However, the last and eighth Nigerian to qualify in medicine in the nineteenth century, Oguntola Sapara, was educated in Scotland, rather than England, obtaining the Licentiate of the Royal College of Physicians and the College of Surgeons of Edinburgh [L.R.C.P and S. of Edinburgh] in 1895 (Adeloye, 1974:275–293).

Even though most of Nigeria's nineteenth-century medical specialists graduated in England, the history of medicine and health shows that even in those early periods, Scotland was central to the training and retraining of Nigerian medical doctors. Although Oguntola Sapara was the only one in that period directly educated in Scotland, four of his compatriots who were educated elsewhere still found it expedient to acquire Scottish training as well. In other words, the contributions of these illustrious Nigerian doctors to the practice of modern medicine owed much to Scottish intellectual traditions. After completing their studies at King's College, London, William Broughton Davies and James Africanus Beale Horton left England for Scotland, where they obtained the M.D.—Davies, in October 1858, by examination from the University of St. Andrews (Adeloye, 1974:275–293), and Horton with a thesis at The University of Edinburgh in August 1859 (Shepperson, 1962:23–26). Both of them were commissioned into the British army as staff assistant surgeons for services in West Africa. Nathaniel King, the first Nigerian doctor to practice medicine in his own country, graduated from King's College, London, in 1874 and gained the M.R.C.S. He would later study in Edinburgh before returning to Lagos to serve as medical assistant to the agents of the Church Missionary Society. He obtained the M.B., C.M. from Edinburgh in 1876 and the M.D. three years later (Adeloye, 1974).

In the same vein, after Obadiah Johnson, became M.R.C.S of England at King's College, London, in 1884, he went to Edinburgh, obtaining the M.B., C.M. there in 1886. In 1889, Johnson went on to write a thesis on "West African therapeutics," and for that he was awarded the postgraduate M.D. from the University of Edinburgh. It was while in Scotland that he became acquainted with his compatriot John Randle, who had entered Scotland in 1884 and later graduated M.B., C.M. in 1888. Both Obadiah Johnson and John Randle were brought into the colonial medical service in Lagos in 1889 by Governor Moloney (P.R.O., C.O. 147, 65; Adeloye, 1974). Thus, while Scotland played a crucial role in the training and retraining of Nigerian physicians, it also played a significant role in the country's public health sector.

### **Of Colonialism, Colonial Rule and Populist Health Services in Nigeria**

The history of public health in Nigeria through the 1920s can be seen from two perspectives. During the first, spanning the period 1861 to 1920, public health initiatives answered a need to control disease, in order to protect the health and needs of the colonial masters. Strategies adopted during this

phase included taking remedial actions against the spread of disease and throwing a *cordon sanitaire* around affected areas. By contrast, the second phase, which began in 1920, was motivated by a desire and need to control the environment in the interest of public health—the health of the most of the people, not just the privileged few. The principles and philosophy of public health became more focused on maintenance of cleanliness, promoting health and hygiene practices, and general programmes for disease prevention. The development of the second phase of public health in Nigeria had effectively turned on its head the earlier, colonial character of the sector. The “tool of imperialism” thesis was advanced by MacLeod (1988) when he stated, *inter alia*:

European medicine, and its handmaiden, public health, served as ‘tools of Empire,’ of both symbolic and practical consequence, and as images representative of European commitments, variously to conquer, occupy or settle.... Medicine served as an instrument of empire, as well as imperializing cultural force in itself....

The view that colonial medicine, especially its tropical component, was a tool of European imperialism—both in its establishment and its justification—was prevalent among scholars (Brown, 2004:309; Bynum, 1994:148; Arnold, 1988:16). However, the development of the second phase of public health in Nigeria towards the end of the second decade of the twentieth century ushered in workable, effective, and people-oriented health services in Nigeria. This developed with Isaac Ladipo Oluwole, a Scotland-trained medical practitioner. Prior to his arrival from Scotland, the colonial approach to public health matters was bordered on racism.

In the twentieth century, new environmental and health pressures developed as a result of pressures on social amenities and facilities and urban migration exerted so much pressure on the capacity of such facilities. The sanitary condition of the general populace had become appalling, owing to their dreadful living conditions, poverty, and malnutrition. The most common disease was malaria. Other diseases prevalent in the region included hookworm, guinea-worm, intestinal diseases, yaws, and other parasitical infestations common in tropical regions (NAI, CSO26/11875). Of all the diseases, however, the deadliest was certainly smallpox, intermittent outbreaks of which kept colonial officers on their toes from 1923 onward (Akinyele, 2004:295).

The problem of sanitation and health was not a minor issue in the period under consideration. According to Olukoju (2004:29):

Many of the problems that continue to plague Nigerian urban centres, such as population explosion, unregulated planning, slumming, epidemics and pollution...could be traced to the colonial milieu in which they first emerged.

The prevalence of malaria, yaws, and leprosy, sleeping sickness, and bacterial and worm infections as major public health challenges in Nigeria ultimately resulted in the creation of a corps of sanitary inspectors in the twentieth century. These were aided by Nigerian sanitary attendants whose roles included marking of tall trees, service of abatement notice, and routine sanitary inspections.

The phenomenon of overcrowding and its corollaries forced the colonial government to introduce urban planning and disease control measures in several urban centres. But when the terrible urban conditions became increasingly obvious, the colonial administration began, by 1917, to segregate Africans and Europeans. Olukoju (2003 and 2004:30) amplifies upon this point:

An accompaniment of town planning during the period was the segregation of Africans and Europeans in all parts of the country, and indigenous Africans and "strangers" in Northern Nigeria. Under various terminologies, such as "European Reserve," "European Residential Area," and "Government Residential Area," the European settlement was separated from the "native quarter" by a cordon sanitaire. The policy was justified on sanitary grounds, specifically that Africans were prone to, and spread, infectious diseases, particularly yellow fever, which were fatal to Europeans.

In Lagos, the bubonic plagues of the 1920s and 1930s compelled the government "to embark on demolition and de-ratting of dwellings, and the relocation of people from the (Lagos) Island to the (Lagos) Mainland." (Olukoju, 2004:29).

By the second decade of the twentieth century, with improved education, the role and position of Nigerians in health and sanitary matters changed. The roles of the Scottish intellectual enterprise in incubating and sustaining the Nigerian medical and public health fields in this regard have been remarkable. However, a salient feature of the Scotland-trained physicians was their crusading spirit. The co-founder of the People's Union (PU), (regarded in some quarters as Nigeria's first political party, and which spearheaded the water rate agitation in Lagos), John Randle, who was born in 1855 attended Edinburgh University where he graduated in Medicine in 1888. On his return to Nigeria, he was appointed an Assistant Surgeon in the Colonial Medical Service of the



period. In this exalted position, he fought against injustice until he was dismissed in September, 1893 (S.O. Arifalo, 2001:53).

Isaac Ladipo Oluwole (1892–1953) historically is the father of modern public health in Nigeria (Society of Health, Nigeria, 1953). He studied at the University of Glasgow, Scotland obtaining the M.B., Ch.B in 1918. Even though he was a physician, he began a crusade to deliver sound and sustainable health to his people through the introduction of programmes that have unanimously been described as brilliant and revolutionary. Oluwole's talents and intellectual depth became obvious in Lagos. In the 1920s when he came back to Nigeria, he was appointed the first African Medical Officer of Health (MOH) in the Lagos Colony. He then began a vibrant programme of school health services using the existing sanitary attendants who began a sustained policy of schools inspection and vaccination of school children in their schools. Dr Oluwole started the first Nigerian School of Hygiene at Yaba, Lagos in 1920. This was the school “where qualified persons from all over Nigeria were trained as Sanitary Inspectors, (and where) at the end of their raining, they obtained the Diploma of the Royal Institute of Health (R.I.H) London... The work of Sanitary Inspectors was greatly noticed during the outbreak of bubonic plagues in 1924, when Dr Oluwole revitalized Port Health Services and sanitary inspection of ships and port premises.” (<http://ehoreconng.org/histor.html>). The extent to which Oluwole laid the foundation of modern Public Health Services is adumbrated by Sani Garba (2008):

Dr. Oluwole revamped port health duties and made sanitary inspection a vital instrument for the control of communicable diseases using entirely Nigerian Sanitary Inspectors. All these brought recognition to the sanitary inspectors in Nigeria. They were referred to as *Wole-Wole* among Yorubas, *Nwaole-ala* among the Igbos and *Duba-Gari* among the Hausa. They were a force to reckon with in that colonial era in the area of preventive health services in Nigeria.

With the vast enhancement of the educational qualifications and training of the sanitary inspectors, the colonial authorities began also to feel more confident in granting them more powers to: conduct routine sanitary inspection of houses, markets, schools, and communities; oversee waste disposal and environmental sanitation; port health duties (air, land and seaports), and; control of communicable and infectious diseases. The demonstration of the effectiveness of this approach became evident with the way the Sanitary Inspectors handled the outbreak of several communicable diseases in the country. In addition to the foregoing, Isaac Oluwole was credited with the progressive changes witnessed in the status of primary health workers in Nigeria.



Following Oluwole in quick succession was another Scotland-trained physician, Oladele Adebayo Ajose. A royal prince of the city of Lagos, Ajose was born on the 20th of September, 1907. As a medical doctor, he followed closely the philosophy and doctrine of public health enunciated by Dr Oluwole, his compatriot and predecessor as the Medical Officer of Health (MOH) in Lagos. During his own tenure, Dr Oladele Ajose organized and presided over an effective health system in Lagos. He led an offensive against the medical and health problems that proved potentially problematic in those days. As a young man in 1927 Oladele Ajose had made his way to the University of Glasgow where he ultimately graduated with an M.B.B.S. in 1932. After his graduation in 1932, Dr Ajose stayed back in Scotland to gain hospital experience and was in private medical practice and to further his education. In September 1935, he was awarded a Diploma in Public Health (DPH) of the University of Glasgow and in 1936 he went back to Nigeria. On his arrival in Nigeria, Dr Ajose took up appointment with the Lagos Town Council, first as Assistant Medical Officer of Health and later, as the Medical Officer of Health. From 1936 to 1947 he was put in charge of students' health at the Yaba Higher College, Igbobi College, Methodist Boys' High School and the C.M.S Boys' High School. His oversight functions also extended to his *alma mater*, the King's College, Lagos. One of his duties as the visiting Doctor to the Yaba Higher College was holding his clinics at the College on Saturdays when students took their complaints to him. He was at these places not only to provide curative care, but also to ensure that feeding and living conditions were conducive to health and learning (Oyediran, 2004:2). In 1939, Dr Oladele Ajose obtained from Edinburgh the degree of M.D.

Dr Ajose began in 1936 to promote the embryo of what later became the Nigerian Central Council Branch of the British Red Cross Society of Nigeria, the Lagos Colony Branch, and the Junior Red Cross.<sup>1</sup> In this position, he launched an all-out campaign that demonstrated his desire to rid his country of communicable diseases. As Assistant Medical Officer of Health, he had the rare distinction of being the founder of the British Red Cross Society Clinic for Diseases of the Chest. He remained the Consultant and Medical Officer in Charge of the initiative from 1943–1948. In this position, he paid particular attention to communicable diseases with major emphasis on tuberculosis, a serious medical problem confronting the people of Lagos at the time. He carried out large-scale reclamation work and beautification of reclaimed lands on Lagos Island, most especially at Apapa and Ikoyi as part of his scheme to “keep Lagos Yellow fever free.” (Fabunmi, 1978:13).

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1 See <http://www.universitystory.gla.ac.uk/biography/?id=WH3007&type=P>.

When the University College was established in 1948 he was accordingly appointed Professor of Preventive and Social Medicine at the University College, Ibadan, the first African to be so appointed (Iluyomade, 2000:392) Thus, at a time when the London University was not teaching Public Health to its undergraduates, Prof. Ajose not only became a firm believer in the merits of such a course, but designed courses on Public health. So, right from the start, Prof Ajose was teaching Public Health at joint sessions to young medical students and students' nurses at the new University College. One of Prof. Ajose's first acts was to pronounce his attachment to the doctrine of Community Care in the training of medical and health personnel in a tropical environment- an approach that ultimately became central to medical training in the country. This approach saw Prof Ajose taking his 'laboratory' outside of the University Campus and outside the city of Ibadan to Ilora, a rural community south of the famous Oyo town. Ilora town was to serve as his field 'laboratory' between 1949 and 1961 for teaching and research against preventable diseases.

### Conclusion

Even though the field of preventive and environmental health has suffered acute neglect in recent years, the landmark achievements of the Scottish-trained personalities have remained significant in Nigeria. The impacts of these pioneers in the field of public health have remained indelible in the annals of medical and social health in the country.

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*Activists, Visionaries, Artists*





## Two Pan-African Political Activists Emanating from Edinburgh University

*Drs John Randle and Richard Akinwande Savage*

*Marika Sherwood*

### Pan- or pan-Africanism

There have been many definitions of *pan-* and *Pan-Africanism*. Professor George Shepperson defined *pan-* as referring to “all those all-African movements and trends which have no organic relationship with the capital ‘P’ variety.”<sup>1</sup> The latter are the organisations and conferences that call themselves ‘Pan-African’. However, I would extend the *pan-* definition to include *individuals* whose ‘all-African’ activism displayed a ‘pan-Africanist’ attitude or belief.

But even this raises questions: first, it is highly unlikely that the mass of the peoples of Africa were any more aware of the *continent* on which they lived than my Hungarian peasant ancestors were of the continent of Europe. Thus, any notion of ‘pan-Africanism’ must have been initially restricted to the Western-educated African elite. Second, the continent was the home of empires, kingdoms, chiefdoms, village communities, so over the centuries hostilities, conquest, trust, cooperation between peoples must have changed, again and again.<sup>2</sup> In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, therefore, even a recognition that your neighbour was someone you could collaborate with, someone with whom you shared something, someone with whom you had something in common, must be seen as an early manifestation of ‘pan-Africanism’.

The two pan-Africanists in this paper belong to the early days of both ‘pan-Africanism’ and ‘Pan-Africanism’.

### Scotland, Slavery and The Atlantic Slave Trade

If one is to understand the role of Edinburgh University in providing medical and other training for colonials, and the experience of those colonials in

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1 George Shepperson, “Pan-Africanism and ‘Pan-Africanism’: some historical notes,” *Phylon* 23/6, 1962, p. 346.

2 One estimate is that there were—and are—about two thousand ethnic groups in Africa.

Edinburgh, one has to begin with Scotland's role in slavery and in the Atlantic slave trade, then examine attitudes towards the enslaved—and then towards the colonised—and also question whether the growth of social Darwinism and racist attitudes were prevalent in the city and the country.<sup>3</sup> There appears to have been very little research in this area of Scottish history. Or the history of Africans in Scotland.<sup>4</sup>

### *Slavery in Scotland*

Another question, to which I could find no answers, what was the relationship of Scottish attitudes to slavery at home, and in the British Empire, as a whole. After all, Scotland enslaved its 'rogues' and vagrants and exported them to the colonies in the seventeenth century, and the enslavement of colliers and salt-panners at home continued until the end of the eighteenth century.<sup>5</sup> How did this experience affect Scottish attitudes toward enslaved Africans in Scotland, toward the trade in enslaved Africans and toward the growing British Empire's dependence on slave-grown produce?

### *Africans in Scotland*

As far as we know at the moment, the history of Scotland and Africans begins with the presence of African troops in the Roman army encamped at Hadrian's Wall, around CE200. From then the records are silent or problematic. For example, those of James IV are quite clear: there were a number of Africans at his court between 1500 and 1508, but we do not know how or why they were there.<sup>6</sup>

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- 3 The classic texts are: Christine Bolt, *Victorian Attitudes to Race*, Routledge & Kegan Paul 1971 and Douglas Lorimer, *Colour, Class and the Victorians: English attitudes to the Negro in the Mid-nineteenth Century*, Leicester University Press 1978 (some mentions of Scotland). See also my "Race, Empire and Education: teaching racism," *Race & Class* 42/3, 2001 and "White Myths, Black Omissions: the historical origins of racism in Britain," *International Journal of Historical Teaching, Learning and Research*, 3/1, January 2003.
  - 4 There is a brief summary by Robert Miles, "Racism and nationalism in Britain," in Charles Husband (ed), *'Race' in Britain*, London: Hutchinson 1987, pp. 307–308. A few books on Scotland and colonialism/imperialism are available.
  - 5 Evelyn Lord, "Slavery in Scotland? Scottish colliers 1606–1799," *The Local Historian*, 37/4 2007; Neil Davidson, *Origins of Scottish Nationhood*, London: Pluto Press 2000, p. 236; P.E.H. Hair, "Slavery and Liberty: the case of the Scottish colliers," *Slavery & Abolition* 21/3, 2000; James A. Bullman, "Slavery in Scotland," [www.unknownscottishhistory.com](http://www.unknownscottishhistory.com). My thanks to Kathy Chater for bringing this history to my attention.
  - 6 Paul Edwards, "The early African presence in the British Isles," in Jagdish Gundara and Ian Duffield (eds), *Essays on the History of Blacks in Britain*, Aldershot: Avebury, 1992. (This was Edwards' inaugural professorial lecture, first published by the University of Edinburgh, Centre for African Studies, Occasional Paper #26, 1990. Peter Freshwater, thank you).



There is, sadly, very little more on Africans in the records,<sup>7</sup> though on Asians the records are somewhat more plentiful.<sup>8</sup>

In 1851 African-American abolitionist William Wells-Brown, touring Scotland, saw “a gentleman with a colored lady on each arm” when he visited the Robert Burns monument.<sup>9</sup> Unfortunately, no one has tried to discover who these ladies were.

Is it possible that there was a class difference in attitudes towards Africans? Ian Duffield scrutinizes the lives of some Blacks who passed through the Scottish legal system. He found that as in England, there appears to have been no bias by the judges. But how these Black women and men were treated by their White neighbours or employers is unsearched.<sup>10</sup>

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7 The only articles I have are: Ian Duffield, “Identity, Community and the Lived Experiences of Black Scots from the Late Eighteenth to the Mid-Nineteenth Centuries,” *Immigrants and Minorities*, 11/2, 1992; Mark B. Duffill, “Further Light on the Life of Thomas Jenkins,” *Hawick Archaeological Society Transactions*, 1994; James McCarthy, “Selim Aga: New Light on his Life and his Explorations in West Africa,” *The Jnl. of the Hakluyt Society*, July 2007; Mark Duffill & Eric J. Graham, “John Edmonstone—the Black ‘Bird-Stuffer’ of Edinburgh,” *History Scotland*, January–February 2007; Angus Calder, “Scotland’s Black History” (no source). Peter Freshwater made me aware of James McCarthy, *Selim Aga: a Slave’s Odyssey*, Edinburgh: Luath Press 2006, and two novels “based on fact”: Donna Brewster, *The House that Sugar Built* (Wigtown: GC Books 1999) and James Robertson, *Joseph Knight* (London: Fourth Estate, 2003).

8 Bashir Maan, *The New Scots: The Story of Asians in Scotland*, Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers 1993 begins this documentation; there are also useful mentions in Rozina Visram’s *Ayahs, Lascars and Princes* (1986) and *Asians in Britain* (2002). See also my ‘Krishna Menon, Parliamentary Labour Party Candidate for Dundee 1939–1940’, *Scottish Labour History*, vol.42, 2007; ‘Lascars in Glasgow and the West of Scotland during World War II’, *Scottish Labour History Journal*, vol. 38, 2003.

9 My thanks to Peter Freshwater for these excerpts from Paul Jefferson (ed), *The Travels of William Wells Brown*, Edinburgh University Press 1991, pp. 148, 201. There are a few articles on African-American visitors: for example, G. Shepperson, “Frederick Douglass and Scotland,” *Journal of Negro History* #38, 1953; G. Clare Taylor, “Notes on American negro reformers in Victorian Britain,” *Bulletin of the British Association for American Studies* #2, March 1961. There also are two dissertations: Duncan C. Rice, “The Scottish factor in the fight against American slavery,” PhD University of Edinburgh, 1969, and Edward Dixon, “The American negro in 19th century Scotland,” M.Litt, University of Edinburgh, 1969. I have not looked at these.

10 Ian Duffield, ‘Identity, Community and the Lived Experience of Black Scots from the Late Eighteenth to the Mid-Nineteenth Centuries’, *Immigrants and Minorities*, 11/2 July 1992, pp. 105–129.

*Scotland, Slavery and The Trade in Enslaved Africans*

In his *The Tobacco Lords* (Edinburgh University Press, 1975), T.M. Devine analyses the growth of Glasgow by examining the profits of slave-grown produce up to 1790. He takes some aspects of this 'story' further in *Scotland's Empire*: about 50 percent of Scotland's commerce until about 1830 was the import and export of slave-grown tobacco, and between 1790 and 1805 the amount of slave-grown cotton tripled; until the early nineteenth century, 90 percent of linen exports were to North America and the West Indies. Many Scots were involved in slaving ventures from Bristol, London and Liverpool. Five managed Liverpool slaving syndicates, and the Bance Island (off the coast of today's Sierra Leone) slaving 'factory' was bought by Scots in 1748. The profits, Devine reports, were invested in industrialisation (mainly in the Glasgow area)—for example, in building canals, expanding coal mining, and funding banks.<sup>11</sup>

The Scottish Executive produced *Scotland and the Bicentenary of the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act*, which acknowledges Scottish involvement in the 'nefarious trade' and notes that though the "Church was the key driver in the Abolitionist movement, the Church of Scotland did not petition Parliament to end the Slave Trade or Slavery." (p. 37) Douglas Hamilton, in his *Scotland, the Caribbean and the Atlantic World*, argues that although there was considerable support in Scotland for abolition, there was, naturally, also opposition, given Scottish involvement in the Caribbean—where, though the bulk of Scottish immigrants were poor, others served as governors, plantation managers, and overseers. Samuel T. Coleridge is recorded as remarking that "of the overseers of the slave plantations in the West Indies, three out of four are Scotsmen."<sup>12</sup> Only six Scottish M.P.s participated in the debates on abolition in the House of Commons after 1789, and "three of them represented English constituencies."<sup>13</sup>

Searching the web I found a report on a public debate at Edinburgh University held in November 2007. There Professor Tom Devine, who chaired the debate, stated that

11 T.M. Devine, *Scotland's Empire 1600–1815*, London: Allen Lane 2003. James Matheson made his large fortune from the opium trade to China. (p. 338) How many other Scots were involved in the highly exploitative East India Company?

12 Devine (2003, n. 11), p. 245. See also Michael Fry, *The Scottish Empire*, Edinburgh: Tuckwell Press/ Birlinn Ltd., 2001, but note that in the sections of this book that I read there are a number of mistakes (eg, mis-spelling of Africans' names and incorrect data on Kwame Nkrumah) and he seems quite unable to call Africans anything but 'negros' or 'natives'.

13 Douglas Hamilton, *Scotland, the Caribbean and the Atlantic World*, Manchester University Press 2005, p. 189. There was also a Scottish governor at Cape Coast Castle: Archibald Dalzel, member of the Committee of Liverpool African merchants. (p. 188) My thanks to Professor Geoff Palmer for bringing this book to my attention.

the slave trade had largely contributed to the rapid economic development of Scotland in the eighteenth century.... Scots were deeply implicated in the trade, including slave-trafficking from Scottish ports and keeping slaves at home and abroad.

Professor John Cairns argued that "Scotland has allowed its involvement in the trade to fade from history." Perhaps, the considerable Scottish effort between 1709 and 1711 to prevent the Royal African Company obtaining the monopoly of trade with 'Guinea' from the British government is an indication of the Scottish interest in slave trading.<sup>14</sup>

According to Rev. Iain Whyte's presentation to the same conference, the Church of Scotland had taken the lead in the abolition movement "to a greater extent than their English counterparts."<sup>15</sup> However, because the Church practised segregation in both Jamaica and Africa, this is a little difficult to believe.<sup>16</sup> But, I have to ask, was the Church of Scotland (like the Church of England) an owner of slaves? How did it treat the slaves, if it had a presence in the colonies? Why did it not petition Parliament for abolition? And what was the Church's attitude toward Africans? One researcher maintains that

the church as an institution is deeply implicated in the spread of racism.... Scottish missionaries perpetuated myths of the 'childlike races of the Empire',...[that] Africans were beasts who need to be controlled and made to work.<sup>17</sup>

And what of the Free Church of Scotland, which raised money from plantations-, and therefore *slave*-owners in the southern United States? A large 'Send Back the Money' campaign succeeded only in preventing further sums being raised. However, the estimated \$9000 already received from the slave-owners were not returned, even though it is likely that no more was subsequently raised from them.<sup>18</sup>

14 Nigel Tattersfield, *The Forgotten Trade*, London: Pimlico 1978, pp. 348–349.

15 *The Journal*, 20 November 2007, [www.journal-online.co.uk](http://www.journal-online.co.uk). See also Iain Whyte, *Scotland and the Abolition of Black Slavery, 1756–1838*, Edinburgh University Press 2006.

16 Fry (2001, n. 12), pp. 177, 404.

17 June Evans, 'African/Caribbeans in Scotland: a socio-geographical study', PhD dissertation, University of Edinburgh 1995, pp. 101–103.

18 See, eg. Howard Temperley, *British Anti-Slavery 1833–1870*, London: Longman 1972, pp. 218.

And what conclusions can we draw from the *Edinburgh Evening Courant's* support for the Confederates at the time of the American Civil War? Was it outweighed by the local abolitionist associations?<sup>19</sup>

### *Racism*

How many people with dark skins were living in Scotland in the nineteenth century, and how were they treated? There are no attempts at comprehensive histories. Robert Miles claims that the “processes which sustained the historical generation and reproduction of racism in England were present in Scotland.” In another article, Miles and L. Muirhead, while discussing Scottish involvement in the trade in enslaved Africans and slavery, unfortunately deal only with the ‘racism’ against Irish immigrants. A pamphlet by Bruce Armstrong (ed.), *A People Without Prejudice? The Experience of Racism in Scotland*, published by the Runnymede Trust in 1989, begins the exploration of racial attitudes.

However, Miles and Muirhead do quote some of the racist writings of Scottish missionaries (and the ‘phrenologists’).<sup>20</sup> Did the missionaries express these views while they were fundraising in Scotland? Even the renowned Scottish missionary David Livingstone, an opponent of slavery, wrote about “certain tribes in this land [live in] the lowest form of barbarism.... They possess neither courage, patriotism, natural affection, honour nor honesty.” And Donald Fraser, writing in 1914, about sixty years after Livingstone, cited “savage people” whose only hope of rescue lay in Christianity.

Some Edinburgh residents would have listened to stories related by their family members returning from overseas duty with Scottish regiments serving in the colonies. The soldiers would have been as imbued with the attitudes of white superiority as the schoolteachers must have been.<sup>21</sup> Many historians have noted that there was a rise in expressions of racism in Britain in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Was this so in Scotland?<sup>22</sup>

19 Christine Bolt, *Victorian Attitudes to Race*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul 1971, p. 97.

20 Robert Miles, ‘Racism and nationalism in Britain’, in Charles Husband (ed), *Race in Britain*, London: Hutchinson 1987, p. 308; R. Miles & L. Muirhead, ‘Racism in Scotland’, in D. McCrone (ed), *The Scottish Government Year Book 1986*, University of Edinburgh Press 1986, pp. 108–120. On overseas investment by Scottish merchants, eg in China, and East and West Africa, see eg Tony Dickson (et al), *Scottish Capitalism*, London: Lawrence & Wishart 1980. There is much on missionaries in A.C. Gibb, *Scottish Empire*, London: Alexander Maclehose 1937.

21 See Bruce Armstrong (ed), *A People Without Prejudice? The Experience of Racism in Scotland*, London: Runnymede Trust 1989; the quotations are from pp. 22–23.

22 See, eg Douglas A. Lorimer, *Colour Class and the Victorians: English Attitudes to the Negro in the Mid-nineteenth Century*, Leicester University Press 1978.

### *Scotland and Empire*

By 1800, according to Professor Palmer of Heriot-Watt University, “Scots dominated the physical and financial management of slavery in British slave islands such as Jamaica.”<sup>23</sup> This statement adds to the 2007 debate, on the effectiveness of the 1807 Abolition Act and emphasises the need for much more research to be carried out on the involvement of Scotland in the trade in enslaved Africans, in slavery—both before and after the 1807 and 1833 Acts—and in the Scottish role in the process of colonisation and in ruling the Empire. According to historian Nigel Tattersfield, Scotland was one of the three areas of Great Britain providing a ‘significant proportion of indentured servants in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.’<sup>24</sup> How many Scots served in the military and the navy as government administrators, as clerks on the plantations and in businesses? Just what proportion were they of this British labour force in the colonies?

But, before the unification of England and Scotland, the Scots attempted their own empire building in South America. In 1695 the Company of Scotland Trading to Africa and the Indies was set up. Because England wanted no competition to its East India Company, the Scots decided to focus on Panama and sent out about 2300 settlers to establish Caledonia, with the capital to be called New Edinburgh. Part of the plan (known as the Darien Venture) was to build a land bridge between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, using African slave labour. But the Spanish, who believed they ‘owned’ that part of the world, didn’t want this Scottish interference and slaughtered almost all of them.<sup>25</sup>

Scottish interest in empire building did not die. It was well demonstrated, some two hundred years later, by the Scottish African Corporation Limited, which had written to the Colonial Office offering to take over ‘responsibility’ for Bechuanaland from the British South African Company. The Scots, it can be argued, had considerable familiarity with this country through their missionaries and adventurous hunters. Thus, it may not be surprising that when King Khama visited Edinburgh in 1895, he was received with much pomp and ceremony. Whether the ‘takeover’ was broached with him is not recorded, but we do know that the King mentioned that he had been told much about Edinburgh by the missionary Mr MacKenzie.<sup>26</sup>

23 ‘Why are so many of our surnames Scottish?’ [www.thesun.co.uk/discussions](http://www.thesun.co.uk/discussions).

24 Nigel Tattersfield, *The Forgotten Trade*, London: Pimlico 1978, p. 305.

25 David Keys, ‘Scotland’s failed bid for global supremacy’, *BBC History Magazine*, April 2009, p. 9.

26 Neil Parson, *King Khama, Emperor Joe and the Great White Queen*, University of Chicago Press 1998, pp. 179–180. The purpose of the visit by three Bechuana Kings was to attempt

## The University of Edinburgh c.1850–1914

### *Nationalism, Imperialism and Racism*

Scottish nationalism had intensified from about the middle of the nineteenth century, and by 1886 nationalists had formed a Home Rule Association demanding the restoration of historic Scottish rights, more representation in Parliament in London, and more equality with England in business matters. Scotland did not demand its own parliament, and it “shared the attitudes of England to subject peoples...[and] celebrated the good fortune of being a partner in empire.”<sup>27</sup> This nationalism (if not necessarily the attitudes to empire) might have surprised and then delighted students from the colonies studying in Scotland, whose own demands on their return home in many ways matched those of Scotland.

It is unclear why Edinburgh was willing to accept a wide range of international students at that time. Today, the rationale is usually the higher fees charged to those coming from outside Scotland, and perhaps conformity to government pronouncements, guidelines and regulations regarding racial discrimination. At the moment there is no explanation for the University’s policies of more than a hundred years ago. However, it has been suggested that one reason might have been a staunch belief in imperialism and the assumed need to inculcate loyalty to the Empire in colonial students. One of the historians of the University quotes Sir James Crichton Browne, an Edinburgh graduate, Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons, London (and the Lord Chancellor’s Visitor in Lunacy), who explained to a Royal Colonial Institute gathering in 1892 that “the colonial students living in Edinburgh carried back to their distant homes...a feeling of affection for the old country...”

In 1850 the Scottish anatomist Robert Knox published his *The Races of Man*, which followed the work of Robert Combe, whose 1825 book *A System of Phrenology* maintained that intelligence was related to the shape of the brain/skull and that Europeans had the most superior shapes. Knox had been a lecturer at Barclay’s anatomy school in Surgeon’s Square, and he was a Fellow

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to persuade the British Queen not to permit the South African Company to take over their country.

- 27 M. Hechter, *Internal Colonialism: the Celtic Fringe in British National Development*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975, p. 214; Lindsay Patterson, *The Autonomy of Modern Scotland*, Edinburgh University Press 1994, pp. 47, 61–62, C. Harvie in his *Scotland’s Nationalism* (London: George Allen & Unwin 1977, p. 91) makes the same point about the importance of empire to Scotland. There is a discussion of the histories of nationalism in Charles Husband, “Race” in *Britain: Continuity and Change*, London: Hutchinson 1987, pp. 304–306.

of the Royal Society of Edinburgh. In addition, the Royal College of Surgeons had appointed him the Conservator of the Edinburgh Museum of Comparative Anatomy.<sup>28</sup> He believed in polygenesis (i.e., that different 'races' had different progenitors): Africans were so inferior that they would become extinct, so Europeans should preserve a few stuffed ones for their museums. According to Douglas Lorimer, "a number of his students became prominent physicians and anatomists," and his theories were propagated by the Anthropological Society of London and Dr James Hunt.<sup>29</sup> These theories, coupled with those of Gobineau, resulted in the idea of racial hierarchies: Europeans at the top, and Africans, who were physically strong but 'mentally feeble' at the bottom.<sup>30</sup> How many of the faculty and the students were influenced by Knox's racial and racist theories?

In 1898 Lord Rosebery, speaking at a meeting of the University's Associated Societies, claimed that "we in Scotland wish to continue to mould the Empire as we have in the past." Historian Ian Wotherspoon concludes that "Edinburgh University was perceived to be uniquely placed to play an important role in fostering the imperial mission and encourage the imperial ethos." By 1914 "the University [had] a real stake in the ongoing success of the imperial mission.... University officials and staff missed no opportunity to restate their commitment to the imperial ideal."<sup>31</sup>

Did the university see it as its *duty* to admit colonial students? Were all its faculty pro-Empire? Certainly, because "Africa provided the second largest number of jobs and service positions for Edinburgh graduates between 1880 and 1914" (especially in South Africa), the University had considerable interest in the Empire. This interest was to "support or justify British aspirations and ambitions in broad terms but also to provide an elevated vision of imperial commitment, mission and services."<sup>32</sup> The University's stance might have been judged 'liberal', given the numbers of its colonial students, but would that

28 Edinburgh University making its own anatomy class compulsory in the mid-1830s, coupled with the Burke and Hare body-snatching case made Knox many enemies in Edinburgh (eg he had to resign his post at the Museum) and he emigrated to London in 1842.

29 Douglas Lorimer (1978, n. 22) p. 137.

30 Louis L. Snyder, *The Idea of Racialism*, Princeton: van Nostran 1962, p. 57. See pp. 136–138 for his definitions of the superior 'Saxon'. See also Michael D. Biddiss (ed), *Images of Race*, Leicester University Press 1979.

31 Ian Wotherspoon, 'The British Empire and the International Students at the University of Edinburgh 1884–1914', PhD dissertation, University of Edinburgh 2002, pp. 9–11, 89.

32 Ian Wotherspoon (2002, n. 31), pp. 177, 220.



liberalism have been any less racist than, for example, the title of a paper given by Henry Fox-Bourne, the very active and 'liberal' secretary of the British Aborigines' Protection Society, at a conference in Paris in 1900? The title is *The Claims of Uncivilized Races*.

However, because 90 percent of the University's graduates were working 'overseas' between 1880 and 1914,<sup>33</sup> is it possible that there was some other self-interest in these imperialist attitudes? If so many students had to leave Edinburgh in search of employment, then the Empire may also have been seen as a future employer of graduates.

### *The Colonial Students*

According to a history of the University of Edinburgh, almost half of the student population in 1858 did not come from the upper classes—in great contrast to England's Oxford and Cambridge universities. Another difference was that in the 1880s about 14 percent of the students had come from abroad, and mainly from the Empire, though they were often from families of Scottish origin. There were 400 foreign-born students in 1880, and in 1898 there were 52 students from the West Indies and 20 from "other Colonies." It is, of course, possible that some of the West Indians were of Scottish origin.

So how many were Blacks or Indians? On his visit to Edinburgh and the University in 1851, William Wells Brown, the African-American abolitionist, noted "among the two or three hundred students, three coloured young men." Of the nearly seven hundred foreign-born students attending the university in 1914, eighty were studying medicine.<sup>34</sup> One historian of the University reported that

missionary links also brought black students from western and southern Africa at quite an early stage, and by the 1870s the Indian government was sending a regular contingent of students.<sup>35</sup>

33 Ian Wotherspoon, (2002, n. 31), p. 221.

34 Ian Wotherspoon, 'The Most Powerful Medical Magnet in Europe: Edinburgh University's Medical School and the Overseas World, 1880–1914', *Journal of the Royal College of Physicians, Edinburgh*, #34, 2004, pp. 153–159; 'Indian and Colonial Students in Edinburgh', *The Scotsman*, 28 January 1899.

35 Robert D. Anderson, Michael Lynch & Nicholas Phillipson, *The University of Edinburgh: An Illustrated History*, Edinburgh University Press 2003, p. 133. I must here express my most profound thanks to Peter Freshwater, who sent me this and much other material used in this section. An article in *The Student* in 1902 claimed that Edinburgh graduates 'served British needs overseas, attesting to the magnificent importance of our Alma Mater'. (Ian Wotherspoon (2002, n. 31), p. 28.



Bashir Maan suggests that Indian students arriving to study medicine were probably encouraged by the many Scottish teachers in the Indian medical schools.<sup>36</sup>

In March 1893 Sir James Siveright, the Scottish-born Commissioner for Crown Lands in the Cape Colony, visited Edinburgh and invited “about fifty” members of the South African Students Union and a number of University officials to a dinner, in order to discuss the founding of the Union. Were there any ‘Black’ Africans among these students from South Africa? I doubt it.<sup>37</sup>

The South African Students Union building was apparently functioning as a residence by 1899, when the issue of accommodation for “the very large body of students from the Colonies and India” was raised at a meeting of the University’s senior professors. A separate residence would serve the interests not only of the students, but of the “educational aspects of Imperial Federation,” some argued.

But there was another concern: the University was worried about the decreasing number of colonial students, which was attributed to the improvement in teaching “at Cambridge and other medical schools” and the promise of residential accommodation at London University. A resolution on the need for accommodation for these students was passed, and a committee was appointed to follow it up.<sup>38</sup> As far as I have been able to discover, however, no such hall of residence was built.

In light of this lack of accommodation, why did so many Indians, West Indians and West Africans gain their European medical qualifications at Edinburgh University?<sup>39</sup> According to one historian, “between 1790 and 1826

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36 Bashir Maan, *The New Scots: The Story of Asians in Scotland*, Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers 1993, p. 75. Engineering was the other field attracting Indian students.

37 Again, my profound thanks to Peter Freshwater for sending me this article, ‘Sir James Siveright and the Edinburgh South African Students’, *The Scotsman*, 4 March 1893. I do not know if there were any Black South African doctors at this time; the first Black barrister in Cape Town was Henry Sylvester Williams, a Trinidadian, reluctantly admitted by the Cape Town Bar in 1903.

38 Yet again, my profound thanks to Peter Freshwater for sending me this article ‘Indian and Colonial Students in Edinburgh’, *The Scotsman*, 28 January 1899.

39 Peter Freshwater has begun an ‘exploration of possible first students who studied early at the University from different countries’. See Peter Freshwater, ‘The Earliest University of Edinburgh Students From Outside Scotland—Part 1: Africa and America’; and ‘Part 2: Asia, Oceania, Mainland Europe and Great Britain and Ireland’, *University of Edinburgh Journal*, 43/1 June 2007 and 43/2 December 2007; and Ian Wotherspoon, ‘The Most Cosmopolitan University in the World—Overseas Students at the University a Century Ago’, *University of Edinburgh Journal*, 41/1 2003.

Edinburgh offered the most prestigious medical education in Great Britain.” The author then argues that the “liberal tradition and tolerance of dissent in Edinburgh...and Scottish nationalism found expression against the British [sic].”<sup>40</sup>

### *Political Support for ‘Black’ African Medical Students*

In 1900 the Nigerian governor and the British government refused to entertain an application from William Cole (then in his penultimate year in Edinburgh) for a post in the Northern Nigerian Medical Service, and it was probably that refusal that galvanised the medical students to act in solidarity with him.<sup>41</sup> In 1902 thirty-five students<sup>42</sup> convened a meeting at which they drafted a letter to Dean Simpson of the medical school asking him to protest against a recent promulgation by Colonial Secretary Joseph Chamberlain. Chamberlain had decreed that Africans were no longer to be employed as West African medical staff, because they were “not judged as competent as Europeans,” The one exception could be for the care of “indigenous patients” in colonial hospitals.<sup>43</sup>

Dean Simpson duly wrote to Chamberlain on 19 March, 1902 but did not elicit a response. The Senatus then instructed the dean to submit the documents to the local Member of Parliament. Sir John Batty Tuke and the Principal, Sir William Turner, wrote again to the Colonial Secretary, but Chamberlain was adamant. The Senatus was informed but made no comment.<sup>44</sup>

What motivated the university to respond positively to a request from the colonial medical students for such political support, in the first place? And

40 Adell Patton, *Physicians, Colonial Racism and Diaspora in West Africa*, University of Florida Press 1996, pp. 63, 91.

41 TNA: CO147/150, Lagos Correspondence, #226.

42 I think this number is excessive for African students, and thus give more credence to G.I.C. Eluwa, who states the number was seven and included F.V. Nanka-Bruce, who became one of the leaders of the Congress movement. (‘Background to the emergence of the National Congress of British West Africa’, *African Studies Review*, 14/2 1971, pp. 205–218) However, this large number does indicate the possibility of support from non-African medical students.

43 Adell Patton, *Physicians, Colonial Racism and Diaspora in West Africa*, University of Florida Press 1996, p. 131. That Africans should be employed in such positions was one of the campaigns undertaken by the Revd James ‘Holy’ Johnson in 1888. See E.A. Ayandele, *Holy Johnson: Pioneer of African Nationalism 1836–1917*, New York: Humanities Press 1970, p. 178. See also Hakim Adi, *West Africans in Britain 1900–1960*, London: Lawrence & Wishart 1998, p. 10. The issue of the employment of Black doctors by the Colonial Medical Service and their unequal salaries rumbled on post WWII.

44 David Kimble, *A Political History of Ghana 1850–1928*, Oxford: Clarendon Press 1965. p. 98, fn. 4; Ian Wotherspoon (2002, n. 31), p. 190.

why, after all their efforts did the university end its efforts? Surely the issue could have been taken further—to Parliament, for example. After all, a similar issue concerning Indian doctors had been raised there, despite common knowledge that Chamberlain, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, believed that “it was pretty clear to men of ordinary sense that British officers could not have confidence in Indian or native doctors.”<sup>45</sup>

This was a radical change. In 1824 one of Edinburgh's first African alumni, Dr William Fergusson, was named Acting Assistant Surgeon to the Royal African Colonial Corps and rose to the rank of Senior Military Medical Officer. In about 1840 he was appointed Acting Governor, and then, in 1845, Governor. He died a year later, en route to the United Kingdom, where he expected to obtain medical treatment.<sup>46</sup> Numerous other graduates were appointed to the government service until this racist exclusion was officially instituted from c.1907 onwards. An Edinburgh graduate, Dr Richard Akinwande Savage was the last African appointed to the African Medical Service.

### *Acceptance?*

Touring Scotland in 1851, African-American abolitionist William Wells Brown saw no problems. He did not recount whether he experienced any racist comments/behaviour he did not recount. He noted “coloured young men” sitting with the students at the “Infirmery,” and among the students “on their way to the college,” and “there appeared to be no feeling on the part of the whites towards their coloured associates, except of companionship and respect.”<sup>47</sup> However, we must recognise that African-Americans were usually in Great Britain on fund-raising visits, so they are hardly likely to have emphasized racist incidents in their published works—which, like their meetings and speeches, were meant to raise funds.

How were the African and Indian students accepted in the city? Ian Wotherspoon reports that there were problems with accommodation, because the university was not residential. “Overseas students...unfamiliar with British social customs and practise, often found animosity from their fellows.” But was it only unfamiliarity that resulted in hostility, or were the students not immune

45 Quoted in David Kimble (1965, n. 44), p. 98. There are also some excerpts from the Colonial Office's letter to Professor Turner on this page.

46 Compiled from material in Christopher Fyfe, *A History of Sierra Leone*, OUP 1962—an incomparable book. Fergusson studied in Edinburgh 1809–1812 and became a Licentiate of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh in 1812. Peter Freshwater, ‘The Earliest University of Edinburgh Students From Outside Scotland—Part 1: Africa and America’, *University of Edinburgh Journal*, 43/1 June 2007, pp. 18–23.

47 My thanks to Peter Freshwater for these excerpts from Paul Jefferson (ed), *The Travels of William Wells Brown*, Edinburgh University Press 1991, pp. 148, 201.

to the prevalent racist attitudes? I would suggest that this was the case—especially, because an ex-student recalled that “the colour bar...was much more evident then,...and the Indian and other students mixed but little with their white contemporaries.”<sup>48</sup> Had attitudes changed since Wells Brown’s visit in 1851?

According to Peter Freshwater, who has looked through *The Student* and *The Gambolier* student magazines for this period, there were very few mentions of ‘coloured’ students. But he did find reports of the University Swimming Club imposing a colour bar. The Students’ Representative Council took up the issue and passed a motion “regret[ting] the action of the...Club which has caused the appearance in the ‘Handbook’ of a paragraph detrimental to academic unity, dissociating itself entirely from the principle of colour distinction contained therein.” Could the Council have been more emphatic? It is notable that there were four students who voted against the motion.<sup>49</sup> The Students’ Representative Council was attempting to live up to its aims, which from 1884 included the promotion of “social life and academic unity among the students.”<sup>50</sup>

What was likely to have been the effect of the University’s propagation of imperial attitudes on the colonial students? Ian Wotherspoon wrote that

for some, their time at Edinburgh University heightened their local, even nationalist consciousness, and awareness of some of the inequalities and pejorative racial stereotyping that Empire brought.<sup>51</sup>

Did the students have to confront the racial prejudices fanned by the popularised perversions of Darwin’s theories on the streets and in their lodgings and hospital placements, and perhaps even in the lecture rooms?

We do not know which city Theophilus Scholes was referring to in his *Glimpses of the Ages Past*, published in London in 1908. He writes of

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48 Ian Wotherspoon, “The British Empire and the International Students at the University of Edinburgh 1884–1914”, PhD dissertation, University of Edinburgh 2002, pp. 53–54.

49 Email from Peter Freshwater, 12 February 2009; *The Gambolier* 4 November 1909; *The Student* 5 November 1909. 27 voted for the motion.

50 The students wanted to establish a Union, as it would ‘bring men from all parts of the Empire into daily social intercourse with one another’. The admission of women became a hot topic of discussion by the turn of the century. Emails from Peter Freshwater, 5 and 26 March 2009, quoting from J.I. Macpherson, *Twenty-one Years of Corporate Life at Edinburgh University*, Edinburgh Students’ Representative Council 1905, p. 18.

51 Ian Wotherspoon (2002, n. 31) p. 225.

Black students at a northern university...hooted [at] and called names. The students' magazine had suggested coloured students should be expelled.... Feelings of intense antipathy towards coloured students had even appeared among the teaching staff of the institution.... When the Alake of Abeokuta had visited [Aberdeen University],...a band of students pursued him and pushed his cap in his carriage.

However, the ill-behaved students were disciplined, and when the Alake reached Edinburgh "a number of African students...were among those who welcomed him."<sup>52</sup>

### *Colonial Student Organisations*

As early as 1884 the University had an Overseas Student Association—for students from Australia and white students from South Africa.<sup>53</sup> Were most of them of Scottish descent? When the first association of non-white students was formed has not been recorded, as far as I could find.

In 1897 Henry Sylvester Williams, a Trinidadian law student in London, set up the African Association, which organised the first-ever conference calling itself Pan-African. It was held in London in 1900,

in order to take steps to influence public opinion on existing proceedings and conditions affecting the welfare of Natives in the various parts of the Empire, viz. South Africa, West Africa and the British West Indies.<sup>54</sup>

Three representatives of Edinburgh University's Afro-West Indian Literary Society journeyed to London to attend the conference. One was an 1899 graduate from Trinidad, Dr John Alcindor, who moved to London and practised there until his death in 1924.<sup>55</sup> The second delegate, Richard Akinwande Savage, was

52 Peter Freshwater sent me the pages from John D. Hargreaves, *Aberdeenshire to Africa: Northeast Scots and British Overseas Expansion*, Aberdeen University Press 1981, pp. 65–67. As ever, thank you. (Correspondence March 2009). The quote re Edinburgh is from the *Argus*, reported in Jeffrey Green, *Black Edwardians: Black people in Britain 1901–1914*, London: Frank Cass 1998, p. 26.

53 George Foulkes, *Eighty Years On*, University of Edinburgh Press 1964, pp. 33–34.

54 From my *The Origins of Pan-Africanism: Henry Sylvester Williams and the African Diaspora* London/New York: Routledge, 2010.

55 Dr Alcindor remained very active politically in pan-African organisations, serving as the president of the African Progress Union and chairing W.E.B. Du Bois's Pan-African Congress in London in 1921. On the Union, see Jeffrey Green, "The African Progress Union of

then completing his medical degree and maintained his pan-African activism when he returned to West Africa. The third delegate was William Meyer, a medical student from Trinidad, who spoke out against pseudo-scientific ideas of racial hierarchy at the conference.

It is unclear whether the Afro-West Indian Association was the same as the Literary Society, but Peter Freshwater assures me they were “one and the same.”<sup>56</sup> The *Students' Handbook* for 1899–1900 lists an Afro-West Indian Society whose object was “the promotion of social life and intellectual improvement among African and West Indian students in Edinburgh.” The only name I recognise among the listed officials is the Vice-President, “R. Akiwande [sic] Savage.” Membership was open “to all African and West Indian students and others that the Committee approves of.”<sup>57</sup> Meetings were held on alternate Saturdays.

This association and the Indian Association<sup>58</sup> held a debate at the Non-Associated Societies Hall in 1908 on the motion “That the success of a cause depends more on its organisation than on its inherent justice.” One of the speakers was H.C. Bankole-Bright, a Nigerian Saros medical student.<sup>59</sup> The Indian Association had been founded in 1883; by about 1908 it had raised enough funds to rent “spacious premises” at 11 George Square, where it remained until the late 1950s. In the first few years of the twentieth century, as the Home Rule movement grew in India, the Edinburgh students “became active in this field,” holding meetings in their offices, at the University and in the city.<sup>60</sup> In 1904 there was an Ethiopian Association in Edinburgh, but nothing more is known about it.<sup>61</sup>

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London 1918–1925: a Black Pressure Group’, paper given at the ICS, University of London, 5 February 1991.

56 Email from Peter Freshwater, 26 March 2009, but the name ‘varies in the Students’ Handbook’.

57 This information was sent to me by Peter Freshwater, who found copies of the *Handbook* in the University library. Many thanks!

58 The Indian Association had been founded in 1883 by the six students then at the University; by 1900 membership had grown to 200. (Rozina Visram, *Asians in Britain: 400 Years of History*, London: Pluto Press 2002, p. 91).

59 Akintola G. Wyse, *H.C. Bankole-Bright and Politics in Colonial Sierra Leone 1919–1958*, University of Cambridge 1990, p. 10, quoting *The Student* 24 January 1908. On the Saros, see below.

60 Bashir Maan (1993, n. 36) pp. 76, 78. A ‘Syllabus of Meetings—Session 1908–1909’ is reproduced on the last page in Ian Wotherspoon (2003, n. 39) pp. 34–37.

61 Hakim Adi (1998, n. 43) p. 11.

What was the state of pan-Africanist ideology in the 1920s? The Edinburgh African Association was formed in 1922, with officers from Sierra Leone, Nigeria, South Africa, and the Gold Coast.<sup>62</sup> But the following year the Edinburgh West Indian Students' Society was founded! Had the Africans not accepted West Indian members? From information found by Peter Freshwater, in 1927 the African Association declared that it was for those of "negro blood." Among the Honorary Presidents of the African Association were Bankole-Bright and Casely Hayford, the well-educated son of a Fante Wesleyan minister.<sup>63</sup>

According to historian Hakim Adi, there was a "high level of political activity amongst West Africans in Edinburgh.... [They] lobbied politicians and wrote to the press both in Britain and in West Africa." But there were also political differences among the West Africans, as indicated by Moses da Rocha when he wrote of "jealous Black Traitors and conspirators" to the African-American journalist John Edward Bruce.<sup>64</sup> Were the Africans influenced by the growing Home Rule campaign mounted by the Indian students?

There is not room in this chapter to tell the stories of more than two African graduates from the medical school at the University of Edinburgh. Some others who have been chronicled are James Africanus Beale Horton, by George Shepperson and Bande Omoniyi by Hakim Adi.<sup>65</sup>

### *Nigeria—A Brief Introduction*

In order to place the life of Dr John Randle into a meaningful context, some understanding of the political situation in the country now called Nigeria is essential.

Lagos was 'annexed' by the British in 1851 and declared a Crown colony in 1862. The only remaining independent state to the west was that of the Egba, whose capital was Abeokuta. More conquests followed; treaties were signed—often at the point of a gun, and equally often without the signer fully understanding what he was signing or of what a signature meant to Europeans; Benin (in 1852) and Biafra (in 1849) were declared British Protectorates,

62 *West Africa*, 25 February 1922, p. 133. Was the Secretary, whose name is given as 'Montebang' a native of South Africa?

63 Peter Freshwater, email 3 February 2009.

64 Hakim Adi (1998, n. 43) p. 11. Da Rocha was a returned Brazilian—ie, a descendant of one of the many enslaved Africans transported to Brazil, who, on obtaining their freedom, returned to their West African homelands.

65 George Shepperson, 'An Early African Graduate', in G. Donaldson, *Four Centuries: Edinburgh University Life*, University of Edinburgh 1983, pp. 92–98; Hakim Adi, 'Andele Omoniyi—a neglected Nigerian nationalist', *African Affairs*, #90 1991 pp. 581–605.



becoming a United Protectorate in 1861. In 1900 the southern lands 'acquired' by the Royal Niger Company were added, to form the Southern Nigeria Protectorate; Lagos was added in 1906. The northern Company lands were declared a Protectorate by Lord Lugard who had been appointed High Commissioner of the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria by the British government. He then proceeded to cajole the northern emirates into submission, or to conquer them, and then added them to the Protectorate, under his governorship. In 1914 he combined the two Protectorates into the colony of Nigeria.

The Africans liberated from slaving vessels by the Royal Navy from about 1810 were landed in Sierra Leone. Missionaries had established schools there, so many of those liberated became the first group of Africans to receive a Western education. Was it the desire to go to somewhere near their ancestral lands that led a number of them (or their children) to migrate to growing cities such as Lagos, Abeokuta, and then Port Harcourt? By 1851, about a quarter of the population of Lagos consisted of liberated Africans—the 'Saros'—and returnees from Cuba and Brazil. Literate, Christianised, skilled, and used to Westerners, they had certain advantages over the local populations, including the coastal peoples, whose experience was often confined to trading with European merchants (in slaves and then in produce).<sup>66</sup> However, according to E.A. Ayandele, Saros "found the pull of traditional culture so strong...[that] many took 'pagan' titles, had more than one wife, kept several slaves and even returned to traditional religion."<sup>67</sup>

Very likely, Saros formed the greatest number of the five thousand English speakers recorded in the 1891 census—out of a total population of eight-six thousand in Lagos. This must have given them an advantage in the eyes of the colonial government, and preference for admission to the few high schools. According to Hollis Lynch, Gov. Glover tried to foster feelings of unity among the Saros, the Brazilians, and the Europeans.<sup>68</sup> Being mainly of Yoruba origins, they also became, as one newspaper put it, "the eyes and ears of the hinterland people."<sup>69</sup> Did all this arouse enmity or envy from the other ethnic groups

66 Hollis R Lynch, *Edward Wilmot Blyden*, OUP 1967, p. 22. Some authors use 'Saro'; others 'Saros'. Some of these traders would soon be sending their children to Britain for a Western education.

67 E.A. Ayandele, *Holy Johnson: Pioneer of African Nationalism 1836–1917*, New York: Humanities Press 1970, p. 114.

68 P.D. Cole, 'Lagos society in the nineteenth century', in A.B. Aderibigbe (ed), *Lagos: Development of a City*, Nigeria: Longman 1975, p. 42.

69 Fred I.A. Omu, *Press and Politics in Nigeria 1880–1937*, New Jersey: Humanities Press 1978, p. 104.



in the colony? The one book I have found on the Saros, and E.A. Ayandele, certainly believe so.<sup>70</sup>

It was at this time—the last quarter of the nineteenth century—that Britain decided to extend its territories in Nigeria, in order to ‘pacify’ the people and ‘civilize’ them. That is, Britain wanted not only to enlarge its market among the people, but to obtain more ground nuts and other produce from inland farmers. Resistance had to be suppressed and measures of ‘civilization’ put in place to achieve this.

An expanding empire also provided more employment for White Britons, which coupled with the rise in racist ideologies, led to a reduction in the numbers of Western-educated Africans employed by the government and merchants. This naturally resulted in much resentment among the Africans and evoked feelings in them of a new nationalism. Historian Leo Spitzer described this period as the people, especially the Saros, being “psychologically little prepared for the changes that were taking place in European ideas about Africans,...racist ideas coming into vogue,...the noble savage stereotype being replaced by the popular image of an ape-like black man.... They began to feel betrayed, scorned.”<sup>71</sup>

Why were these feelings new? The country we call Nigeria was created in 1885 by Europeans drawing lines on a large map of Africa in Berlin. They all wanted a ‘piece of the action’, and it was thought best to agree on the boundaries peacefully and not have to resort to military battles with each other for possession. These new creations—‘countries’—encompassed people who spoke over a thousand different languages and naturally, had their own thousand-year histories. There was nothing at all to unite them, except the purposeful zeal of the Christian missionaries (some of whom fought among themselves) and the guns pointed by the new rulers. Added to this ethnic and linguistic mixture were the people called the Saros. Seen by many of their hosts as upstart Europeanised foreigners, they were given some status by resident whites and were often used as middlemen by European traders.<sup>72</sup>

70 Max Dixon-Fyle, *A Saro Community in the Niger Delta, 1912–1984*, University of Rochester Press 1999; Cole (1975, n. 68), pp. 45–55.

71 Leo Spitzer, ‘The Sierra Leone Creoles’ in P.D. Curtin (ed), *Africa and the West*, University of Wisconsin Press 1972, p. 104.

72 See, eg J.F. Ade Ajayi, ‘Nineteenth century origins of Nigerian nationalism’, *Jnl. of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, vol. 2, 1961, pp. 196–210; Tekena N. Tamuno, ‘Some aspects of Nigerian reaction to the imposition of British rule’, *Jnl. of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, vol.3, 1965, pp. 271–293.

*Dr John Randle (1855–1928)*<sup>73</sup>

John Randle was born in Regent, Sierra Leone, a village housing liberated Africans, mainly of Yoruba origins. His parents were both liberated Yoruba. He attended the village missionary school, and then the Church Missionary Society (CMS) grammar school in Freetown. In 1874 he was apprenticed to the Colonial Hospital, where he became a ‘dispenser’.

As a qualified ‘professional’, he moved to Accra, on the Gold Coast, and saved enough money to travel to Edinburgh in 1884 for formal training as a doctor. He graduated in 1888 with the gold medal in *materia medica*, and in 1889 he and another Edinburgh graduate, Dr Obadiah Johnson, were appointed Assistant Colonial Surgeons in the Colonial Hospital, Lagos.<sup>74</sup> Concurrently, Dr Randle set up a private practice, with patients who included “most of the European trading establishment of Lagos, especially the German merchants.”<sup>75</sup>

In 1892 Dr Randle resigned from the Colonial Service. Among the reasons he gave was that he had been required to provide medical services in the hinterlands, for example in Ijebu-Ode, 110 miles from Lagos, although his appointment had been to Lagos. He was also incensed by the discrepancy in salaries: Africans trained in the same universities as whites received a little over half their salary.<sup>76</sup> In his letter to the Colonial Office regarding the resignation of this well-respected, well-liked, and socially prominent physician, the recently appointed Lagos governor made his attitude to the African doctors serving under him quite clear: “My past experience of native doctors...does not encourage me to place much faith in their aptitude for this profession....”<sup>77</sup>

However, Randle may have been quietly informed that the Colonial Office did not fully agree with Governor Carter. In any event, he withdrew his resignation. He then demanded, again, an increase in salary to £500 per annum, something he considered especially warranted, in view of his periodic postings to

73 Dr Randle's death was noted in the *British Medical Journal* (4 August 1928, p. 224), which recorded that he had been a member of the British Medical Association and “also served on a number of Government committees.”

74 The starting salary for Colonial Surgeons was £250 per annum for African doctors and £400 for Whites. Adelola Adeleye, *African Pioneers in Modern Medicine*, Ibadan: University Press 1985, p. 90. Chapter 7 in this book is on John Randle. Obadiah Johnson graduated MB CM in 1886. (Peter Freshwater, email 26 March 2009. Thank you!)

75 Adelola Adeleye, *African Pioneers in Modern Medicine*, Ibadan: University Press 1985, p. 97.

76 On this issue, see Marika Sherwood, ‘Coloured Medical Men’, *BASA Newsletter*, #32, January 2002; #34, September 2002; #37, Sept. 2003.

77 Adelola Adeleye (1985, n. 74) p. 99. There are more instances of Gov. Carter's racism in this article.

Ijebu-Ode. This was £200 in excess of the maximum salary then on offer to African doctors.

But the ensuing copious correspondence was to no avail. Late in 1893, when he was informed that he was being moved to Ijebu-Ode, Randle resigned irrevocably. According to the report in the *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, Dr Randle had felt that this appointment “crippled his manhood and suppressed his individuality.”<sup>78</sup> Given the governor’s attitude, one can only wonder what level of disparagement and insults the African medical officers had had to contend with.

We can gain an insight into the kind of person John Randle was from his relationship to a boy named Aina Onabolu, whose father

encouraged him to have a free and close association with Dr. Randle.... When Aina was around twelve years old, the two of them occasionally read together in a foreign newspaper an openly racist depreciation of Africans as being intellectually incapable of creating fine arts. They both became deeply upset.... Dr. Randle would encourage [Aina] to prove those kind of prejudices wrong by becoming an artist practising “fine art” in a western sense.<sup>79</sup>

Onabolu lived up to Dr Randle’s expectations, becoming the first recognised modern artist in Nigeria.

By 1890 John Randle was sufficiently respected to be accepted as the husband for Victoria,<sup>80</sup> one of the children of Capt. J.P.L. Davies and his wife, Sarah Forbes Bonetta, Queen Victoria’s god-daughter.<sup>81</sup> Capt. Davies, a very prominent merchant, was probably the richest Saros in Lagos.<sup>82</sup> The young

<sup>78</sup> *Sierra Weekly News*. 27 August 1904.

<sup>79</sup> Evelyn Nicodemus, ‘The Black Atlantic and the paradigm shift to modern art in Africa’, *Critical Interventions*, June 2009. My thanks to Evelyn for a copy of this article.

<sup>80</sup> Victoria was also accepted as a god-daughter by Queen Victoria, and visited her, together with her children Beatrice and John, escorted by Bishop Johnson in 1900. (*Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 15 September 1900, p. 4) The marriage did not last long: from 1898 Victoria and the children lived for some time in England; then in Freetown; they then returned to Lagos in 1917 and Victoria died there in 1920 (*Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 11 December 1920, p. 4).

<sup>81</sup> On Sarah, see Caroline Bressey, ‘Of Africa’s brightest ornaments: a short biography of Sarah Forbes Bonetta’, *Social & Cultural Geography*, 6/2, 2005. pp. 253–266, and chapter 6 in her PhD dissertation, ‘Forgotten Geographies—historical geography of black women in Victorian and Edwardian London’, University College of London, 2004.

<sup>82</sup> James Pinson Lalubo Davies (1828–1906) was also of Liberated African descent: his father was from Abeokuta, his mother from Ogbomosh, Sierra Leone. Initially apprenticed to

couple's status in Lagos society is evidenced by the two hundred guests, including Governor Moloney, who had attended their wedding and the wedding reception in 1862.

Dr Randle now moved wholly into private medical practice.<sup>83</sup> Again, according to the *Sierra Weekly News*, he was very successful and "within a couple of years [became] a man of affluence and one of the largest land proprietors in Lagos." He was a prominent shareholder in the Bank of British West Africa, established by the Liverpool merchant Elder Dempster.<sup>84</sup> A well-liked doctor with patients from all strata of Lagos residents, he clearly cared for all, because, as the newspaper account related, he "used to treat the poor and give food and medicine to the poor in Lagos." Though his father had become a merchant in Lagos, Dr Randle retained his relationship with his native village, promising in 1902, for example, to give £60 per month for the sustenance and education of "twelve poor villagers".

John Randle became very active politically in Lagos. What might lie behind this? His early experiences in Edinburgh might have made him realise that Great Britain was not invincible and that there were some peoples within the British Isles who resented England's dominance. This could have encouraged him to consider political activism, once he returned home, but there was another factor in his life that would have pushed him in that direction: his father-in-law, who was not only a charitable, but a political man.<sup>85</sup> Davies had been among those who, in 1856, had protested against the assumption of many powers by Britain's Consul Campbell. As a trader, Davis became acquainted with many of the different peoples in the hinterlands, so it is not surprising that he was one of the founders of the African Commercial Association in

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the Royal Navy, he gained the master mariner's certificate and moved into trading. By 1858 he owned at least one trading vessel. In 1870 Governor Hennessy described him as 'highly intelligent, and most honourable in all his dealings... For many years, in the Commission of the Peace'. Jean Herskovits Kopytoff, *A Preface to Modern Nigeria*, University of Wisconsin Press 1965, p. 358.

83 For mention of some of Dr Randle's published medical articles, see Adelola Adeyoye (1985, n. 74) pp. 108–9.

84 For a critique of Elder Dempster, see my 'Elder Dempster and West Africa 1891–1940: the genesis of underdevelopment', *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 30/3, 1997.

85 For example, in 1867 Capt. Davies donated £100 to the CMS Grammar School which he had attended in Freetown. A leading member of the wealthy Saros society in Lagos, he was well-supported by his wife. 'She is always doing good' Governor Hennessy had written about her. (James Pope-Hennessy, *Verandah*, London: George Allen & Unwin, 1964, p. 137)

1863.<sup>86</sup> This was established by “all the different African tribes in this settlement having for its object Peace, Unity and Concord....”<sup>87</sup> In 1872, the Governor appointed Capt. Davis to the Lagos Legislative Council. Did his father-in-law’s experiences, activism and pan-Africanist outlook influence John Randle?

Dr Randle’s first struggle with the authorities—over the discrepancy between the salaries of African and white medical officers in government service—may have encouraged him to engage in further political activity. In 1901–2 he was among those protesting against the Forest Ordinance which was, in fact, a proposal by Governor Lord Lugard to take over the ownership of land. The following year he was among the signatories (as was Capt. Davies) of a petition to the governor regarding proposals to restrict the freedom of the press.<sup>88</sup>

In 1908, with Dr Orisadipe Obasa, Dr Randle formed the People’s Union to campaign for the welfare of the Lagos community, irrespective of their ethnic and religious differences. With the support of some of the Lagos chiefs and some of the “class of potentially radical professional men with progressive ideas,”<sup>89</sup> the union led the agitation against the imposition of a Water Rate Act that, they argued, was going to provide piped water only for Europeans.

In 1911 the Union toured Yorubaland, to garner support for a fight against Lord Lugard’s latest proposal to alter traditional land tenure laws in Southern Nigeria by declaring all lands to be government property. Drs. Randle and

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86 Trading in cotton and palm oil in Lagos, Abeokuta and Porto Novo, Davies was bankrupted, under somewhat questionable and long drawn-out circumstances, by his English partners in 1876. But he recovered, returned not only to trade but also moved into growing coffee and cocoa for export. Davies traded widely: coffee from Brazil, cocoa from Fernando Po; from the 1880s to the 1890s he was ‘responsible for almost all the cocoa shipped from Lagos’. (A.G. Hopkins, ‘Innovation in a Colonial Context’, in C. Dewey and A.G. Hopkins, *The Imperial Impact*, London: Athlone Press 1978, p. 88).

87 Jean Herskovits Kopytoff (1965, n. 82) p. 195.

88 Fred I.A. Omu, *Press and Politics in Nigeria 1880–1937*, New Jersey: Humanities Press 1978, p. 177.

89 Richard L. Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties: Power in an Emergent African Nation*, Princeton University press, 1953, p. 48, quoting Nnamdi Azikiwe, *The Development of Political Parties in Nigeria*, published by the Office of the Commissioner in the UK for the Eastern Region of Nigeria, 1957, p. 5. However, when I looked at this, I found: ‘The People’s Union, said to be controlled by Dr J.K. Randle, Dr Obasa, Dr Akinwande Savage.... Politically conservative compared with the NNDP which was radical. The political status quo was regarded as ideal by the People’s Union and any changes were to be gradual’. I would suggest that Dr Azikiwe had been misinformed by those he had questioned about the People’s Union.

Obasa apparently travelled to the UK to press the issue.<sup>90</sup> The proposal was abandoned by the government. In 1915 the Union had to fight against Lord Lugard's attempt to re-impose the Water Rate in Lagos. The government now accused the Union of "threats of agitation" and sedition! This had the desired effect: The demands were reduced to a "not exorbitant rate." The Lagos traditional elite was very disappointed by this climb-down by the Union and withdrew its support.<sup>91</sup>

With the outbreak of World War I in 1914, Dr Randle served as the superintendent of the Nigerian Overseas Comfort Fund, established to supply "the material needs" of Nigerians serving abroad and to ensure that their service was well recognised.<sup>92</sup> Although there were some rumblings of disaffection, it is believed that most colonised West Africans supported the war. John Randle complained that

in recent years the administration of the government...has not given the people entire satisfaction. The people see the government as not carried on in their interest. But, however, painfully true this is, let us not forget the wider principle that we are citizens of the British Empire.<sup>93</sup>

This statement raises many questions: for example, could Randle not envisage independence from British overlords? If not, is this related to 'Nigeria' having been a far-from-unified country? Did he believe that the British were more acceptable rulers than the Germans might be? Did he consider himself a "citizen of the British Empire," despite the racial discrimination he had been subjected to in the medical service? Was he following some Scottish thinking on 'nationhood'? Was he being very careful, in order to avoid being charged with sedition during the war?

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90 Rina Okonkwo, 'The Lagos Auxiliary of the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Rights Protection Society: a re-examination', *Int. Jnl. of African Historical Studies*, 15/3 1982, pp. 423–433.

91 Patrick Cole, *Modern and Traditional Elite in the Politics of Lagos*, Cambridge University Press 1975, pp. 70, 74, 83, 96–99. There were some negative interpretations of the Water Rate struggle; see eg Fred I.A. Omu, *Press and Politics in Nigeria 1880–1937*, New Jersey: Humanities Press 1978, p. 222, which also summarises the complicated political issues of the time.

92 Adelola Adeboye (1985, n. 75) p. 189.

93 Akintola G. Wyse, *H.C. Bankole-Bright and Politics in Colonial Sierra Leone 1919–1958*, University of Cambridge 1990, p. 32; Michael Crowder discusses this statement and possible West African attitudes to WWI in his *West Africa Under Colonial Rule*, London: Hutchinson (1968), 1976, Chapter 2.

After the war, Drs. Randle and Obasa returned to politics by launching a new socio-political organisation, the Reform Club, about which all I could find was that it became involved in some political and educational matters.<sup>94</sup> John Randle also returned to his earlier interest in West African nationalism. In 1914, before the war, he had received a proposal from Casely Hayford and Dr Akinwande Savage for a West African conference on the Gold Coast and had responded enthusiastically. In 1915 he was elected Chairman of the Lagos Committee for the proposed conference—though all activity to promote the conference had to be postponed because of the outbreak of war. When the call for the conference was eventually issued, Drs. Randle and Savage (who had returned to Lagos in 1915 and joined the Lagos organising committee) were in such serious disagreement that Dr Randle did not attend the conference. This first Pan-African conference to be held in Africa, which created the National Council of British West Africa (NCBWA), was held in Accra in 1920.

One of the resolutions of the NCBWA was a proposal for elections to town councils. Despite the generally negative reaction of the British government regarding this idea, Governor Sir Hugh Clifford decided to institute elections in Lagos. Among the contending groups in 1923 was the revived People's Union; another was the Union of Young Nigerians, whose president was another Edinburgh medical graduate, Moses da Rocha.<sup>95</sup> Dr Obasa stood for the People's Union but was not elected.

Although it was in a state of fast and fatal decline by 1927, the Union (still under the leadership of Dr Randle) was among the organisations protesting about the government's proposal to institute a poll tax in Lagos. They won, and an income tax system was instituted instead.

That Dr Randle retained his Saros status—and his pan-African identity—is perhaps demonstrated by his appointment in 1920 as of the vice-patrons of the Sierra Leonean Friendly Society of Lagos. He retained his allegiance to his native village by building a chapel and two schools there, and he gave money for the construction of a science building, and for science teaching, at Fourah Bay College. He also named one of his many Lagos properties "Regent House."<sup>96</sup>

94 Adelola Adeloye (1985, n. 75) p. 190.

95 Da Rocha also contributed to newspapers; in 1920 he founded the Union of Young Nigerians. (Fred I.A. Omu [1978, n. 88] p. 233).

96 For the many charitable bequests in his will, see Adelola Adeloye (1985, n. 75) pp. 110–111; Christopher Fyfe (1962, n. 46) p. 537.



He also supported the youth of Lagos by building the Onikan Swimming Pool for them, and annual Dr J.K. Randle Swimming Championships still held there. He also created a recreation space known as the Love Garden in the same area.<sup>97</sup>

### *The Gold Coast—A Brief Introduction*

In 1821 the British government placed the administration of the coastal Gold Coast settlements under Sierra Leone. After 1874 it became a separate colony, with some responsibility for Lagos until 1896. The wealthy Asante Empire, which had been expanding since the eighteenth century, was finally conquered by the British in 1896, and King Prempeh I was deported. The subsequent uprising led in 1901 by Queen Mother Yaa Asantewaa was viciously quelled, and the Empire was now added to the Gold Coast as a Protectorate. The territories and peoples north of the Empire were also now incorporated into the colony.

The coastal area was inhabited in the nineteenth century mainly by the Ga peoples on the east and the Fante peoples to the west.<sup>98</sup> Early in the century the Fante had allied with the British because they were threatened by the Asante. Having gained some limited judicial powers as the price of their co-operation, the British tried to extend these. The Fante chiefs used this attempt to create the Confederation, which advocated freedom from British rule. The Ga Confederation also had been formed to resist British penetration—equally unsuccessfully.

In 1897 the governor introduced a Lands Bill into the Gold Coast Legislative Assembly that proposed making all lands Crown property. To resist the Bill the Fante formed the Aborigines' Rights Protection Society (ARPS) and sent a delegation to London. They prevailed, and the lands remained in Africans' possession. In 1911 when a Forest Bill was mooted—again threatening a takeover of lands—the ARPS organised a massive protest. This dispute rumbled on for fifteen years.

The British 'Protectorate' government created a legislature to which the Governor appointed two African representatives.<sup>99</sup> In 1883 the legislature passed an ordinance removing all authority from the chiefs. Naturally, this caused much resentment. In 1888–7 there were demands for the government to hold elections to the legislature, but this was turned down. The educated

97 Email from Everlyn Nicodemus, 23 May 2009; [www.ngrguardiannews.com/sports/article06//indexn3\\_html?pdate=160509&](http://www.ngrguardiannews.com/sports/article06//indexn3_html?pdate=160509&).

98 Both the Fante and the Ga are polities with many sub-groups ruled by their own chiefs.

99 In 1874 the 'Protectorate' was proclaimed a more formal 'Colony and Protectorate' over the southern states west of the Volta; the British met considerable resistance East of the Volta.



elite, and some of the chiefs, then proposed the creation of Town Councils, with elected members. The government agreed to allow the Councils, but insisted that most of the members be nominated, not elected. It was not until 1898 that the first Town Council was created, in Accra. In 1916 Casely Hayford, of the ARPS, the well-educated son of a Fante Wesleyan minister, was one of the two men nominated as an 'unofficial' member of the Legislative Assembly.<sup>100</sup> He became probably the foremost political and nationalist activist on the Gold Coast.

There was, of course considerable resentment among the chiefs and kings about the usurpation of their powers. Although most of them lacked Western-style education, they recognised that it was in their interest to cooperate with the ARPS. Thus the ARPS became the 'spokesman' for a considerable proportion of the coastal hierarchy, if not the 'ordinary' peoples.

It was not till after World War I that the educated elite began to propose "self-determination." In the years before, there was little thought of "independence outside the British Empire", according to historian Ofusu-Appiah.<sup>101</sup> Who were this elite group? Not liberated Africans returning to their homelands, as in Lagos, but often the progeny of Europeans who had conducted trade along the coast and married local women. Some, known as "merchant princes," were very wealthy and became hugely influential in local politics.

### *Dr Akinwande Savage (1874–1935)*

The son of a prominent merchant of Sierra Leone and partly of Egba origins, Akinwande Savage<sup>102</sup> was born in Lagos, educated in the Breadfruit School, then the CMS grammar school in Lagos. He entered Edinburgh University in 1895 and graduated in 1900. At University the young Lagosian led a political existence. He served on the Students' Representative Council and the Executive Council. In 1898, at a Scottish Inter-University Conference, his motion for the establishment of lectureships in tropical diseases was "favourably entertained by the Authorities."<sup>103</sup> Savage was sub-editor of *The Student*, joint editor of the

100 Hayford, related to the very wealthy merchant Brew family via his mother, had trained as a lawyer in London. Brew, an Irish merchant on the Gold Coast married to a Fante, had founded the Brew fortunes from trading in slaves, and as a coastal agent of the Asante.

101 L.H. Ofusu-Appiah, *Joseph Ephraim Casely Hayford: the man of vision and faith*, Accra: Academy of Arts and Sciences 1975, p. 3.

102 Was the father a Liberated African? And why was the family given the name 'Savage' by the missionaries?

103 Adelola Adeboye (1985, n. 75) p. 192. Much of the information on Dr Savage is from this book.

*University Handbook* for 1899 and 1900, and the president of the Afro-West Indian Literary Society, probably in 1900.

In 1900 he attended the Pan-African Conference held in London at the instigation of a Trinidadian law student, Henry Sylvester Williams. Savage represented the Afro-West Indian Literary Society; unfortunately, the details of his contribution to the Conference do not appear in any of the reports I have been able to locate.<sup>104</sup>

After graduation Dr Savage was appointed African Colonial Surgeon on the Gold Coast, then Medical Officer of Health in Cape Coast, where he served from 1907 until 1911. According to Michael Crowder, he “lost his job when his post came under Gold Coast government control.”<sup>105</sup> The British Anti-Slavery Society (ASS) took up the issue of the non-employment of African physicians by the Medical Service in 1906. The Gold Coast Auxiliary of the ASS also took up the issue, and Dr Savage, who appears to have been a member, had letters published about the issue in the *Gold Coast Leader* on 3 February 1912, and in the *Nigerian Chronicle* on 23 February 1912.<sup>106</sup>

Much of Dr Savage's time was spent on politics, as it had been in Edinburgh. He served on the editorial board of the very political *Gold Coast Leader*, which Casely Hayford used “to plead all the causes which he cherished,” and he was probably its first editor.<sup>107</sup> From 1912 the *Leader* published a number of articles about the urgent need for West Africans to unite. The feedback was positive, and so in 1914 Hayford and Dr Savage wrote to all the leading and prominent men in Lagos, Sierra Leone, and the Gold Coast, inviting their response to a proposal to hold a West African conference. One of the men they contacted was Dr John Randle. After working with Casely Hayford to establish the Sekondi Gold Coast Imperial War Fund, and despite having been elected to the Sekondi Town Council, Dr Savage moved back to Lagos.

104 See Marika Sherwood, *The Life and Times of Henry Sylvester Williams*, Routledge, forthcoming.

105 Michael Crowder (1976, n. 93) p. 426.

106 Rhodes House: ASS Papers, Mss Br. Emp. S.22, G249, ‘West Africa—Native Medical Men 1909–1914’; there is copy of an ASS leaflet in the Jane Cobden Unwin Papers, which reproduced a letter from the Gold Coast Auxiliary, dated 19 April 1911. See also Ghana Archives: ADM 12/5/143, Hugh Clifford to Viscount Milner, 29 March 1919 in which it is indicated that from 1914 ‘native medical men’ could apply for posts to treat ‘natives and more especially the poorer classes...away from the large towns’.

107 L.H. Ofusu-Appiah, *Joseph Ephraim Casely Hayford: the man of vision and faith*, Accra: Academy of Arts and Sciences 1975, p. 15; K.A.B. Jones-Quartey, *History, Politics and Early Press in Ghana*, University of Ghana 1975, p. 96.

The first gathering, in 1920, of what came to be called the National Council of British West Africa (NCBWA) was a significant beginning for African activists.<sup>108</sup> Hayford, probably its main progenitor, had written in his *Ethiopia Unbound* (1911) of the need for Africans to shed their inferiority complex, to come together and make their views heard by the rest of the world. They had to retain their national identity and “race instincts.” His dream was of a “united West Africa [as] the common danger to our ancestral lands has made us one.... United we stand divided we fall.”<sup>109</sup> For this initial meeting, six representatives arrived from Nigeria, three from Sierra Leone, and one from Gambia, and there were forty Gold Coast delegates, including representatives of some chiefs and of the ARPS.

Among the Conference's demands was the founding of an African university; the re-opening of the Medical Service to African doctors; land ownership exclusively by the (local) people themselves; and greater representation of Africans by Africans in the local government bodies. They also asked that at least half those representatives be elected—not appointed by the governor, which was the prevailing practice. Self-determination, though within the Empire, was to follow.

Dr Randle cabled the conference that as the “properly constituted Lagos branch” was not represented, the Lagos representatives in attendance were not legitimate. At this time, Dr Savage was one of the joint secretaries of the Lagos branch, so<sup>110</sup> it seems that the two men had fallen out for some reason. Fred Omu argues that Dr Savage was “in fact an intemperate, self-assertive and self-satisfied man with a penchant for mud-slinging and abuse.... [H]e acquired a reputation as one of those who wrecked the Lagos branch of the Congress movement.”<sup>111</sup>

108 In his *Press and Politics in Nigeria 1880–1937* (New Jersey: Humanities Press 1978, p. 229) Fred I.A. Omu points out that the idea of a West African Conference originated in Liberian newspapers in 1900 and was copied widely in other West African papers. This 1920 meeting was widely reported abroad at the time, eg in the UK in *West Africa* 3 April 1920; even in the USA, eg in the *Negro Year Book* for 1925–1926.

109 L.H. Ofusu-Appiah, *Joseph Ephraim Casely Hayford: the man of vision and faith*, Accra: Academy of Arts and Sciences 1975, p. 25 and David Kimble, *A Political History of Ghana 1850–1928*, Oxford: Clarendon Press 1965, p. 375, quoting from Hayford's *The Truth about the West African Land Question* (1913). There is a thorough entry on Hayford with a list of his publications in *The Encyclopaedia Africana: Dictionary of African Biography*, New York: Reference Publications 1977, volume 1: Ethiopia-Ghana, pp. 253–255.

110 Fred I.A. Omu (1978, n. 88) p. 231.

111 Fred I.A. Omu (1978, n. 88) p. 60.

In Lagos Governor Clifford was scathing about the Congress, calling those who attended “a self-selected and self-appointed congregation of educated African gentlemen.”<sup>112</sup> He was not far wrong, as it certainly cannot be claimed that those who attended represented the mass of the population in their colonies: they were mainly merchants and Western-educated professionals. Perhaps equally appropriate was Clifford’s comment of the “manifest absurdity of a West African Nation.”<sup>113</sup>

Although Clifford’s statement was probably based more on prejudice than on an objective assessment of the situation, there was some truth to it. Given that there are many hundreds of ethnic groups in West Africa—all with their own histories, languages, cultures, legal systems and other particular features—it would have been difficult to create a coherent “nation-state” within the 1885 boundaries drawn up in Berlin.<sup>114</sup> It has not proved possible, even after all these years to overcome these European-imposed boundaries. Thus, it is not surprising that the NCBWA did not become a very effective pan-West African organisation, even though some of its branches carried on with local political work for some years.

The NCBWA was most forcefully opposed by the Gold Coast Governor and by Nana Ofori Atta, who wanted to preserve the status of hereditary rulers.<sup>115</sup> An NCBWA delegation was sent to London but was refused an audience by the Government. Lord Milner, Secretary of State for the Colonies, responded to the petition by stating that “the time has not yet come for the introduction into any West African colonies and protectorates the principles of election to the Legislative Councils [or for unofficial majorities] on those councils.”<sup>116</sup> However, the deputation was received by the League of Nations Union and met with local organisations such as the West African Students’ Union and the African Progress Union.<sup>117</sup>

112 Michael Crowder (1976, n. 92) p. 428. On Clifford, see Harry A. Gale, *Clifford: Imperial Proconsul*, London: Rex Collings 1982.

113 Fred I.A. Omu (1978, n. 88) p. 232.

114 See, eg S.E. Crowe, *The Berlin West African Conference, 1884–1885*, London: Longmans 1942; R.J. Gavin, *The Scramble for Africa 1884–1885*, London: Hurst, 1975.

115 Nana Ofori Atta I was the ‘paramount chief’ or king of the state of Akyem Abuakwa, to the N-W of Accra. He was appointed to the Legislative Council in 1916 and then served as an elected member from 1928.

116 Adelola Adeloje (1985, n. 75) pp. 193–194.

117 According to G.I.C. Eluwa, the delegates’ meeting with the League of Nations Union ‘apparently proved “rather distressing” to the Colonial Office’. (‘The National Congress of

Dr Savage soon returned to Lagos. Having gained more journalistic experience through his contributions to the *Gold Coast Leader*, he now contributed to the *Lagos Standard* and in 1923, founded his own paper, the *Spectator*, and his own press with modern equipment, the Akibomi Press. A historian of the Nigerian press reports that

Akinwande Savage was one of the most renowned vocational journalists in the 19th and early 20th centuries. It has been said of him that "his was a facile pen,...a style peculiarly engaging,...a rich and copious vocabulary which he used with a deft hand of a perfect master".<sup>118</sup>

In his autobiography Nnamdi Azikiwe described Dr Savage's paper as "cosmopolitan" and was impressed by the "superb English of his editorials."<sup>119</sup> In his editorial notes in the first issue of the paper, Dr Savage expressed his pan-African viewpoint: "When we think of a united Nigeria we must also think of united British West Africa."<sup>120</sup> This, of course, also indicates his awareness of the problems of creating a 'Nigeria'.

Through the paper Dr Savage influenced Lagos politics, in which he also participated: for example, in 1920 he was the Secretary of the Egba Society and he and Dr Randle were among the people consulted by Governor Clifford regarding a major chieftaincy issue that year. Perhaps, a scrutiny of the *Nigerian Spectator* would reveal more of Dr Akinwande Savage's remarkable life.

Dr Savage, unlike Dr Randle, retained his connections with Edinburgh. Was this due to his marriage to a Scottish woman? In 1899 he and Maggie S. Bowie, an iron turner's daughter, were married there in a civil ceremony. Their place of residence was given as Cape Coast Castle, and their son, also named Richard, was born in 1903 at 15 Buccleuch Place, Edinburgh.<sup>121</sup> Richard, Jr, also graduated from Edinburgh University's medical school and also married a Scottish woman. It is believed that he practised somewhere in Africa and retired in Scotland, having found Africa "vexing."<sup>122</sup>

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British West Africa: a pioneer nationalist movement', *Gèneve Afrique*, 11/1 1972, pp. 38–51; the quotation is from fn.28, p. 45).

118 Fred I.A. Omu (1978, n. 88) p. 60.

119 Nnamdi Azikiwe, *My Odyssey: an Autobiography*, London: C. Hurst & Co 1970, p. 67; the first issue was dated 19 May 1923.

120 Nnamdi Azikiwe (1970, n. 119) p. 292.

121 My grateful thanks to Peter Freshwater, for this information.

122 Information from Jeffrey Green, who had corresponded with Richard Jr some years ago. (Emails 29 December 2008).

In 1906 the elder Dr Savage's daughter, Agnes Smith Bowie, later called Yewanda, was born at the same address as her brother. She graduated from Edinburgh's medical school in 1929, becoming the first African woman to gain a medical degree. She worked mainly in Ghana but retired to the United Kingdom. According to papers preserved in the Ghana archives, in 1945 the issue of whether she and another African doctor should be employed on the same terms as Europeans was mooted—not as a real policy change, but an “interim formula.”<sup>123</sup>

## Conclusion

### *The Importance of Drs Randle and Savage*

Both these doctors became the forerunners of pan-African activism in the British colonies in West Africa. Dr Randle became the personification of the espousal of a united identity at least among the many people of Lagos and then to some extent of some of the hinterland—and then for ‘British’ West Africans. His political, medical and charitable activities attempted to overcome the many historic differences among the peoples inhabiting this European-created city and country. He also used his skills to form a political party and to launch united protests to the colonial authorities. Thus he must be acknowledged as one of the very few who recognised the need for unity in order to be able to attain fair treatment and make demands on the authorities.

Dr Savage was obviously interested in the pan-African vision from his student days as he attended the 1900 Pan-African Conference in London. He was one of the organisers of the National Council of British West Africa (NCBWA) formed on the basis that ‘United we stand divided we fall’. Dr Randle was one of the first members of the NCBWA. At the Council's first meeting in 1920 eventual ‘self-determination’ was one of the proclaimed demands. As a newspaper editor then owner, and as a journalist, Dr Savage espoused pan-Africanism, thus bringing the notion before a wide public. The NCBWA, as Dr Kwame Nkrumah acknowledged, was the forerunner of his pan-African philosophy and activism. These resulted in the formation of today's African Union.

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<sup>123</sup> Adell Patton, *Physicians, Colonial Racism and Diaspora in West Africa*, University of Florida Press, 1996, p. 28. Ghana Archives: ADM12/1/141, Confidential Despatches 1945, Colonial Office to Governor. Alan Burns, 14 May 1945. In 1947 Susan Gyankorame de Graft-Johnson became the first Gold Coast female medical graduate at Edinburgh.

### *Some Unanswered Questions*

Scotland, and Edinburgh have only just begun to research their relationship with the world they helped colonise, whether that world is 'out there', or here at home.

We need to know much more about the behaviour of the Scots, as agents of colonisation, towards those they were ruling, whether enslaved or free.

We need to know more about the wealth that was accumulated by them, and how and where it was spent.

We need to know more about the Scottish churches, whether they owned slaves, if they received compensation; how they treated their enslaved servants in the Caribbean.

We need to know more about attitudes in Scotland regarding the abolition of the trade in enslaved Africans and towards their emancipation.

We need to know more about the actions regarding Abolition and Emancipation by the Church and those with power and authority.

We need to know much more about the University vis-à-vis Africa and India in all aspects of these relationships.

We need to know much much more about peoples of African descent and origin who have lived in Scotland, at least for the past five hundred years. How did they arrive, how were they employed, how did they relate to local White Scots, whom did they marry and how were they and their children treated?

We need to know much more about the experiences and lives of students from Africa and India studying in the Scottish universities.

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## Geographies of Early Anti-Racist Protest in Britain

### *Ida B. Wells' 1893 Anti-Lynching Tour in Scotland*

Caroline Bressey

#### Introduction

The African American journalist and feminist Ida B. Wells is a relatively well-known figure in her home country. Her essays and articles, and numerous publications written about her contribution to the civil rights movement, have led to widespread recognition of her significance as an early African-American writer and activist. Yet her visits to Britain - which she undertook in 1893 and 1894 to draw attention to the violent racial prejudice faced by Black Americans - and their influence on debates and activist politics in Britain have been given little consideration by scholars of British political movements. In March 1894, Wells described her time in Britain as being “born into a new world,” where she was “welcomed among persons of the highest order of intellectual and social culture as if one were on of themselves.”<sup>1</sup> The majority of the detail of her trips to Britain comes from articles she wrote at the time and from her autobiography, *Crusade for Justice*. First published in 1970, nearly forty years after her death, the text was still unfinished when she died in March 1931.<sup>2</sup> Although it may not be as complete as she intended, it does detail her trips to Britain and campaign work with the Englishwoman Catherine Impey and the Scotswoman Isabella Mayo, two women with whom she worked and who influenced her experiences in Britain as illustrated in this chapter.

#### Ida B Wells

Ida B Wells was born in Holly Springs, a northern Mississippi town, in 1862. In 1878 both her parents died during a yellow fever epidemic. Aged sixteen and determined to keep her family together, Wells trained to become a teacher, so she could care for her five surviving brothers and sisters.<sup>3</sup> It was hard and she

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1 Alfreda Duster (ed), *Crusade for Justice: The Autobiography of Ida B Wells*, The University of Chicago Press, 1972, p. 135.

2 Linda McMurray, *To Keep the Waters Troubled: The Life of Ida B Wells*, Oxford University Press, 1998.

3 Alfreda Duster, 1972.

was grateful when her aunt suggested Ida and her two younger sisters move to stay with her in Memphis.<sup>4</sup> But in 1884 Wells became the focus of a *cause célèbre*. Travelling to work a conductor told her she would have to sit in the 'colored' compartment of the train in which she was riding. Wells refused. She had a ticket that allowed her to sit in the Ladies car; besides, the 'colored' accommodation provided by the railroad was a smokers' car.<sup>5</sup> When Wells persisted in remaining in her seat, the conductor and a baggage attendant dragged her out of the car, to the accompaniment of applause from the white passengers. She told the conductor that she would rather get off the train than go into the smoking compartment, and because he offered her no alternative seat, she was forced to leave the train. Wells hired a lawyer to sue the railway company, and in 1884 she won her case, but the victory was short lived, because in 1887 the Tennessee State Supreme Court overturned the decision.<sup>6</sup> This result formed the basis for her first published article, written at the invitation of the editor of *The Living Way* (a religious paper for the African-American community). She then began a regular column about topics of concern to the African-American community. Other papers reproduced them, and gradually Wells began to earn a reputation as a journalist. Eventually Wells left teaching and became a full time journalist.<sup>7</sup>

After the lynching of three men in Memphis in March 1892, including the husband of a close friend, Wells ferociously attacked the injustices of lynch law and the trumped-up charge of rape that was customarily used to justify it. In the 21 May edition of *Free Speech*, Wells wrote "Eight Men Lynched," an editorial that spoke out strongly against mob rule. The piece raised the wrath of white racist elements in Memphis, who responded with public threats against the journalist's life. Fortunately for Wells, she was on a trip, visiting friends and supporters in New York and Chicago, when the piece was printed.<sup>8</sup> In her absence, anger focused, however, on Wells' co-worker at the paper, J.L. Flemming. Fearing that he would be lynched, Flemming left his newspaper - as he had been forced to do when he has previously lived and worked in Marion, Arkansas.<sup>9</sup> A mob descended on the *Free Speech's* offices, destroyed its furnishings, and sent death threats to those who might have been tempted to try restarting it. Wells did not return to Memphis, but instead accepted a position

4 Paula J Giddings, *Ida: A Sword Among Lions*, Amistad, 2009.

5 Alfreda Duster, 1972.

6 Alfreda Duster, 1972; Linda McMurray, 1998.

7 For a full explanation see Paula J Giddings, *Ida: A Sword Among Lions*, Amistad, 2009.

8 Linda McMurray, 1998.

9 Wells reports that he was "run out of Marion because of politics in the overthrow of the so-called Negro domination by white Democrats in 1888." Linda McMurray, 1998, p. 67.

as a reporter for the *New York Age*, where she continued her campaigns to improve the civil rights of women and blacks from the North.<sup>10</sup> Wells became a popular and forceful speaker, lecturing to audiences in Wilmington, Delaware, Pennsylvania, and Washington D.C. While visiting Philadelphia in the autumn of 1892, Wells was the guest of William Still, an African-American activist and author of *The Underground Railroad*. In her memoirs Wells recalls that among those who called on her was the editor Catherine Impey, and the two women vowed to “keep plugging away at the evils” they were both fighting.<sup>11</sup>

### An Invitation to Britain

In March 1888 Catherine Impey, an English Quaker, had launched *Anti-Caste*, which could arguably be called Britain's first anti-racist journal. Edited by her and distributed from her home in Street, Somerset, *Anti-Caste* was a small monthly paper that was concerned with the welfare of those facing racial and caste discrimination across the world. Although Australia and the Caribbean were often discussed in its pages, the United States, Africa and India featured more regularly. *Anti-Caste's* readership was relatively small, but by the end of 1889, it had over 250 subscribers, and up to 3500 copies were printed for distribution each month.<sup>12</sup> Many were published for free distribution to readers all over Britain, from Edinburgh to Evesham and Sunderland to Bristol. The journal gained an international readership as well. Frederick Douglass was listed as a life subscriber and in 1890 Rev. S.P. Foster was sent 100 copies for distribution in South Carolina. In addition, over the seven year run of the paper, personal subscriptions came from men and women in Africa and the Caribbean.

On her return from the United States in 1892, emboldened by the meetings she had attended and her discussions with Wells, Impey planned to turn the *Anti-Caste* readership into an organisation. She decided to travel around Britain to meet with *Anti-Caste's* keenest supporters and ensure their backing for a new society.<sup>13</sup> Among them was Isabella Mayo. The two women had not yet met, although they had corresponded since Impey had placed Mayo on the free-distribution list for *Anti-Caste*. Mayo had expressed “so strong a desire to

10 Jacqueline Royster (ed), *Southern Horrors and Other Writings; The Anti-Lynching Campaign of Ida B. Wells, 1892–1900*, Bedford Books, 1997.

11 Alfreda Duster, 1972, p. 82.

12 *Anti-Caste*, February & March 1892, p. 4.

13 MSS. Brit. Empi. s. 20 E7/8, The Bodleian Library of Commonwealth and African Studies, University of Oxford.

help in the movement for race equality and justice, that after about two months, during which they frequently exchanged letters, they agreed to meet for a few days' conference in Manchester."<sup>14</sup> In the end Mayo asked Impey to visit her at home in Aberdeen, suggesting it would be a more comfortable for both women, and so Impey's sister lent her the money she needed for the trip from Somerset to Scotland.

Isabella Fyvie Mayo was better known to the public as the writer Edward Garrett. Although born in London in 1843, Mayo described her upbringing as a typical Scottish middle class family experience and spent most of her adult life in Aberdeen.<sup>15</sup> In July 1870 she had married John Ryall Mayo, a solicitor, who died seven years later. Lindy Moore describes Mayo as an ethical anarchist, pacifist, anti-imperialist and anti-racist campaigner; in addition to her career as a writer Mayo published over 30 books and numerous poems, reviews, and essays.<sup>16</sup> Following her husband's death Mayo also took in boarders, and Wells described her home in Aberdeen as "an asylum for East Indians who enjoyed her practical friendship."<sup>17</sup>

Due to a cold, Impey spent longer than she originally intended in Aberdeen. During her visit the two women worked together on a special issue of *Anti-Caste* and composed a letter to Wells, inviting her to come to Britain to highlight issues of lynching and racial prejudice before a British audience, but also to help galvanise support for a new campaigning society. Signed by Impey, the letter was written out for the women by one of Mayo's boarders, George Ferdinands, a Ceylonese medic practising in Aberdeen who would later become a fateful actor in the women's relationship. Wells was staying with Frederick Douglass in Washington DC when the invitation arrived, and he urged her to travel to Britain. Wells began her first voyage across the ocean on Wednesday, 5 April 1893.

### Speaking in Scotland

Following her difficult battle to gain attention for her campaign in the United States, Wells described the opportunity to speak to a British audience as "like

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- 14 MSS. Brit. Empi. s. 20 E5, The Bodleian Library of Commonwealth and African Studies, University of Oxford.
  - 15 Mayo, Isabella Fyvie, *Recollections of what I saw, what I lived through, and what I learned, during more than fifty years of social and literary experience*, John Murray, London, 1910.
  - 16 Lindy Moore, The reputation of Isabella Fyvie Mayo: interpretations of a life, *Women's History Review*, 193, 2010, 71–88.
  - 17 Alfreda Duster, 1972, 89.

an open door in a stone wall.”<sup>18</sup> She began the tour by staying with Catherine Impey in Somerset, but after a few days, the two travelled to Aberdeen where they spent about two weeks working with Isabella Mayo, George Ferdinands, and two of Mayo’s other boarders, preparing for the inaugural meeting of the tour. The group wrote letters, arranged meetings, and mailed out several thousand copies of *Anti-Caste*. A meeting in Mayo’s drawing room marked Wells’s first lecture on lynching. Upon hearing her, the audience formed itself into the first branch of a new society: The Society for the Furtherance of the Brotherhood of Man, although it would be soon better known as the Society for the Recognition of the Brotherhood of Man (SRBM), which aimed to “secure to every member of the human family, Freedom, Equal Opportunity, and Brotherly Consideration.”<sup>19</sup>

Wells’s first public appearance in Britain was chaired by Isabella Mayo in the Ballroom of the Music Hall Building in Aberdeen on 24 April 1893. Following introductory remarks from Mayo, Impey outlined the reason and need for the creation of a new society to bring attention to the increasing murderous violence faced by “the coloured people” in the United States.<sup>20</sup> As reported by the *Aberdeen Weekly Journal*, Wells followed Impey with a lengthy and eloquent speech that was met with applause from the large and “representative” audience.<sup>21</sup> The tour was off to an excellent start. Wells and Mayo travelled to Huntly, Edinburgh, and Glasgow, and at each venue the audience was encouraged to commit itself to forming a branch of the new society. It was a busy schedule, and Wells worked hard to help the SRBM gain an audience.

In Edinburgh she undertook a full programme of talks. On a Friday afternoon she addressed an influential meeting in the Bible Society Rooms at St Andrew Square. The next day, she spoke to a drawing-room meeting convened in the Free Church and then to a crowded assembly in the hall of the Carrubbers Close Mission, an independent evangelical church founded in Edinburgh in 1858.<sup>22</sup> On Monday she spoke to in the rooms of the YMCA South St Andrew Street. At each venue the audience was encouraged to commit itself to form a branch of the SRBM. On 1 May the *Edinburgh Evening Gazette* reported that the Society “the proposed basis for protests against violence and prejudice...has already enrolled many names, and every post is bringing more.”<sup>23</sup> On Tuesday

18 Quoted in Linda McMurray, 1998, 187.

19 *Lux*, May 20 1893.

20 *Aberdeen Weekly Journal*, April 25, 1893.

21 *Aberdeen Weekly Journal*, April 25, 1893.

22 It is now called the Carrubbers Christian Centre <http://www.carrubbers.org/about/history/>

23 *Edinburgh Evening Gazette*, 1 May 1893.

2 May Wells moved onto to Glasgow, where spoke at the Friends' Meeting House on North Portland Street. The following day, the *Glasgow Herald* reported that Wells's talk had been given to another large, attentive, and appreciative audience.<sup>24</sup> She was such a popular speaker that two more lectures were scheduled in the city for later in the month: one at the Dennistoun Free Church on 10 May, and the other at Renfield Free Church Hall on 11 May.<sup>25</sup>

Wells left Scotland to speak in England and to reach London in time to attend the 1893 annual charity May Meetings, but before Wells reached the capital, she found herself embroiled in a personal dispute between Mayo and Impey. While working alongside her new colleagues in Aberdeen, Impey had developed strong feelings for Mayo's boarder George Ferdinands and wrote him a letter that was, in essence, a proposal of marriage. When Impey's actions became know to Mayo she was outraged and insisted that Impey could no longer remain a public part of the SRBM's campaign. This left Wells without Impey's influential public presence during her time in England. Despite her raised profile - due to announcements in journals such as *Society* and the *Ladies Pictorial* - Wells felt that the loss of Impey during the last leg of the campaign meant she was be unable to gain access to as many of the May Meetings as she would have liked.<sup>26</sup> Personally, Wells stayed loyal to Impey, and as a result she, too, was cast out of Mayo's circle. She returned to the United States disappointed by the emotional turn of events.

### The Scottish Branches of the Society for the Recognition of the Brotherhood of Man

Despite the setbacks, the new society that was developing on the back of Wells's tour seemed to be holding great promise, reflected in a new journal, *Fraternity*, with Britain's first black editor Celestine Edwards at the helm.<sup>27</sup> For their part Mayo's Aberdeen branch was one of the most successful in the new

24 *Glasgow Herald*, May 3, 1893.

25 *Glasgow Herald*, May 10, 1893.

26 Alfreda Duster, 1972; For a discussion that presents events from Mayo's perspective see Lindy Moore, The reputation of Isabella Fyvie Mayo: interpretations of a life, *Women's History Review*, 19:1, 2010, 71–88.

27 *Anti-Caste* itself came to an end with a joint issue for May and June of 1893 that was edited by Edwards and Wells with Impey's assistance. For more on Celestine Edwards and *Anti-Caste* see Bressey, Caroline, *Empire, Race and the Politics of Anti-Caste*, Bloomsbury Academic, 2013.

SRBM network. Mayo's declaration in the short report of their finances that she had secured £4 of subscriptions, along with the highly organised structure of the branch with the Rev. David Brown (principal of the Free Church College) as their president, certainly set a high standard for others to emulate. Later in the year, Celestine Edwards lectured to the Aberdeen Brotherhood branch about issues around segregation in the United States. Speaking on "The Blacks and Whites" in America at a "crowded meeting" at the YMCA on Sunday 10 September, his talk the following evening at the Young Men's Christian Institute, dealt with "The Racial War in the United States."<sup>28</sup> How, or whether, local people of African descent - rather than, or including, international students - joined the crowds or had been integrated into the society's networks in Aberdeen or others parts of Scotland is not yet known.

Wells returned to Britain in 1894 and once again undertook a busy lecture tour in England organised by Impey. Wells did not return to Scotland, however, because Mayo refused to support any visits there.<sup>29</sup> Despite the disputes between the society's leaders, articles in the *Aberdeen Weekly Journal* meant Wells's work was still followed by a Scottish audience, albeit far smaller than the previous year.<sup>30</sup> In addition, *Fraternity*, under Edwards's editorship, presented an opportunity for personal disagreements to be left in private and for the movement to focus on the furtherance of the brotherhood of man. During the early summer of 1894, however, Edwards became seriously ill and returned to the Caribbean, hoping to recover.

Edwards's arrival in the West Indies was reported in the July number of *Fraternity*, an issue that also countered a claim that Wells had made in a letter to the *New York Age* (on June 21) that stated that the Society had broken its funding arrangements with her and was "without funds" sufficient to properly support her tour. This, the anonymous author argued, had nothing to do with "the Scottish branches."

Before Miss Wells left the States this year, it was made plain to her that the Scottish branches declined her services, for reasons which were fully stated. Ex-Senator Green was invited to Scotland in her stead, and we do not think he will complain of either the hospitality or the liberality of our cold and needy North!

The author ended with the complaint that the:

<sup>28</sup> *Aberdeen Weekly Journal*, September 11, 1893.

<sup>29</sup> Alfreda Duster, 1972.

<sup>30</sup> *Aberdeen Weekly Journal*, June 7 (two articles) & June 13 1894.



Scottish branches (among whom lies the origin of the society) have received no help or furtherance of any kind from the Central Society, in which they were induced to merge themselves by representations which have not been strictly adhered to.

The author added that some branches were beginning to ask if they “might do more and better work apart than in a union with the English branches, which is not only nominal for all helpful purposes, but is also threatened by serous and indefinite risks.” The piece was signed “An Original Member.”<sup>31</sup>

### The Society in Scotland

News of Celestine Edwards’ death in 1894 came to the readers of *Fraternity* through a letter from Edwards’s brother, and was a hard blow to the many communities he served. The staff at *Fraternity* were greatly saddened by their loss but vowed that the magazine would continue. At the time of Edwards’s death, the SRBM had held great potential. It had a truly national reach through its branch secretaries which, in September 1894, numbered over twenty-five in England, three in Wales, six in Scotland, and one in the West Indies. In addition, at least two thousand people signed up to the society at some level. But Edwards’ death in the Caribbean prompted a split from which the movement could not recover.

The front page of the October issue of *Fraternity* confirmed a coup by the Scottish branches. This issue announced a new council and structure of the SRBM. The society now had a president, a role taken by Mrs Mayo. Her deputy was George Ferdinands. Clearly, whether from Scotland or England, the lobbying of local branch secretaries had been taking place in order to assure support for the new formation when it was announced. Seven branches, whose establishment was credited to Celestine Edwards (not Wells or Impey), had come on board: Portsmouth, Birmingham, Sheffield, Liverpool, Manchester, Jarrow-on-Tyne, and of course, Aberdeen “the town in which the Society originated.” Moreover, branches that did not make contact with the new central office, based in Scotland, would no longer be recognised as part of the movement by the society or its journal.

*Fraternity - The original and only Organ of the S.R.B.M.*, as it was now called, continued to be published by the Scottish branches, with Helen Sillitoe (who had worked with Edwards) as editor. Sillitoe either wrote or agreed to publish the history of the SRBM that appeared in the December 1894 issue.

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<sup>31</sup> *Fraternity*, July 1894, p. 15.



Towards the close of 1892, a small group of people in Aberdeen discussed among themselves the necessities of the Negroes in the Southern and Western States of the American union, and determined to utter their protest against the evil of Lynch Law, and to use their influence to obtain justice for the Negro. They forthwith looked around for the fitting means and methods by which to aid their brothers in black.

Hearing of a small paper published occasionally in the South of England, whose mission was to expose and combat race prejudice, and its dire sequences, one of the Aberdeen group wrote to the Editor of the little publication, asking, "Cannot we do something to bring this matter strongly before the British public?" The immediate result of this practical question was the issues of a special number of the paper, prepared by the joint labours of its Editor and a Scotch lady in the house of the latter, in which the cruel "Facts of Lynch Law" were placed in the hand of the public.<sup>32</sup>

The retelling of the organisations' history relocated the foundational work of the movement in Scotland, and specifically, in Aberdeen and Mayo's home. The marginalisation of Impey and *Anti-Caste* within the history of the SRBM indicated a permanent split in the movement, with those who remained loyal to *Anti-Caste's* legacy creating a new journal of their own.

The society in Scotland, now entirely estranged from its English cousins, continued to meet, and publish *Fraternity* and developed increasingly closer ties with the politics of labour. While Impey had always seen work - that is, issues of labour - as a way to highlight and discuss discrimination across the empire (for example, she once wrote a piece on the human cost in to plantation workers in producing cheap tea for the British public), the politics of labour, *per se*, did not feature in *Anti-Caste*. Under the control of the Scottish Branches, however, *Fraternity* came to be edited by women who increasingly moved it toward a closer union with emerging labour movement politics. *Fraternity* would not have another black editor, and problematic imagery and discussions of race appeared in pages of the later volumes.<sup>33</sup> Public meetings of the Scottish SRBM included a lecture by Mr Hayford, "a Fanti gentleman" and a member of the Inner Temple, who spoke about "The state of things in Ashanti

32 *Fraternity*, December 1894, p. 1.

33 For many years the 1895 run of *Fraternity* was missing but has recently been discovered among the special collections of the University of Illinois. For a discussion of these issues under the control of the Scottish Branches see Bressey, *Empire, Race and the Politics of Anti-Caste*, Bloomsbury Academic, 2013.

and the Gold Coast" in Aberdeen in November 1895. As Wells had done two years before he spoke in the Ballroom of the Music Hall, but Hayford's talk drew only a small audience.<sup>34</sup>

Mary A M Marks took over from Helen Sillitoe who had retired due to ill health and being overworked. *Fraternity* was still a monthly magazine, and the strapline continued to acknowledge Celestine Edwards as its founder. It still claimed to be the official organ for the international Society for the Recognition of the Brotherhood of Man. The issue also contained an appeal to subscribers for more funds, as two years after its establishment, *Fraternity* did not pay for itself. The announcement of Caroline Martyn as the new editor of *Fraternity* came in July 1896. Martyn was well known in Scotland, as a high profile socialist speaker, and she had also served as an editor on *Christian Weekly*.<sup>35</sup> Earlier in the year she has been elected to the National Administrative Council of the Independent Labour Party, and was due to become the Trades Union Organiser for the North of Scotland.<sup>36</sup> Although well educated, Krista Cowman has identified Martyn as one of a group of women socialists who were never encouraged to tackle economic issues, but rather encouraged to focus on the arts.<sup>37</sup> Martyn may have seen *Fraternity* as an opportunity to develop and communicate her socialist ideas through a different political forum, but the opportunity for her to influence the direction of the paper was short lived. Like Stillitoe, Martyn was overworked and she complained of the hard speaking schedule the movement committed her to.<sup>38</sup> She died suddenly, the same month she became editor, "in the midst of strenuous labours for the cause of humanity" in Dundee.<sup>39</sup> Martyn was replaced by Frank Smith whose editorship represented a shift towards a predominant concern with the politics of labour, both within a colonial context and within Britain. A close friend and colleague of Keir Hardie, the pioneering Scottish socialist and labour leader, Smith sought to increase *Fraternity's* readership by running monthly advertisements in Keir Hardie's *Labour Leader*; but it seems Smith's editorship was also short lived.<sup>40</sup>

34 *Aberdeen Weekly Journal*, November 26, 1895.

35 Krista Cowman, 'With a lofty moral purpose': Caroline Martyn, Enid Stacy, Margaret McMillan, Katherine St John Conway and the cult of the good woman socialist' in Geoffrey Cubitt and Allen Warren (eds), *Heroic Reputations and Exemplary Lives*, Manchester University Press, pp. 212–224, 2000.

36 *Fraternity*, August 1896.

37 Krista Cowman, 2000.

38 Krista Cowman, 2000.

39 *Fraternity*, August 1896, p. 7.

40 E.I. Champness, *Frank Smith, M.P. Pioneer and Modern Mystic*, Whitefriars Press, 1943.

The issue of *Fraternity* published in February 1897 was the final number advertised in *Labour Leader*, and appears to be the final issue of *Fraternity* that was published. Frank Smith also placed a personal advertisement in the February issue of *Labour Leader* outlining a lecture tour that he was to give on 'Our Glorious Empire, on which the sun never sets and the tax-gatherer never goes to bed. The truth about the record reign'. Boasting that nothing like it had ever been attempted, he was to present facts and figures on all nations under the Union Jack to audiences at Rotherham, Halifax, Leeds, the Albion Hall in Glasgow, Rutherglen Town Hall, Balbeattie Town Hall and the Good Templar's Hall in Paisley throughout March and early April. With such a busy schedule it is perhaps not surprising he was unable to produce another issue of *Fraternity*, and it would seem that Mayo was unable to find anyone to take his place.

### Conclusion

Reflecting upon the success of Ida B Wells's anti-lynching campaigns in Britain, Sarah Silkey argues that instead of viewing Wells's British anti-lynching activism as a failure because the violent practice of lynching continued in the United States, we should recognise the huge impact Wells's campaigns had on British public debates about lynching and race relations in the United States and the increased sympathy for the plight of African Americans this realised.<sup>41</sup> Examining how Wells's campaigns may have influenced civil rights campaigns in Britain needs to be placed with the history of anti-racist movements in Britain - itself an under-researched subject. This particular focus on the Scottish Branches set up on the back of the Wells' 1893 illustrates a legacy of anti-racism activism that became interwoven with women socialists and the labour movement. How this may or may not have fed into debates about race and racism in labour movements is still to be fully examined. For example, when race riots erupted across Britain in 1919, Glasgow was one of the worst hit parts of the country.<sup>42</sup> Did any former members of the Scottish Branches draw

41 Sarah L Silkey, Redirecting the Tide of White Imperialism: The Impact of Ida B Wells's Transatlantic Antilynching Campaign on British conceptions of American Race Relations, pp. 97–119 in Angela Boswell and Judith N. McArthur (ed), *Women Shaping the South: Creating And Confronting Change* University of Missouri Press, 2006b.

42 See Jacqueline Jenkinson, The Glasgow Race Disturbances of 1919 in Kenneth Lunn (ed) *Race and Labour in Twentieth-Century Britain*, Frank Cass, pp. 43–67, 1985; Jacqueline Jenkinson, Black 1919: riots, racism and resistance in imperial Britain, Liverpool University Press, 2009.

on the debates of racial equality from *Fraternity* in order to analyse or counter the violence that swept across Britain between January and August that year?

Mayo had died in 1914, but it is difficult to know what she made of *Fraternity's* legacy as she made no mention of the SRBM movement in her *Recollections* published in 1910. Although, as Lindy Moore reminds us, these were not intended to be an autobiography, if her experiences within the movement, both positive and negative, had influenced her "practical life" she did not wish to share her reflections in public.<sup>43</sup> Catherine Impey left no indication of such reflections either, and although she lived until 1923 her side of the movement fell away at a similar time to *Fraternity*, and her role in this radical movement has been largely forgotten. She is mentioned, however, in Wells's autobiography. With Mayo choosing to ignore her years with the movement in her *Recollections*, as Vron Ware noted over a decade ago, Wells appears to be the only person to have detailed the important internal dynamics of the early brotherhood movement in Britain, an important reminder that the political histories of anti-racism and the African diaspora in Britain are often found beyond these shores.<sup>44</sup>

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Since the material for this chapter was presented at the Africa in Scotland / Scotland in Africa conference it has been developed and incorporated into a monograph by Caroline Bressey entitled *Empire, Race and the Politics of Anti-Caste* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), which examines the historical geographies of readership and the content of *Anti-Caste* under Catherine Impey in England and Isabella Mayo in Scotland.

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43 Quoted in Moore, The reputation of Isabella Fyvie Mayo, *Women's History Review*, 19:1, 2010, p. 74.

44 Vron Ware, *Beyond the Pale: white women, racism and history*, Verso, 1992.

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## Exploring a Scottish Legacy

*Lewis Davidson, Knox College, and Jamaica's Youth*

*Janice McLean*

### Introduction

For many Jamaicans, their first indication of the existence of a connection with Scotland is their surnames – Campbell, McDonald, Douglas, etc. (Palmer 2007: 43–44). These surnames serve as living monuments testifying to a complex relationship that has spanned several centuries and which began with the Scottish involvement in the Transatlantic Slave Trade as plantation owners, overseers, doctors, sailors, merchants, etc. (Devine 1976, 2009; Smout 1961; Landsmans 1999; Palmer 2009). Within these capacities, they aided the proliferation of two interconnected structures, namely the sugar plantation system and slavery, which not only supported the Transatlantic Slave Trade but also resulted in a dramatic change in the population composition and density of the islands of the Caribbean as countless Africans were forcibly brought to the region and subjected to a life of bondage. It was these slaves that became the ancestors of the majority of Jamaicans. It is imperative to note however, that Scots not only played an active role in the perpetuation of slavery but also in its abolition. As Iain Whyte documents, Scots were active in campaigning for the abolition of slavery and in the cases of the missionaries on the Scottish-owned plantations in Trelawny, were engaged in ministering to the slaves. In their ministry to the slaves however, these missionaries' duty was to promote the spiritual interests of the slaves, without interfering with their civil condition (Whyte 2006: 214–220). Following the emancipation of the slaves, these Scottish missionaries and the Presbyterian Church that they represented, were instrumental in the founding of the free town<sup>1</sup> or village of Goodwill and instituting other ventures to aid the freed slaves. As a result of these specific relationships, as well as the Colonization and Christianization of the region, there has been

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1 A free town is a settlement of emancipated slaves. The church would buy a piece of property – normally a part of a bankrupt sugar estate – which was subsequently subdivided and sold to members of the congregation. In this manner, many slaves were able to become landowners, and small-scale farmers – thus gaining some independence from their former plantation owners.

a transplantation and insertion of various aspects of Scottish cultures into the very fabric of what constitutes Caribbean society.

The acknowledgement of these processes has not only been noted within academia, but in many discourses these specific topics – the transatlantic slave trade, the abolition movement, colonization and Christianization – have dominated the study of the relationship between the two places. Although these foci are valid and necessary, it may not give sufficient attention to investigating how other ties have helped to shape the pre/post independence and contemporary societies. One area where such an investigation is warranted is in the emergence of quality education systems within a rural context. By examining the educational system that was implemented by the Scottish Missionary, Rev. Dr Lewis Davidson at Knox College, I will explore the impact that this institution has had and continues to have on its students, Jamaica and several Diaspora societies. Included within this investigation will be the content analysis of several alumni web-postings<sup>2</sup> to ascertain what were some of the values they learned during their time at Knox and how these values have impacted their lives.

Prior to discussing the educational system implemented by Dr Lewis Davidson, it is necessary to give a brief historical overview on education in Jamaica from the pre-emancipation period (before 1834) to the founding on Knox College in 1947.

### **A Brief History of Education in Jamaica Pre-1834 to 1947**

In examining the history of education in Jamaica one has to be mindful of the context in which this instruction emerged – namely Jamaica's colonial past. During the period of slavery, education was primarily an enterprise in which white children were engaged. For the wealthy, their sons were either sent back to England – the 'mother country' – to be educated or private tutors would be hired. For those of lesser financial standing, there were those schools that had been established by wealthy benefactors. For the slaves and their children, their educational engagement was limited due to the belief among the planters that formal education was not a necessity (Whyte 1979: 11). When they were

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<sup>2</sup> These web-posting were taken from the Knox Alumni web-page which is accessible to the public. Additional perspectives on Knox's impact on its students were obtained from conversations with a small sample of alumni – who have given their permission for their comments to be included in this paper. Alternatively, as a Knox alumnus and a former Prefect, I have also drawn upon my personal knowledge of the school to inform some of the content included within this paper.



educated, it was conducted as a part of the missionary's endeavor to spread the Christian religion (Whyte 1979: 11; Turner 1982; Gordon 1996: 13, 64). As such, their education was focused on reading the scriptures and being obedient and hard-working slaves.

Following emancipation, the schools that were established by the missionaries became the primary forum through which the Negro Education Grant was administered. This education grant that began in 1835 and ended in 1845 "was intended by the British Government to provide nothing short of a popular system of education in the colonial territories" (Gordon 1958: 141). The proposed expenditures that were deemed suitable for this grant included the provision of, teacher training, compulsory primary education and some form of secondary education. This grant was distributed in conjunction with the religious denominations that were already engaged in that work, these included the Church of England, the Moravians, the Methodists and the Baptists.<sup>3</sup> The government grant allowed the churches to expand what they were already doing. In this venture, there was a noted bias towards the established church – the Church of England, who was given a larger share of the grant to assist in establishing schools in comparison with the other denominations, in particular the Baptist church.

### *Primary Education*

The Negro Education Grant was focused primarily on providing the newly emancipated slaves and their children with a basic elementary education. In this regard, much consideration was given to developing a curriculum that would best suit their current status and in many ways continue to perpetuate the status quo. The education taught within these primary schools concentrated on two specific areas: vocational and religious education. The vocational education curriculum centered on agriculture, carpentry and other areas within the employment sector that enabled the society to continue to function without actually challenging the manner in which the overall system was organized. In the sector or realm of religious education, the aim was to teach the emancipated slaves and their descendants to be god-fearing, law-abiding and hard working citizens. As Shirley Gordon affirms, "the maintenance of 'public tranquility' was to be the main object of the religious education of the Negro population" (Gordon 1958: 140). Although primary education was now available, the quality was poor, due in large part to inadequately trained teachers. Within the rural contexts, an additional factor was added which served to

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3 The Church of Scotland would later become involved with providing primary education. By 1911, they controlled six elementary schools see Aggrey Brown, *Color, Class and Politics in Jamaica* (New Brunswick: Transaction, 1979), 84.



further diminish the overall educational experience of many children – that of family obligation. Thus, some students would be absent because their presence would be required to assist with the sowing or reaping of the family's crops or to care for their younger siblings at various times. As a result, the education of many children within the rural context was sporadic at best and of an inferior quality.

### *Secondary Education*

As stated earlier, in pre-emancipation Jamaican society access to secondary education was primarily limited to a select part of the society – white males. Following emancipation, this group was expanded to include some females<sup>4</sup> and a few colored and black children<sup>5</sup> whose parents were able to meet the financial demands required for such an education. It is imperative to note however that despite their education, the upward mobility experienced by the coloreds and the blacks was usually within their “own segmented sector of the society” (Bacchus 1994: 219). They were still excluded from the prominent positions within the society, which were reserved for the white elites. There was also a noted bias towards the urban areas in the establishment of these secondary schools. As a result, there was limited access to secondary education within the rural settings.

The secondary schools that were established consisted of two major types: the model or intermediate schools, and the grammar schools. The model or intermediate schools helped to prepare their students to fill the lower level white-collar jobs – teachers, policemen, postmasters, catechists etc. Thus the curriculum focused on acquiring various technical skills, and gaining theological and teacher training. Many of these institutions were established and run by various religious denominations and several benefactors. Initially, poor white students attended these schools, however later they also included upwardly mobile colored and black students. Thus these institutions became a

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4 These schools included secondary girls schools that were established to meet their specific educational needs and teacher's training schools that equipped them to teach in the primary schools.

5 A distinction is made here between colored and blacks because on a whole they inhabited different social classes within Jamaican society and were thus perceived by whites, and themselves as belonging to two different racial groups. The colored people normally constituted the middle class and were more similar to the whites in terms of their attitudes, cultural practices, and religious beliefs. In contrast, the blacks normally comprised the lower class and were perceived to embrace more African influences in terms of their attitudes, culture and religious beliefs.

major instrument for achieving upward mobility among the non-whites within the society. In contrast, the grammar school education helped to prepare its students for high-level white-collar jobs, various prominent positions within the society, and admission into the tertiary institutions in Britain. As a result, the curriculum was the same classic grammar school curriculum that was used in Britain. Embedded within this 'classical' curriculum however, was the ideology of white superiority and the perception of Britain as the civilizing colonizer. The superiority of whites was re-enforced by the faculty, who were educated and socialized within the British society. Given these factors, these institutions came to be perceived as a sure way of securing a bright future for one's children – a future that only the upper and middle classes could afford.

### *Education in Jamaica After 1865*

In 1865, Jamaica experienced an event that significantly altered its relationship with Britain, and as a consequence affected the development of education within the country. This event was the Morant Bay Rebellion, which occurred on October 11, 1865. This rebellion, which was led by the Baptist Deacon Paul Bogle, served to highlight the stark conditions that continued to dominate the lives of many former slaves. For although their liberty from slavery was granted in 1834, and their full emancipation on August 1, 1839, they were still marginalized and excluded from full participation within the society 26 years later. Some areas of exclusion included the lack of political representation largely due to their ineligibility to vote,<sup>6</sup> severe economic conditions,<sup>7</sup> and the lack of opportunities for upward socio-economic mobility. The debate that was generated in Britain due to the drastic measures that Governor Eyre enforced in suppressing the rebellion, not only resulted in Governor Eyre being disposed of his duties as Governor and recalled to Britain, but, became the impetus for the Jamaica Assembly to renounce its charter and become a Crown Colony. The foremost consequence of this decision was that ultimate authority within the country dwelt in a British minister of the crown, whose will was in turn executed by the colonial Governor. The Governor would then nominate the individuals who would serve in the local legislative assemblies. According to Bacchus, "The 'chosen few' were those most likely to protect and preserve British and to a large extent the planter interest" (Bacchus 1994: 9). Therefore, although the Governor was the individual who had directly responsibility for

6 Although the former slaves had gained the right to vote, they were excluded for participating in this venture due to the high poll tax that accompanied a voter's eligibility.

7 These economic conditions were exacerbated by a drought that lasted for two years – 1864–65.

establishing local legislation, including those who dealt with education, the planters and the white elites still heavily influenced his decisions.

As a result, education came to be used as a means of legitimizing “the highly unequal social and economic structures within the society by convincing the masses to accept their subordinate role and thereby modifying their occupational and social aspirations” (Bacchus 1994: 15). This mindset was cast in the philosophy that if an individual worked hard enough and embodied various characteristics of British culture then they would get ahead. This perceived ‘openness’ and ‘accessibility’ within the society was validated in several ways. One, by providing academic scholarships that enabled a few qualified blacks and colored students to attend the grammar-styled schools. Two, by creating more space for the admission of increasing numbers of colored and blacks students to the intermediate and model secondary schools. Three, by having a few ‘cultured’ and British educated blacks and coloreds in certain high-level positions such as barristers, clergymen, magistrates, and members of the local legislative assemblies.

### Education at Knox

Having given a brief overview of the development of education in Jamaica, I will now examine the educational system that was put into practice by the Scottish Missionary, Rev. Dr Lewis Davidson at Knox College highlighting some of the contributions that this particular education system has made to the students and their parents, the wider community, the nation and finally the Diaspora.

Prior to embarking on this endeavor, it is necessary to briefly say something about Davidson and his background. He was born in Glasgow on March 15, 1915. He graduated from Glasgow University in 1938 with honours in Philosophy and Psychology. In 1939, he got married and relocated to Jamaica as the Headmaster of Wolmer’s Boys School, in Kingston. As the oldest grammar school in Jamaica, Wolmer’s had a reputation of success and an educational system that was implemented along traditional lines. For Davidson however, “it was not enough for schools to get their pupils through examinations which would enable them to enter the respected professions: teachers would have to start now to give training in the skills of government, of industry and commerce, of education and social welfare, so that when independence came Jamaicans would be ready to take over the full management of their own country” (Davidson, 1992: 21). Thus for him “drama, art, music and technical subjects ought to be given as much time as examination subjects” (Davidson, 1992: 23).

His particular stance on the curriculum resulted in his departure from Wolmer's in 1942. In the years that followed Davidson, served as a missionary for the Church of Scotland and social Welfare advisor to the Presbyterian Church in Jamaica. It was out of this work that the vision of what became Knox College eventually emerged.

Knox College high school was founded on September 3, 1947 by the Scot Rev. Dr Lewis Davidson and David Brent a Jamaican. It is named after the Scottish scholar and reformer John Knox, who according to the school booklet published in 1957 "displayed in his life integrity, strength of character, statesmanship and a zeal which Scotland needed in the grim days of the Reformation.... A pioneer in the field of education it was John Knox who first saw the importance of education for the common people" (Knox College booklet, 1957). By naming the school after Knox, the intention was that "this college stands in Jamaica for the things that John Knox stood for in Scotland – a fearless search for truth, an inflexible will, a warm love for country, and above all, obedience to the will of God" (Knox College booklet, 1957). Located in hills of Clarendon overlooking the town of Spaldings, the college is also near to the border of two neighboring parishes – Manchester and Trelawny. In this strategic location it is able to cater to the secondary educational needs of several primary schools<sup>8</sup> – a segment of the rural population whose access to secondary education had been limited in the past due to distance. Knox is owned by the United Church of Jamaica and Grand Cayman, formerly the Presbyterian Church, and receives an education grant from the government. It is a co-educational facility that operates as both a boarding and a day school. As a result, it has a diversity of students from various countries, parishes within of Jamaica as well as from the surrounding community. Today, the high school is one part of the Knox complex that also comprises an elementary school and a community college.

The educational system that Rev, Dr Lewis Davidson implemented at Knox was focused on providing quality Christian education for the individual students. For Dr Davidson, Christian education in general and Protestant Christian education in particular had, to a large extent, been marked by individualism, intellectualism, and obscurantism (Davidson, 1950: 4–7). As a result, the education received seemed to ignore the need for social and communal responsibility, lacked warmth and relevance to life, and overlooked the ways in which other disciplines could contribute to the further development and growth of Christian education. Within the Jamaican context in particular, these features

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8 These schools include: Byrce Primary (United), Pike All Age (United), Christiana Moravian Primary (Moravian), Christiana Lease (Anglican), Spaldings Primary and a few of the primary schools in southern Trelawny.

had resulted in maintaining the status quo while producing an elite group of educated individuals – including coloreds and blacks – who seemed to have very little social responsibility towards the other members of their ethnic group and the society as a whole.<sup>9</sup> In order to address what he viewed as weaknesses within Protestant Christian education, Davidson proposed that six principles should govern Christian education. First, Christian education must be religious, i.e. based on faith and dogma, and the belief in the rights of man as a child of God regardless of sex, creed, race and status. In Christian teaching, there needed to be a certain level of love, tolerance and humility, these attitudes were to be balanced with social responsibility – being those individuals who work alongside those who struggle for the good in the society. As such, education was deemed by him to be more than just imparting knowledge, it should also clearly point out the other alternatives, for it is only then that it would be right for the Christian teacher to witness to the reality of the Christian faith. In the entirety of this process however, the free will of the child to choose to reject knowledge or refuse the skill was to be both honored and respected. This was a perspective that was in marked contrast to the totalitarian educational system where such a choice is not given.

Second, Christian education must be based on love (agape), one which “arises out of a profound sense of being loved by God.” According to Davidson:

Agape makes no excessive demands on others, but does not hesitate to ask. It never uses others for the sake of anything else (not even the Kingdom of God), nor for the sake of anyone else (not even God). Even agape is not completely altruistic, for we are told to love ourselves just as much as our neighbours. Agape is the essence of personalism, for it is a love which cares for every single person as important in himself.

DAVIDSON 1950:44

Thus agape stands in stark contrast with self-interested love which he terms as ‘eros’ which seeks satisfaction irrespective of the interests of other and neurotic love which seeks to compel love by bribes, threat or pity. When applied to Christian education this love provides the method that helps to facilitate the nurturing of the personal life expressed in the relationship between the teacher

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9 In the Jamaican context, education is one of the primary vehicles through which an individual is able to attain economic mobility and status. As a result, the educated person or student is normally perceived by others to be a standard bearer in terms of civilization and class. One consequence of this designation however is that the educated person may begin to see themselves as being superior and separate from the others members of their ethnic group.

and children, teacher and teacher, and between children and other children (Davidson 1950:45)

Third, Christian education must help the individual to adjust him/herself to reality. Here Davidson agrees with Pestalozzi that there are two educational values that need to be observed in training children to adjust properly to experience. The first level of the training was accomplished “through the feelings and by the mother”; the second is the progression of this process (Davidson 1950:45). When this principle is applied within the school setting, “the subjects which are taught become not an ends in themselves, but [instead] the material that is required to secure the child’s adjustment” (Davidson 1950: 45). It is imperative to note however, that this adjustment, which takes place within the child, is not a process of the mind alone; instead it also involves changes in the child’s attitude and behavior.<sup>10</sup> According to Davidson, the application of this principle – the purpose of education is to guide the child to make satisfactory adjustments to reality – is of particular importance within Christian education because it highlights two weakness of Protestant education, namely “the over-emphasis on intellectualism, and the failure to explain how the Gospel can be actively appropriated” (Davidson 1950: 47).

The fourth principle that Davidson purposes is that Christian education should develop man as a whole. He admits that although this ideology undergirds all theories of education, exactly what is meant by ‘wholeness’ is not always clearly articulated. For him, ‘wholeness’ means that education should not try to produce a specific type of person but instead assist in developing the inward power so that the individual will reconcile him/herself to his/her community. As such Christian education is not simply vocational training; instead it is an appraisal, discovery and confrontation of human and societal needs and the preparation of children with the appropriate skills which will enable them to respond to those needs. It is the development of a good citizen and a good Christian who does not ask: “What am I to get out of this?” but, rather, ‘What is there that needs to be done?’ and answers in the prophetic spirit, ‘Here am I: send me.’” (Davidson 1950: 50). Education that is focused on the development of the whole human being – mind, body and spirit, does not treat these entities as separate things, instead they are treated as overlapping, thus securing “for the child a flexibility of movement, [which assists him/her] to become a self-determining organic unity, with all his [her] inherent powers harmonized within himself [herself] and with the organic community to which he [she] belongs” (Davidson 1950: 51).

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10 It is not enough for the student to know that is right and wrong, that knowledge gained also needs to be applied to their lives.

Fifth, Christian education must be based on experience and training in the use of experience. In discussing this principle, Davidson states:

Education should consist in providing the growing child with experiences which exercise the incipient powers of mind and body and spirit. Religious and moral education does not consist in teaching abstract ideas about God and the good life, but in letting the child see his parents worship and pray and live the Christian life, and in subjecting the child from the beginning to the demands of family life, thus evoking rudimentary loyalty, love, self-discipline and so on. In other words, education must be based on experience, and the experience must precede instruction. The religious life of the family, the school and the community is the reality which theology is called to interpret, and therefore religious instruction apart from religious life is a waste of time, and more, it may permanently jeopardise the growth of a living faith, because abstract ideas have a way of getting between God and his children.

DAVIDSON 1950: 52

Thus in terms of their education the pupils also become active partners engaged in the process of doing, examining, reacting, expressing, – i.e. experiencing. In this manner the acquisition of knowledge moves beyond ascertaining the right answers or some important facts, to become the attainment of a skill manifested in “an activity, a search, a painful, exultant, joyful search, of a mind that thinks, sees, smells, observes and hungers for certainty” (Davidson 1950: 53).

Finally, Christian education must be the education of the individual for a community. One fundamental point for Davidson was that “Christian education is not mass education: it is the education of each unique person” (Davidson 1950: 58). Thus, such education also needed to pay attention to the differences that existed between individuals. It is here that he was influenced by the Alfred Alder’s theories about individual psychology in regards to the student’s personality and behavior. For Alder the central critical experience for the child is the feeling of inadequacy – i.e. to satisfy the need to love and be loved. As a result of this need, the behavioral and emotional expressions of an individual, and that person’s idea of themselves, is to be understood not in the singular parts, but in the manner in which these part contribute to the whole – i.e. in terms of the purposive unity of the personality or character. For Alder, it is also necessary to realize that in his/her unconverted, uneducated state the child and the adult has a ‘goal of superiority’ which arises out of the feeling of inferiority (Davidson 1950: 33) and the methods by which the child and the adult



'compensate' for this sense of inferiority can lead to the extraordinary diversity of human achievement and the byways of neurotic substitution (Davidson 1950: 33). When Davidson applies these ideas to Christian education, he concludes that:

[It] is concerned to do two things: first, to begin the education of the child at the stage of development which he has reached now, and secondly to prepare the child for the society that exists now, while at the same time preparing him for his destiny as a child of God and a citizen of the Kingdom of God.... Thus the child is not to *become* a citizen, he *is* a citizen now, and has the duties and responsibilities that he is capable of performing now, no more and no less. As the child grows within the educative society, he becomes more and more able to carry more and more burdens. It is not only the citizen who is growing: the man is growing, too, for man and citizen are one and the same. Within the educative society, there is no possibility of personal growth without growth in social grace as well.

DAVIDSON 1950: 58–59

Having briefly discussed the six principles that Rev. Dr Lewis Davidson saw as governing Christian education, we can now examine how these principles and educational system then implemented at Knox. In terms of the curriculum, Davidson concluded that it was not enough to just prepare students to succeed at the examinations that would enable them to enter certain respected professions, given the pre-independence context, it was equally important for educators to begin to train their students in the skills of "government, of industry and commerce, of education and social welfare, so that when independence came Jamaicans would be ready to take over the full management of their own country" (Davidson, 1992: 21). As a result, the curriculum that was employed was diverse in its composition, combining the subjects required to sit for the Cambridge Local Examination, as well as music, art, physical education,<sup>11</sup> agriculture. As a result of this curriculum, both students and people within the community were exposed to various kinds of Art and Music. For the students, this took the form of Art and Music classes,<sup>12</sup> for the wider community, their

11 At Knox, all students must achieve passing grades in Physical Education in order to graduate. See Knox College High School website: [http://knoxalumni.com/KHS/knox\\_high\\_school\\_web\\_page.htm](http://knoxalumni.com/KHS/knox_high_school_web_page.htm), accessed April 2009.

12 This exposure in turn helped to fostered several students' involvement in drama, the school choir, photography and other artistic ventures.



exposure came in the form of annual summer programs that were held at the school. These summer programs also functioned as a forum in which various methods and techniques aimed at improving the family life and social life within the community were also presented. In the area of physical education, many students were introduced to various sports that given the rural context in which they lived were not a possibility prior to coming to Knox. These included – swimming, tennis, volleyball, and netball.

Included within the mixed curriculum as of 1968 was also an on-campus work-study program that required all of the students to perform various tasks associated with the ongoing operation of the school. For Davidson, this program would not only give all of the students the experience of doing things for themselves, but the experience of working with their hands and performing hard labor would also assist them in developing well-rounded personalities and an appreciation for those people within their families, the wider community and at Knox who where full-time laborers – be it on the land, in building, in the kitchen or in the laundry. It is necessary to note that the inclusion of this program within the curriculum and requiring that all students achieve a passing grade in this program in order to graduate was a revolutionary measure, for within Jamaican society, the pursuit of education is indelibly linked with upward-mobility, entry into a white-collar profession, and status – i.e. not having to do hard manual labor.<sup>13</sup> Thus by requiring its students to perform manual labor, Knox sought to debunk the ‘prince-like’ mentality or special treatment that many of the students were given within their homes, community and the society at large. The work-study program remains a prominent part of the school’s curriculum, requiring each senior to complete at least 50 hours of supervised work in some task associated with the overall operation of the school.

The educational system implemented at Knox was oriented around the individuality of the students, while also building a communal ethos within the school. Thus, in the situations where student exhibiting problems of learning and personality, instead of dispensing corporate punishment or marginalizing the students by labeling them as dysfunctional and disruptive, Davidson took various measures to ascertain what was happening by meeting with the individual students to discuss the problem, and then offering counseling. Among

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13 It should also be noted that within the society, a manual laborer by virtue of profession had less social standing than someone who was educated. Within many rural communities especially in pre-independence Jamaica, the educated person or even the student was perceived as the standard bearers in terms of civilization and class. As a result, certain activities were considered to be beneath them, both within the community and their homes.

the staff, he sought to foster an understanding of children's behavior, which would in turn govern their interaction with their students. As a result of this attitude towards the students, two specific roles were established among the staff – guidance counselor and homeroom teacher. The guidance counselor was a teacher who would meet with each class for several sessions during the academic year to discuss certain issues that were relevant to the students, and also offer the students guidance. At the beginning of each academic year each student was assigned to a homeroom and a homeroom teacher. It was hoped that the students would form relationships with other students in their homeroom and also their homeroom teacher, and in the case where they had a problem they needed to discuss with an adult then they could go to their homeroom teacher.<sup>14</sup> In terms of the actual teaching process, a departmental system was instituted. The advantage of using this system was that the various skills in a department could be combined in a comprehensive syllabus. Thus if a teacher had to be absent for any period of time, another teacher could substitute because all of the teachers had been involved in drawing up the syllabus. This system also created a forum in which inexperienced teachers could learn from the more able teachers in the department (Davidson 1992: 122). The students' learning process is further enhanced by an intentional emphasis on independent study. Here students are encouraged to use the library to conduct research for various projects and to ascertain information that they ought to know.

The communal ethos of the school was produced and maintained in several practical ways. First, all of the students wore the same style of uniform – this was a navy blue tunic and light blue blouse for the girls and navy blue trousers and light blue shirt for the boys. Black shoes and navy blue socks completed the uniform. Second, all of the students had to follow the same rules and were required to fulfill the same academic requirements. As a result of these practical measures, the students, despite their socio-economic backgrounds – rich or poor, urban or rural, local or overseas, found themselves, in an environment where they were all treated in a similar fashion – as Knox students, students who would be challenged to grow academically and socially (Davidson 1992: 79).

Another element that was included within the educational system was student leadership with the goal being that it would give the students some

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14 In certain situations, some students may have the same homeroom teacher for the entire five years that they were in high school. Thus, a relationship would have been formed that allowed the student to seek out this teacher whenever they had a problem and wanted to speak to an adult. It is necessary to note that the students who boarded were also assigned to an additional teacher who was charged with looking out for their welfare.

responsibility for their own welfare. This leadership was expressed in several forms, namely – the Students Council, Prefect Council, and the nomination for the receipt of the John Beattie Shield – the school's highest award. According to the schools' website, "the purpose of the Students Council and Prefect Council is to enhance the involvement of students in their education while developing their skills in decision-making and leadership."<sup>15</sup> In each class, the students select a fellow student to serve as their student council representative. Through a democratic election process, both the teacher and students in turn select a President and Vice-President from the group of elected representatives. For the Prefect Council, the selection is conducted by the academic staff and is based on the student's positive leadership qualities, attitude and academic performance. From this group of Prefects, a head boy and head girl is selected. The duties of the Prefect council and final year Student Council leaders are varied. They are assigned homerooms, where they assist their fellow students should they have any problems while also ensuring that the school rules are being obeyed. This group of students also functions as bus monitors for the day students who take school buses. In some situations, some of the Prefects may be called upon to monitor a class or invigilate an examination in the absence of a member of staff. In the early years, the Prefects also formed a part of the School Council, a group that also consisted of staff, who met weekly to consider the overall life of the Knox community. Another form in which student leadership is expressed is in the nomination process for the John Beattie Shield. Here final year students along with the staff will choose a senior who they perceive to be providing the greatest service and leadership to the school. It is necessary to note however, that should such a student not be found for that year then no award is given.

### **Knox's Impact on Its Students**

Thus far in this paper, we have briefly discussed some of the principles that Rev. Dr Lewis Davidson saw as governing Christian education and seen how these were implemented in various ways into the curriculum, organization and life of Knox College. One question emerging from this discourse however is, what impact did the form of Christian education implemented at Knox have on its students, the wider community and the Diaspora? The section that follows will seek to offer some answers to this question.

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<sup>15</sup> [http://knoxalumni.com/KHS/knox\\_high\\_school\\_web\\_page.htm](http://knoxalumni.com/KHS/knox_high_school_web_page.htm), accessed April 2009.

The Christian education implemented at Knox influenced its' students in both a positive and negative manner. For many students, Knox functioned as the foundation for their later achievements. According to Kairy Walker, a computer network specialist who attended Knox from 1987–1992, "Knox is the foundation on which most of my life has been built. Responsibility, teamwork, service to community, leadership, humility, respect, morality and spirituality are all a part of the lasting impact those 5 years had on my life."<sup>16</sup> This foundational function was also expressed by Kevin Roberts, (1989–1994) who states, "the influence my schooling at Knox had on me keeps pushing me further and further into education and I am now enrolled in a Masters of Adult learning and Distance education degree with the University of Phoenix.... Without a solid foundation, the house we build is easily susceptible to a great fall. Thanks Knox for that solid foundation."<sup>17</sup>

For other students, Knox was the place where they were exposed to various artistic, cultural and athletic experiences. As noted above, for many of the students who came from the rural surrounding communities, Knox became the place where they were exposed to photography,<sup>18</sup> drama, and various kinds of music. This was the case for the Kevin Smith, who attended Knox from 1981–1989. He states:

As some who knew me while I was at Knox will tell you, towards my last years there I had fostered a love of music. It is this love that after many years [and] much soul searching has led me to the decision that I have made concerning my field of study.... I have just finished my second year [in a vocal performance program at Temple University in Philadelphia], and I find it quite exciting. It is my dream to someday move back to Jamaica and it would be the icing on the cake if I could return as an accomplished opera singer.<sup>19</sup>

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16 See spotlight on Kairy Walker submitted by Douglas Clarke on February 20, 2004 on the on the Knox Alumni webpage <http://knoxalumni.com/WEBPAGES/spotlight.htm>, accessed April 18, 2009.

17 See spotlight on Kevin Roberts submitted by K.A. Roberts on January 12, 2004 on the on the Knox Alumni webpage <http://knoxalumni.com/WEBPAGES/spotlight.htm>, accessed April 18, 2009.

18 While attending a funeral in Jamaica in October 2009 I had a conversation with two Knox Alumni, one of whom stated that he was first introduced to photography while a student at Knox. His interest was further nurtured by his involvement in the Chaplain's photo club – the on-campus photography club.

19 See Kevin Smith's Profile on the Knox Alumni webpage <http://knoxalumni.com/WEBPAGES/spotlight.htm>, accessed April 18, 2009.

In the athletic dimension, Knox was also the context in which many of these students learned to swim, play netball, tennis and other sports.

Knox also had a positive impact on some of its' students in terms of providing them with opportunities to be mentored by different adults and upper class students, fostering among them a sense of social responsibility and providing many families with an educational legacy which has been passed down to the later generations. For Ava Tomlinson who graduated from Knox in 1992, the institution not only molded her for her career path, but also was instrumental in shaping the lives of several family members including her grand aunt, her mother, her uncle, and her sister.<sup>20</sup> In recent years the perpetuation of this educational legacy has taken on added dimensions, for as several alumni have relocated to the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom some are choosing to send their Diaspora born children back to Knox for their secondary education.

It is imperative to note however that the impact of Knox on its students was not always positive. For some students the educational system that was implemented and their subsequent experience were largely negative. By involving students in the leadership of the school – in the form of Prefect and Student Council, Knox not only provided these students with a forum for developing their leadership skills, but in some ways also served to create an environment in which an elitist status amongst the wider student body also developed. Although it was stated earlier that all of the students wore the same style of uniform, there were two groups of students whose uniforms were modified – the Prefects and the Student Councils members. Instead of a tunic, the girls wore a navy blue skirt, and for the boys their regular shirt was replaced with one that was tucked inside one's trousers. The uniform for both genders was completed with a tie and a badge. Coupled with the distinction that was made in terms of one's uniform, the Prefects and Student Council members also had a room designated for their personal use – to leave their personal items, eat lunch and to congregate. This room was considered to be off limits to the other students unless they were accompanied by one of the Prefects or Student Council members. In the case of the Prefects particularly, who were chosen solely by the staff, it may seem like only a certain type of student was considered for such leadership – one who was respectful, diligent academically and obedient to the rules of the school. In these situations, those students who may have leadership skills but not conform to all of these qualities would most likely not be given the opportunity to serve in this capacity. In a recent

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20 See Ava Tomlinson's profile on the Knox Alumni webpage <http://knoxalumni.com/WEBPAGES/spotlight.htm>, accessed April 18, 2009.

conversation with an alumnus, I was told that the teachers always chose the 'good' students for these positions, and as a result, a student like himself, who had the tendency of wanting to have his own opinion, was not even given a chance to be in leadership. He stated emphatically – "they did not like me."<sup>21</sup> Thus for this student and many like him the Knox environment had not provided them with a place to express their individuality or develop their leadership skills. For this alumnus, this lack of acceptance and marginalization was a leading contributor to his disregard that he showed towards several of the school rules.

Although the educational system put into practice at Knox sought to balance the elitism and status that accompanied having a secondary and tertiary education, from the reflections shared by some of the alumni it is clear that in some ways the institution eventually fell susceptible to this same mindset amongst its students and within the community. In providing quality secondary and tertiary education to the surrounding communities, Knox has gained the reputation as a 'citadel on the hill' – the standard bearer for the community. It is important to note however, that this reputation i.e. the standard bearer is not only applied with the institution, but to all who are connected with it, particularly the students. Therefore, once the students are in their Knox uniform they are expected to behave in a manner that will serve as a positive example for other young people. For some students, this expectation is expanded to include their daily lives within their respective communities. Being a standard is not limited to ones behavior however, but also includes how one is groomed – the expectation being that the student is groomed in a manner befitting someone who is a upstanding member of the community and the society. For the boys this meant having a clean-cut hairstyle, and for the girls, wearing one's hair in an appropriate manner – having a hairstyle that was not too short, elaborate or dyed. On the occasions when students have engaged in such behavior that is deemed inappropriate, they may become the subject of gossip or ridicule among their fellow students, or be approached by a member of staff to discuss their actions.

Another manner in which the Knox experience may continue to function in what may be perceived as a largely negative manner for some of its students is evident in the construction and content listed on its' alumni webpage. There are two types of messages found on the webpage – students who are trying to reconnect with fellow students, and students who are documenting the ways in which Knox – the school, teachers, educational system and friendships – have

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21 These sentiments were expressed several times by this Knox alumnus during multiple telephone conversations that we had over the course of December 2009 and January 2010.

contributed to achievements they have gone on to accomplish in their respective lives. It is significant that there are no postings by Alumni stating the negative impact that attending Knox may have had on their lives. Thus again, the alumni who fall into this category find themselves marginalized and unmentioned. For although each alumni is free to post whatever comments on the page, which person, would want to be the individual who posts the first negative comment in the sea of positive and successful stories.

In terms of Knox's impact of Jamaica and the Diaspora, here too we are confronted with both the positive and the negative. On the positive side, Knox alumni are currently in several leadership positions both within Jamaica and beyond. These include: the Postmaster General and CEO of Jamaica Postal service; President of Florida Memorial University; Director of Tourism for Jamaica; numerous doctors, lawyers, IT specialist and educators. In many situations, these are the alumni who are celebrated and acknowledged as Knoxites. On the negative side, some Knox alumni have gone on to become involved in criminal activity and many anti-social behaviors. As a result of this, they may not be claimed as readily as a Knoxite.

## Conclusion

The relationship existing between Jamaica and Scotland is multifarious – including such discourses like – the transatlantic slave trade, the abolition movement, colonization and Christianization. Although these foci, which have become dominant within academia, are valid and necessary, it may not give sufficient attention to investigating the existence of other ties such as the emergence of quality education systems within a rural context. This paper sought to correct this myopic approach by focusing on the educational system put into operation by the Scottish Missionary, Rev. Dr Lewis Davidson at Knox College high school. This examination was conducted in three specific stages. First, it necessary to discuss the six principles that Davidson believed should govern quality Christian education. Second, we explored what were some of the particular features that constituted this educational system. Finally, by hearing from the alumni themselves, we were able to ascertain what were some of the positive and negative influences that the institution had on their development and their lives. We have learned that Knox provided a forum for students to be exposed to many artistic, cultural and athletic experiences that have significantly impacted their lives. It also provided many with the foundation on which they were able to build their lives and support their subsequent achievements. However, in the process, Knox also became a place of rejection



and marginalization for some students. For both groups of students however, Knox was a place of learning that one's life must not be lived only for oneself but also in service of others – a mindset embodied in the school motto 'Nite servire Neque Cedere' – To Strive, to Serve, and not to Yield. As the school enters the next decade of the twenty-first century, one of the challenges that lie ahead is how can it re-claim some of Dr Davidson's vision of being an institution that fosters the development of the individual by creating a space where students are free to express their opinions without fear of being penalized for doing so? Another challenge is how will Knox – the institutions, staff and students – having gained the reputation as the citadel on the hill, now use that as a platform to take the lead in serving their community and fostering the social responsibility towards the society that Davidson saw as critical for the ongoing development of the country?

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### *Conversations with Knox Alumni*

- Conversation with two Knox alumni on October 15, 2009 during the funeral celebrations for Uriel A. McLean in Coleyville District, Jamaica.
- Telephone conversations with an alumnus who graduated from Knox in 1991 during December 2009 and January 2010.

## Robert S. Duncanson, an African American Pioneer Artist with Links to Scotland

*Everlyn Nicodemus and Kristian Romare<sup>1</sup>*

Robert S. Duncanson, a pioneer African-American artist of African and Scottish ancestry, was a revolutionary in being the first painter of African descent to enter the competitive world of fine art and to make an international career as a landscape painter combining the Romantic traditions of the Hudson River and Scottish Highlands schools of landscape painting. He met success in both U.S. and British circles but experienced traumatizing reverses and died mentally disordered and destitute. The authors of the chapter argue that his modification of the Romantic aesthetic of the Sublime, in paintings such as “The Land of the Lotus Eaters” and his depictions of Loch Katrine, suggest a political sensitivity to the fate of black slaves and Native Americans in the New World. After his death he fell into obscurity for nearly a century, and the archive situation is consequently highly faulty. Even the reliable art historical research from the beginning of the 1990s, upon which these papers primarily build, has left considerable lacunae. To bridge over these gaps in order to be able to tell an extraordinary life story and a unique artistic achievement has required assumptions and reasonable reconstructions, which will partly be discussed in the commentary at the end of this chapter.

### I      How an Early African American Pioneer Made his Career Through Scotland

The photograph reproduced here is taken in Montreal, Canada, in 1863. A man aged forty-two years poses as a relaxed gentleman, yet in his face there is a sensitive tension. It may indicate he is involved in an intellectual adventure. It might indicate more (Figure 1).

It is funny how photographers loved to choose props telling about the subject. The furniture in this portrait, made of trailing tree branches, might

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1 Sections 1 and 2 of the chapter, by Everlyn Nicodemus and Kristian Romare respectively, build on common research, as the authors are working as a research team.



FIGURE 1 W.A. Notman, Portrait of Robert S. Duncanson, Photograph 1864, McCord Museum, Montreal, Canada.

indicate that the sitter is a landscape painter. And that is what he is. A beautiful water-colour from the same time has as its subject a wild forest.

The artist is Robert S. Duncanson (1821–72). He had come from Cincinnati, Ohio, and was on his way to Britain, in the hope of furthering his career. When he in due time arrived there, he ended up in Scotland, and his work bridges

American and Scottish Romantic landscape painting. At the time the photograph was taken, however, he had just found out that there was a role for him to play in colonial Canada, where he consequently stayed for two years.

It has to do with the remarkable photographer W.A. Notman (1826–1891),<sup>2</sup> who took this portrait. Like the famous Parisian photographer Felix Nadar (1820–1910),<sup>3</sup> who opened his gallery for the then-unknown Impressionist painters, and thus played a role in European modernism, Notman employed multiple initiatives to promote Canadian artists, still relatively unknown. He immediately recognised Duncanson's great talent and engaged him as his artistic adviser, a stroke of luck for both Duncanson and Canada. Duncanson went on to become a pioneer and a teacher in an early chapter of Canadian art history. Several of his best landscapes, including his beloved waterfalls, were painted in Canada (Figure 2).<sup>4</sup>

Duncanson was the grandson of a slave and the great-grandson of a Scottish slave owner in Virginia.<sup>5</sup> That makes him, to my knowledge, the earliest person

2 Photography and photographers played an eminent role in Duncanson's career. Being a "technical practice" beside the highly esteemed practice of Fine Art, photographic work represented for many an entrance gate into the latter sphere. As early as 1844 Duncanson, who dealt with the new techniques, advertised together with a fellow artist and photographer a "spectacle of chemical painting...comprising views after the singular style of Daguerre." In the 1850s he worked in the photographic studio in Cincinnati of the fellow African American photographer James P. Ball, retouching portraits and coloring photographic prints. I will come back to that most important collaboration. William Notman, finally, had moved from Scotland to Montreal in 1856 and established a flourishing photography studio there, which soon became widely famous, and which Queen Victoria even made purveyor to Her Majesty the Queen. Notman operated a partnership with Canadian artists such as John Arthur Fraser and Henry Sandham, opened his studio for exhibitions by Canadian painters and provided training for photographers and painters. It was in that activity he engaged Robert S. Duncanson. It even facilitated the artist's consecutive preceding to Europe, as he was included in a Canadian exhibition in Dublin.

3 Felix Nadar, pseudonym of Gaspard-Felix Toumarchon, was a French photographer, caricaturist, journalist and novelist, famous for the first aerial photograph of Paris, which he took as a pioneer balloonist. In April 1874 he lent his spacious and centrally situated photography studio to a group of then unknown artists, the *Impressionists*, for an exhibition, which became their breakthrough.

4 In the 1860s Duncanson painted *Minnenopa Falls*, *Falls of Minnehaha*, *The Niagara Falls*, *River with Rapids*, *Canadian Falls*, *Waterfalls of Montmorency* and *A Wet Morning on the Chaudiere Falls*.

5 The principle "partur sequitur ventrem," that a child was considered a black slave according to the status of his or her mother, not to the color of the father, was first adopted by the state of Virginia. We know nothing about Robert Duncanson's great-grandmother, who obviously was an African slave, if she was raped or kept as a concubine by the owner. What we know is



FIGURE 2 Robert S. Duncanson, *A Wet Morning on the Chaudiere Falls*. Oil on canvas, 1868. National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.

of African descent ever to have made a career within what the white Caucasian world calls “Fine Arts.” And this he did at a time, in the mid-1850s, when many Europeans believed in discriminatory, racist theories like that of de Gobineau, which maintained that Africans as being inferior human beings were not capable of creating fine art.<sup>6</sup>

Robert Duncanson’s grandfather, though a slave, had been spared slave-labour on the plantation, having been chosen instead to train as a house

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that according to legislation 1748, “Negroes, Mulattos and Indian slaves” were considered personal property. The treatment of Mulatto children of slave owners varied. Often they were exploited by hard labor like the other slaves. In some cases they were treated more favorably, even sent abroad to study. The grandfather’s was a case in between. He was accorded what was called ‘genteel slavery’, that of house servants or skilled artisans. After the Declaration of Independence, Virginia legislature allowed emancipation by deed, will or with a signed, sealed and witnessed document. The latter form was obviously in this case how his freedom was bought.

6 Several racialist so called scientists published similar theories around 1850, Robert Knox, *Races of Man*, published in London 1850, Comte de Gobineau, *Essai sur l’inegalite des races humaines*, first published in Paris 1853, J.C. Nott and G.H. Giddens, *Types of Mankind*, published in Philadelphia 1854.

painter.<sup>7</sup> He was even permitted to earn some money from his craft. Thus, he was eventually able to buy his freedom from the slave owner – his own father! He took his family away from slavery in Virginia and travelled northward, to La Fayette in Seneca County, New York State. It was there, in 1821, that Robert was born.

When Robert was seven, his grandfather died. Slavery had ended in New York State only the previous year. His father, John Dean Duncanson, took the family – his wife, Lucy, and his two daughters and five sons – farther away from the threat of slavery and moved up along the Hudson River and Erie Canal to the Great Lakes, close to the Canadian border. At the time, even emancipated slaves might face dangers to their freedom, and British Canada meant additional security for Blacks escaping slavery or distancing themselves from the South. John Dean Duncanson brought with him his skills in house painting and carpentry, and with the help of his elder sons, who served as his apprentices, he set up a business in the town of Monroe.<sup>8</sup> Robert soon was to share his brothers' work as a house painter apprentice.

It is not difficult to reconstruct the family's choice of a place to settle. The steamer traffic along the Hudson River was in the middle of an explosive development, and its extension by the Erie Canal had just occurred. Monroe is situated at the western tip of Lake Erie. The journey from New York City's Manhattan Island is still today a fascinating voyage through American history. The sceneries are so fascinating that since 1999, when the American Congress established *The Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area*, tourist and heritage organisations have published an extensive illustrated description online of the area, its history and its beauties.<sup>9</sup> It makes it possible to follow the seven-year-old Robert Duncanson on his travel through what would later become his preserve as a unique landscape painter with an underlying interest in the history of mankind.<sup>10</sup>

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7 Slave holders in Virginia tended to allow the skilled artisans among their slaves to hire themselves out. This was probably how the grandfather could earn money enough to buy his freedom. In 1793 this trade was officially forbidden.

8 Monroe had been granted a town charter only five years before the Duncansons established themselves there in 1828. It soon became a commercially prospering town. This made people change their old-fashioned log houses for technically modern buildings. And that gave plenty of openings for carpenters and housepainters. (See John Warner Barbour, *Connecticut Historical Collection*, 1836).

9 See *Exploring the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area* on *Windows on History*, [Amtrak.com](http://Amtrak.com).

10 The steamboat voyage passed by many historical places reminding of the American Revolution such as Fort Montgomery, White Plains, Stony Point and Saratoga as well as



The family's breaking-up mood was repeated in a new and individual dimension with Robert Duncanson's emancipation from his father's craft to take up a career as an autonomous fine artist. This was a tremendously daring journey, which no individual of African descent had dared to embark on before him. It passed through several stages between workmanship and artistic practices, gradually more sophisticated. I have tried to reconstruct these steps from what can be found as common patterns among (white) American pre-career painters.<sup>11</sup>

An early step for Duncanson was to establish himself as a portrait painter by advertising for clients who might commission portraits, a common way of earning a living with one's paintbrush.<sup>12</sup> He progressively freed his portraits from a certain stereotypical stiffness but turned, in the end, to landscape painting, a genre in vogue among autonomous artists in the era of Romanticism. Seen at a distance, from the perspective of global art history, this represented nothing less than a revolutionary journey into another world, the established white universe of Fine Arts, the world of exhibitions, art collectors, galleries and museums. Addressing an anonymous art market and no longer delivering to well known customers, this meant that the artist had to invent – and to compete with – a philosophy, style and discourse of his own. As we will see, it took Duncanson quite some purposefulness and caution to steer free from biased attitudes that might block up such an adventure.

A very first step in the emancipation is documented in an ad in a Monroe newspaper of April 17 1838, in which Robert Duncanson and a friend announced having established themselves as a company of "painters and glazers...in the

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West Point Military Academy. It passed the historical residence of the peace negotiating Founding Father John Jay, impressive landscapes of the Hudson River Valley and the Hudson Highland such as Bear Mountain and, of future importance for Duncanson, the Catskills, where only some few years later Thomas Cole was going to establish the head quarter for the Hudson River group of landscape painters and poets. Another point that seems to have played a role in Duncanson's future artistic career is the Shodack Island, where Henry Hudson's ship *Half Moon* ran aground in 1609. It was of this historical event that the online *Heritage Journey* marked the 400 year anniversary in 2009.

- 11 When housepainters and carpenters advanced to finish and embellish interiors, they were sometimes commissioned to include decorative pieces while painting the walls. Next step seems to have been to produce these decorative pieces on separate panels. The step from there to painting pictures was technically short.
- 12 To have one's picture painted represented a status ambition within middle class and lower middle class families. A passable likeness was thereby mainly the only criterion within a lucrative market. Portrait as character study, on the other side, belonged to the level of fine art.

most superior style...[and] on the lowest possible terms.”<sup>13</sup> It proclaimed the ambition to advance further in the house painting craft. By choosing to leave the team of the Duncanson family business, seventeen years old Robert here also commits a kind of commercial patricide, promising to surpass and undercut his father’s company, something that emphasizes the radicalism of the step. The youngsters’ company seems to have been short-lived. The next step in Robert Duncanson’s emancipation, boldly taken around 1840, meant leaving Monroe, family and trade behind and moving sixty miles to the south to Cincinnati, Ohio,<sup>14</sup> a cultural centre in the United States that was close to the border of a slave state, Kentucky. That was where he in the following years was to embark on the career as a fine artist.

We should keep in mind that this was a period with slavery as a threat and racial thinking still being common. It must have meant a course of life in which blows of adversity and setbacks alternated with glimpses of hope and with experiences of achieved success. The unforeseeable play of genes had supplied Robert Duncanson with fairly light complexion. He could have passed for being white. But an African American he was, and he was widely known as such in Cincinnati through his collaboration with fellow African Americans and abolitionists. The ever-present strain meant never being able to breathe freely. He died at only fifty-one years of age, and in a state of total mental breakdown. Only a few years after the Notman photograph was taken, Duncanson is said to have shown signs of psychological disorder. He was frequently so incapacitated by it that he was incapable of working. Success and catastrophe consequently interlaced. Authors writing about Duncanson have surmised that his suffering was caused by lead poisoning from paints.<sup>15</sup> That

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13 The ad was first published in *Monroe Gazette* April 17 1838, and its full text was as follows: “A New Firm. John Gamblin & R. Duncanson, Painters and Glaziers, beg leave to acquaint their friends and the citizens of Monroe and its vicinity, that they have established themselves in the above business, and respectfully solicit patronage. They pledge themselves to do work in the most superior style, and to use the best and genuine materials for the same on the lowest possible terms, – lower than ever executed in this city. Monroe, April 16, 1838.”

14 While the big American cities in early 19th century such as New York were situated along the coast, Cincinnati was the first booming inland city to rival them. Its cultural life had traditions from German immigrants. A professor G. Frankenstein is said to have been teaching at an Academy of Cincinnati that still existed in early 1840s. Cincinnati flourished with the steamboat traffic on the Ohio River. When this was overtaken by railroad nets, Chicago succeeded Cincinnati.

15 Among oil paints, Flake White has been found to contain a high concentration of lead, which often inflicts poisoning (sometimes called ‘painter’s colic’). To its symptoms belongs a nervous system toxicity causing aggressions and antisocial behavior, which



may well have been a contributing factor, but I would venture a guess that he also suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder, PTSD, a psychological disorder following unbearable stress in war or by persecution.<sup>16</sup>

When I began doing research on Duncanson, I was working on a textbook for American undergraduates on African, Asian and Latin American modernism including the African diaspora in America,<sup>17</sup> and I found myself in a muddle of contradicting sources about the artist. He had been forgotten for nearly a century. Rumors and myths swirled around. Even when I decided to keep to the two sources supposed to be the most reliable ones, the contradictions remained.

The first of the sources was *A History of African-American Artists from 1792 to the Present*,<sup>18</sup> a survey written by the two African Americans, the artist Romare Bearden and author Harry Henderson. Romare Bearden has always had my admiration as an outstanding intellectual artist. I was predisposed to take his

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made Duncanson's biographer to conclude: "His behavior in his latter years is consistent with lead poisoning."

- 16 Psychological trauma among artists and the impact of PTSD on visual art has been much less researched than lead poisoning. The author of this essay has made pioneering research on the issue of art and trauma and dedicated her doctoral thesis *African Modern Art and Black Cultural Trauma* (Middlesex University, London 2011) to black cultural trauma. In Africa, modern art emerged some sixty years after Duncanson, in the African diaspora of USA, took his decisive step. 'The connecting link between modern art and cultural trauma in Africa is the circumstance from which visual art in a modern sense emerged during colonial time. It meant a departure from a system of visual production with great traditions in the past, which had been functionally integrated in everyday life in pre-modern African societies. And subsequently it meant the generation of a new system of production and reception according to which artists were assumed to manifest their individuality and to invent-and-produce works for aesthetic consumption for an exclusive anonymous market'. Evelyn Nicodemus, *African Modern Art and Black Cultural Trauma*, doctorate by Public Works, 2011, eprints.mdx.ac.uk/9026, page 10.
- 17 *Modern Art in Africa, Asia and Latin America: An Introduction to Global Modernisms*, Editors Elaine O'Brien, Evelyn Nicodemus (Africa), Melissa Chiu and Benjamin Genochio (Asia) and Mary K. Coffey and Roberto Tejada (Latin America), Wiley-Blackwell 2012. In the chapter 'Art of the African Diaspora', Michael D. Harris writes: 'It is difficult to say how much Duncanson identified with his African heritage, but he lived during a time when there had been several riots in Cincinnati in which whites attacked blacks, and proslavery advocates had a strong presence there,' *Modern Art in Africa, Asia and Latin America: An Introduction to Global Modernisms*, Wiley-Blackwell 2012, 67.
- 18 Romare Bearden & Harry Henderson, *A History of African-American Artists from 1792 to the Present*, New York: Pantheon Books 1993. The earlier artists mentioned, such as Joshua Johnston, if they were confirmed to be of African descent, were folk artists. Duncanson was the first to embark on an artistic career.

writing quite seriously. The other source was a monograph building on research into mainly local documents and written by Joseph D. Ketner II, art historian at Emerson College in Boston, *The Emergence of the African-American Artist: Robert S. Duncanson 1821–1872*.<sup>19</sup> By a strange coincidence they were both published the same year, in 1993, and thus talked at cross-purposes.

The strength of the Bearden-Henderson text is the authors' deep insight into Duncanson's drama as a black pathfinder. Where did he find his courage and self-assurance? And how did he develop into an artist with such profound insight and into such a well-read intellectual, when in his childhood there were hardly any schools for black children in America?

The consciousness of Bearden and Henderson of the big questions overarching Robert Duncanson's life work became to them a trap in their research. Their full assurance that there just must have been a consistent schooling somewhere in his childhood and adolescence made them jump, somewhat uncritically, on the bandwagons of unfounded myths – especially the one claiming that Duncanson should have been the son of a Scottish immigrant in Canada, who had married a runaway slave, and that he consequently had gone to school in Canada.<sup>20</sup> It was in the thoroughly researched Ketner monograph that I was able to find a more reliable biography. His reconstruction of Duncanson's life documents beyond doubt the straight line that I have referred to of descent from the slave in Virginia to the artist in Cincinnati.<sup>21</sup>

But the underlying questions remain and forced me to do some further research. The grandfather probably could read and write. Illegitimate children of slave owners were often permitted to share the homework of their legitimate siblings. It happened they were encouraged to learn to read and write to become useable in the service of their owner-father. Sometimes they were even sent abroad to study.<sup>22</sup>

19 Ketner built on articles in newspapers such as Cincinnati Gazette, on US censuses, obituaries and private letters.

20 Without accounting for sources, the authors state that Robert Duncanson's mother was an African American who has sought refuge in Canada and married a Canadian of Scottish descent. This myth, which also produced the reading of the S for his middle name as standing for "Scott", while his middle name in reality was Seldon, has proved incredibly persistent, also among texts written after that it was corrected by Ketner's biography.

21 The details about the grandfather's conditions as a slave are still to be further researched.

22 It has been argued that the benevolence of helping an illegitimate son to leave the plantation sometimes was due to the feelings of the white housewife whom the child reminded of her husband's infidelity. Thomas Thistlewood's diaries, the most extensive commentaries made by a British slave owner about enslaved Africans in 18th century plantation America, tells about his son Mulatto John that he received schooling until the age of

In addition to this ambition, in the part of New York State, where Duncanson's family settled, a contemporary religious revival movement laid extra stress on everyone being able to read the Bible. Local editions of the classical *The New England Primer* were available to facilitate self-tuition. There seems to have been no schools for the Duncanson children, so the Primer was probably intensively used in the household, if my assumption is correct.<sup>23</sup>

With basic literacy established, the rest may have been a question of ambition and intellectual curiosity on Robert's part. It is here that my interest in the family's journey to Monroe, on one of the steam ships plying the Hudson River, fits in. I imagine that for the seven-year-old Robert that journey must have been like opening a picture-book about American history and American landscapes.<sup>24</sup> His career as a self-made intellectual is indeed as remarkable as his artistic career.

A dozen years later Duncanson had moved sixty miles to the south and settled at Mount Healthy, outside Cincinnati.<sup>25</sup> There he began to grapple with producing art, and his ongoing self-education profited from his social intercourse with abolitionists, fellow artists and fellow African-Americans. The way into art for him, as for most self-taught artists at the time, was by copying engravings, as a form of training, and by painting fancy portraits for a living.<sup>26</sup> Gradually these earlier fashions were replaced by more serious character portraits. It is fascinating to follow his step-by-step proceeding. His decorative still-life paintings with fruits and flowers may still have contained an echo of

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fifteen. See Cecily Jones, *If this be living I'd rather be dead*, The University of Warwick, 2007. <http://dxdoi.org/10.1016/j.hispan.2007.08.002>

23 *The New England Primer* was the first textbook published in the thirteen colonies, originally printed in Boston in late 17th century. It was intended both for beginners and intermediate readers, starting with the alphabet and containing a shortened Catechism. Several local editions occurred. Available for the Duncansons would have been the edition of 1805 from Albany or the edition of 1807 by David Smith, New York. Together with the Bible and an Almanach, the Primer, which was often called Little Bible of New England, constituted the library in many homes. See David Barton, *New England Primer*, Boston 1977.

24 see note 10.

25 Cincinnati is located north of the Ohio River at the Ohio-Kentucky border. Mount Healthy, at the time still called Mount Pleasant, was a community of some hundred people with some enterprises, where Duncanson found work. It functioned as a health refuge for Cincinnati in times of epidemics.

26 In the 1840s Duncanson painted portraits of several Berthelet family members, and in the 1850s he painted more developed portraits of Nicholas Longworth and Richard Sutton Rust.

the interior decorations he had produced, when he was an advanced house painter. And in the middle of idyllic and nostalgic images, suddenly a symbolic glimpse of cruelty appears in the form of an impressive painting of a vulture and its prey. Its exceptional character invites an interpretation of it as a symbolic picture of the time.<sup>27</sup>

Cincinnati was close to slave holding territory, separated from a slave state only by the Ohio River. Tensions were often high. The so-called Underground Railroad for fugitive slaves, the secret path with 'stations' of helpful people, was running through Cincinnati and Mount Healthy.<sup>28</sup> The city functioned as a magnet both for runaway slaves and consequently for slave hunting "vultures." Sometimes, as in the year when he moved to Mount Healthy, there were serious riots provoked by those tracking down escaped slaves and freedmen. From the biography of Harriet Beecher-Stowe, at the time resident in Cincinnati, we learn about the impact of the Fugitive Slave Act, a law, which was passed in 1850. It compelled federal marshals to enforce rendition of fugitive slaves back to the slave owners and it imposed penalties on individuals who helped slaves to escape. This law infuriated many citizens in Cincinnati, and it gave Beecher-Stowe the incentive to write *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.<sup>29</sup> But Cincinnati was not only a centre for free African Americans and a stronghold of abolitionists. What added to its attraction for young Duncanson was that it was a town of growing importance as a provincial cultural centre with art institutions, associations organizing art exhibitions and a concentration of artists.<sup>30</sup>

27 *Vulture and Its Prey* (1844) is owned by the National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian Institute, Washington DC.

28 The Underground Railroad was a secret network of hiding places and safe houses with brave people prepared to hide fugitive slaves, which was used by black slaves from the South when escaping to free states and to Canada.

29 The Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, part of the Compromise between Southern slave holding interests and Northern Free-soilers, which by abolitionists was nicknamed the *Bloodhound Law*, declared that all runaway slaves be brought back to their masters, and that everybody helping them to escape should be fined. Harriet Beecher-Stowe, who was said to have been hiding a runaway slave woman, was exasperated. It contributed to her decision to write the abolitionist novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

30 By 1830 painters and sculptors began flocking to Cincinnati with its growing market for arts and with patrons like Nicholas Longworth and Reuben Springer. According to Julie Aaronson, curator of American Painting, Sculpture and Drawings at Cincinnati Art Museum, the city was an oasis – a haven for artists. There were opportunities for them to exhibit their work. There were newspapers that wrote about it. And there was the opportunity for them to sell their work. With the rise of a middle class, the public broadened. The Western Art Union, established in 1847, distributed engravings of artists' works to its membership and then sold them.

In 1842 Robert Duncanson had works of his accepted for the first time at an exhibition of a Society in Cincinnati, and he participated 1842 and 1843 in the Annual Exhibitions of Western Art Union, Cincinnati. This amounted to a decisive acknowledgement of him as a fine artist. A decade later one of Cincinnati's wealthiest citizens, Nicholas Longworth, commissioned him to paint murals in his Belmont mansion. The building is now Cincinnati's Taft Museum of Art. In the mansion, which contained the owner's eminent art collection, the Longworth family lived, dined, and held receptions surrounded by Duncanson's mural paintings, which all presented landscapes. The commission marked his great breakthrough. He was all at once established as a central artist in Cincinnati. And his fame as a landscape painter began to grow (Figure 3).

Was his devotion to the cause of abolitionism reflected in his art? It appeared openly only once – in 1853, in a scene from Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.<sup>31</sup> The book, written by a member of a well-known abolitionist family, who had married in Cincinnati, had been published the previous year and had made her world famous overnight, widely favoring the case of abolitionism. Nothing is known about whether there had been any contact at all between her and Duncanson, nor is there any evidence that the painting, *Uncle Tom and Little Eva*, – the only painting in which Duncanson is known to have painted a black African – was among works he intended to exhibit. He painted it at the personal request of an abolitionist. I hesitate to speculate about how much of its religiously sentimental attitude we should attribute to the painter, and how much to Stowe or to the commissioning buyer (Figure 4).

This work calls nevertheless for some background commentary. First, Duncanson seems to have painted his most explicit work about black slavery on thousands of square feet of canvas, without sentimentality but also without signing them. It was during his first and very close collaboration with a photographer, namely, the African American James Presley Ball, who worked in Cincinnati and who had established an important photographic gallery there.<sup>32</sup>

31 The painting *Uncle Tom and Little Eva* (1853), representing a scene from chapter 22 in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, focuses on the girl, who with an emotional gesture points to the heaven. The figure of Uncle Tom, more in shadow, is less brought out. The painting is rather a representation of abolitionist feelings than a portrait of a Black African American.

32 Joseph D. Ketner II describes in an essay called *Struggles many and great: James P. Ball, Robert Duncanson, and other artists of color in antebellum Cincinnati* how the Duncanson - Ball collaboration during the height of abolitionist favor in Cincinnati expanded into a "black art community." Their reputation lured a number of young black men from the South to come and work as apprentices in Ball's studio. Ketner adds that the "negrophobia" following the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863 put an end to that community and





FIGURE 3 Robert S. Duncanson, *Landscape*. Mural in the Belmont mansion, 1852. Taft Museum of Art, Cincinnati, USA.



FIGURE 4 Robert S. Duncanson, *Uncle Tom and Little Eva*. Oil on canvas, 1853. Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit, USA.

Ball organised a panorama, called *The Splendid Mammoth Pictorial Tour*, with which he toured cities around the USA.<sup>33</sup> It invited the public to follow, instructed by a guide, an impressive painted succession of scenes. The visitors were made to contemplate the cruel fate of black Africans, their being kidnapped from their villages, then shipped and sold as slaves, and their brutal treatment in the plantations in the South. It showed them persecuted like animals by slave hunters, when they managed to escape, and chased all the way to the Canadian border.

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changed the Cincinnati, to which Duncanson was to return from Britain in the winter 1867, into "a city hardened in its discrimination against anyone with a drop of African blood." This may explain why he needed to make a new start, probably hoping for a less local market. (See <http://www.themagazineantiques.com/articles/ketner-james-p-ball-robert-duncanson-antebellum-cincinnati>).

- 33 Ball's *Splendid Mammoth Pictorial Tour of the United States, Comprising Views of the African Slave Trade, Cincinnati 1855*. The script advertises the panorama as "painted by Negroes" and mentions about Cincinnati "the liberal spirit of Cincinnatians (...). The Anti-Slavery people courageously faced the storm of popular indignation [and] free speech triumphed."

This kind of huge painted panorama was a common phenomenon all over the industrialized world. It is a phenomenon that has been mainly forgotten by those who write and study art history. Like stage design, the panorama paintings have seldom been preserved. Fortunately, in the case of Ball's panorama, we happen to have a published guidance program with descriptions. The absence of the painter's name is interesting. I have found advertisements from the time that show that even well-known artists were proud to acknowledge having painted certain panoramas. It was not something thought to be beneath an artist's dignity. Considering his close collaboration with Ball, who had his paintings on the walls of his gallery, there are good reasons to assume that Duncanson was the main painter behind the panorama.<sup>34</sup> But why anonymously?

Duncanson obviously had reasons not to connect his name publicly to this panorama and not to go further in dealing with the sensitive question of color than he had done in the soft Uncle Tom version.<sup>35</sup> This is what I believe to be his reason. In order not to damage his career prospects as an exhibiting artist, he avoided standing out as a black African American, though people knew what he was and that he worked with other prominent Blacks like Ball, as well as with abolitionists. As an artist addressing an anonymous art market, he depended on the press. He seems to have managed to persuade the Cincinnati press not to take his skin color into account when writing about his art, probably for reasons of local patriotism. He was their famous painter, the regional press heralded him as "the best landscape painter in the West." That was from his side part of his negotiating his way and from their side part of their double game.

The next step in his career, after the murals, was a trip to Europe in 1853. "The Grand Tour," as it was known at that time in the United States, was the main consecrating enterprise in any artist's "academic" career and was a must. Robert Duncanson was sponsored in this case by Longworth. He made the tour with a fellow artist and friend of the same age, German-born William Louis Sonntag.<sup>36</sup>

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34 There is today a consensus about Duncanson being the head painter of the panorama, probably assisted by the young African American artists working for Ball.

35 When Robert Duncanson's son urged his father to pay more attention to the color question in his art, the artist is said to have answered: "I have no color on the brain, all I have on the brain is paint."

36 William Louis Sonntag (1822–1900), the son of German immigrants, came early to Cincinnati, where quarters called *Over-the-Rhine* constituted a commercially and culturally active German community. Some sources indicate that Sonntag studied at the



We have now arrived to the point upon which I from the beginning had intended to base my conference paper: the claim that Robert S. Duncanson had been admitted to the art academy in Glasgow, Scotland. This myth was as strong as that about his having had a Scottish-Canadian father. I fell for this one in the same way as Bearden-Henderson fell for the other myth. In my case I felt pride about Scotland's history of admitting African and African American scholars into institutions of higher education at times when they were excluded in most places elsewhere.

But after having found out the more-or-less exact dates for the two friends' travel, I simply could see no time left over for when they could have studied in Glasgow. They first went to London, and then proceeded to Paris, where they studied museums and collections. Italy, in their case Florence, was the conventional destination for any Great Tour. A horde of American artists, for whom Duncanson expressed a certain contempt,<sup>37</sup> were busy painting antiquities there. He made sketches of romantic ruins of his own choice. Finally, we know that he and Sonntag were back in New York as early as in January the following year, Robert Duncanson seems hardly to have had any time even to apply for entrance to the academy in Glasgow. Research, with the kind help of librarian Brenda Woods at Edinburgh Central Library, into the archives of the Glasgow School of Art turned up no mentioning of his name.

Abandoning the original idea of building the Scottish connection of my conference paper on the artist as a student in a Scottish art academy, I here take a jump in his biography to his second tour to Britain, which occurred in 1865.

When we first met Duncanson, he was in Montreal, on his way to Britain, where he hoped to make himself known internationally by exhibiting the works he considered his masterpieces. If his destination was London, the market of the markets,<sup>38</sup> it is however interesting to note that he first exhibited the works in Glasgow and Edinburgh. It would take further research to find out

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Cincinnati Academy under G. Frankenstein, while others suppose that he taught himself as an itinerant landscape painter. He and Duncanson became close friends and exchanged artistic knowledge. Significantly Sonntag also produced a panorama, in his case on Milton's *Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained*, 1851.

37 In a letter to Junius Sloan, Duncanson wrote in January 22 1854: "Now I will let you know why I returned so soon. I was disgusted with our artist in Erope [sic]. They are mean copy-est [sic] producing pictures."

38 While in the 1840s many exhibitions of contemporary art in London were held in rented premises by a constantly changing roster of associations, print sellers, and auctioneers, by the 1860s, an established gallery culture with dedicated spaces and regular exhibitions increasingly defined the market for contemporary art. It was now London became a leading modern art market.

about the true strength of his feelings for his links to Scotland. Perhaps it was not by chance that once, in his early attempt at history painting, he had chosen to copy a Scottish academic painter, Sir George Harvey.<sup>39</sup>

Duncanson had great success in London and was lionized in upper class circles. This happened to take him back from London to Scotland, as he was invited by the Dutchess of Argyll to come and stay at her castle, not far from Lake Katrine in the Highlands. With its Ellen Island, this lake was famous from Sir Walter Scott's *The Lady of the Lake*, a fact that did not escape our African American votary of romantic literature. His stay in the heart of the Scottish Highlands was the beginning of a new chapter in his career as a successful landscape painter. From now on he became famous as the American painter specialising in Scottish mountain landscapes. He made plenty of sketches of Lake Katrine and other impressive sights. When he returned to Cincinnati in 1867, he set up a new studio and began to paint from his Scottish sketches (Figure 5).<sup>40</sup>



FIGURE 5 Robert S. Duncanson, *Ellen's Isle, Loch Katrine*, Oil on canvas, 1871. Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit, USA.

39 Sir George Harvey (1806–76), a Scottish history painter, who 1864–76 was president of the Royal Scottish Academy, had painted an apocryphal scene of William Shakespeare at court, which Duncanson chose to copy.

40 Post-Civil-War Cincinnati, to which he returned, had lost much of its abolitionist liberalism and also much of its fervor for art. See note 32.

In spite of increasing mental illness he returned to Scotland in 1870 for a new harvest of sketches. Had his life not ended in tragedy two years later, he might have experienced, as an esteemed painter of Scottish landscapes, a second flower season.

At the end he was haunted by an astonishing delusion of being constantly visited by the spirit of a woman artist who assisted him in creating his works. Maybe this delusion should be interpreted as a distorted internalising of all those prejudiced questionings of his unquestionable talent that he had met on his hazardous journey.<sup>41</sup> He experienced dramatic swings in temperament, including aggressive outbursts, which often are symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. It was while optimistically hanging an exhibition in Detroit 1871 that he finally collapsed. He died the following year.

## II Between the Hudson River School and the Scottish Highlands School of Romantic Landscape

One could argue that Robert Duncanson was fortunate to die before experiencing how the chapter of art history to which he had been contributing – that is, late Romanticism – would rather suddenly become outmoded. That was a contributing reason why he was forgotten and remained obscure for nearly a century.

Duncanson shared that fate with a whole generation. In Scotland, for instance, the romantic mountain visions painted in the studio by Horatio McCulloch (1805–67) were considered old hat by the time of his death, while William McTaggart (1835–1910)<sup>42</sup> represented the new mode. It was more than a generation shift. It was a new paradigm of realism, of choosing to paint in the open air and depicting social reality and also of believing in science.<sup>43</sup>

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41 The first black African fine artist on the African continent, Aina Onabolu (1882–1963), was met with widespread disbelief that he as an African at all was able to paint portraits. He went so far, in the first decade of the 20th century, as to invite guests to witness how he practiced as a portraitist.

42 While McCulloch painted romantic visions of the Highlands constructed in the studio from sketches, McTaggart took his easel outdoors and painted fresh views of landscapes. He observed social realities and depicted consequences of the Clearance, mainly in scenes of forced emigration.

43 In an essay with the title ‘The Origins of Landscape Painting: An Intercultural Perspective’, the German philosopher Heinz Paetzold characterizes the Romantic Landscape Movement as the third phase of western landscape painting. He sees the two preceding phases as represented by Renaissance painters and by the Dutch School, and he notes

Doubts were cast about ideas held high by Romanticism. One of those concepts, the notion of the Sublime, is of interest here, as it is connected to vast and wild landscapes. As recently as some decades ago, I was reminded by an incident in Antwerp in Belgium about how deeply rooted and how persistent those negative attitudes have been.

A wilful young curator had compiled an exhibition about the Sublime at the Royal Museum of Fine Art. The “Void” is a central element in the Sublime, so he exhibited an empty hall representing the notion of the sublime void. The museum director disagreed and had chairs put in the empty hall. Furious about this sabotage of his exhibition design, the curator removed the chairs. It came to open conflict and the director called the police. Finding no indecent artwork to carry away (the most common reason for censorship), the police carried away the curator. This true anecdote about the Sublime being negated shows a renewed dealing with Romanticism. But it is not an isolated sign.

If the Romantic Sublime was about contemplating the frightening Unknown, we were recently reminded of the fact that this does not represent an insight buried forever. The icon of Romanticism, Caspar David Friedrich's painting from 1818, *Wanderer Above the Sea of Fog*, appeared suddenly on the financial page (!) of *The Guardian* one day in the middle of the currently ongoing economic crisis. The headline stated: “We are on the brink – perhaps it is time to look to the Romantics for what lies ahead.”<sup>44</sup>

To return to history, I will first briefly focus on the two schools of late Romantic landscape painting, the American Hudson River School and the Scottish, between which Robert Duncanson can be said to have commuted. Then I shall focus upon the work Duncanson considered his masterpiece, *The Land of the Lotus Eaters*, which he exhibited in Scotland and then brought to London.

Landscape painting was not invented by Romanticism but had become a genre of its own within Western art, which the Romanticists turned into a widespread craze.<sup>45</sup> The growth of the modern metropolis in the Western world was one factor in this process. City dwellers, discovering wild, untouched

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that the late Romantic movement in its turn was succeeded by the Pleinairism of the Barbizon School and by Impressionism, ‘which aimed at the visual glorification of the world, and especially of the suburb (...) and focused on lived experience. The aristocratic gesture that characterized the romanticists vanishes. Parallel to impressionism, the democratic photography comes into existence’. ( In Antoon Van den Braembussche et al (eds), *Intercultural Aesthetics: A Worldview Perspective*, Springer 2000, 59).

44 The reference was signed by Larry Elliot, *The Guardian*'s economic editor.

45 See note 43.

Nature and prizing it as a counterpart to the engineered urban rationality around them, craved landscape paintings on their walls. Markets consequently emerged. London and New York, for instance, became big markets.<sup>46</sup>

Individualism was another factor, as was illustrated by the typical Romantic individualist seen contemplating the scary Unknown in Caspar David Friedrich's *Wanderer Above the Sea of Fog*. He turns his back to us and on any human society. Industrialization was a third factor. Steamboats and railways took town people far away to the wilderness for sightseeing or hunting, in London on seasonal tours to Scotland, and in New York along the Hudson River. Tourism, above all, was central to the emergence of the landscape painting mania.<sup>47</sup>

And finally, national identity was on the program. Wild landscapes were made to serve as tools to forge a sense of identity on both sides of the Atlantic,<sup>48</sup> though the self-image tended to overlook certain aspects of ethnic cleansing of Native Americans and of the Clearances in the Scottish Highlands.

Informations about Duncanson's visits to Britain are sparse. He studied Turner. But I have not been able to establish if he saw works of, or had contacts with. Scottish Romantic landscape painters about his age like Horatio McCulloch (1805–67). The important ones within the Scottish Romantic landscape movement, including John Knox (1778–1845) and John Thomson (1778–1840), belonged to an earlier generation. Thomson, who painted some of the most truly “sublime” wild landscapes in the 1820s, was a friend of Sir Walter Scott, a circumstance that reminds us about the closeness of literature and painting in the Romantic period. Typically, when in the 1860s Duncanson made sketches in the Scottish Highlands, he carried with him and read poems and novels by the famous Scottish author.

The Hudson River School was the central movement of American Romanticism, and some sources tend to include Robert Duncanson in this group.<sup>49</sup> It was founded by Thomas Cole (1801–48), a painter who had

46 See note 38.

47 See for instance Elizabeth Johns, *American Landscapes: Manifest What?*, The Massachusetts Institut of Technology, 1993. The Scottish painter John Knox painted around 1820 *Landscape with Tourists at Loch Katrine*.

48 While the Highlands landscapes symbolized a regional Scottish identity, in the United States what the Hudson River School produced functioned as identifying America as ‘Nature’s Nation’.

49 The Hudson River School counted beside its founder Thomas Cole (1801–48) the painters Asher B. Durand (1796–1886), Frederick E. Church (1826–1900), Albert Bierstadt (1830–1902) and Thomas Moran (1837–1926). Both Duncanson and Sonntag, who were influenced by Cole, often have been counted among the artists of the school but belonged to the Cincinnati circles.



immigrated as a youth to the U.S. in 1818, having formerly practiced engraving in England. He returned several times to Europe and conveyed ideas back from there to his adopted home. When he died, at only forty-seven years old, he was hailed as the father of the school, which comprised both painters and poets who all had gathered around him at his headquarters at Cedar Grove, in New York State's Catskill wilderness. The Catskill Mountains border on the Hudson River, the epitome of natural beauty, so it was quite natural for the group of artists who coalesced around Cole to take its name. It was there that Cole painted the series *The Course of Empire*, to which I will return.

Cole is known to have received a great deal of inspiration from the eighteenth century Anglo-Irish philosopher Edmund Burke's theories on the Sublime, and the violent character of several of his wild landscapes can be traced back to formulations by Burke. "Whatever is terrible with regard to sight is sublime too." If pain and terror are not carried to physical destruction, Burke reasoned, "they are capable of producing delight, not pleasure but a sort of delightful horror" (Figure 6).<sup>50</sup>



FIGURE 6 Robert S. Duncanson, *Blue Hole, Flood Waters, Little Miami River*. Oil on canvas, 1851. Cincinnati Art Museum, Cincinnati, USA.

50 See Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful*, Oxford: Blackwell 1987.

We cannot talk about “delightful horror” upon first viewing a painting like Robert Duncanson’s *Blue Hole, Flood Water, Little Miami River* (1851).<sup>51</sup> I regard it as one of his most remarkable works. His American biographer, Joseph D. Ketner II, goes so far as to characterize Duncanson’s art as representing the picturesque opposite to the threatening Sublime. I cannot fully agree. For initiated viewers, and for his contemporary fellow African Americans as well as for his abolitionist patrons, the horrific threat was there, hiding beyond the seemingly calm idyll, as if the cry of hounds were already heard from approaching slave hunters. And in fact, Ketner is the first to remind us about it. He tells us that *Blue Hole* was widely known as a hiding place for escaping slaves along the so-called Underground Railway.

This kind of hidden meaning takes the Sublime into the subliminal perception. This is, in my opinion, as important for understanding Duncanson’s art as his treading the tightrope and not making things too plain. It is true that some scholars lately have questioned this interpretation. They consider it impossible to verify in his images something hidden beneath the beauty, something connected to the deep frustration of being a descendant of black slaves. In the discussions around Ketner’s monograph, even an African American scholar like Judith Wilson refused to see any racial trauma in his art.<sup>52</sup>

But if we implicitly see in a work of art a reflection of, and an answer to, what we carry with us as viewers – in this dialogue between the work and the viewer to which so many post-Duchampian scholars have referred –, then any deeper analysis should take into account not just the mainstream Western perception of today, but also the sensibility of those viewers among Duncanson’s contemporaries who shared or sympathized with the artist’s life experience.

Duncanson’s painting *Ellen Isle, Loch Katrine*<sup>53</sup> refers, of course, to Sir Walter Scott’s *The Lady of the Lake*. But for many who saw it at the time it was first shown, and who were aware of the drama of slavery and escaping slaves, it also (or perhaps primarily) carried another message. Any picture showing a

51 The painting belongs to Cincinnati Art Museum.

52 Judith Wilson, who teaches art history at California University, Irvine, argued against authors who wanted to read traces of personal racial anguish in Robert Duncanson’s paintings. They “are working from a false set of assumptions. There isn’t any evidence that Duncanson was in conflict about his mixed racial status. That’s the lingering power of the ‘tragic mulatto’ myth.”

53 The painting *Ellen Isle, Loch Katrine* played a role in what became the most traumatizing adversity in Duncanson’s last years, his failure to penetrate the New York art market. He donated the painting to the famous anti-slavery politician Charles Sumner, who had it hanging in his sleeping room. But Sumner never confirmed the ownership.



rowing-boat evoked for them an echo from slave songs, songs with lyrics like these in “Michael Row the Boat Ashore”: “Brudder led a helpin’ hand/ Sister, help for trim dat boat/ Jordan stream is wide and deep,”<sup>54</sup> Passing Jordan was the symbol of escaping slavery. I cannot see why Robert Duncanson should not have portrayed such double meanings in his paintings, even if we cannot always incontestably prove it (Figure 7).

The same open-minded scepticism informs my examination of Duncanson’s huge painting *The Land of the Lotus Eaters* (1861). There was at this time, when what the French Cultural Sociologist Pierre Bourdieu describes as consecration through the art field was not yet fully developed,<sup>55</sup> a common practice among American artists of taking not only panoramas, but also big masterpieces on tour. They thereby acted like travelling theatrical companies coming to town to show their best, building up and spreading their fame. And this was in fact what Duncanson’s grand plan was about when he conceived the



FIGURE 7 Robert S. Duncanson, *The Land of the Lotus Eaters*. Oil on canvas, 1861. The Royal Court, Stockholm, Sweden.

54 See William Francis Allen, Charles Pickard Ware, and Lucy McKim Garrison, *Slave Songs of the United States*, New York: A. Simpson & Co, 1867.

55 About how the field and its agents consecrate artists and produce art as value, Bourdieu writes: “(W)ho is the true producer of the value of the work – the painter or the dealer, the writer or the publisher, the playwright or the theatre manager? (...) The art trader is not just the agent who gives the work a commercial value by bringing it into the market (“ He is the person who above all invests his prestige.” Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*, Polity Press 1993.

work - to take it around the USA and then abroad and around Britain, in order to make his name nationally and internationally famous.<sup>56</sup>

Consequently, it was more essential than ever that he find the right topic for it. When he began to work on it in 1861, political tensions were high. When he finished the work and initially exhibited it in Cincinnati, Civil War had broken out in the United States. And the war was about slavery. Whatever literary theme he would have chosen, it seems unthinkable that the painting would not contain, in some way or another, on some level an allusion to the burning political questions of the day. He chose to build the painting on Alfred, Lord Tennyson's poem *The Land of the Lotus Eaters*.<sup>57</sup> And the discussion about the reason why has been going on since then.

The poem retells an episode from Homer. On their way back from the Trojan War, Ulysses and his Greek men went ashore on an exotic island. There the natives treat them in an extremely friendly manner. They offer them narcotic lotus fruits to enjoy. These make the men forget their martial thoughts and cause them to want to stay and dream their days and nights away.

When painting the imagined landscape, Duncanson kept close to the descriptions delivered in Tennyson's very picturesque poem, which musically paints a land of streams: "And like a downward smoke, the slender stream/ Along the cliff to fall and pause and fall did seem." In this landscape Ulysses and his men "with faces pale" meet "dark faces,"

The mild-eyed melancholy Lotus-eaters came,  
Laden with flower and fruit, whereof they gave  
To each, but who so did receive of them and taste  
Deep-asleep he seemed yet all awake  
And music in his ears.

If it was a stratagem, another case of treading the tightrope, to choose this seductive piece of poetry with various meanings and no unambiguously political message, Duncanson seems to have succeeded. As far as we know, the contemporary reception of his grand painting was marked by unalloyed admiration: It was taken as a beautiful artistic representation of a beautiful poem by a famous poet. No jarring sounds whatsoever, at least not within the Cincinnati cultural sphere.

<sup>56</sup> Duncanson's original plan first to tour his painting in the USA was made impossible by the Civil War.

<sup>57</sup> Alfred Lord Tennyson, 'The Lotus Eaters' in *English Poetry III; From Tennyson to Whitman*. The Harvard Classics 1904-14.

It has been up to posterity to seek for hidden messages referring to the loaded political background in which Duncanson moved. And here a kind of political correctness has encouraged trying out direct links to the war and to black slavery.<sup>58</sup> Different interpretations have been put forward, but none of them seems very convincing to me when scrutinized. Was the message about non-violence or even outright about draft resistance? That would have provoked an outcry in a situation like Cincinnati's. Many feared that the city was going to be attacked by pro-slavery Confederates. It was finally the courage of spontaneously mobilised African Americans that saved it.<sup>59</sup>

Similarly, to read the painting, as has been suggested, as a hidden insinuation that the people in the South, the enemy, were spoiled and made weak by being served by black slaves seems far-fetched and rather opportunist. Ketner's theory is then more plausible. He interprets the happy forgetfulness of the men of Ulysses as mirroring the artist's own dreaming away before the beauty of Nature.<sup>60</sup> But I cannot avoid asking myself: Do you have to enlist both Homer and Tennyson to tell your viewers that you are a Nature-loving romantic?

I will try to add another level of inquiry by comparing *The Land of the Lotus Eaters* to certain monumental paintings by other artists within the Hudson River School. If Duncanson was related to the School, it was rather a relation characterized by competition. And the element of competition in the practice of taking on tour what artists considered their masterpieces is too easily overlooked. Duncanson planned his huge painting *The Land of the Lotus Eaters* as a coup de force in this game. I choose here to compare it to the most typical example of the genre, namely Thomas Cole's monumental series *The Course of Empire*.<sup>61</sup> Twenty-five years after it was first shown it remained still in people's

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58 When Robert Duncanson was "rediscovered" in the 1970s, it was in the context of reevaluating race and culture. Consequently there has been and still is a tendency to a kind of political correctness, that wants to connect his art directly to slavery questions and to the Civil War rather than to try to understand the complexity of the relations. One could probably also talk of a "reverse PC" in the case of Judith Wilson's commentaries. See note 52.

59 In 1862, when the Confederate Army was on the move in Kentucky and threatened to invade Cincinnati, it was the Black Brigade that deterred the invasion and saved the city.

60 But Ketner also points to 'an underlying content, perhaps subconsciously motivated, that expresses Duncanson's vision of an ideal world, devoid of the adversity that an African-American confronted in his daily life in antebellum America'.

61 Thomas Cole *The Course of Empire* (1836) is a five-part series of paintings – The Savage State, The Arcadian or Pastoral State, The Consummation of Empire, Destruction and Desolation – which normally hangs in The New York Historical Society and has been displayed at Tate Britain in 2002 and at Columbia Museum of Art. The artist referred to Lord Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (1812–18) as inspiration.

mind. And I will focus on how the introduction of tiny humans in wide, romantic landscapes, so typical within American Romanticism, here seems to have been given an ideological function. I choose for the comparison Cole's *The Savage State* (1836), which represents the first stage in his series (Figure 8).

The five big paintings that constitute the series, which may have taken some inspiration from Edward Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776), are imbued with a certain Romantic nostalgia for a lost Arcadia, against which the critical reflections on empirical over-cultivation were displayed. Cole wrote for instance: 'If nature were untouched by the hand of man, man could become more easily acquainted with the hand of God'.<sup>62</sup> The series is mainly situated in Greek and Roman antiquity. But remarkably, in *The Savage State* Cole has transferred what is conceived as the "savage state" of early humanity to an American wilderness. In untouched, wild nature small figures clad in skin, obviously representing Native Americans, are seen roaming around as primitive hunters. It is as if the painting insisted that the prehistoric origin still existed in the American wilderness, a common racial thinking about native peoples everywhere. In a corner, clusters of wigwams indicate primitive dwellings. It is difficult to disregard that this high-handed anthropological



FIGURE 8 Thomas Cole, *The Savage State*, first canvas in the series *The Course of Empire*. Oil on canvas, 1836. The New-York Historical Society.

62 This quotation from Cole's writings has often been used as standing for the quintessence of the Hudson River School's romantic landscape.

reinterpretation, positing the “redskins” as the primeval people, easily can be perceived as complicit with the ongoing ethnic cleansing and genocide of America’s original populations. We are reminded about the fact that among the factors which made American Romanticism differ from the original European Romanticism are elements such as slavery, racism and Indian removal.<sup>63</sup>

There is a parallel between the human drama of black slavery, brought to the fore by the civil war, and the ongoing drama of the Native Americans. What I suggest is that Duncanson, aware of this parallelism, instead of referring directly to the ordeal of black slavery chose discretely to connect to the ongoing no less horrific, genocidal drama of the Native Americans. By giving the tiny native figures in his painting a friendly role, he may have wanted to remind the viewers of the fact that meetings between “pale faces” and “dark faces” had not always and not necessarily been hostile. That there was a time when Native American peoples were approached by Europeans respectfully via negotiated treaties.

If that thought is not a too daring assumption, I will argue that Robert Duncanson had plenty of reason to be aware of the situation of the Native Americans. When he first arrived in Monroe as a child in 1828, families of native tribes still lived nearby. And he could come upon hearsays from the other side of the Canadian border about lively discussions between pro-integration and pro-resistance Indian chiefs, a heated but democratic quarrel. Nothing of the kind was heard of on Duncanson’s side of the border. Soon, the Native Americans were evicted from Monroe. And two years later, the Indian Removal Act of 1830, which was passed during the presidency of Andrew Jackson, legalised cynically an already ongoing practice of brutal ethnic cleansing.<sup>64</sup>

I will also argue – and that is part of my assumption here – that he can have been inspired by a historical event, which he very well may have heard narrated as a boy when travelling on the Hudson River on the way to Monroe. The

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63 In a painting from the same time as *The Land of the Lotus Eaters*, titled *Minehaha Falls*, Duncanson openly referred to Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, *The Song of Hiawatha* (1855), the most famous example of a romantic ennobling of Native Americans. It can be characterized as a version of the anthropological theme of “the noble savage” and became very popular, partly as a way of covering up the political reality. “Native Americans became a leit motif for Duncanson, a subject that appears repeatedly throughout his career and appears to have carried deep personal associations for the artist.” Joseph D. Ketner II, *The Spiritual Striving of the Freedmen’s Sons* (2011).

64 Indian Removal Act was meant to force the peoples of the “five civilized tribes” from eastern states, particularly Georgia, to move west into “Indian Territory,” now Oklahoma. This act of ethnic cleansing led to the Trail of Tears and many atrocities.



steamer passed close to Upper Schodack Island, where the event took place. As a legend it had become part of American lore. He could have read about it in newspapers, which published historical engravings imagining how it took place. In 1606 the explorer Henry Hudson<sup>65</sup> had his ship run aground close to the island. And when he went ashore with his crew, they were warmly greeted by the Mohicans, who at that time still lived in the region. If we assume that the painter became attached to the friendly character of the scene depicted in the poem by Lord Tennyson, he could easily have associated it with this legend about Henry Hudson and the Mohicans, thus conceiving of it as a symbol of a certain human equality that had not yet been replaced by overbearing oppression and violence.

It is an interpretation that tries to understand how Duncanson, courageous and stout but basically a peace loving non-militant, tried to communicate ideas that might have proved controversial if expressed too explicitly. To think peaceful coexistence of dark faced and pale-faced peoples implied a repudiation of black slavery deeper than militancy. There are striking similarities in the grouping of the figures on the historical engravings in newspapers and in Duncanson's painting. What is obvious is that he deliberately abstained from giving Ulysses and his men antique appearances and clothes, something that facilitated a more open reading.

I admit that it can seem hazardous to speculate like this when the records are as sparse as they are in the case of Robert Duncanson. But how can we proceed otherwise if we want to try to fill in the many unfair gaps in art history? What I have attempted to show is how Duncanson, while representing a link between landscape painting in America and landscape painting in Scotland and generally adapting himself to their current trends, developed a mode and a sensitivity of his own. If he modified the aggressiveness, which connected to the aesthetics of the Sublime is to be found in late Romanticism, it might be because he knew that he had to negotiate his way into a new terrain. And also because he belonged to a people who had been and still were at the receiving end of white aggression, a collective experience producing a deep cultural trauma as well as individual psychological wounds.

What I will add here is only some words about the fate of *The Land of the Lotus Eaters*. For a long time it was believed that the painting had disappeared, and there was a frenetic search for it until Romare Bearden in 1972 managed to track it down to Stockholm, where it had ended up in the collection of King

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65 Henry Hudson (c.1565–1611) was an English sea explorer and navigator, who under the auspices of the Dutch East India Company explored the river that became named after him and laid the foundation of Dutch colonization of the region.

Charles XV of Sweden.<sup>66</sup> When and how was unclear at first. But after correspondence with the Royal Palace in Stockholm, I have had it confirmed that, while visiting London in the years when Duncanson made his success there in the 1860s, the king bought the work directly from the artist, who had been introduced to him by a famous actress.<sup>67</sup> This leaves me with another speculation. What did they talk about when they met, the one a grandson of a slave from Virginia who had become an esteemed artist and the other the great-grandson of a commoner in Pau in the French Pyrenees, who happened to be a ruling monarch? Both were preoccupied with painting. But in the world of art, Robert S. Duncanson was the sovereign.

### Commentary

A number of assumptions made during the research try to answer some inevitable questions about Robert Duncanson's life and career. If, as it seems, there were no schools for black children where he grew up, how could he manage a series of achievements that were highly intellectual such as breaking out of a handicraft trade milieu into an autonomous artistic career and even play a pioneering role as an artist? How could he acquire his obviously wide reading (e.g. Tennyson, Walter Scott)/?

These are questions, which have persuaded many writers to put faith in myths like the one that asserts he was born and went to school in Canada. With his true biography documented of being that of the grandson of a slave in Virginia, the questions above still need answers. It has occasioned several hypothetic assumptions tentatively made plausible by reconstructions and context research: (a) that his grandfather as a privileged slave (the son of the slave owner) not only had been allowed to take up the craft of a housepainter but also had had occasions to learn to read and write; (b) that literacy became a cherished part of the grandfather's emancipation, when he moved his family out of the South; (c) that the family searched for and made the most of the

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66 Jean-Baptiste Bernadotte (1783–1844), was invited by the Swedish government to become crown prince of Sweden. As Charles XIV John he founded the still reigning Bernadotte royal house. He was the son of a commoner in Pau in the French Pyrenees and had under Napoleon risen through military ranks. King Charles XV (1826–72), his grandson, is known to have had amateur painting as a hobby.

67 Charlotte Cushman (1816–1876), a famous lesbian American actress, sometimes referred to as “the greatest living tragic actress,” is said to have promoted African American artists.



opportunities of self-taught literacy, which demonstrably existed in the remote corner of the New York state where they ended up and where even not churches seem yet to have been built; (d) that Robert Duncanson was of an inquiring mind and a free intelligence, that he loved reading and carried on with self-tuition and that he as a seven years old profited by the family's voyage along the Hudson river, which to him constituted a groundbreaking journey of knowledge of American history and landscapes; (e) and that he later on carried the family's spirit of breaking up and of emancipation further, when he became an autonomous artist.

Another question: how was the mainly appreciating reception and consecration of him as an artist of African descent possible at all in the given political context, especially if we take into account that Romanticism initiated an Idealism, which placed poetry and art high on pedestals as the quintessential criteria of civilization, while so called racial philosophers at the middle of the 19th century asserted that black Africans were not capable of creating fine arts and never could reach above handicraft? The assumption here has been about geopolitical differences. What Duncanson found in Cincinnati was not only a provincial centre of art, but also a city where the contributions by dedicated abolitionists and by pugnacious freed slaves to an atmosphere which, filled of contradictions and antagonisms, offered opportunities. He negotiated his way not by denying he was an African American, but by entering into an alliance with local patriotism. The press and the public perceived him as someone to be proud of. In New York, with wealthier collectors and an emerging more international art market, where the Hudson River School had made their economic base, the same kind of conditions for colored were sparse. It was one of the most traumatizing adversities for Duncanson that he never was acknowledged in the New York art market, while he experienced success in London, the emerging world market. (See Pamela Fletcher and Anne Helmreich, *The rise of the modern art market in London 1850–1939*, Manchester University Press 2011.) Paradoxically, Duncanson's career was thus at the same time provincially delimited and internationally advanced.

The perhaps most wild assumption is finally that the artist in his work *The Lotus Eaters* connected to the fate and the history of the Native Americans rather than to Black slavery. There are scant sources documenting relations between abolitionism and an involvement in the drama of the ethnic cleansing and extermination of the Indians. But it is an assumption which, together with those mentioned above, allows a recognition of Duncanson's life-time achievement as extraordinary bold and far-seeing within the African diaspora in the USA, a United States of America still struggling to find its way from a rebellious colony to a modern state.

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## *Mission and Transmission: Religious Legacies*





## Invoking Gender

### *The Thoughts, Mission and Theology of Mary Slessor in Southern Nigeria*

*Oluwakemi A. Adesina and Elijah Obinna*

#### Introduction

This chapter is a historical inquiry into the relevance of gender perspective in understanding the thoughts of Mary (Ma) Slessor and her mission in the Calabar region of Nigeria. In 1876 the “white African mother” and “Queen of Calabar,” Mary Slessor, arrived in Calabar as a missionary of the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland (UPC)—now the Presbyterian Church of Nigeria (PCN)—marking a decisive moment for the mission work in Calabar and its environs. Today, she is perceived as a heroine among many Nigerians—especially, within the contemporary PCN. Her bravery, goodness, and kindness have been widely acknowledged in African history books. Being the saviour of twins was another. However, extant literature on this brave woman has neglected to dissect the roles she played in her missionary works within the context of gender inequality and patriarchal control.

The chapter takes a critical look at some of Slessor’s legacies within Nigeria and demonstrates how the contemporary PCN and Nigerians are appropriating them. It looks closely at the gender politics of the nineteenth-century religious missions and assesses the extent of its impact on Slessor’s work. By combining the historical approach with gender analysis, the study highlights the exemplary contributions of Mary Slessor to social change in Africa during an age characterized by ritual killings, degradation of native women, and overbearing patriarchal attitudes and postures.

In no part of the foreign field were conditions more formidable than in Calabar, an area notorious for its harsh displays of both Nature and of human nature. For instance, the trade in slaves intensified in the eighteenth century, with the three main ports of Bonny, Elem Kalabari, and Calabar accounting for roughly 90 percent of all trade with Europeans during that time (Falola and Heaton, 2008:56). While much of the Calabar area was beautiful, it was one of the ‘unhealthiest spots’ in the world, with sickness, disease, and swift death, common threats to the Europeans who ventured there. The natives were considered to be the most degraded of any in Africa, slum-dwellers whose forebears,

from time immemorial...had occupied the equatorial region of the continent, a people without a history, with only a past of confused movement, oppression, and terror. They seem to have been visited by adventurous navigators of galleys before the Christian era, but the world in general knew nothing of them. On the land side they were shut in without hope of expansion.

LIVINGSTONE, 1916:15

Many of such negative reports on sickness and 'depravity' of the communities in which the missionaries served were popular and shaped the home church's perception of the mission field.

### Pre-Slessor Missionary Enterprise in Africa

The nineteenth century has often been noted as the greatest century of missions. On May 31, 1792, at Northampton, England, William Carey (1761–1834) preached from Isaiah 54:2–3, and his greatest exhortation was: "Expect great things from God, attempt great things for God." In addition to expounding his views in an eighty-seven–paged book, *An Inquiry into the Obligation of Christians to use Means for the Conversion of the Heathen* (Carey, 2007), where Carey literally launched the modern phase of the missionary movement. His sermon inspired twelve Reformed Baptists to form the Baptist Society for Propagating the Gospel among the Heathen (BSPGH) (Finnemore, 1923:14). In the years after 1793, several Protestant missionaries were recruited and sent out to many parts of the world, including the area that became modern Nigeria.

David Livingstone (1813–73) was one of the important Protestant missionaries from the mid-nineteenth century whose role in Africa inspired Mary Slessor. Livingstone is credited with the mapping and exploring of much of the African continent, and in his work and writing, he stressed the benefits of civilization, commerce, and Christianity and opposition to the slave trade (Fletcher, 1950). The work of T.F. Buxton, *African Slave Trade and Its Remedy*, followed the same line of reasoning. Buxton argued that the abolition of the slave trade could be real only if there was a profitable alternative. He asserted that:

The one needful thing, in order to induce them to unite with us in repressing the slave trade, is to convince them that they will gain by selling the productive labour of the people, instead of the people themselves.

BUXTON 1939:304–306

He suggested the unity of the Bible and the plough—the substitution of agricultural exports for trade in people and the rebuilding of African society on Christian principles (Sundkler and Steed, 2000:224). Although it remains doubtful how Buxton's argument could have served as a remedy without further exploitation of the freed slaves, his book served as a resourceful and motivational material in arousing mission interests to Africa.

The colonial scramble for Africa (1880–1914) coincided with a generational shift in African missions. Following the Berlin Conference of November 15, 1884, to February 26, 1885, the continent of Africa was partitioned among the colonial bodies of Europe into artificial zones serving Western interests. Fourteen countries were represented by ambassadors when the conference opened in Berlin. The countries represented, at the time, included Austria-Hungary, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Britain, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Russia, Spain, Sweden and Norway (which were unified from 1814 to 1905), Turkey, and the United States of America. Of these fourteen nations, France, Germany, Britain, and Portugal were the major players at the conference and controlled most of colonial Africa at the time (De Blij and Muller, 1997:340). The conference marked the formalisation of the European scramble and partition of Africa, as well as expansion of missionary interests in the region.

The mission churches embellished the outcome of the conference with denominational stripes, thereby destroying the fragile inter-denominational cooperation that had existed previously among mission agencies. It is therefore fair to contend that the Berlin Conference was both a political and religious partition in which imperial powers nationalised mission bodies and institutionalized denominationalism in Africa. It marked the beginning of increased competition and rivalry between Roman Catholics and Protestants, on one hand, and among the different Protestant missions as they scrambled for space and influence on the African continent, with splits along both religious and political lines. The legacy of this boundary demarcation along religious lines is still visible within the regions of Nigeria, and of Africa, as a whole.

Owing to the increased interest in Africa spurred by the conference's outcome, the number of missionaries and mission agencies grew exponentially through the last part of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth. Far more single women were recruited as missionaries in the twentieth century than in the nineteenth. These single women, in turn, found that the opening of the mission field enabled them to practice medicine, preach, and teach, while in Europe or America they would have been limited largely to domestic duties. Perhaps, the most famous of such single women



missionaries to Africa was Mary Slessor, the “Queen of Calabar,” born on December 2, 1848, at Gilcomston, a suburb of Aberdeen, Scotland (Hardage, 2008:3).

### Mapping the Mission to Calabar

The Calabar mission was founded and nurtured from Jamaica; however, the mission work in Jamaica, which began in 1800, was sponsored by the Scottish Missionary Society (SMS) and the United Secession Church. Following the 1838 Emancipation Act, which resulted in the emancipation of the slaves in the West Indies, the Jamaican Mission Presbytery (JMP) indicated a strong willingness to take the Gospel back to Africa. To this end they initiated a “freedom offering” (Johnston, 1988:8). The agents of the Scottish Missionary Society (SMS) and of the United Secession Church, who together served within the JMP from the mission’s, discussed the matter and resolved to take action (Young, 1845:25; Hewat, 1960:1–7). At its meeting of July 1841 at Goshen (now in South Africa), the Presbytery resolved, among other things, “that the time seems to have arrived, and to be in an eminent degree favourable for introducing the blessed gospel into central Africa” (McKerrow, 1856, 368–369).

However, the officials at home in Scotland were unenthusiastic over the mission’s intentions of JMP; they deprecated such uncertainty over a venture in a pestilential climate. The home presbytery considered the JMP’s move to be “premature, displaying more zeal than judgment, not in accordance with the state of dependence in which our Jamaican Church stood, both for means and missionaries...” (McFarlan, 1946:7; SMS minutes, November 19, 1841). E.G.K. Hewat quoted Hope Masterton Waddell, one of the missionaries serving at that time in Calabar, as saying that the letter they received from the home presbytery was “enough to frighten us” (Hewat, 1960:193–194).

A.U. Agha has identified some factors which could have incurred the disapproval of the JMP’s missionary intentions to West Africa as: 1) the over estimation of the efforts and desires of the home presbytery in Scotland; 2) the failures of earlier missionary works in other parts of Africa begun by other sponsors; 3) the disruption of 1843 in the Church of Scotland; 4) the prevalent rate of famine and hardship, which left people with little to donate toward African missions. As a result of considering these factors, the Scottish Committee thought that it would be a grave mistake to embark on any foreign mission to Africa at that time (Agha, 1988:29). Despite such a discouraging response from the home presbytery, the JMP, at its meeting of 1842 at Stirling Park, Westmoreland, reaffirmed its commitment to the mission. Through the efforts

of Rev. George Blyth and Rev. Peter Anderson, who were then serving missionaries in the West Indies, the JMP was able to secure the home presbytery's approval. On invitation Mr Waddell sailed from Jamaica for Scotland to promote and raise support for the Calabar mission. The Secession Church adopted the mission in its May 1844 meeting at Glasgow (McKerrow, 1856:373).

Finally, on April 10, 1846, Hope M. Waddell, Andrew Chisohm (a carpenter), Edward Miller (a freed slave who had been a doctor's assistant), and George Buchanan Waddell arrived in Calabar to begin their mission work. The pioneering team's profile had a lasting impact on the subsequent batches of missionaries sent to Calabar. It became a structural pattern to always have missionaries from the West Indies on the staff of the mission at Calabar, maintaining the link with the first group who ventured there (Buchan: 1980:50). In the following year the Calabar mission was taken over by the United Presbyterian Church (UPC), which had been formed by the union of the United Secession and Relief Churches. Waddell noted that Calabar people were kind and more advanced in their mode of life and learning than he had expected but was initially convinced, however, that the team he went with was unequal to the task and challenges of the pioneering work (Agha, 1988:31, McFarlan, 1946:15).

Mission work in the Calabar region became more promising over time. On May 1, 1882, Rev. John Kerr reported that Ekong Edim, an indigenous chief, was very useful to them:

He has a pleasant countenance and a modest manner, he is sincere friend of the mission and is a willing helper of the work... We held a service of a more regular order, and we were greatly pleased with the demeanour of the audience, and with the intelligence and interest they manifested.

PARKER, 1992:150–151

In another instance, Samuel H. Edgerley reported:

I was out of sugar, and decided to drink water, minus tea and sugar,— not a bad beverage! An Efik trader sojourning in the same town hearing this sent my servant a canister of loaf-sugar. When I offered to pay him he declined saying, “you endure for the sake of God, and may I not deny myself a little for your sake in the work!” When I told him that his kindness would have been sweeter had I been sure that he loved Christ as he loved me, he replied, “that is true, sir, that is true”.

EDGERLEY, 1882:192

The comments by Kerr and Edgerley further show that contrary to some generalised reports of the cruelty of the Calabar, its inhabitants were also hospitable and played meaningful roles in the mission work.

### Mission and Gender

One benefit of focusing on women in mission history has been to highlight the ways in which female agents managed to circumvent the confines of patriarchy in its various historical manifestations (Callaway, 1987, Oliver, 1982, Strobel, 1991, Chaudhuri and Strobel, 1992). The other is to understand how women missionaries such as Mary Slessor contributed to social change in Africa in an age characterized by ritual killings, native women's degradation, and overbearing patriarchal attitudes and postures. The increasing interest in women's roles, both from the general public and from academics, has culminated in the recent publication of several texts on the subject (Robertson, 2001; Ewan, 2006; Knox, 2006; Prevost, 2008:796–826, 2009: 765–799; Dimock, 2009). Furthermore, the emphasis of women's agency has unquestionably enlarged and enriched studies of gendered roles in mission history. It has highlighted the meaning of gender as depicted in stories which did not just describe or report religious events, but created them; stories about how males and females acted in terms of how they ought to have acted or about how they have defied conventions in their mission works. They were stories about power and status as models for relationships that also laid a basis for inclusion and exclusion.

Rhonda Semple's (2003:12) study of three major mission societies during the late nineteenth century highlights the entrance into and subsequent subordination of women in the mission field. Her study takes into account the religious and societal pressures that shaped or informed the candidates applying to go on missions. She uses mission society records to establish the quality and profile of mission workers in the London Missionary Society, Scottish Presbyterian Mission (SPM), and the China Inland Mission. Although SPM appears to be an uncommon term, she seems to use it as a category to cover all the Scottish missionary bodies which were Presbyterian-related. Semple's initial charting of gender role expectations within those missions is followed by a longitudinal study of individuals who implemented the policies of each society from 1860 to 1910. Semple's findings show that British Victorians' expectations of the proper roles for men and women heavily influenced women's roles in mission during the period—even when gender equality was valued. She argues that women's positions were influenced by the British

tendency to use business language and professional qualifications as standards for men while using the language of spirituality and of relational trust for women.

The matter of wives for missionaries arose in different contexts, following the increasing recruitment of single missionaries soon after the 1857 Indian Rebellion. The debate entailed arguments for and against marriage for both men and women working in the field. For men it was argued that salaries were too low to support a family and that the society could not pay more. Furthermore, it was reasoned that men were required to travel widely within their districts and would necessarily be away from home a great deal, thereby having little time for their families. As for women, it was thought that if they married, it would be a loss to the missionary society (Kirkwood, 1993:38–39). Nonetheless, at the beginning of the nineteenth century many women went to the mission field as wives or relatives of male missionaries, and it was through them that works among indigenous women were initiated. Although such women were traditionally presented as wives and support workers, it became apparent that, on the contrary, women missionaries often played a culturally important role (Bowie, Kirkwood, and Ardener 1993). To substantiate this point, E.R. Pitman argues:

Devoted men have laboured in heathen countries for nearly a century, among heathen peoples, without making much impression upon women. Why? Because, almost invariably, male missionaries are denied access to native women. It is true that many devoted ladies, wives of missionaries...have laboured among females, and conveyed to them some crumbs of the "bread of life;" but, as a rule, male missionaries must not, in the majority of instances, so much as allude to the female members of a heathen family, such an allusion being resented as a studied insult.

PITMAN, 1800:v–vi

Pitman's comment demonstrates the weakness of undertaking exclusively male-dominated and male-led missionary work by the nineteenth century missionary agencies. The debate on including women in missionary work lingered for a long time. However, such shortcomings as those identified by Pitman influenced the discussion across several mission bodies, in terms of amending their earlier policies of only sending males to the field. Nonetheless, it was not until the second half of the nineteenth century that the Church of Scotland seriously considered the engagement of unmarried women for missionary work. Semple (2003:115) suggests that the rise in the number of missions led by the church's evangelical revivals, an increase in educational

and medical missions, the rise of the social gospel, and the increasing professionalism of mission were all factors in the shifting identity of mission workers.

Even though both married and unmarried women were becoming more welcome and more widely employed as missionaries, and even though unmarried women missionaries who married while in the field continued to work, they had a practical change in their status: They no longer received salaries, a situation which often caused some hardship for them and their families. Moreover, even the most qualified women failed to receive the position or remuneration commensurate with their training and ability—something that apparently has continued within the contemporary PCN. Although the wives of ministers are often expected to work very hard in support of their husbands' ministries, in most cases they are not paid for the services they have rendered. It is, however, doubtful that the same level of hard work is expected of the husbands of female ministers, although where such an expectation does exist, their services also are seldom paid for. This implies that most mission families may have to depend on the stipend paid to one of the spouses.

Furthermore, although in Mary Slessor's time, the church considered it proper for women to be recruited and sent abroad as missionaries—and to attain leadership positions in foreign fields—in the Church of Scotland at home, they were not able to become ordained ministers or elders until much later. Owing to her gender and lower class, Slessor faced significant disadvantages. However, as will be highlighted below, her involvement in foreign mission marked a turning point not only for the UPC, but also for her. She suddenly became a celebrated missionary, and as such, was able to circumvent the gender and class discrimination prevalent in much of Victorian Britain.

### **Mary Slessor and the Mission to Calabar**

When she was eleven, Mary Slessor relocated with her family to Dundee in 1859. Her father, Robert Slessor, lost his job as a shoemaker due to his alcoholism but eventually found another job in Dundee's jute mills. James Buchan (1980:7) describes the period of Mary Slessor's birth as the "Hungry Forties." At the beginning of the century, the population of Scotland had risen sharply, with failed crops leading to the exodus to the cities of several rural dwellers like Robert Slessor who went in search of work and food, in cities which were quite unprepared to receive them. Miss Slessor's mother, also named Mary, was quite religious and ensured that her children attended Sunday school. Mary and her siblings, Susan, John, and Janie, joined their mother in attendance at

Wishart Church in the east end of the Cowgate of Dundee (Livingstone, 1916:2). The younger Mary Slessor later joined a local mission to the poor, working to instill Christian values in Dundee (Wellman, MCMXCVIII: 7–8).

Mary Slessor was inspired by David Livingstone and other complex factors to become a missionary. The story of Calabar had fired her imagination when she was a child. The UPC, in which she was brought up, placed its missionary work abroad in the forefront of its activities; it had missions in China, Japan, Calabar, and Kaffraria (now in South Africa). Reports about mission works in those places were presented in the monthly *Missionary Record*, which became a 'must read' in many homes. Such reports generated not only great interest in missions, but also increased financial support for mission agencies. Added to this there were regular presentations from missionaries on furlough in which she regularly participated.

Slessor's mother was also a regular attendee of such meetings. Mrs Slessor never missed listening to missionaries on furlough who came to Dundee, and once, in the company of Mary and John, she was so moved by the address from Rev. William Anderson as to the needs of Old Calabar that she longed to dedicate her son to the work (Buchan, 1980:11). Those men and women visiting from distant outposts became heroic figures to the church congregants, and people thronged to hear from their lips the story of their difficulties and triumphs. Such stories also inspired fear, as working in foreign missions was considered deadly and impossible—especially, for women. As time went on, however, the opportunities that missions offered to both men and women hearing those stories overcame their dread. Mission was seen as offering life-changing opportunities. This was especially true for women wishing to move away from the limited domestic sphere to which they were confined and into more interesting employment, which might involve travelling as well as religious fulfillment.

John Slessor's sudden death, a week after he emigrated to New Zealand, dashed Mrs Slessor's hope of having her son become a missionary. To Mary the death was a bitter blow, but she turned her thoughts more directly to the foreign mission. Could she fill her brother's place? Would it be possible for her ever to become a missionary? (Livingstone, 1916:12–13). In 1866, at the age of seventeen, Mary was inspired to educate herself from reports in the *Missionary Record* about David Livingstone, a mill-worker (like her) who educated himself and became a doctor (Buchan, 1980:14). On May 1, 1873, David Livingstone died, and early in 1874 the news of his death stirred abroad, resulting in a wave of missionary enthusiasm (Livingstone, 1916:17). In 1875 Miss Slessor offered to serve under the Foreign Mission Board of the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland.

At the age of twenty-eight, after having received her training in Edinburgh, Miss Slessor left Scotland on August 5, 1876 and arrived in Calabar on September 11 of the same year. She arrived in Calabar more than thirty years after the establishment of the mission. On hand to receive her was Miss Miller, who later became the "Mammy," Mrs Euphemia Sutherland. She had, in 1849, been deployed as the first female missionary to Calabar.

The recruitment and deployment of Slessor to Calabar in a field that was male dominated marked a turning point in the UPC's foreign missions. In April 17, 1877, Miss Slessor wrote:

The surrounding heathenism has such a dressing influence, and the slow progress (which is almost a necessary consequence of their state of utter debasement) makes one heartsick. Oh for power! Oh, for a heart full of love to Jesus and these perishing ones for His sake, for oh one cannot love them for their own, at least, some of them.

SLESSOR, 1877:1

The above comments highlight Slessor's earliest impression of Calabar. Her astonishment could be understood as a result of cross-cultural contacts. She had spent all her life in Dundee, and her knowledge of Calabar appears to have been based on the stories she read from the missionary records and information from serving missionaries. It was not long before she came in contact with King Eyo Honesty VI, who often asked for Mary's advice in dealing with white men. Similarly, Slessor asked for his help in working with the natives. Through this process, Slessor served as a bridge between the white and the natives, and vice-versa.

Miss Slessor served in Duke Town, and later in Old Town, but then moved to Akpap Okoyong in 1888 where she did much of her missionary work. After some years of service at Akpap Okoyong, the British consul general, Sir Claude Macdonald, in 1892, considered sending one of his deputies to administer the district, but Slessor argued that the Akpap Okoyong was not yet prepared to receive such an official, nor to accept an abrupt introduction of new rules and procedures. She had grown in her understanding of the people's cultural practices, and thus, had become more patient. Macdonald was astonished by Slessor's vast knowledge of the indigenous culture and invited her to become vice-consul, with the authority to preside over local courts. This role shift could be considered a mismatch for a missionary, and although few of her colleagues agreed with her appointment, her involvement with the judiciary further served to bridge the divide between the church and the state. She became the first woman to occupy such a position in the British Empire.



### Social and Gender Dynamics in the Pre-Slessor Calabar Region

Pre-Slessor Calabar was a highly patriarchal society socialized into the fear of witchcraft. It was a society where crime and punishments were gendered in a blatantly unequal way: men prescribed the punishments meted out to women, the birth of twins was criminalized, and women were punished or killed for delivering less-than-perfect infants. When the king died, his wives and slaves were buried, alive, with him. Mary found all these practices strange, but she was determined to win the ‘heathens’ of Calabar to the Lord—an ambition she had nursed for most of her life. Basil Miller gives credence to this fact in this statement:

As a child she breathed the spiritual air of Calabar, and her soul burned with the desire to seek the Master’s lost sheep of this her adopted land. She was inspired by this one motive: to present her Lord with Calabar as a trophy of His transforming grace.

MILLER, 1974:7

Mary’s approach in her dealings with the people of Calabar showed an awareness of gender roles, and she concentrated on reforming both the women and the men. One major problem she confronted with the women was their alcoholism. This ailment was all too familiar to Slessor, whose father had been a drunk and a disappointment to his family. Coming from this background, she was only too determined to put a stop to this act. But in achieving this, a gendered approach must be adopted. This was evident in the following observation:

She knew too well that glazed look in their eyes that satisfied but stupid expression on their faces. How could that be? She saw green gin bottles on the ground. The boatman rebuked the women for her. The women seemed to realize for the first time that Mary had a white face. They seemed to know she was behind the boatmen’s righteousness. They scowled at Mary. “What business is our drinking to her?” they clamoured. “We worked hard to collect palm kernels, and now we are enjoying our pay!” Mary snapped in Efik, *“I see now the Efik women must be cleansed first, or the men will never change either!”*

But the men were not spared either.... Some men did lounge around the next hut, even drunker than the women. They had both rum and gin. Mary put her hands on her hips. “Shame on you men,” she fumed. “In broad daylight too.”

WELLMAN 1998: 55–56; our emphasis

### Interfacing her thoughts, Mission and Theology with Gender

Suffice it to state at this juncture that Mary Slessor did not set out to either enforce the traditional control that was endemic in the Calabar region or engage in feminist politics. Her thoughts, mission, and religion revealed her as a quintessential advocate of gender equality and social justice. Mary was confronted with and tackled the cultural practices that impinged on the women's human rights. These actions and attitudes were clear in her questioning the validity of the traditional practices of the people. Regarding polygamy, she asked if a man needed to have more than one wife; she regarded sex and sexual satisfaction as being equally important for both men and women and maintained that it was appropriate for women to seek sexual pleasure outside matrimony.

She further learned that the Calabar culture held the view that twin-birth was an abnormality, since "Everyone knows that a man can father only one child" at a time (Wellman 1998: 79). If an Efik woman was discovered to be a mother of twins by the Efik men, she was either murdered or cast out into the jungle. Aside from killing the mother of the twins, the twins were placed in a clay pot and carried back into the forest. Very often, the babies were killed before they were put in the pot (Wellman 1998: 79–81). However, women had found a way of circumventing this traditional practice before Slessor's intervention:

Many of the Efik women got around the death sentence on twins by murdering one of them. If the pregnant woman's own mother and grandmother were her midwives at birth, they could conspire to keep the birth of twins a secret. It wasn't that hard. Men never witnessed births.

WELLMAN 1998: 79

So the murder of one twin "by the close-mouthed women in an Efik family seemed the lesser of two terrible evils" (Wellman 1998: 56). From the purview of her Christian faith, Mary resolved to put an end to the practice through her sermons and through the adoption of such children. All these practices were a function of the people's religious and belief system, widespread features of the indigenous religions in pre-colonial Nigerian societies. According to Afonja and Pearce,

The religion was the primary source of the non-material culture of the society concerned; it articulated the story of how men were created and their relationship to God and the gods. It provided the foundation of

political authority and by the constant round of religious festivals and celebrations; it provided the public life of Nigerian societies and symbolized the passing of time.... Truth in any religion is presumed to be unchanging and eternal and all religions tend to stress that their beliefs and rituals have been passed down unchanged since they began

AFONJA and PEARCE 1984: 142

Giving justice and protecting women remained a central concern of Mary Slessor's work. It was recognized that what passed for cultural practices failed to pay attention to the rights of women. A particular incident in a multiplicity of episodes reveals the gender dimensions of her missionary work. In Calabar, the chief was on his deathbed, and the whole harem was terrified, since they knew the death of the chief meant that some of his wives would be buried with him. In a dangerous journey from her Ekenge village base, Mary Slessor endured a dangerous journey to administer medication to the ailing chief. His survival brought happiness to the chief's harem and the entire village. Everybody knew there would be no slaying (Wellman 1998: 131). Attention to such performances draws our attention to the kinds of struggles she undertook to overcome forms of domination and a profoundly ideological notion of male superiority. Thus, some of her works in Calabar would ultimately become the precursor of gender practices now embedded in certain social practices and institutions in Nigeria.

There was very profound evidence of "Ma" Slessor's dexterity at resolving other gender issues. A salient example involved a woman's infidelity in the Calabar region. The desire of one Chief Okon to punish unfaithful women brought out in Mary Slessor the quintessential defender of women's rights. After being told they each would receive one hundred lashes of a crocodile hide whip, she asked the Chief for permission to meet with the elders:

"You wives have shamed all the women of the village!" she snapped. The wives were stunned. "Wives must remain pure," she continued. "You betrayed your chief's trust. But the Word of God I bring you in this sacred book says that God has mercy." The four wives began to relax; surely White Ma was going to insist they go unpunished after all. Mary continued, "But God does not overlook sin, nor does God forbid punishment for sin." The wives looked sick again.

"Punishment," grunted an elder. "Now White Ma speaks well."

Mary turned on the elders. "It is your terrible custom of taking many wives that caused these young women to get bored and stray. Men should not have more than one wife!"

"Did I hear White Ma right?" blurted Chief Okon. "What's this about not having more than one wife? Does it say that in your book?"

"Yes! Right here in the 10th chapter of Mark," she cried.

Chief Okon was boiling. "I don't know about this Word of God...."

An elder growled, "Are these sinful wives not to be punished after all?"

"Listen to me!" Mary held up her hand. "The wives must be punished for their foolishness. The hide of the crocodile is appropriate...."

"She speaks wisdom now!" yelled an elder.

"No salt in the wounds," she insisted.

"Granted," commented the chief.

"No fingers or toes may be cut off," added Mary.

"That's a small thing anyway," shrugged an elder.

Mary announced, "Each wife should get ten lashes!"

"Ten lashes is almost as painful as a hundred lashes," commented another elder matter-of-factly. "After the first ten lashes they usually faint anyway."

And so the young wives received ten lashes. Mary cleaned their wounds, rubbed in analgesic salve and gave them an opiate. She would sedate them for a day or two—until the worst pain was over. It was the most she could do. But through the power of Christ she had probably saved their lives.

LIVINGSTONE, W.P.: 1916

Ma Slessor engaged in other works that made life more bearable for the men and women of her mission field. Following the expedition to Arochukwu from 1901 to 1902, Slessor relocated in 1903 to pioneer the mission work at Arochukwu, the patrons of the dreaded *IbinUkpabi* oracle. There she established a school under a shed at Amasu. *IbinUkpabi* was noted for its widespread patronage and effectiveness as the highest court of appeal and the supreme judicial and religious institution in the Niger, Cross River basins and beyond. W.B. Baikie observes that *Arochukwu* and its oracle became the Mecca of eastern Nigeria: pilgrimages, as Baikie termed them, were made to the shrine of the *IbinUkpabi* from far and wide, "not only from all parts of Igbo proper but from Old Calabar, from tribes along the coast and from Oru and Nember" (Baikie, 1859:265).

The *IbinUkpabi* was perceived by several British colonial officers and missionaries as a hindrance to the expansion of the British commerce, authority, and missionary work (Ijeoma 1982: 146–147). It became the practice of the protectorate administration to ascribe every act in Igboland and Ibibioland that did not serve the British economic interest to the Aro people of Igboland. Apart from the promptings of the British officials, the UPC Mission, which was

established in Calabar in 1846, had prodded the protectorate government to sack Arochukwu. Ayandele (1966:116) supports the view that the Presbyterian mission helped to trump up charges for the invasion of Aro. Following the expedition, the oracle was destroyed and Arochukwu and its environs were opened for mission work.

After establishing the mission in Arochukwu, Miss Slessor later moved to Itu, where she also served as a vice-president of the native court (McFarlan 1963: 59–61). Slessor, continuing her pioneering endeavors, later moved to Ikot-Obong at the time when the mission station and hospital had been established at Itu. In November 1907 Slessor relocated to Use, where she yet again was a pioneer of mission work. From Use she went to Ikpe, and although she was advised by Dr John W. Hitchcock not to stay, she nevertheless lived there from 1910 until December of 1914. Because her health was in decline, she then relocated to Use, which was closer to Dr Hitchcock and would allow for him to attend to her more easily. Slessor died at Use on January 13, 1915, at the age of sixty-six years, and was buried in Calabar (McFarlan, 1963: 93). Her influence lives on in the towns and villages of Calabar and throughout modern Nigeria. Her life and work remain central to contemporary discussions of the PCN and Church of Scotland.

However, there is a huge ambiguity in the work and life of Slessor—especially, in relation to the part she played in the establishment and maintenance of British imperial rule. She provided assistance to officials, apprising them of local matters (such as raids by slavers) that she thought required government attention. She also reported cases of improper behavior by government agents, such as court clerks and others who were abusing their authority. Although Slessor occasionally irritated officials, her government-related activity enabled the colonial administration to function more successfully. Slessor also offered informal orientation to newly arrived British officials on how to survive in the tropics and on indigenous culture. In essence, Slessor served as an intermediary between the colonial officials and the indigenous people. She played key roles in explaining the positions of both the government and the natives on matters of controversy (Proctor 2000: 51). Often, she presented government policy to the natives in ways they could understand, assured them that the government had their best interests at heart, and encouraged them to comply with its dictates (Slessor, 1897: 158). Whether her explanations to the natives were biased or not, Slessor had won the trust of the natives, who felt safer with her than with other colonial officials.

Mary Slessor saw no conflict in her dual roles—missionary and court judge. However, her judicial activity made heavy demands on her time. Once, she reported to the UFSC Women's Foreign Mission Committee, "the court takes up

a great deal of my time, but I do not know how to let any of it go, for it holds such possibilities for good" (Livingstone, 1916:231; *Women's Missionary Magazine* 1906: 91). Such services gave her access to Calabar society and raised her status among her colleagues and the indigenous population. It also provided her with opportunities to apply Christian principles in the administration of justice. The various forms of assistance she received from the colonial officers enhanced her effectiveness as a missionary. However, it must be pointed out that the colonial administration supported some of her activities because they saw that it was useful to the colonial interest and objectives. Thus, her relationship with the colonial administration was one in which she gave and received (Proctor 2000: 56). In 1913 Sir Frederick Lugard, impressed by her work, recommended her to the secretary of state of the colonies for an award. She was thereafter made an Honorary Associate of the Order of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem (Proctor 2000: 45).

Furthermore, Miss Slessor was convinced that the natives benefited from their subjection to British authority. She asserted in 1895 that the relationship "did not mean loss of liberty, but the opposite, for it had brought into being a 'just' legal order and had 'made out of the roughest material a loft of self-respecting men.'" Ten years later she rejoiced that roads were being built, courts opened, and administrative offices established in the interior, "so that the rights of the poor erstwhile scum of society may be safeguarded, and that they might have guidance of the right kind." As she looked at what had been accomplished, she voiced her belief that "our British rule is far and away the best thing for Africa and for all subject races" (Livingstone 1916: 304–307; Slessor 1905: 416).

However, the benefits that Slessor derived from her romance with the colonial government had an impact on her missionary work (Taylor 1996: 132). The first baptism (which involved seven adults and eleven children) did not occur at Akpap Okoyong until 1903, fifteen years after she began work there. Mary Kingsley reported, after her visit, that Slessor "has lost most of her missionary ideas." She became too busy to attend mission council meetings regularly or send reports when due to Edinburgh. She considered resigning her missionary appointment on several occasions when the Foreign Mission Committee pressured her to devote more of her energies to missionary work. She wrote at the time, "I am not enthusiastic over church methods.... I would not mind cutting the rope" (Livingstone 1916: 225; Birkett 1992: 34). Notwithstanding, Slessor's missionary and judicial work was most rewarding, and among all the Scottish missionaries in Nigeria, she is the one most remembered. Although she did not establish churches, she saw her work as that of preparing the way for her colleagues who were gifted in this area.

### The Queen of Calabar and Contemporary Discourses

From January 19 to 31, 2009, two staff members of the Church of Scotland (Rev. David Bartholomew, convener of the African and Caribbean Committee, and Neil Crawford, the then Locally Supported Partnership Officer—(LSP) visited Nigeria, in order to discuss its new mission partnership strategies (twinning) of congregation-to-congregation relationships with the PCN. Amazed at the things they saw and the hospitality they received, on their return Bartholomew and Crawford reported:

From the beginning of this visit it was apparent how much the PCN values its history. The legacies of the Scottish missionaries are not simply a remembrance of times past—it is a vital part of the church's vision for the future.... The legacy of those missionaries has also left a deep and abiding affection for the Church of Scotland.... Wherever we went there was a real sense that our visit represented the renewal of a link that seemed to have been broken, but that should be maintained. If twinning represents the best way to do that in the years ahead then PCN will be an enthusiastic partner, and they look forward to extending their missionary work to Scotland so that they can return the seed planted in Nigeria by people from that land.

BARTHOLOMEW and CRAWFORD 2009: 1–2

This extract illustrates the close attachment of the PCN not only to the Church of Scotland, but to Scotland, as a whole. The reality of the affection, as highlighted in the report, is demonstrated in the PCN's logo. The logo has two intercepted circles representing Nigeria and Scotland. The history of the circle and its implication is studied during catechism classes by most members before they qualify for the Lord's Supper. There appears to be a mental connection among several members of the PCN with the life and work of past Scottish missionaries—especially Mary Slessor, Queen of Calabar. She is known by several names among the Igbo, including *Ezinne* (Good Mother) and *Nneoma* (Sweet Mother). Among the Efiks and Ibibio, she is called *Eka Kpukpro Owo* (Mother of all the People) and *Ma Akamba* (Great Mother).

Miss Slessor's influence lives in the care of twins and twin-mothers. She adopted several twins, and in collaboration with the British colonial administration, she managed to get the practice of killing twins abolished. The tradition of her life of service goes on in the church, hospitals, schools, and governments of some states of Nigeria. Slessor's image; carrying twins, is inscribed on the national dress of the PCN's women and is always used at least once in a year



during the Mothers' Sunday in March; on that day, this attire is often required for women across the different congregations of the PCN, whose region stretches down to Togo and Benin Republic. The week preceding the Sunday is usually used to run seminars that draw on the different virtues of Slessor. Teachings drawn from her virtues are often extended across every member of the congregation. Interestingly, although Slessor did not marry and was female, her life and work remains a source of inspiration to males and females, young and old. The young—both boys and girls—are encouraged to emulate Slessor's sacrifices. The life of Slessor remains a model for several PCN members, irrespective of their gender.

This same discourse about Slessor is woven into public speeches, such as those of political office holders, court magistrates, judges, and other public and civil servants who are often challenged to emulate her commitment to justice and sincerity. The life of Slessor often serves as a connection point between the PCN and the government of Nigeria, and between the PCN and other Christian groups within the country. Her legacies are broadly shared by many, and several institutions – both those owned by the PCN and those by the government – are named after her. Although the PCN often wish to appropriate sole ownership of the name, the government has often reminded the PCN that the work of Slessor goes beyond any Christian group, or even religion, in Nigeria. The argument has always been that she served both the government and the church, and as such, no single institution can lay exclusive claim to her legacy.

In Scotland several books have been written about Slessor, a museum is named after her in Dundee, the Clydesdale Bank's ten-pound note shows her image and on its obverse, the map of the places where she worked in Nigeria. However, the question remains of how an understanding of this historical relationship between Nigeria and Scotland could reshape and enhance a contemporary relationship. The life of Slessor lays a basis on which a new partnership could be charted. Her missionary involvement challenges the missionary patterns based on power and not dialogue, and demonstrates a newer, dynamic approach to mission, cooperation and partnership. Such a partnership remains the aspiration of several members of the PCN and Nigeria today. The relationship would make for mutual benefit and respect between Nigeria and Scotland. The life of Slessor remains a good example of a bridge between the poor and the rich, young and old, great and small, Western and non-Western.

## Conclusion

By the time she died in 1915, *Mma Akamba* (Great Mother) had created a more harmonious society than the one she first encountered. *Eka kprukpru Owo*

(the mother of all people), the White queen of Okoyong, established schools and hospitals, identified with the people, and struck a balance in gender relations, ethics, and social stability. Thus, over the years men began to learn how to care for, protect, and respect their women. That became a defining feature of post-Slessor Calabar that has survived to the present.

She who loved us, she who sought us, Through the wild untrodden  
bushlands,  
Brought us healing, brought us comfort, brought the sunshine to our  
darkness—  
She has gone—the dear white Mother—Gone into the Great Hereafter.  
Thus she taught and thus she laboured; Living, spent herself to help us,  
Dying, found her rest among us.

KUMM 1917

These were the words for *Eka Kpukpru Owo* (everybody's mother) at her departure (<http://www.akwaibomstate.gov.com/Mary%20Slessor.html>). The memory of Mary Mitchell Slessor has two dimensions; the simple and the complex. Mary Slessor was a simple woman who lived with and cared for a people who were referred to as bloody, savage, crafty, cruel, treacherous, sensual, devilish, and thievish as cannibals, fetish-worshippers, and murderers. An indication of her complexity is the fearlessness she exhibited in the face of patriarchal control and of Calabar cultural practices. She never shrank from anything that she thought her Lord Jesus would have done; thus, she welcomed the hardest tasks and considered it a privilege and an honour to do them. To do this, she employed her sense of humour, honesty, and down-to-earth temperament (Hardage 2008: 8). For these reasons, Mary Mitchell Slessor is remembered and honoured to this day in Calabar.

Evidence abounds of her legacies. These legacies have endured for generations after her death. Aside being known to have fought against the killing of twins and cannibalism, she has improved the status of Calabar women. The white queen established hospitals for the treatment of leprosy, smallpox, and later made vaccination available to infants. The healthcare facility established by Mary Slessor in November 1897 – Saint Margaret Hospital – became the University of Calabar Teaching Hospital. The legacy of the Ma Slessor permeates the existence and life of the society; her spirit lingers in the religious, social, and economic spheres of the society. At the centenary celebration of the hospital in 1997, the official publication of the University of Calabar Teaching Hospital was named the Mary Slessor Journal of Medicine, in appreciation of the role she played in the foundation of the health sector.

On the website of the journal (<http://maryslessorjournalofmedicine.org/>) is a summary of the contributions of Mary Mitchell Slessor and a justification revering her name;

She is even better remembered for her fight against the superstition killing of twins in this part of the world. Hitherto, twins were regarded in southeast Nigeria as products of evil spirits. They were promptly killed and their mothers ostracized. Mary Slessor fought this practice relentlessly, salvaged a large numbers of twins, their mothers and other so called outcasts and maintained their colonies which necessarily moved along with her missionary transfers. She introduces nutritional rehabilitation units in these colonies. She was one of the earliest to recognize and practice the social and economic empowerment of women as a means of checking abuse. During the small-pox epidemic, she worked as a nurse and also motivated the leprosy hospital at Itu a few kilometers from Calabar. Her grave stands today on the hill, about 200metres across the University of Calabar Teaching Hospital. Perhaps, no other name would command more respect and love in this part of the world than Mary Slessor. Hence immortalizing the name of this pioneer missionary, an advocate of rights of women and children and a primary health care worker with this international journal, did not come with any difficulty.

In 2002, Dr Lawrie Mitchell MBE and Mrs Eme Mitchell decided to continue with the missionary work of Mary Slessor with the establishment of the Mary Slessor Foundation at Akpap Okoyong, the location where Mary Slessor devoted her life before her death in 1915. The vision of the Mary Slessor Foundation is to emulate the social and medical work of the great missionary, Mary Slessor. They concentrated on helping the people of Calabar by improving the lives of the youth, local women, and men through attaining sustainable developments in the social, economic and health sectors of the community by introducing the following developmental projects: Skills Training Centre targeting men and women to train them in mechanical engineering, welding, fabric design and manufacturing, carpentry and forge operations. The foundation also provides medical facilities targeting perinatal activities, AIDS, malaria, typhoid and other water borne diseases including an outreach facility to the more isolated rural communities. The MSF also set up a Agricultural Processing Mill specializing in palm/cassava crops producing staple food, palm oil and shoe polish. (<http://maryslessor.org/>)

Perhaps, the most enduring legacy of the white queen of Okoyong is the adoption of her frock-like dresses with puffy sleeves, as the traditional attire of

Calabar women, worn at traditional ceremonies. (see <http://www.strategicchic.com/2011/07/nigerian-women-pay-tribute-to-late-mary.html>).

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## **Pentecostalising the Church of Scotland?**

### *The Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA) and the Pentecostal Challenge in Kenya (1970–2010)*

*Damaris Seleina Parsitau*

#### **Introduction**

Over the last couple of years, the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA) has undergone significant changes within its internal structures and has witnessed important transformations, such as waves of Pentecostalization that have swept across most former mission churches in Kenya and other parts of the African continent (Parsitau 2007). These challenges have been brought about by the appeal of Pentecostal and charismatic groups for its members—especially, for the young. To curtail the drift of its youthful members to Pentecostal churches, the PCEA church embraced Pentecostal spirituality and its ethos as a survival strategy. This was taken a notch higher by its former moderator, Rev. Dr David Gathii who transformed the Presbyterian Church tremendously along Pentecostal lines, changed its century-old logo, went about demolishing century-old buildings claiming that they were demonic, and changed the church's liturgy and mode of worship. These measures have created tremendous tensions within the PCEA as it struggles to achieve a delicate balance between inherited tradition and identity, on the one hand, and the need for self-preservation in the face of tremendous pressure to Pentecostalize and retain youthful members, on the other hand. This chapter examines these changes in the PCEA but first, I shall offer a brief historical examination of the former Church of Scotland as a background for appreciating the immensity of this challenge.

#### **The Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA) in Historical Perspective**

The PCEA is a large mainline protestant church in Kenya. It is an offspring of western mission initiatives from North American Presbyterianism and Scottish Presbyterianism. As a result of twentieth century historical mission dynamics, a vast majority of PCEA members are from the Kikuyu ethnic community, the largest, and perhaps most prosperous, enterprising ethnic group in Kenya.

The PCEA church itself boast of a membership of over 4.3 millions and an annual growth rate estimated at about 5 percent. This means that about 12 percent of Kenyans are believed to be members of this huge religious giant. Yet, Kenyan Presbyterianism despite having North American roots appears to have borrowed heavily from Scottish Presbyterianism than American Presbyterianism.

The PCEA grew out of the work of Scottish missionaries from the Church of Scotland who arrived in Kenya in 1891. These missionaries had arrived from South Africa, where they had founded the Lovedale Mission, led by Rev. Dr James Stewart. In Kenya they first settled at Kibwezi, some 250 km from Mombassa,<sup>1</sup> where they established a mission station called the East Africa Scottish Mission. In 1892, the first temporary church at Kibwezi was opened by Dr James Stewart, who also started the first school, with two pupils. In 1893 mission work was strengthened by the arrival of John Paterson, who introduced western agriculture and the first coffee seeds to the country. But owing to ambiguity of malaria at Kibwezi, and the danger posed by wild animals—resulting in the deaths of a number of missionaries—in 1894, these missionaries led by a Mr Thomson Watson went to Dagoreti, on the outskirts of Nairobi, to explore the feasibility of transferring the mission station to a less-threatening and safer environment. Consequently, the missionaries moved in 1898 from Kibwezi to Dagoretti, where they constituted themselves as the Church of Scotland Mission (CMS)<sup>2</sup> and established the famous Church of the Torch (*Thogoto*, in Kikuyu).<sup>3</sup>

In 1898 the church pitched camp at Kikuyu and began to spread the Gospel and convert locals to Christianity. It was from Kikuyu that the church spread to Nyeri (Tumu Tumu), Murang'a, and Kiambu.<sup>4</sup> It is also within this period that the Church of Scotland introduced formal education and provision of health-care for locals, leading to the establishment of Kikuyu Mission Hospital in 1908. In 1920, by the authority of the 1918 General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, a form of church government was set up and inaugurated by the Very

1 <http://www.oikoumene.org>.

2 Moses Njagih, Reaping Fruits of Seeds Sowed 100 years go, *The Standard*, Wednesday 8/10/2008 p.3.

3 Unable to pronounce the word Scotland, the Kikuyu corrupted the word to Thogoto, as it is presently known.

4 Tumu Tumu situated in Nyeri on the slopes of Mt. Kenya and is regarded as the cradle of civilization by many Presbyterians as it was the place where Scottish Missionaries (Dr Ruffle Scott and Dr Arthur) planted the seeds of Christianity in the Mt. Kenya region, the home of the Kikuyu, the largest ethnic group in Kenya.

Reverend J.N. Ogilvy, elders were ordained, parish sessions formed for the congregations of the Kikuyu, Tumutumu, and St. Andrews, Nairobi, and the presbytery of British East Africa instituted, to exercise jurisdiction over these congregations.

But it was not until 1926 that the first African pastors—Rev. Musa Gitau, Rev. Benjamin Githieya, and Rev. Joshua Matenjwa, at Kikuyu—were ordained. In 1936 the separation of the overseas Presbytery of Kenya (to cater for the church's colonial and continental work) was effected by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. In 1946 the Gospel Missionary Society (GMS), an American-oriented church based at Kambui in Kiambu, joined the overseas Presbytery of Kenya. This merger acted as a catalyst for church growth. In 1952 authority was given to the overseas Presbytery of Kenya by the General Assembly to begin conversation with the synod of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa, with a view to ultimately uniting the Presbyterian work in East Africa into one church. In 1956 the synod of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa and the overseas Presbytery of Kenya declared their respective congregations united as one church, and a constitution was then adopted. Today, the Church of Scotland has become indigenized, being an independent church although it maintains cordial ties with the Church of Scotland and American Presbyterianism.

### **The Presbyterian Church of East Africa: A Leading Social Service Provider**

Almost a century later, the former Church of Scotland, now the PCEA, has grown by leaps and bounds, like the biblical mustard seed, to become a giant religious organization comprising some four million people.<sup>5</sup> It has also become a key development partner and a major service provider, and one that has had a positive impact on the lives of thousands of communities all over the country.<sup>6</sup> In fact, in about one century since its inception, the former Church of Scotland has left an indelible and noble mark—particularly, on education and medical work. It has emerged as a powerful religious giant and a leading development organization. Gifford (2009) extols the contributions of Africa's main-line churches as unrivalled and enormous, especially in the fields of education

5 Moses Njagih, Reaping Fruits of Seeds Sowed 100 years ago, *The Standard*, Wednesday 8/10/2008 p. 3.

6 Moses Njagih, Reaping Fruits of see sowed 100 years go, *The Standard*, Wednesday 8/10/2008 p. 3.

and health. He claims that about 64 percent of all of the country's educational institutions and 40 percent of healthcare in Kenya are church based.

The Presbyterian Church pioneered in education and medical work and founded the first hospital in the country, Kijabe Mission Hospital. This hospital, established in 1908 in Kikuyu, was the first hospital of its kind and the biggest mission station to be built by Scottish missionaries in Kenya. Over the years the hospital has acquired the reputation of being the largest referral hospital in Kenya for diseases of the eyes and the first hospital in the country to offer X-ray services. Other medical facilities founded by the Church of Scotland include Tumu Tumu and Chogoria Mission hospitals.

Scottish missionaries also established schools, including Alliance High School for boys and Alliance Girls high schools, the pride of the nation. The church runs two schools for the deaf, a home for old people, and a children's orphanage. Today, it runs three major hospitals, and several health centres and sponsors more than seven hundred schools, besides the prestigious Alliance schools. The church participates in other developmental works and operates several community-based projects (both rural and urban). Other projects include hotels and conference centres and other such facilities, HIV/AIDS control programmes, relief efforts, and refugee programmes. Recently, the Presbyterian Church has opened up the Presbyterian University of East Africa, reflecting an emerging trend among many mainline churches that have had a long-standing and impressive record as social service providers (Gifford 2009).<sup>7</sup> But evangelical and Pentecostal churches are equally emerging as service providers: Several have opened up a number of universities, Bible colleges, secondary, primary, and pre-schools, clinics, and health centres.<sup>8</sup>

Yet, despite an impressive development record, the Church of Scotland concentrated only in central Kenya, and has therefore remained a predominantly Kikuyu church. As the Kikuyu ethnic communities moved to various parts of the country, they established PCEA church congregations. But this remained exclusively for members of this ethnic group—to the point where liturgy is sometimes conducted in the Kikuyu dialect even in cosmopolitan urban

7 Kenyan Mission Churches: Anglicans, Catholics, Methodists and Presbyterians have a long history of Development work. Mission churches have also opened up Universities and have outnumbered public universities: examples include the Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA), the Kenyan Methodist University (KEMU), St. Paul's University Limuru (Ecumenical), and the Adventist Baraton University of Eastern Africa.

8 For example, Evangelical Kabarak University, Daystar University and The Pan Africa Christian University (Pentecostal Assemblies) and African Christian University (formerly Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology (NEGST), and The International Leadership University (formerly Nairobi International School of Theology (NIST).

churches such as Nairobi's St. Andrews. And while the church has attempted to spread to non-Kikuyu areas such as Maasailand, it is still largely perceived as an exclusive, ethnically based denomination tilted toward the Kikuyu elites. This has often led many Kenyans to resent the Kikuyu—said to be the largest ethnic group in Kenya—for dominating the country's politics and economy. (The late Kenyan president Jomo Kenyatta was from the larger Kikuyu ethnic group, as is the current one, Mwai Kibaki).<sup>9</sup> But while the church is either unable or unwilling to shed off its ethnic label, it has not been able to resist waves of Pentecostal and charismatic movements that have swept across much of the African continent. As Kalu (2007:5) observes, the dynamic growth of these churches has caused quite a stir among mainline churches in Africa, and many have been forced to embrace certain elements of Pentecostal spirituality in order to survive its impact. Let us consider this development next.

### The Pentecostalization of Kenyan Christianities

Since the 1970s, but more significantly the 1980s, changes have occurred within African Christianity, not only in Kenya, but in the African continent, as a whole. In fact, the contemporary face of Pentecostalism in Africa was "catalyzed by charismatic movements led by young people from mainline church movements from the late 1960s in some parts of the continent but more especially in the 1970s in others" (Kalu 2003).

Thus, different Kenyan Christian churches have undergone changes, such as incorporating of Pentecostal and charismatic practices. For example, Pentecostal practices are visible in many mainline churches attended by Roman Catholics, Presbyterians, Anglicans, and Methodists, and in evangelical churches like the Baptist Church, African Inland Church, African Gospel Church, the Seventh-Day Adventists, and even African Instituted Churches. In Kenya one can say with certainty that there is no mainline church today that has been unaffected by the ever-present practices of Pentecostal and charismatic movements (Parsitau, 2007). Across the countryside in the villages, but largely in Kenya's largest cities and towns, Pentecostalism has changed the demographic and religious map of the country. The Pentecostal explosion has

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9 This anti-Kikuyu sentiment partly culminated in the ethnic violence witnessed in the 2007 general elections that led to the death of over 1300 people and displaced thousands from their home. The bulk of the internally displaced come from the kikuyu community that had settled in many parts of the country but especially at the Rift Valley Province described to have been the epicenter of the ethnically motivated violence.

not only taken members, particularly youths, from mainline churches by storm but has pentecostalized and charismatized them as well. Today thanks to the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements, there is no mainline church which is not thinking of or reflecting about issues advanced by these movements (Asamoah-Gyadu 2005).

Thus, Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity, have not only transformed the religious as well as the political landscape through its various dimensions and manifestations, but has also become a force to reckon with in Kenya's public space to the extent where Asamoah-Gyadu (2005) observes, "Churches refusing to integrate its spirituality in one form or another know they face atrophy. The movement has also led to renewal of Christianity in East Africa, while their ethics of transformation in Christ has influenced their political theology."

The impact of the Pentecostal movement in Kenya extends so far beyond its burgeoning demographic numbers, Pentecostal and charismatic beliefs and practices are also changing the way many Kenyan Catholics, Protestants, Methodists, Baptists and Anglicans practice their faith. A huge number of Kenyan Presbyterians have embraced Pentecostal spirituality and practices such as emotional worship, music and dance during services, and other practices such as speaking in tongues and divine healing. Notable areas include increased spontaneity in worship, acceptance of the place and role of the Holy Spirit in worship and its increased permissibility and many other areas. For example, it is no longer uncommon to hear worshippers shout, "Amen." and, "Halleluiaah," in mainline churches such as the PCEA, African Inland Church (AIC), African Gospel Church (AGC), Baptist church, and some Adventist churches. Greeting each other in a characteristic Pentecostal style and signature, "Bwana Asifiwe," or "Praise God," has become common. The Pentecostal signature of being "saved" or "born again" and "I love the Lord Jesus Christ as my personal saviour" are all common words in most mainline churches in Kenya, and members of these churches are not ashamed to admit that they are "saved" or "born again" and that they love the lord as their personal saviour. In fact, it is almost fashionable to say so with pride. Clapping of hands, dancing and joyous singing, fasting, tithing, Friday prayer meetings or fellowships, and attending all-night prayers (popularly called *Keshas* in Kenya) are all Pentecostal features and ethos that are now evident in Kenyan mainline churches.

Some mainline churches now hold revival meetings and open air-crusades in the manner of Kenyan Pentecostal churches. Certain Pentecostal terminologies and ethos have therefore found their way into the heart of mainline Christianity. Thus, looking at the Kenyan religious scene at the moment, there is no doubting the tremendous impact and influence that Pentecostal and



charismatic Christianity continue to have on mainline Christian churches, where many have been forced to not only rethink their theologies, but also to accept a Pentecostal type of pneumatology, healing, and general spirituality. In this way Africa, as Asamoah-Gyadu (2005) observes, has emerged as the new centre of theological creativity, a workshop where Christian answers to African questions are being hammered out. They represent a contextualized message that constitutes a theological transformation that has had a significant impact on worship, social, public, and ecclesiastical shape and role of Christianity in Africa. All these developments have led to the adoption into mainline Christianity of Pentecostal spirituality, ethos, and practices, an on-going process that allows those churches to survive and retain their younger members. I shall now discuss the pentecostalization of the PCEA.

### **The Church of Scotland, the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA), and the Pentecostal Challenge**

Nowhere is the integration of Pentecostal religion into mainline Christianity more visibly enacted and overtly evident in Kenya than in the PCEA. It has experienced significant challenges posed by this new African phenomenon, forcing it to renegotiate its teachings and liturgy in the light of inherited traditions and experiencing conflicts in its internal structures. Particularly under its former moderator, the Rev. Dr David Gathii, an ardent Pentecostalist, the church's leadership came to include like-minded individuals such as the Rev. George Wanjau, who also served as a moderator for two terms in the 1980s and 1990s. They have transformed the Presbyterian Church along Pentecostal lines, in order to curtail the drift of its members. In many of the Presbyterian churches—especially while they were under the leadership of the two former moderators—spiritual explanations of natural societal and political events have taken centre stage after the manner of Pentecostalism. On his installation as a moderator of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa on April 22, 2003, at the St. Andrews Church, Nairobi, Rev. Gathii said he would reform the church to attract the youth.<sup>10</sup> He also pointed out that he would transform its worship and liturgy to suit the African context. He argued that the Scottish missionaries

10 George E. Wanjau, 'Report on November 2003', *The Spark* (of St Andrew's PCEA Church), Feb 2005, 3–8 Elly Wamari, 'Where the Devil lives and rules in Kenya, by the Maverick Clergyman', *Nation*, 1 April 2007, 2 f. 'Moderator's Report of the 18th General Assembly', Doc 1, in *Proceedings of the 18th General Assembly, held 17–22 April 2006*, Nairobi: PCEA, 2006.

left behind a Gospel wrapped in Scottish culture and traditions which he considered incompatible with African cultures.<sup>11</sup>

The PCEA's adoption of Pentecostalism appears to have emerged from three pathways. First, it sprang from the general waves of Pentecostal and charismatic fervor that have swept across the East African region since the 1970s. But prior, there were influences from the East African Revival Movement in the 1930s, in which elements of the "Tukutendereza Yesu" ("We praise you, Jesus," in Luganda) were evident—especially, in this church. Second, Pentecostalism may have emerged from the youthful charismatic groups who refused to leave the mainline churches, but instead chose to change them from within. And third, there was an increase in ardent Pentecostalism among the clergy and church leadership—particularly, in the 1990s and in the new millennium.

Thus, the striking feature about Kenyan Presbyterianism and its subsequent turn to Pentecostalism is that unlike what happened in other mainline churches in Kenya, the change emerged internally, and mainly from some of its leaders. This is interesting, given the fact that in the majority of Kenya's mainline churches, adoption of aspects of Pentecostalism and charismatic religion has often been resisted by a section of its church leadership. The youth in the Presbyterian Church found support from a section of church leaders such as the moderator. The youth who, unlike their elders, embraced the charismatic ethos and spirituality were seeking an enlarged space by challenging the polity, testing liturgical boundaries, and criticizing foreign elements in the former Church of Scotland. The charismatic movements became a force that catalyzed the decolonization of the African churches (Kalu 2007).

These youth found strength in the fact that their moderator was open to their Pentecostal aspirations and worked with them to transform the church along Pentecostal lines. In the PCEA, it is encouraged and fronted by some of its leaders. Cephas Omenyo (2002) argues that some mainline churches have broadened the space for the charismatic movement and liturgical renewal as a model of local assertion or agency, and as a cultural signifier indicating maturity and independence from foreign control. This seems to be the position taken by the PCEA. This has been described as the third dimension of African Christianity's response to the gospel, or what Ogbu Kalu calls "a setting to work" of the missionary message and the reconstruction of Christian experience in Africa (Marshall-Fratani, 1992).

Many of the Presbyterian churches (especially under the leadership of the former moderator Dr David Gathii, and the Rev George Wanjau), have

11 Moderator's Report of the 18th General Assembly', Doc 1, in *Proceedings of the 18th General Assembly, held 17–22 April 2006*, Nairobi: PCEA, 2006.

undergone significant changes internally (in terms of liturgy) and externally (in terms of buildings). Notable areas where Pentecostalism has taken hold include elements of worship—such as “Praise and worship,” which has now become an integral part of the liturgical practices of the PCEA and other non-Pentecostal churches. The use of gospel music and other performance elements, such as dancing and handclapping, is increasingly appropriated from Pentecostal practice. In fact, gospel music and dance has almost replaced the hymn book in some of these churches (Parsitau 2006). Aside from the music and dance, other elements of Pentecostal religion are increasingly visible there, signs of the changes that are taking place in the church.

### A New Logo

To reflect the changes and transformations going on within the Presbyterian Church, the moderator further changed its century-old logo to a new one which was unveiled during his address in 2006 to the church’s eighteenth General Assembly.<sup>12</sup> In his speech Gathii claimed that the PCEA was not only held captive by the Masonic and satanic practices and procedures bequeathed it by the missionaries, specifically, by Freemasons who built the churches, but also by its logo, a cross with the word *Jitegemea* (self-reliant) inscribed along the crosspiece, with the central letter ‘g’ capitalized, something that Githii said symbolized a false god. To “save the church from the satanic enslavement,” he promised that “this General Assembly will be presented with the new logo that will have a free cross not distorted by ‘JiteGemea’ with the mystical capital” “G”(Gifford 2009). On the adoption of the new logo, Gathii said:

There is now a national witness that PCEA has changed tremendously in many ways and more so in worship. The Holy Spirit has finally settled in the church and the church is no longer static but dynamic. Our new logo reflects the change within the church. The old logo has a cross with words *Jitegemea* meaning “independence” written across. This means that the church had not accommodated the Holy Spirit and did things its own way. Our new Logo has a message of Faith, Hope and Love with the Dove as a reminder of the Holy Spirit. There is also the Bible and two torches and the symbol of the burning bush. As a Church we are now open to the move of the Holy Spirit. Every Sunday we start with praise and worship.

12 Moderator’s Report of the 18th General Assembly’, Doc 1, in *Proceedings of the 18th General Assembly, held 17–22 April 2006*, Nairobi: PCEA, 2006.

Previously you could not even say amen or halleluiah. We were restricted to hymn books now we shout halleluiah and we have drums and keyboards. The congregation is also given time to pray for themselves, this time not whispering but talking to God like Hannah did.<sup>13</sup>

This statement not only shows the extent of Pentecostal and charismatic influence in the PCEA, but the significant changes and transformation the church is going through. According to Gathii, God has used him and others in the leadership of the church to give a new face to the PCEA church.<sup>14</sup> This is a pointer to the ability of Pentecostal Christianity to diffuse into other denominations that are non-Pentecostal.

The moderator sought to introduce more changes. In early October 2004, Gathii embarked on a crusade to eliminate all Masonic signs in the church, starting with its flagship church, St. Andrews Nairobi. During this time the windows and other items were removed (and destroyed, even though many of the windows were of considerable value). Gifford (2009) reports that at least thirty stained-glass windows and metallic grills more than a century old were removed from St. Andrews Church, the main seat of PCEA, and destroyed by supporters of a faction claiming that the designs were similar to the ones used by Freemasons. Some of the symbols that have come under suspicion for promoting devilry and general evil include “a compass and square on the grilles at the entrance to St. Andrews Church, Masonic coffins on the church’s 30 windows and celestial globes on stairs leading to the main sanctuary. Other symbols on the chopping block are the old church’s spiral, which is a spear on top of a hut.”

In his statement Gathii cited several pronouncements of other churches as supporting him—particularly, some Pentecostal churches. He listed the many symbols removed. One was a panel commemorating the Scottish Black Watch regiment,

Who fought and killed Kenyans in 1950–54. This is repugnant to Christians and the people of Kenya and on a church building as it promotes the culture of violence and death.

Another detested symbol is the square and compass, and in railing against it he goes beyond the notion of incompatibility with Christianity and introduces notions of Satanism and witchcraft being connected with it. For example, the crucifix (Jesus on the cross), rather than the empty cross, is seen as a device

13 Incerpts of interview Dr Gathii gave to Revival Springs, March Issue No.128. p. 6–7.

14 Ibid.

used by Satanists and other cults to teach that Satan defeated Jesus on the cross. Also, "The curtain rails in the vestry terminate in snake representation, which is part of satanic worship."<sup>15</sup>

The sanctuary and the newly constructed youth hall both have checkered floors. Checkered floors are Masonic symbols of witchcraft for controlling people. Where there is a checkered floor, incantations can be cast against the congregation so that they don't comprehend the gospel and pray.<sup>16</sup>

Another author in the same issue of the church magazine cites this conclusion of an 'in-depth study' by the presbytery of Milimani: "[Freemasonry] is a multi-layered organization which is satanic to the core." The author maintains that there are two orders of Masonic membership, with only the inner core fully understanding its true satanic import. "Freemasonry seeks to control and influence the churches through their symbols and signs which have deliberately been incorporated into the church buildings."

The early 'missionaries-cum-freemasons' did this, the author continues, replicating altars in their Masonic lodges, so that

The sacrifices which they would perform on the altars in the lodges would result in psychic spiritual energy which the Freemasons could and still use to control and manipulate legitimate worship in the churches through witchcraft.

Further, the incorporated signs and symbols" in 'practically all the churches', he says, are used as contact objects through which the Masonic power of witchcraft is used to control the minds of worshippers and therefore influence the direction of the church." This explains why the Presbyterian churches show a "lack of spiritual growth despite their continued growth in numbers." So Masons, even in Christian churches, are really communicating with their own gods "already incorporated in the churches." What is required is cleansing, so that the Satan worshippers are "automatically disconnected from their power source once their contact points are destroyed."<sup>17</sup> The

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15 Elly Wamari, 'Where the Devil lives and rules in Kenya, by the Maverick Clergyman', *Nation*, 1 April 2007, 2 f.

16 George E. Wanjau, 'Report on November 2003', *The Spark* (of St Andrew's PCEA Church), Feb 2005, 3-8.

17 Mugumo Munene, 'Behind the Veil: Revealing the Dark Secrets of Freemasonry', *The Spark*, Feb 2005, 14 f.

St Andrew's Youth Fellowship (citing Deuteronomy 7, 5 and 12, 2 f.) pledged to go around to all of Kenya's Presbyterian churches, to destroy all such symbols.<sup>18</sup>

The destruction of a century-old church building and historic, valuable, and irreplaceable works of art and fittings from the church was justified by Gathii and his followers because they were deemed incompatible with African Christianity. The Rev. George Wanjau, in defense of the demolition of church structures, related them to Freemasonry, which he considered incompatible and inconsistent with Christianity. Gathii has faced some sort of resistance from some church members, who are keen about preserving more than a century-old tradition. Gifford (2009) reports that he is the only incumbent moderator in the nearly 120 years of the PCEA who has not been automatically re-elected for a second term and has needed a rerun of the election.<sup>19</sup> A report of the PCEA Theological Panel (dated March 2005) is highly critical of Gathii's entire project (which they believe is the pentecostalisation of the PCEA)<sup>20</sup> and links the destruction of artifacts with what it sees as the flouting of constitutional procedures within the church and the introduction of Pentecostal worship in the place of approved Presbyterian practice under the guise of making the church more 'African'.

The report actually calls Gathii and his followers "fanatics" and accuses them of "racism" (presumably, for their animus against the Scottish missionaries). Gathii's faction has also been opposed by a group made up of some of the prominent business leaders in the congregation, who, according to the press, contend that:

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- 18 *The Spark*, Feb 2005, 23. See also *Visionary Shepherd*, August 2005 (especially its cover story 'Freemasons' Agenda to Wipe out Christianity', whose claims that Freemasons funded Charles Darwin and that it is linked to the emerging One World Government might indicate a North American fundamentalist connection), and *Missioner*, Vol 6 2005; and numerous newspaper stories in late 2004.
- 19 *Nation*, 20 Feb 2006, 11. Githii insists that US Presbyterian churches had spent huge sums to get him removed (*Nation*, 9 Aug 2006, 20).
- 20 'This General Assembly ought...to restrain any non-born-again Christians to be involved in the leadership of the Church'. It must embrace the five-fold ministry: 'The problem is that our church has always suppressed these gifts in the name of safeguarding the traditions...(The General Assembly must) allow the members to use their God given spiritual gifts because our faith is not founded on tradition but on the scriptures'. Again, the missionaries are to blame: 'The missionaries failed to plant these vital apostolic elements in the church...prayer and fasting, the anointing oil, the laying of hands or praying in tongues – all these are the anathema yet the Apostles and Jesus commended them' (Moderator's Report).

the targeted symbols and designs have been in the PCEA churches for more than a century and were simple Scottish internal décor engravings and patterns on stained glass windows with links to free masonry but not necessarily satanic.

This faction, perhaps without knowing it, is clutching onto the legacy of the overseas presbytery of the Church of Scotland, which ran the affairs of the church for almost half a century (until 1956) and relinquished direct control only in 1975, when the first African senior minister was installed. The stained-glass windows that are the subject of Gathii's 'righteous' wrath are a tangible connection to the colonial history of the church. The faction that supports their maintenance shall eventually lose, because it is unknowingly in the path of a historical tsunami (Gifford 2009).

It recommends that those with:

a different view of worship, of dedicated church buildings, and the practices of this church, instead of bringing confusion in the church and dividing it...should do the honorable thing, resign and propagate their new heresy outside the PCEA.

Another recommendation reads:

The Panel wishes to state that if anyone has personal scores to settle with another person or group of persons or with a certain tribe or race, one should not use the church to do this for him by perpetrating cheap and false teachings.<sup>21</sup>

The demolition of colonial structures and great works of art that adorn some Presbyterian Church buildings surprised many and caused tensions among church members. The demolition exercise was marred by violent clashes between church factions allied with the moderator and those who felt that the demolition of church structures goes against church tradition and culture. The police intervened to quell confrontations at the church between the two factions.

However, the members of that theology panel have been dispersed and sidelined, and Gathii has defended his policies as transforming the PCEA church. Obviously, he is determined to renew the church, and renewal, for him, consists essentially of establishing Pentecostalism or charismatic renewal

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21 Report dated March 2005.



there.<sup>22</sup> His overview of the history of Christianity enables him to present himself as a new Calvin, a reformer.<sup>23</sup> He believes that during his time of service as a moderator, God has deliberately used him and others in the head office to give a new face to the PCEA. And on this point he says:

The lord has given me tremendous breakthrough. For example in February 2007, I gathered two hundred intercessors from Nairobi region to be taught on intercession. The same has taken place in Nakuru Presbytery. Others of the same kind are scheduled to take place. Previously intercession was not even mentioned in the Presbyterian Church. there was a lot of biblical truth that traditions had polluted.<sup>24</sup>

It is important to point out that beyond its challenge to inherited traditions, the aggressive advocacy of born-again spirituality has clashed with Presbyterianism because of the generational factor (Kalu 2007:5f). Kalu summarizes the nature of this generational conflict this way: A generational approach to church history indicates different responses to the Gospel and missionary control by the older and younger members of a church. The first generation experienced the full impact of the missionaries' control of the church and became very committed. The second generation treasured the memory and respected the traditions of the church. This appears to be the fate of the younger generation. This matter is complicated by another factor. Scottish ministers were in the vanguard of Freemasonry and Rosicrucianism in Kenya. This produces an additional clash of spiritual orientations into the conflicts already in place. People who were comfortable as both Christians and Freemasons feel threatened by young people denouncing secret societies as un-Christian and demonic, while the young feel that Christianity and Freemasonry are incompatible. The high profile given to the Holy Spirit by the Charismatic movement also inspires a conflict with the compromisers of the older generation. The debate on cultism causes much internal strain. Those who were trained by missionaries accept the traditions of their education in the church as canonical. But among the younger generations of ministers who are more educated and embraced charismaticism in secondary schools and university, there is less feeling of vulnerability; they can enter into secular

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22 David Githii, *Phases of the Church: from the Garden of Eden to the Present*, Nairobi: the author, 2007, 147. For a very critical response, see Egara Kabaji, 'Snake is Venerated in Many Cultures', *Standard*, 5 Aug 2007, 28.

23 Githii, *Phases*, 79, 84, 136, 13.

24 Ibid.

careers; are more critical; and tend to empathize more than an older generation might with the appeal of charismatic religion felt by the youth. They may be drawn to such religious observance themselves. This is the case with the PCEA moderator Gathii, and it points to shifts in theological reflections that have compelled many to embrace charismatic theology.

The demolition of church structures and the association by Gathii of the church with Freemasonry (and therefore wickedness) caused conflicts and tensions between those with widely divergent worldviews and cultural policies. The capacity of charismatic Christianity to interweave traditional African culture, the Gospel, and the third person of the Trinity constituted a key aspect of the ideological core of the conflict (Kalu 2007). This also points to the enlarged political space for Christianity, with each tradition competing for relevance.

Pentecostal beliefs about the Holy Spirit, the devil, and demonology are at the heart of Presbyterian Christianity. The Presbyterian Church moderator sees the devil in many ancient symbols, logos, and artworks—especially, those that adorn parliament and many Presbyterian churches. In his book *Exposing and Conquering Satanic Forces in Kenya*, the Reverends delve into the cult of devil worship in that country. Pentecostal beliefs about Satanism, witchcraft, devil worship, and demonology are at the heart of Presbyterian Christianity. But the discourse about the devil, devil worship, demonic forces, the occult, and witchcraft is a language borrowed from the Pentecostal theology about demonology and Satanism. This language is a tool of critic in which Pentecostals use to critic, interrogate and even understand the social and political world around them. As such this language not only served a public, social, and political purpose but also as a tool for them to understand social problems. This study argues that this language enabled the PCEA clergy to interrogate and moralize Kenyan politics. They used the rhetoric of good and evil as a dichotomous language of social criticism in which the Pentecostal theology and discourse of demonology helped to concretize issues relating to social disorder. For Gathii, the demolition of church structures which he relates to devil worship is a civic duty which he feels he has a right to undertake in order to recreate a moral order. This is the reason that the demolition of church structures is projected into the nation and the parliament.

### **Parliament as the House of Satan in an Idolatrous Nation**

Gathii's obsession with the devil goes beyond the confines of his church and projects it onto the national level. He claims that a demonic spirit is enthroned

in Kenya and is responsible for the state of the nation. He is convinced that the Kenyan parliament is the abode of the devil, because of artistic works dating back to colonial times that adorn the parliament building. Gathii, who wants to see these works removed, is of the opinion that they are responsible for problems such as corruption, poverty, tribalism/ethnicity, and nepotism that afflict the country. He sees a relationship between this and the Kenyan MPs who have a habit of falling asleep in parliament in the middle of sessions instead of debating on issues of national importance. He says:

The nation is held captive by many satanic alters including The symbols in parliament such as snakes, frogs, crocodiles Charging bulls and rhinos, witchdoctors (a horn associated With a witchdoctor hangs in parliament), the Masonic stars The royal arch which is a Masonic ritual which incorporates Other associated symbols including the capital G surrounded By light—The Great Architect of the Universe.

According to Gathii, the Honorable Members of Parliament sleep because the Kenyan parliament, otherwise called the August House, is the seat of the devil, which comes about in the name of the many artistic works that adorn the parliament buildings.<sup>25</sup> The spirits behind these great works of art, according to Gathii, represent Satanism and devil, and therefore cause the legislators either to fall asleep (signifying laziness) or to fight with each other—as is often the case—or just to doze off and not pass important bills. He diagnoses this behaviour:

The snake makes politicians twist the truth, the tortoise makes them lazy, the frog makes them croak meaninglessly, the crocodile makes them attack each other, while the rhino makes them sexually promiscuous.

He argues that Kenyan government buildings harbour many satanic symbols and that Kenyan is a country reeling under “the great influence of devil worship.” He was recently quoted in the media as saying that “the two snakes at the entrance to parliament, the huge Masonic star at the entrance to the high court, the frogs and tortoise signs in the High Court must be demolished—presumably, because they are signs of the devil.”

The moderator argues that though the government had recorded economic growth, it needed to be cleansed so that the effects could trickle down to the ordinary citizens who have not benefited from the growth. While many have

25 Elly Wamari, ‘Where the devil lives and rules in Kenya’, *Sunday Nation*, April 1/2007.

dismissed him as obsessed with devil worship, and others have nicknamed him the maverick clergyman, Gathii has vowed to continue pushing for the removal of these satanic symbols from parliament buildings and other government institutions. He has asked Kenyans to pray for a government that would remove the satanic symbols.<sup>26</sup> Nor did his investigations into the insidious nature of Lucifer stop there. He has an answer for Kenya's social, economic, and political malaise in the form of the goddess Harambee.

### The Goddess Harambee

The goddess Harambee is another destructive force eating Kenya. He asks:

Has it ever occurred to you that every time you mention the word harambee [Kenya's motto meaning, roughly, "Let us pull together"] you have hailed a Hindu goddess? Har means hail, lift or exalt. Ambe is a goddess who claims she is the mother of the universe enthroned above all gods and goddess who is actually spirits thrown out of heaven by God.

How did the goddess come to dominate Kenya? The story goes back to a hundred years, when Indians were brought in by the British colonialists to help build the Kenya–Uganda railway. When they lifted heavy loads, the Indians chanted the words *Har* and *Ambee* as *Harambee*. Gradually, our African brothers who worked alongside the Indians adopted the slogan. When Kenya's first president, Jomo Kenyatta, took over the country's leadership from the British, he innocently came up with what sounded like a good national slogan, "Harambee," which called on people to pull together as a united nation. Little did he realize that he was imposing a foreign god on the country. This word *Harambee* is also in the country's coat of arms. Nobody could have anticipated the spiritual consequences that would result from enthroning that word on this symbol of Kenyan power, the courts of arms. As if this was not enough, the goddess was seen by some to possess the main government buildings (Harambee House which houses the office of the presidents), and even our streets and avenues, as was the case for Harambee Avenue.

He continued: Just look at the influence of the goddess known as Harambee. She is associated with our coat of arms, our money, Harambee Avenue, and Harambee House. This Hindu goddess now controls our city, the army, the police, and even parliament. In short, this goddess now reigns over our land.

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26 Ibid.

It is no wonder that Kenya's economy is in the hands of the Indians, whose goddess also appears to control our currency. Innocently, we have given this Hindu goddess complete domination over our beloved land of Kenya. Soon, darkness began to surround our nation, as this goddess is known for her destructive powers.

The spiritual causality and explanations given by Gathii as the cause of Kenyan problems pervades the country's social and political life. Religious discourses—but especially, discourses about Satan, Devil worship, demonic spirits, and witchcraft—are widespread throughout Kenyan society, surrounding, and even enveloping, politics. Social and political issues are often explained in religious language, and religious issues are given a political explanation. Satanism, demonic forces, forces of darkness, the occult, and witchcraft came to pervade public space and place these beliefs in the context of public debates and discourses about the (im)morality of power. Such subjects pervaded socio-political discourse in Kenya throughout the 2007 campaign period. They also dominate many Pentecostal church sermons and discussions, and as Meyer points out in the Ghanaian context, these discourses can be quite elaborate (Meyer, 1998).

More fundamental, probably, is the intolerance and constricted social space that African Christianity is assuming. It is becoming increasingly intolerant of other religious traditions and cultures, including, among others, Freemasonry and the New Age movement. But even as it is growing intolerant, it is also creating the basis of a politics connected to the moral lives of the majority. It also points to the easy African resort to prayer even about non-spiritual issues. When there are natural or man-made calamities, for example, Kenyans tend to pray. Gathii asked Kenyans to pray for a government that would remove satanic symbols.<sup>27</sup> According to Gathii, there is a lot of idolatry in Kenya:

Since our leaders have failed to address this matter of idol worship in our land, it is important that the electorate be advised to elect God fearing people, people who can honestly fight corruption and take a godly stand on issues like immorality. And while I do not advocate for a government run by Christians alone, I am clear in my mind that Kenya will be better off by far if the majority of people in the government are God fearing.

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27 Government of Kenya, *Report of the Presidential Commission of Inquiry into the Cult of Devil Worship in Kenya*, n.d., 31. Ibid.

### The 1994 Presidential Inquiry into the Cult of Devil Worship in Kenya

In 1994, at the height of former president Daniel Arap Moi's rule, there were great concerns about the cult of devil worship in Kenya's institutions of higher learning, and especially, in secondary and high schools where schoolchildren were involved in activities that many parents regarded as anti-social, immoral, and anti-Christian. It is important to note that these were difficult and strenuous social, political, and economic times, and Kenyans were barely just getting by. Allegations of massive corruption in the regime, political intolerance, and abuse of human rights were at their peak. This was also the period when the HIV/AIDS pandemic took its toll in the country, resulting in massive deaths.

Around this time the Anglican Archbishop Manassess Kuria, in one of his sermons, blamed the problems affecting the government on devil worship, sparking public debates and putting pressure on President Moi to look into the matter. The subject was even discussed in parliament, where an assistant minister declared that if the practice continued, devil worshippers could eventually take over the country, eliminating God altogether (*Daily Nation*, July 7, 1994). Due to intense public pressure, in October 1994 President Moi instituted a presidential commission of inquiry into the cult of devil worship in Kenya.

The commission was to establish the extent and effects of its infiltration into learning institutions and society; establish its reported link to drug abuse and other anti social activities and make recommendations on how to deal with the menace. It comprised Catholic Archbishop Nicolas Kirima as the chairman, an Anglican bishop, the moderator of the Presbyterian Church, a university professor of Religious Studies, a chaplain of a national school, a prominent lawyer, and a senior police officer. The commission invited both oral and written submissions from interested parties and travelled around the country, holding both public and private hearings. It interviewed many people, visited sites that were said to be the abode of the devil, and interviewed former devil worshippers who were rescued from the cult and "saved." The commission reported that there were allegations of heresy in which the commission detected recurring motifs: signs and symbols, initiation rites, riches, nakedness, human sacrifice, drinking of human blood, astral travel (especially to India), the ability to transform oneself into a cat, a snake, a fly, or a cockroach and to cause natural disasters like ferry, train, road, and air accidents.

The commission further identified doorways through which Satanism or devil worship would enter the country or society, including Freemasonry (popularly known as Masonic), Mormonism, transcendental meditation, the Jehovah's Witnesses, and the New Age movement. These religious movements

have nothing to do with the occult, but there is a general belief among many Kenyans that ignorantly associate the groups with devil worship. To a majority of Kenyan Christians, the word *Masonic* is synonymous with devil worship, and the 1994 commission confirmed this rampant belief. This commission identified Freemasonry with the cult of devil worship, and this really contributed to this widespread association of Freemasonry with the cult of Devil worship in the country.

The commuter (public) transport or the Matatu industry—which was notorious for causing fatal road accidents—were also identified with this cult of devil worship. While the blanket demonization of the movements mentioned above, along with freelance preachers all categorized as sects linked to devil worship, was unacceptable, it helped to bolster the influence of mainstream churches, who were by this time losing their members to new religious movements, but especially, to the newer Pentecostal and charismatic churches. The mainstream churches had hoped to use the apparatus of state security to counter or reverse the drift to newer churches, but to no avail.

The commission recommended that all secondary schools chaplains and Muslim imams be appointed. (Islam was not demonized.) It further recommended that religious education be promoted in schools and universities. While the findings of the presidential commission of inquiry were never made public, the report was released to religious leaders, and the information somehow leaked to the press, who published it in the media. Pirated copies are also available, if one has the right connections. According to media reports, the commission concluded that from all the evidence presented, the commission believed that the cult of devil worship exists in Kenya, both in institutions of higher learning and in the society, generally (GOK Report, 1995).

It is not clear whether the report influenced the PCEA church moderator but what is not in dispute is that Gathii sees the devil in many things. Although the report on the cult of devil worship was largely dismissed by many as worthless public relation exercise, it marked the beginning of a sustained discourse and engagement in public about politics, power, and occult forces and gave credence to idea that there was supernatural causality of events, a way of explaining national issues.

### **Pentecostalism and Occult Forces**

Over the years Pentecostalism has developed elaborate discourses about Satan, devil worship, the occult, and other such forces that are collectively referred to as forces of darkness or principalities of this age. Pentecostal churches are



often involved in a kind of a day-to-day spiritual warfare with these forces, which are said to be responsible for many bad things. This global war (the devil is said to be everywhere) is to be constantly fought everywhere anytime. This discourse is now heavily appropriated in mainline churches such as PCEA. They speak about witchcraft, *kamuti* (stick), love potions, and other such concoctions and medicine. Pentecostals believe that they have power over these forces through the blood of Jesus Christ, prayer, and fasting and often holding prayer vigils or night-long prayer meetings to wrestle with forces that can only be tackled with.

Bishops, pastors, and even laypersons give personal testimonies of their individual encounters or involvement with these forces and offer revelations and insights about how they, work and how they were personally rescued by Christ through the Christian act of salvation or being born again. Bishop Wanjiru, of JIAM, and Apostle James Ng'ang'a, of Neno Evangelism, have revealed this warfare in their testimonies, revelations, and sermons. Apostle Ng'ang'a's unique church services are full of such discourses and are in themselves exorcisms of demonic spirits. In a televised church service on October 16, 2007, Bishop Mark Kariuki, the general overseer of the Deliverance Churches of Kenya, preached a sermon based on Acts 19: 18–20 entitled “Those who practice witchcraft.” He drew a parallel between the Kenyan nation and the city of Ephesus, where the people practiced idolatry and magic.

## Conclusion

The analysis above shows how African Christianity is approaching an epochal break with its European roots. The separation of the moral domains of Kenyans and Europeans is becoming a fundamental step in the process of decolonization. Some could argue that African Christianity is attempting to re-traditionalize and re-spiritualize its liturgy along African religious thoughts and worldviews. Gerrie Ter Haar and Stephen Ellis (2002) have argued that it is simply not possible to understand Africa's current predicament without heeding the resurgence of traditional modes of religiosity in political and social life. Gathii's taking issue with national symbols such as *harambee* is just one demonstration of the extent to which African Christianity is critically questioning not only its colonial past, but its future. The Kenyan churches are carving out a moral space in which they are re-moralizing politics.

This chapter has shown how African Christianity has come to cast political discourse in religious terms. This is successful because, in most of Africa, religion remains integral to both the public world of modern politics and

the private world of everyday life. In Kenya, to borrow Meyer's words, popular criticisms of power are often expressed by an imagined association between wealth and political power and occult forces (Meyer, 1998). These criticisms must be understood as part and parcel of ongoing debates about the morality or immorality of power (ibid). The discourses and debates about the forces of darkness have shown how African Christianity understands its role in the public sphere and how these churches have developed a sort of 'dualistic political theology' which asserts that Kenya can prosper only if it is led by God-fearing leaders (Meyer, 1998; Parsitau, 2008).

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## Scottish Missionaries in Ghana

### *The Forgotten Tribe*

*Michael Perry Kweku Okyerefo*

#### Introduction

Although Presbyterianism in Ghana today is most associated with the Basel and Bremen endeavours, the role of Scottish missionaries in the country is generally overlooked, forgotten and buried. This chapter seeks to establish the reason for that oversight, to unearth their legacy to Presbyterianism in Ghana. This is a necessary undertaking, given the fact that Scottish missionaries rescued the Presbyterian mission at critical periods of Protestant missionary activity in the Gold Coast (now Ghana). Those critical periods occurred during World War I and World War II, when Basel and Bremen missionaries were obliged by the British to leave the Gold Coast. It was the Africans whom the Basel and Bremen missionaries had trained who took over the reins of leadership, with “assistance from the United Free Church of Scotland” (Clarke 1986: 97). Besides, Scottish missionaries engaged in pastoral ministry, as well as the provision and management of schools. These schools would serve as bedrock to Ghana’s human resource and socio-economic development. Specifically, the overarching goal of Scottish missionaries in the Gold Coast was the training of teachers. Aburi Training College (now Aburi Girls’ Senior High School), Akropong Training College, Krobo Training College (now Krobo Girls’ Senior High School), and Agogo Training College were all established by Scottish missionaries. Why, then, does their vital intervention receive hardly any prominence in the Ghanaian public memory?

The Ghanaian historian, Kofi Agbeti (1986: 73–79), documents, at great length, the works of Scottish missionaries in Nigeria without making an appreciably equal reference to their presence in Ghana. Although W.H. Taylor (1996) gives a detailed account of the educational work of Scottish missionaries in Eastern Nigeria, where Mary Mitchell Slessor was the mission’s maverick (Taylor 1996: 115), he notes that “their contribution to education in Africa went far beyond eastern Nigeria.” Taylor’s observation does not, however, specifically mention Ghana. In any case, this Scottish contribution to education lies particularly in the Scottish Presbyterians’ influence on the “Phelps-Stokes commission in the 1920s,” whose “Reports helped to shape subsequent British colonial educational policy” (Taylor 1996: 5) in colonies such as the Gold Coast.

In contemporary Ghana, however, the mark left by Scottish missionaries in the public mind is like footprints in the sand.

My curiosity about investigating the lacunae in Presbyterian mission history's view of the Scottish presence in Ghana was aroused when I met Mrs. Phyllis Harrison in 2000 at Ugley Green, near Bishops Stortford, United Kingdom. Mrs. Harrison gave me a photograph of her father, the Rev. George Douglas Reith, wishing that it be presented to the Presbyterian Church at Abetifi, Ghana, where he had worked as a missionary. In 1969 a member of the Abetifi church had asked Mrs. Harrison for a photograph of her father, to be published in the Golden Jubilee celebration brochure of the Abetifi Seminary/Ramseyer Training Centre. She never received a copy of the brochure. She said she would, therefore, be delighted to receive some more information from me regarding her father's work at Abetifi.

According to his family, in 1919 Rev. Reith, of the United Free Church of Scotland, answered an appeal for missionaries to take over the work of the Basel Mission at Abetifi. Records on the Abetifi Seminary/Ramseyer Training Centre, where he served, indicate he was appointed to the station in 1918 (Centenary Brochure 1999: 18). The German staff previously stationed there had been interned and repatriated, making it necessary for replacements to be found and sent. Overtaken by fever, however, Reith had to return home that same year. His contribution, like that of many other Scottish missionaries who went to Ghana, is unsung, causing the tale of their historic rescue of Presbyterianism in Ghana to fall into oblivion.

### **Methods of Data Collection**

Three methods were employed in gathering information for the study. First, there was a reassessment of secondary published material and examination of church documents such as the baptismal register of the Ramseyer Presbyterian Church at Abetifi. In this regard, some scholarly works were reviewed, with the intention of giving a foundational basis to mission historiography regarding the region being studied. Historical records, such as the baptismal register at the Ramseyer Presbyterian church at Abetifi, provide hard evidence on the veracity of facts sought. Second, clergy and scholars who are knowledgeable in Presbyterian missionary work in Ghana were interviewed. Frequent meetings were held with the interviewees in Accra and Abetifi between February and March 2009. The information each gave was crosschecked with that supplied by the others. Third, a focus group discussion was held at Abetifi with some members of the Presbyterian community who had encountered some

missionaries. Again, this was a useful forum where participants helped to straighten out the facts emanating from each other's story.

Such a multifaceted approach was deemed necessary for dealing with an area which could be highly contentious, in view of the enormous amount of oral history involved. For this reason, a sociological method that employs triangulation is arguably the best means by which 'truth' could be disentangled from 'falsehood'. At best, use of a combination of methods is most likely to present a true picture of the reality being investigated. The study, therefore, builds on the broadly known historical facts on missionary activity in the African sub-region concerned, and the Scottish question is inserted into that context.

### **The Scottish Intervention**

Presbyterianism forms part of the history of Christianity in West Africa in modern times. Agbeti (1986: 3) contends that Christianity was first introduced to West Africa on January 20, 1482. That day, a Portuguese chaplain celebrated the first Holy Mass at Elmina in the Gold Coast. A Portuguese expedition under Don Diego d'Azambuja had landed at Elmina the previous day. While the main purpose of such expedition was commercial, chaplains served the spiritual needs of the occupants of the forts and castles that the different European groups built to further their commercial activities. Eventually, the chaplains would extend their services to some of the local people outside the European fortifications. According to Peter Clarke, this 'unorganized' evangelization resulted in "a number of conversions to Christianity among the local rulers and their people" (Clarke 1986: 19), thereby preparing the ground for organized evangelization.

Until the end of 1617, only Roman Catholic missionaries carried out Christian activities in West Africa. From 1618, however, Protestant missionaries also came onto the scene. That year the English "Company of Adventurers of London Trading to Africa" built two forts along the coast in the Gambia and the Gold Coast (Agbeti 1986: 5). After the English came the Dutch, in 1637. Other Europeans who later established themselves on the coast include the French, Danes, Swedes, and Brandenburgians.

The English formed two missionary societies: the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG), in 1699, and the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge (SPCK), in 1701. Although their purpose was that of missions, their main concern was not the evangelization of Africans, but the spiritual well-being of the European traders abroad. Even when the missionary groups became fully engaged in the evangelization of the peoples on the West African

coast, their activity was not entirely uniform and unbroken from the start. For example, consistent Catholic missionary activity in the Gold Coast after the fifteenth century would recommence only in the 1880s. Also, as indicated already, the work of German (*German* here means both ethnic German and German-speaking) missionaries from Basel and Bremen in the same territory was hampered during World War I and World War II, saved only by both local and Scottish intervention.

The Basel and Bremen missions in the Gold Coast were well established by the time World War I was declared in 1914. The Basel Mission, for example—to be known from 1926 as the Presbyterian Church of the Gold Coast—would become fully independent by 1950 (Clarke 1986: 97). The Ewe (Bremen) Church became the Ewe Presbyterian Church in 1926 (Ansre 1997: 75). But much is owed to Scottish missionaries for such growth, and particularly, during war-time. When, at the inception of World War I, “all the German missionaries were rounded up” by the British, “brought to Accra and deported on 16 December” 1914, it was the Scottish Missionary Society that took over the work of the Basel mission (Agbeti 1986: 72; Clarke 1986: 97). The work of the Bremen Mission, in the English-speaking zone of Trans-Volta-Togoland, was also “passed on to the Scottish Mission while in the old German, now French zone, the Paris Mission assumed responsibility of the Schools and congregations” (Agbeti 1986: 92).

The United Free Church of Scotland, therefore, controlled the mission stations and educational facilities of the German missionaries. Thus, although the German missionaries of the Bremen Mission would return to the Gold Coast in 1923—some nine years later—it was only on the condition that they work under the auspices of the Scottish missionaries. According to Gilbert Ansre, that condition was specified in the Alien Missions Ordinance passed by the Gold Coast Administration in November 1922 (Ansre 1997: 63).

The Ewe (Presbyterian) Church, for example, attained its independence during the war years, but actual full independence, in Ansre’s view, was nurtured by the Scottish mission’s conviction that the African church should stand on its own (Ansre 1997: 69). That conviction was incorporated into the Scottish mission’s educational responsibility, as well. Under the mission’s educational oversight, the teacher training course at Akropong was revised, and new buildings provided. Although the Gold Coast government supported the provision of infrastructure, the Scottish mission bore the major costs. Ansre observes that modest “contributions were also made by the two young Presbyterian Churches—the Presbyterian Church of the Gold Coast and the Ewe Presbyterian Church” (Ansre 1997: 83). The fact that the Scottish missionaries had a sizeable number of teacher trainers in their fold made a positive impact on education in the Gold Coast. The Scottish mission helped the colonial



government to execute educational reforms while it (the Scottish mission) administered church schools.

At the beginning of World War II (specifically, from 1939 to 1940), German missionaries were again arrested and deported. Consequently, the Bremen Mission ceased to exist as a missionary society in the Gold Coast, and the World War I arrangement with the Scottish missionaries was upheld. After the war some Scottish missionaries would remain and work with the two independent Presbyterian churches until the 1960s. Rev. Ian Strachan—perhaps, the last Scottish career missionary—left Ghana in the 1960s, over forty years ago. As will be seen later in this chapter, Strachan continues to nurture cordial relations with the Presbyterian churches in Ghana, as well as with individuals there. So, Scottish missionaries took charge of missionary activities in the Gold Coast twice during the twentieth century. During that period they left their mark—particularly, on church growth and educational development. How, then, can such historical import be obliterated from the Ghanaian memory?

### Species in Oblivion

As spelled out above, historical evidence exists on the Scottish intervention in the establishment and growth of Presbyterianism in Ghana. The same is true of the Basel and Bremen missions, whose contributions are well recognized and taken for granted. But in addition, the Basel and Bremen mission societies enjoy huge popularity regarding Presbyterianism in Ghana. The same cannot be said of the Scottish mission. Knowledge about the Scottish contribution seems to be remotely relegated to Ghanaian Presbyterian Church circles only where some cooperation with the Scottish church continues till today. In view of the enormous contribution made by the Scottish church to Presbyterianism and social development in Ghana, however, it would be appropriate to bring the recognition of the Scottish contribution to mainline Ghanaian society. This chapter sets out to do so by tapping into the reminiscences of the tiny segment of Ghanaians acquainted with the Scottish mission's contribution. The process of research on the subject, which started by employing purposive sampling, gained momentum, a snowballing effect that led to an interview with the Scotsman Rev. Ian Strachan,<sup>1</sup> who was introduced to me by Rev. Prof. Gilbert Ansre.

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1 I had three email exchanges with the Revd. Ian Strachan on 17th March 2009, 22nd March 2009 and 24th March 2009.

Strachan worked with the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ghana (Bremen mission) in the Volta Region. He says the Scottish mission went to the Evangelical Presbyterian Church fifty years ago, when the cohort of former and active missionaries was no more than a dozen. But most had done, or were doing, pioneering work in education and in mission. They worked mainly at Akropong, Amedzofe, Jasikan, and Krobo, with Bob Duncan and Tom Colvin working among the Dagomba and other northern groups. Strachan's own experience was to be with the Evangelical Presbyterian Church for only six years, and then, about thirty years later, he made the first of three visits (so far) to his former mission in the past decade. He says he has always been well received as a former Scottish missionary—perhaps, for three special reasons. First, it happens that he still speaks Ewe moderately well. (According to him, none of the other Scots were able to speak it at all.) Second, he was invited back in November 2008 for the fiftieth anniversary (Nkekenyuie) of the Christian Youth Builders (Dekakpui kple detugbuiwo fe habobo), which he initiated in his own youth. Third, he also founded the Hohoe Evangelical Presbyterian Secondary School (now Hohoe Evangelical Presbyterian Senior High School). He also visited the school in January 2009 and was able to hand over a reasonable cash gift from his family. The money was raised on the occasion of his and his wife's golden wedding jubilee and was meant to provide support for the school.

Strachan says there were a handful of Scots in the mission, and some were English. According to him, at the height of missionary enterprise, the Gold Coast was only a small addition to the large concerns of the Church of Scotland and the Free Church. In fact, Ansre contends that the Scottish church accepted the Gold Coast mission reluctantly, due to their own lack of personnel. So from the Scottish side, Strachan argues, they probably did not make much of the Gold Coast mission, compared say to Calabar or India. Consequently, members of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church probably did not feel that they loomed large on the Scottish horizon. Strachan maintains it may also be the case that the Church of Scotland never invested money for building and projects. It is very clear that in Ho and elsewhere, the Bremen mission provided important building and staffing funds until recent times.

Ansre is a retired professor of linguistics, University of Ghana. It was his edited book, *The Evangelical Presbyterian Church: 150 Years of Evangelization and Development 1847–1997*, from which this chapter draws a lot of Scottish historiography in Ghana, and my interest in it led, in turn, to an interview with him.<sup>2</sup>

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2 I interviewed the Rev. Prof. Gilbert Ansre in his home at Adenta, Accra, on 24th February 2009. We have engaged in frequent telephone conversations ever since where he continues to give me useful new information and insight into the subject.

But for such a work both the Presbyterian Church of Ghana and the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ghana would have scanty information on the Scottish mission. Rev Ansre, a minister of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ghana, has had firsthand encounters with Scottish missionaries in Ghana and is very knowledgeable about their activities in the mission. His father, Rev. Gilbert Bansah Ansre, himself a Presbyterian minister, studied at the University of Edinburgh. His mother, Felicia Angelica Ansre (née Nane), attended the St. Colms Missionary Institute in Scotland, where she and Strachan were contemporaries. Today, Ansre continues to nurture the friendship his parents struck up with Strachan.

Ansre observes that despite a relative unawareness of, or the memory loss in the Ghanaian public sphere regarding the Scottish contribution, the leaders and members of both the Presbyterian Church of Ghana and the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ghana are in touch with the Scottish church. The latter continues to be represented at synods of the Presbyterian churches in Ghana, and even assist the Ghanaian churches, financially. Such cooperation is not publicised by the Presbyterian churches in Ghana. The Church of Scotland has limited missionary work in Ghana today; it no longer sends career missionaries, for example. Rev. Seth Yaw Duvor,<sup>3</sup> tutor at the Ramseyer Training Centre at Abetifi, points out that the cooperation has moved to a different level, including Scottish medical doctors visiting the Begoro Presbyterian Hospital to support and share their knowledge, skills and experience with local staff.

Ansre would, however, like to see the relationship of the Presbyterian churches in Ghana with the Scottish church be more widely publicised. The Presbyterian Church of Ghana and the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ghana do not collaborate in forging the relationship with the Scottish Church. Each church does so independently. Apparently, the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ghana would rather relate to the Scottish Church directly, rather than dissolve into the Presbyterian Church of Ghana, which is the larger of the two local churches.

The churches' preference for maintaining separate relationships to the Scots brings to mind some of the lasting legacy of the Scottish Church in Ghanaian Presbyterianism. The Scots did not administer the Basel and Bremen missions as a unit. The various churches were administered independently of each other. According to Ansre, the Scottish vision consisted in having two

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3 I interviewed the Rev. Seth Yaw Duvor at his residence at the Ramseyer Training Centre at Kwahu Abetifi on 28th February 2009. The Rev. Edmond Perregaux, Ramseyer's nephew, was asked to start the training of evangelists in 1898 (Centenary Brochure, Ramseyer Training Centre 1899–1999).

independent but related church organizations. The Scots caused the real Presbyterian mentality to be ingrained in the Ghanaian churches. That mentality is characterised by entrenchment of the role of the General Assembly and the Synod of Presbyters in the churches, with emphasis on *presbyteroi* rather than *episcopoi*. According to Ansre, this thoroughly Presbyterian ecclesiology, or understanding of church, was enhanced severally by Scottish, rather than Basel and Bremen, missionaries.

Thus, in church administration, in theological perspective, and in education, the Scots left their mark through their insistence on quality, rather than quantity. This is exemplified in the well-educated local clergy they left as a legacy to the Ghanaian church. But unlike the German missionaries, who had some local clergy trained in Germany, the Scots mainly preferred that training be done in Ghana rather than Scotland. To this end, the Scots engaged mostly in middle-level teacher/catechist training, while the Germans aimed at top-level training of pastors, starting when the candidates were young.

According to Ansre, the German missionaries never really took over the administration of the churches when they returned after World War II. Since the local clergy continued to be in charge, with the assistance of Scottish missionaries, this study tested the memory of some of the elderly members of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana at Kwahu Abetifi regarding their knowledge of Scottish missionaries and the latter's contribution to the local church. Kwahu Abetifi was chosen because of the town's association with the photograph of Rev. George Douglas Reith that was to be presented to the Church there. The photograph served to help strike a relationship with the people and was also of assistance in facilitating the interview process.

What is more, Abetifi is famous in Ghana for its 'Christian Quarters', christened 'Abarim' with reference to the biblical example in the book of Numbers (Num 27: 12—"And the Lord said unto Moses, Get thee up into this mount Abarim, and see the land which I have given unto the children of Israel"). Christian Quarters in Abetifi is the exclusive Presbyterian settlement created by the legendary Ramseyer. All the Presbyterian "mission stations in the country were called Salem" (Akuamoah 2007: 26), except the Abetifi settlement. Rev. Ramseyer acquired the site of his Abarim from the chief of Abetifi, Nana Kofi Dankyi, after commencement of missionary work in the town in 1876 (Akuamoah 2007: 21–24). He surveyed the land and distributed plots to members of the church. Inhabitants of Christian Quarters today are, therefore, mostly descendants of those early converts who first got land from Ramseyer. Apart from the residential area, the Ramseyer Training Centre occupies the rest of the land acquired by Ramseyer, which is now property of the Presbyterian Church. Part of the centre houses the Presbyterian University College offices

and library (housed in the old church Ramseyer built). The new church and presbytery also stand on the Abarim property.

The foregoing informs the intention to meet and interview some elders of the church living at Christian Quarters who had had contact with Scottish missionaries. Indeed, Reith's photograph opened the way for a warm reception in the presbytery on the morning of 28 February 2009, although none of those present at the time had known him. Most disappointing of all was the fact that Reith's name was missing from the beautifully erected plaque in memory of missionaries who had served in the Abetifi Church. The plaque was erected in commemoration of the centenary of the Ramseyer Memorial Presbyterian Church at Abetifi in 1976. All the names of missionaries on the commemorative plaque, beginning with the first missionary who started at Abetifi in 1876 to the last in 1976, are ostensibly German names. The war periods, 1918 to 1932, have no entries, which seems to say that there were no missionaries at the church during that period. Another plaque, in the pastor's office, is in memory of local clergy and lists the names of all Ghanaian pastors who have worked in the church at Abetifi, including those who were there during the war period. Records in the baptismal register in the church for the same war years also indicate that Ghanaian clergy administered the sacrament of baptism at the time. So where were the Scots? Does it mean that no Scottish missionary worked in the church at Abetifi at any time?

In pursuit of an answer to this question, a focus group discussion was held at Christian Quarters. The principal actors of the focus group discussion were three. Samuel P. Adomako is a retired teacher and Senior Presbyter of the Abetifi Church. He was born in 1937 and baptised in 1948. Patrick Kwakye Safo, a retired tradesman, was born in 1927 and baptised the same year. He was Senior Presbyter from 1964 to 2003. Joseph Kofi Wiafe, a retired police officer, was born in 1935 and was baptised the same year. He was Presbyter of the Church from 1997 to 2007. Also present at the discussion was Grace Sewaa, born in 1966. Grace was the contact person in the Presbyterian community at Abetifi who arranged all the appointments for the study. She was proposed by Rev. Fr. George Amor, a Catholic priest in charge of the Divine Word Missionary (SVD) novitiate at St. Peter's Senior High School, Kwahu Nkwatia.

The main participants were, thus, seventy-two, eighty-two, and seventy-four years old respectively. Obviously, they could not recognize the man in the photograph shown them as Reith—who was in Abetifi ninety years ago. All three, however, know about, but do not have any memory of, personal contacts with Scottish missionaries who lived and worked at Abetifi. Some of the names of missionaries they remember very well include, of course, Ramseyer, Perregaux, who served at Abetifi long before any of the informants were born, Ernst

Niklaus (1960–1961), Paul Rutishauser (1962–1970), and Bruno Bassi (1971–1976), who served during the group's lifetime. All the missionaries in question were German speaking. In short, it is the German memory that lives on in the Presbyterian fold of Abetifi.

Rev. Seth Yaw Duvor says there is good reason for this. The Scots are not prominent in the popular memory because they were involved in setting up administrative structures in the mission. For example, Dr. A.W. Wilkie (a Scotsman) set up the Regulation and Practice Procedure (RPP) of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana. The RPP is essentially the constitution of that church. Duvor argues that since the Germans had already established the mission, and returned to it after the wars, they overshadowed the Scots in actual contact with the people. Consequently, ordinary people do not have memories of Scottish missionaries in Ghana, in spite of the fact that the Scots set up the schools and administration. While doing this they did not change the names of churches the Germans established, which had become independent. For Duvor, then,

the Scottish memory lies in the schools and institutions; not in the mission stations. Information on the said memory can be unearthed from secondary sources (published materials, schools and hospitals) and not from primary sources (people).

Credence is given to Duvor's contention in view of information found in the Centenary Brochure of the Ramseyer Training Centre at Abetifi, rather than to the centenary plaque of the Ramseyer Memorial Presbyterian church in the same town. It is in the brochure that mention is made of Reith: "The Church of Scotland appointed G.D. Reith to Abetifi in 1918" (Centenary Brochure 1999: 18). He worked in the seminary/training centre, rather than in the parochial church.

Duvor points out that there are continuing links with the Scottish church, such as those forged through Scottish medical doctors' having come to assist at the Begoro Presbyterian Hospital. However, in his own words, "the Scots could not break the German influence." This corroborates Strachan's contention that "the Scots were not the founding fathers of the mission." What is more, forty years after he (Strachan), the last missionary, left the mission, memory of them is fading in the minds of the local people. This is particularly so in view of the fact that in Strachan's opinion, the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, for example, has not been very careful in its recordkeeping. He believes that much lies to be uncovered, but the local church currently has no one who is aware of the larger picture.

## Conclusion

What this chapter contributes to the “Africa in Scotland, Scotland in Africa” theme is twofold. First, it seeks to bring Scottish missionaries out of the ecclesiastical archives, or even doldrums, of Presbyterianism in Ghana into a mainstream of Ghanaian historical debate. In other words, the contribution of Scottish missionaries affects not only the Presbyterian churches in Ghana, but Ghanaian society at large. Second, by engaging ordinary church members in this discussion, memory of the Scottish missionary role in Ghana would be aroused in the minds of people who would otherwise not have an inkling of their endeavour. The Scottish intervention in Presbyterianism in Ghana, in terms of mission, effect on moral formation, and social development pursued through the field of education, is too important to be shelved in ecclesiastical libraries and circles.

While Bremen and Basel missions are household names in Ghana, knowledge about the role played by Scottish missionaries in sustaining Presbyterianism is negligible in the larger Ghanaian society. Thus, the Scottish mission seems to have been subsumed into the Basel and Bremen missions, thereby accounting for the Scottish position as a forgotten species. Basel and Bremen missionaries were pioneers in the Presbyterian endeavour in the territory; therefore, it is quite natural that their work eclipsed that of the Scots. Even so, given its enormous contribution to Ghana, the Scottish missionaries’ role is capable of standing on its own. If a conscious effort is not made to redeem their memory, Scottish missionaries will end up regarded only as an appendage to the Basel and Bremen missions, if reference is ever made to them at all.

The foregoing indicates that there is a huge gap in ecclesiastical historiography in Ghana. It means that possibly, there is a lot more information on missionary activities, in general, waiting to be unearthed. Consequently, although this chapter does throw more light on or even generate new evidence about Scottish missionary activities, it leaves some questions unanswered regarding mission history. Other studies can surely take us farther afield in the said terrain.

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## Scottish Missionaries in Central Nigeria

*Musa A.B. Gaiya and Jordan S. Rengshwat*

In this study central Nigeria refers to the Christianised part of northern Nigeria—what was called the Middle Belt of Nigeria in the 1950s and is still referred to as such in present Nigeria's socio-political rhetoric. The Middle Belt was created as a result of the Christian missionaries' work in northern Nigeria, which began in the early 1900s. The area comprised of Adamawa, Southern Bauchi, Plateau,<sup>1</sup> Southern Zaria,<sup>2</sup> and Benue.<sup>3</sup> This area was called the Bible Belt of the Northern Nigeria. This study focuses on Plateau and Southern Zaria. Missionary societies under consideration are the Sudan United Mission (SUM), which worked in Plateau, and the Sudan Interior Mission (SIM), which was dominant in the Southern Zaria area. Both missionary bodies had a number of Scottish missionaries. However, SIM was a non-denominational mission, meaning that, once they were accepted into the mission, missionaries were expected to put aside their denominational convictions and apply themselves exclusively to evangelism.

Since the nineteenth century, Africa has been a major recipient of Scottish missionaries. Notable are David Livingstone, the missionary explorer of Africa, a major exponent of the civilising impact of Christianity in Africa, and the implementer of Fowell Buxton's theory that the slave trade in Africa would be extinguished through mission work and the introduction of free trade; Alexander Duff and James Chalmers, missionaries to India and New Guinea, respectively; Hope Waddell, of Calabar (South East of Nigeria), and Mary Slessor, who toiled in southern Nigeria as a missionary and a representative of the British government. Slessor is well known in Nigerian history as the courageous woman who stopped the notorious custom of killing twins. This study not only adds to the list of Scottish missionaries in Africa, but also argues that Scottish missionaries who worked among the Berom in Jos, Plateau State, and among the Kagoro in Southern Zaria, inspired a Christian nationalism that was directed at reversing the internal colonialism created by the British

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1 Plateau was made up of present Plateau and Nassarawa states.

2 Today Christian nationalists prefer the term 'Southern Kaduna' in their struggle for independence from Zaria emirate.

3 Benue included groups such as the Tiv, Jukun, Idoma and Igala in present Taraba, Benue and Kogi states.

administration in implementing Indirect Rule Policy. Influenced by their experience in Scotland under English hegemony, these missionaries encouraged their converts to seek independence from the Hausa/Fulani overlords imposed on them by the British colonial authorities. Thus, the first nationalist movement created in the region under study was, strictly speaking, Christian, anti-Islam and opposed to Hausa/Fulani overlordship and exploitation. This might explain why the umbrella under which this Christian nationalism thrived was called the Non-Muslim League (later, the Middle Zone League and Middle Belt Movement).

Three scholars have drawn similar conclusions in their study of this period. These are Niels Kastfelt,<sup>4</sup> Paul Chunun Logams<sup>5</sup> and recently, Nanyak Barko Goifa.<sup>6</sup> All these scholars perceive the missionary influence in the early Christian nationalism in northern Nigeria; Kastfelt studied the role played by the Lutheran missionaries in the rise of Christian nationalism in former Adamawa Province (northeast of Nigeria) however, only Logams, using George Balandier's and M.J. Dent's works, was inspired by Scottish nationalism to study Christian nationalism in northern Nigeria under the umbrella of the Middle Belt Movement.<sup>7</sup>

But Logams did not restrict his study to Scottish missionaries or saw the influence of their political history to inspire their converts, albeit covertly, to struggle for autonomy from Muslim Hausa/Fulani hegemony, and he did not look at the consequences of religious politics, which has marred peace and social harmony in central Nigeria—and indeed, in northern Nigeria, as a whole. Although Goifa's work makes a case that Christian identity in Southern Zaria was due mainly to the work of SIM, his work lacks depth of analysis and dwells more on mission-related considerations. There are other very helpful works on Plateau and Southern Zaria (as the Christianised area in present Kaduna State was called) but did not treat Christian nationalism as a theme, such as Elizabeth Isichei's extensive work on pre-colonial social history of the ethnic groups of Plateau;<sup>8</sup> Yusufu Turaki's work on the impact of Indirect Rule

4 Niels Kastfelt, *Religion and Politics in Nigeria: A Study in Middle Belt Christianity*, London: British Academic Press, 1994.

5 Paul Chunun Logams, *The Middle Belt Movement in Nigerian Political Development: A Study in Political Identity 1949–1967*, Abuja, Centre for Middle Belt Studies, 2004.

6 Nanyak Barko Goifa, "A Historical Study of Mission's Approach to Culture and Evangelisation of Northern Nigeria: An Evaluation of Religion and Socio-Political work of the SIM in Southern Zaria (Kaduna State), 1910–1954" M. Phil Thesis, Oxford Centre for Mission Studies, Oxford, 2009.

7 Logams, p. 11.

8 Elizabeth Isichei, *Studies in the History of Plateau State, Nigeria*, London: Macmillan, 1982.

on the non-Muslim groups and societies of Southern Zaria with no attention paid to the important role missionaries played in the emergence of Christian nationalism in that area,<sup>9</sup> and equally was Matthew Hassan Kukah's<sup>10</sup> political history of northern Nigeria paying particular attention to the role played by the media in perpetuating Hausa/Fulani political hegemony over minority ethnic groups but omitting Christian use of the media to counteract such pro Hausa/Fulani domination, one of the early pro Christian media was the *Nigeria Standard* published in Jos by the government of Benue Plateau State.

### Scottish Missionaries in Central Nigeria

There were several Scots in the services of the SUM. A few in Plateau were the Rev. and Mrs David Forbes, Mr and Mrs Henry George Farrant, and the Rev. and Mrs Tom L. Suffill; Rev. and Mrs Thomas Archibald who worked in Southern Zaria, were of the SIM. The SUM was an interdenominational faith mission which began Christian missionary work in Bauchi Province of Nigeria in 1904, with the aim of evangelising 'pagan' groups there. By 1914 there were four branches of the mission working in Central Nigeria: the British branch, the South African branch, the Danish branch, and the American branch. Owing to its non-denominational character, the British branch of the SUM drew its field staffs largely from across the non-conformist<sup>11</sup> churches of England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. In this way many Scots probably found working with it easier than with the denominational members of the SUM. Between 1911 and 1921 alone, ten Scots laboured for the SUM in the central region of Nigeria.<sup>12</sup>

9 Yusufu Turaki, *The British Colonial Legacy in Northern Nigeria: A Social Analysis of the Colonial and Post-Colonial Society and Politics in Nigeria*, Jos: Challenge Press, 1993.

10 Matthew Hassan Kukah, *Religion, Politics and Power in Northern Nigeria*, Ibadan: Spectrum Books Limited, 1993.

11 These were non-Anglican and non-Roman Catholic Christian bodies. These included Baptist, Congregationalist, Methodist, Presbyterian and the Society of Friends who were also known as Quakers. They were negatively called Dissenters or Non-conformists (B.G. Worrall, *The Making of the Modern Church: Christianity in England since 1800*, Third Edition, London, S.P.C.K., 2004 pp. 136–137).

12 These were Mrs A.G. Alexander, Mrs N.H. Bronnum, Mrs H.J. Cooper, and Mrs W.R. Fleming (these women were married to non-Scottish men). Others were Mr and Mrs H.G. Farrant, Rev. and Mrs David Forbes, and Rev. and Mrs T.L. Suffill (See SUM staff roll call for the period in *The Lightbearer*, the official magazine of the mission). In the years that followed many others worked in the region (Elspeth Young, Interview, Gold and Base, Jos, 7-4-2009).

The Rev. David and Mrs Forbes<sup>13</sup> began work in Central Nigeria in 1910, and their first station was at the Freed Slaves' Home (F.S.H.) Rumasha.<sup>14</sup> In later years the couple also worked in Wukari, Ibi, Lupwe, and Gindiri.<sup>15</sup> In addition to their general missionary work, the Forbes' devoted themselves to the formal education of some blind youth, the first of such work in Nigeria, and the second of its kind in West Africa.<sup>16</sup> One of their earliest impressions was of the plight of the blind in Central Nigeria. However, the immediate impulse for action was the existence of a handful of blind youngsters in the F.S.H. They felt that if they could provide the children with some education, they would not take to begging on the streets, a common practice among the blind of Central Nigeria and the whole of Northern Nigeria. Therefore, during one of their furloughs, they devoted much of their time to learning Braille and how to work among the blind. When they returned to Nigeria in 1916, they organised some training in Braille reading for the blind inmates of the F.S.H.<sup>17</sup> These pioneer students became teachers for other blind children in the years that followed.<sup>18</sup> In the words of M. Miles,

One of the first four blind girls, Miss Batu (later Miss Milkatu), rapidly gained proficiency in Braille and became an assistant teacher, a Hausa Braille transcriber and a leading light of the local Christian community... During the next thirty years, successful blind students spread Braille materials to blind people across a wider region.<sup>19</sup>

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- 13 Although the Forbes' were Scots, missionary records in Nigeria does not show which part of Scotland they came from.
  - 14 'SUM roll call' in *The Lightbearer*, November–December, 1923. The F.S.H. was opened in 1909 and named Lucy Memorial Freed Slaves' Home in memory of Mrs Lucy, the late wife of Karl Kumm, the founder of SUM. These slaves were transferred from colonial government custody to the mission. The home was a miniature of the 18th and 19th century freed slaves' colony of Sierra Leone or Liberia.
  - 15 'Death of Mrs David Forbes' in *The Lightbearer*, May–June, 1959, p. 34. Rev. Forbes took ill in Gindiri in 1937. He was buried at Vom, Nigeria, that year. Mrs Forbes died in Europe in 1959.
  - 16 According to M. Miles, the Forbes' work on formal education for the blind was the second of its kind in West Africa after the one which was started in Liberia in the second half of the 19th century ('Disability World' p. 6, in m99miles@hotmail.com).
  - 17 M. Miles, 'Disability World' pp. 6–7 in m99miles@hotmail.com.
  - 18 Miles, p. 7.
  - 19 Miles, p. 7. This is corroborated by an editorial 'Work Amongst the Blind' in *The Lightbearer*, January–February, 1940, p. 3, and by another editorial 'Wanted – a Teacher for the Blind' in *The Lightbearer*, January–March 1950, p. 9.

After the death of Rev. Forbes, his wife continued to work among a handful of blind children at Vom. In addition to this, she took up the task of educating lepers at their treatment centre, also at Vom. In the words of H.G. Farrant, writing in 1941, "With the help of Africans, Mrs Forbes runs three schools daily. There is one for the little children, one for the lepers, and one for the blind."<sup>20</sup> The SUM British branch later established a school for blind children at Gindiri in 1953 based on the pattern established by Rev. and Mrs Forbes.<sup>21</sup> This became the first of such schools in Nigeria.<sup>22</sup> The political ideas of Rev. Forbes were not made known; the group he worked among would have been incapable of making any impact on the political transformation of central Nigeria, anyway.

In 1913 Mr and Mrs Henry George Farrant came to Nigeria from Skelmorlie, a village in North Ayrshire,<sup>23</sup> in the southwest of Scotland. In 1916 Mr Farrant was made field secretary of the mission, and he remained there until 1948, when he left Nigeria.<sup>24</sup> Farrant's work (for which he is still remembered) was in the area of mission administration and promotion of Western education. His son Service Farrant was an educationist and was associated with the Gindiri schools. Henry Farrant and Mr W.M. Bristow were responsible for the founding of the Gindiri schools in 1930s. By 1930 the SUM needed trained evangelists, teachers, and interpreters to send to villages that missionaries had toured, so they considered a school for the training of such assistants a necessity. When the idea of a training centre to meet these needs became clear to Farrant, he immediately set to work. He began by choosing an ideal site. According to him,

I wrote down a list of requirements for the ideal site, and the list seemed impossible to obtain in one site. I wanted a site cool for Europeans and not too cold for Africans, fertile and well wooded to provide scope for students to farm.... Much prayer gradually revealed the neighbourhood

20 H.G. Farrant, 'What does Mrs Forbes do at Vom Hospital?' in *The Lightbearer*, July–August, 1941, p. 74. Farrant was the field secretary of the mission from 1916 to 1948.

21 Bitrus Pam, 'The Past Fifteen Years' in *The Gindiri Jubilee Magazine 1934–1959*, n.c., Sudan United Mission, n.d., p. 20.

22 Florence Banku Obi, 'Equalizing Educational Opportunities for the Nigerian-Ghanian Blind Girl-Child', p. 2, in obibanku2000@yahoo.co.uk.

23 Wikipedia.

24 This post made him to be corresponding secretary to all the branches of the Sudan United Mission. He was also made secretary of the Conference of Missions in the Northern Nigeria Provinces (Jan Harm Boer, *Missionary Messengers of Liberation in a Colonial Context: A Case Study of the Sudan United Mission*, Amsterdam, Rodopi, 1979, p. 297). This biographical data helps us to see the position from which he was able to influence Central Nigeria.

of Gindiri as appearing to meet the conditions, and two visits showed it to be almost ideal.<sup>25</sup>

As soon as the site was found in 1933, Farrant set in motion the machinery necessary for the take-off of the school. He allocated staff before the school was even built.<sup>26</sup> The following year the school commenced in earnest, having found the candidates for training.<sup>27</sup>

By 1948, the year Farrant left Nigeria for good, there were, in addition to the schools for the training of teachers and evangelists, a women's school, a boys' boarding middle school, and an industrial school. The students of the teachers' training school were coming from all over Central Nigeria and beyond. By the year of the silver jubilee of the Gindiri schools in 1959, the schools had men and women from eight provinces of Nigeria.<sup>28</sup> To ensure a constant supply of teachers for the Gindiri schools, and for other similar schools in the region, Farrant began the Northern Nigeria Project in Britain, advertising the dire educational needs of Northern Nigeria in many universities in Britain to solicit the services of young men and women to come out and help as teachers. His efforts in this direction paid off handsomely<sup>29</sup>—so much so that at the silver jubilee celebration of the Gindiri schools, his role in staff development was acknowledged: 'The development of the Gindiri itself was greatly aided by his vision and planning and by his fruitful efforts to obtain staff'.<sup>30</sup> In 1948 Farrant's contributions to the advancement of education in Nigeria was officially recognised when the British government awarded him the Order of the British Empire (O.B.E.).<sup>31</sup>

Farrant was a prolific writer. His writings are chiefly about education, but his contributions in the missionary journal *The Lightbearer* also gave his perspective on the relationship between the Christian groups and society in

25 'A Training-School in Nigeria' in *The Lightbearer*, May-June, 1933, p. 40. This article was part of Farrant's letter to his prayer partners.

26 Ibid.

27 R. Damina, 'Yadda Gindiri T.T.C. Ta Soma' in *The Gindiri Jubilee Magazine 1934-1959*, n.c., Sudan United Mission, n.d., p. 9. Damina was a pioneer student.

28 'Where Gindiri Students Come From' in *The Gindiri Jubilee Magazine 1934-1959*, (Jos?): Sudan United Mission, n.d., p. 22.

29 Mollie E. Tett, *The Road to Freedom: The Story of the Sudan United Mission*, Kent, Sudan United Mission, n.d., pp. 58-60. Also see 'Retirement of Mr H.G. Farrant, O.B.E.' in *The Lightbearer*, July-August, 1964, p. 64.

30 'H.C [sic]. Farrant' in *The Gindiri Jubilee Magazine 1934-1959*, second plate between pp. 44, 45.

31 Farrant, pp. 44, 45.



central Nigeria and the Muslim Hausa/Fulani domination supported by the British government through the Indirect Rule Policy. We will come to this later.

Rev. John L. Suffill, also Scottish, is called “Da lo” by the Berom, meaning the father of the Berom people. The first community secondary school built by the Berom, Dalo Memorial Secondary School, is named after Suffill and is located in Foron, where he worked for about forty years. This devotion is understandable, because the Berom believe that he made them what they are today. When one of them was raised to the status of Second Class Chief, he invited missionaries to the staff presentation ceremony, in the letter he wrote: “In thinking of the promotion I can see that the real reason is that the Mission has helped us Birom to become a people, until now we are doing our duty in the fear of our Lord Jesus Christ. I covet your prayers and those of all God’s people that the Lord will help me in this difficult task with its increased responsibilities.”<sup>32</sup> Suffill came to Nigeria in 1914, and his wife, Elizabeth, joined him five years later.<sup>33</sup> They were assigned to work among the Berom on the Jos Plateau.<sup>34</sup> Before they came the mission had been working there since 1907.

Ten years later there were still no converts. The mission therefore asked the Suffills to close the station, but they requested that they should be given more time,<sup>35</sup> convinced that “God had called them to that district.”<sup>36</sup> Therefore, in order to win their way into the hearts of the people, the Suffills gave themselves to intensive study of the Berom language. They also attended to many cases of sickness, including the treatment of snakebites and the regular washing and dressing of ulcers.<sup>37</sup> Very gradually, these helped to build friendship between them and the people, and in 1921 two young men, Toma Tok Bot and Yakubu Pam Ndong, were baptised.<sup>38</sup> Through these young men the Gospel spread throughout Berom land and in the Jos Plateau tin mining camps.

In the years that followed, the Suffills embarked on a number of projects that were aimed at uplifting the lives of the people. To check the prevalence of maternal deaths during childbirth, they established a maternity hospital in Foron.<sup>39</sup> By 1937 a new maternity ward was built and named Scott Stacey

32 *The Lightbearer*, Sept to Oct, 1954, p. 130.

33 ‘SUM Roll Call’ *The Lightbearer*, December, 1921.

34 Jos Plateau was in Bauchi Province then.

35 W.M. Bristow, ‘Mustard Seeds: Beginning among the Birom’ in *The Lightbearer*, July–August, 1961, p. 66. The Bristows worked with the Suffills in the Foron mission district.

36 *Lightbearer* 1939, p. 24.

37 *Lightbearer* 1939, p. 66. Also see T.L. Suffill, ‘Nigeria Revisited’ in *The Lightbearer*, July–August, 1966, p. 75; T.L. Suffill, ‘The Birom’ in *The Lightbearer*, January–February, 1954, p. 18.

38 Toma To Bot, ‘Takaitacan Tarihin Rev. Toma T. Bot’, (Unpublished manuscript).

39 Early writers on the people used Forum. Foron is what is in use today.

Maternity Ward. They also put up an orphanage in 1926,<sup>40</sup> to care for babies whose mothers had died in childbirth, even though custom demanded that such infants should be buried with their mothers. In the words of an editorial,

Early in her contact with the Birom Mrs. Suffill found that if a mother died in child-birth the living baby was buried with her, because fetish belief asserted that it was possessed by an evil spirit which had killed the mother. Mrs. Suffill begged to be given such babies, but it was a long time before anyone consented, because, the people said, it would be folly to allow a spirit-possessed evil creature to grow up to plague them. Eventually, however, a fear-inspiring baby was given to her, no evil followed, others were brought and the Nursery became a permanent feature of Forum Station.<sup>41</sup>

The orphanage was called W.P. Mathews Memorial Nursery. Both the orphanage and the new maternity ward were officially opened on 21 September 1937. Some days after the opening ceremony, which was attended by the acting resident of the Plateau Province and the district officer, Elizabeth Suffill wrote a report of the ceremony part of which reads,

My husband then offered the prayer of dedication, after which the Resident addressed the company. He spoke to the chiefs about the old customs, and pointed to the happy, healthy youngsters on the veranda as proof that it was unnecessary. He said it had come to his ears that there had been a case very recently where the baby was buried, and that in future such happenings would be regarded as murder. He then unlocked the door, and the guests filed in and saw the interior and the babies.... Next we went down to the maternity hospital, and the Resident unlocked the large new ward built and equipped through the kindness of friends in Scotland and Canada, after whom it is named.<sup>42</sup>

After a few years of fostering, "[some of] the babies [of the orphanage] were given to Christian families, several childless couples being especially delighted to receive them."<sup>43</sup> Others were returned to their fathers and stepmothers,

40 Bulus Tok Bot, 'Dalo-Da Tomas T. Bot: Shigan Mission a Kasar Berom' p. 2 (Unpublished manuscript).

41 'A Help Meet: Elizabeth Suffill' in *The Lightbearer*, January-February, 1960, pp. 6-7.

42 E. Suffill, 'A Gala Day at Forum' in *The Lightbearer*, January-February, 1938, pp. 8-9.

43 'A Help Meet' p. 7.

after Mrs Suffill had instructed the parents on how to take care of them.<sup>44</sup> The identities of these children were not hidden from them. This is evident in the letter, which a former inmate of the orphanage wrote to Rev. Suffill, part of which reads,

In case you have forgotten who I am, it will be good to introduce myself. When you were at Forum you remember you kindly brought up some orphans at the Mission Church there. Well, I am glad to say that I am one of them...<sup>45</sup>

By the time the Suffills retired in 1950, they had taken care of about a hundred orphans.<sup>46</sup> Some of the orphans later became nurses, teachers, and midwives. One of them, John Nash, became the *Dagwom* (chief) of the political district of Foron.<sup>47</sup> Another, Moses Rwang Pam Sanda (popularly known as Rwang Pam), was not brought up in the orphanage but nevertheless was trained at the SUM school in Du and later, at the government Toro Teachers' Training School. He was appointed teacher and later, headmaster of the government primary school in Riyom. He was active in the Christian nationalist movement as the secretary of the Berom Progressive Union before the British government appointed him the Chief of Berom in 1947 by the then Chief Commissioner, Sir Eric Thompstone.<sup>48</sup> Thus Rwang Pam became the second Chief of Berom after Dah Chung Gyang who was the first and later Pam became the Chief of Jos in 1955. In fact, as will be shown below, the Christian nationalism in Central Nigeria started among the Berom.

Besides starting and maintaining an orphanage and a maternity hospital, the Suffills were deep into the education of the Berom people. When they arrived, there was not a single school in the area.<sup>49</sup> In the years that followed, they established 'Classes for Religious Instruction'<sup>50</sup> in many villages. These classes later developed into formal primary schools. By the time the Suffills

44 Bulus Tok Bot, 'Dalo-Da Tomas T. Bot: Shigan Mission a Kasar Berom', p. 3.

45 A letter from Markus Musa to Rev. Tom Suffill quoted in *The Lightbearer*, May-June, 1964, p. 53.

46 Bulus Tok Bot, 'Dalo-Da Tomas T. Bot: Shigan Mission a Kasar Berom', p. 2.

47 Bulus Tok Bot, pp. 2-3.

48 *The Lightbearer*, 1956, p. 31. This enthronement was celebrated by a national newspaper, the *Nigeria Citizen* of 1st December 1955.

49 Bulus Tok Bot, Interview, 7-4-09.

50 In these elementary schools the subjects taught were reading, writing, arithmetic and religion.

retired to Europe in 1950, there was a primary school in each of the Berom villages, including Foron, Du, Kuru, Vwang, Fan, Rim, Gigiring, Rite, Lwa, and Sho. There was also one in Ganawuri town, among the Ganawuri, neighbours of the Berom. Others were located in Fobur, Zarazong, Shere, and Zandi (among the Afizere).<sup>51</sup> Pupils who successfully graduated from these schools went to the SUM schools in Gindiri for teacher training or secondary school education. Others went to the government-owned Toro Teachers' College.

Tom Suffill also built three roads: the Foron-to-Shen road, Foron-to-Halle road, and the road from Foron to Maraba-Foron. He built a total of four bridges along these roads, recruiting and paying African labourers to help him in the work. However, on some occasions, village-heads who understood that the work was for their benefit provided voluntary labourers. The Suffills also established a mini-forestation programme, planting many fruit trees in the town of Foron, and particularly, on the land provided for the mission station.<sup>52</sup> Throughout their time in Nigeria, they made the concerns of the people their own. They moved about with medicine kits to treat the sick, and during a locust invasion, Tom Suffill spent days—from morning to evening—helping the people to kill the locusts.<sup>53</sup>

The many schools that the Suffills set up became a major factor in helping the Berom to attain their independence from internal colonialism arising from Hausa/Fulani hegemony. Farrant explains this point with more clarity:

The uneven struggle of the pagan people against the Mohammedans is familiar to readers. To understand its nature it should be recognised that Islam is a society as well as a religion, and its social attraction is quite as strong as the religious one. In a sense the pagans are a society too, and a very old one with a distinct culture, but it has no coherence and therefore no strength, because the pagans are divided into so many little tribes. Now the Church is established among them and the Church brought the School, and these two are making the pagan people into a much more coherent community which is more capable of retaining its independence. A Christian mission is not sent to establish an earthly kingdom, but in Nigeria what I have described is a good example of Matt.

51 Bulus Tok Bot, 'Dalo—Da Tomas T. Bot: Shigan Mission a Kasar Berom', p. 5. All these came into being as a result of the missionary work of the Suffills who worked in the area for thirty six years.

52 Bulus Tok Bot, Interview, 7-4-09. A handful of these trees still exist today. According to Bulus Bot most have been destroyed.

53 Bulus Tok Bot, Interview, 7-4-09.

6:33 – “Seek ye first the Kingdom of God...and all these things shall be added unto you”.<sup>54</sup>

To show their continuing love for the Suffills, the Berom raised money and invited them to visit Nigeria in 1965, fifteen years after their retirement.<sup>55</sup> At the airport to receive the Suffills was Rwang Pam in his royal regalia.

After their arrival in Africa in 1927, Mr and Mrs Thomas Archibald from Glasgow worked among the people of Kagoro as part of the SIM. They started work in Kwoi in 1928 because the British government would not allow Thomas Archibald his heart's desire: to move to Kagoro. The government felt that it was not safe for the missionary to move in there, since the people had not yet been pacified.<sup>56</sup> Apart from itinerant preaching, provision of Western education to his converts was a major preoccupation for him and his wife. This made Kagoro a centre of Western education from 1935, as Gindiri became through the work of the SUM. The Archibalds endeared themselves to the people of Kagoro. M.G. Smith reports that “the Archibalds wrought remarkable changes by peaceful persuasion, won a permanent place in the hearts of Kagoro and made many converts before 1940.”<sup>57</sup>

Gwamna Awang was among the earliest (in 1927). He was trained in the SIM primary school and at the government's Toro Teachers' Training School; he later became a teacher and the headmaster of one of the SIM schools. In 1945 Awang was appointed the chief of Kagoro, and like Rwang Pam of Berom, Awang was active in the Middle Belt movement. Most probably due to their political activities, a Divisional Officer for Zaria had described Thomas Archibald and Gwamna Awang “dangerous people.”<sup>58</sup> Andrew Barnes has shown how the Colonial authorities looked down on evangelical missionary groups especially the SIM who appeared to lack sufficient education “to exercise the necessary tact in the difficult position...”<sup>59</sup> Awang was the leader of the Southern Zaria wing of the movement called the Southern Zaria Freedom Movement.<sup>60</sup> Thus, the chief of Jos and the chief of Kagoro became

54 H.G. Farrant, ‘Crescendo of the Cross: VIII – The Schools which fill the Churches’ in *The Lightbearer*, September-October, 1954, p. 152.

55 T.L. Suffill, ‘Nigeria Revisited’ in *The Lightbearer*, July–August, 1966, p. 74.

56 Goifa, p. 70.

57 In Logams, p. 417.

58 E.P.T. Crampton, *Christianity in Northern Nigeria*, London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1979, p. 70.

59 Andrew E. Barnes, “‘Evangelization Where it is Not Wanted’: Colonial Administrators and Missionaries in Northern Nigeria during the First Third of the Twentieth Century,” *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 25 (4), 1995, p. 430.

60 Logams, p. 421.

institutions representing Christians in Central Nigeria.<sup>61</sup> We believe this was due to the encouragement of Western missionaries (especially Scottish ones) who had passed through similar experiences of internal colonialism created by the English, but without sectarian violence that characterised the relation between Christians and Muslims in northern Nigeria from 1987. We do not have abundant evidence for this conclusion; in fact, the only place where the connection between Scotland and Nigeria (i.e., Christians and Islamic domination in northern Nigeria) appears is in a suggestion made by H.G. Farrant, when he wrote,

Anyone who studies the history and present position of the Church of Scotland and contrasts it with the Church of England will be assured that lasting benefits accrue to a Church which grows in opposition.<sup>62</sup>

But it should be stated that missionaries were very careful not to meddle in local politics, because that might be interpreted as opposition to the British government.<sup>63</sup> It may be helpful here to briefly relate a history of Scottish nationalism. An incipient Scottish nationalism emerged in 1707 with the assimilation of Scotland into the United Kingdom.<sup>64</sup> Increasingly from the late eighteenth century onwards, resistance to English domination manifested itself in cultural revival—especially among Highlands dwellers, with their use of the tartan (and kilt) and bagpipes, but also, in the late nineteenth century, among the people living in the Lowlands. The sense of cultural unity of the two Scottish societies—particularly in culture—during the “Celtic Revival” was due to the works of Walter Scott.<sup>65</sup> Thus, the effects of the First World War on Scotland’s socio-economic condition made them to discuss the possibility of a devolution or home-rule. The economic prospects for Scotland’s separation from the rest of Great Britain became even more attractive after 1960, when oil was discovered within Scottish territorial waters. This is shown in the Scottish National Party’s (SNP) cry, “It’s Scotland’s oil!” and its campaign for Scotland’s independence within the European Union.<sup>66</sup> It can be said that Scotland could

61 Logams, p. 349.

62 Logams, p. 169.

63 See Andrew Barnes, “Evangelisation Where It Is Not Wanted”: Colonial Administrators and Missionaries in Northern Nigeria during the First Third of the Twentieth Century’ *Journal of Religion in Africa*, vol. XXV, No. 4, 1995, pp. 426, 431–432.

64 Carsten Hammer Andersen, et al “The Development of Scottish Nationalism” <http://earth.subetha.dk/-eek/meseum/auc/marvin/www/library/uni/projects/scotsmat.htm>, 1998.

65 Andersen, et al.

66 Andersen, et al.

have achieved this independence, but for the lack of internal cohesion and the fear of the consequences of isolation. It is our contention in this study to show that Scotland and the Middle Belt share a similar political history. More interesting to us is the fact that Scottish missionaries Christianised the two areas of concentration, Berom and Kagoro lands—where Christian nationalism started in Central Nigeria and where it was transformed into the Middle Movement.

### The Emergence of Christian Nationalism in Central Nigeria

The Middle Belt groups and societies were never conquered by the Hausa/Fulani during the jihad inspired by the teachings of Othman dan Fodio in 1804, although a number of them were regularly raided for slaves.<sup>67</sup> Some Middle Belt groups and societies, like Tiv and Idoma, were not even affected by the jihad,<sup>68</sup> but upon their subjugation by the British, they were placed under Muslim Hausa/Fulani rulers as a means of implementing the Indirect Rule Policy. For example, Plateau was placed under Bauchi Province, with the emir of Bauchi as the head, and Southern Zaria was placed under Zaria Province and the emir of Zaria was the head—the latter remaining as such until 1995. Even the Tiv, south of northern Nigeria, were not spared. Audu dan Afoda, a non-Tiv Muslim, was made the 'Chief of the Tiv' in 1917 by the British.<sup>69</sup> The outcome of British subjugation, incorporation, and subordination of Middle Belt groups and societies (and indeed, of all non-Muslim groups and societies) was the creation, by 1914, of a new Islamic kingdom with headquarters in Sokoto which the British called Northern Nigeria – a subject treated with passion by Yusufu Turaki,<sup>70</sup> Matthew Hassan Kukah<sup>71</sup> and Toure Kazah-Toure.<sup>72</sup> Meanwhile, by 1940 most of the non-Muslim groups and societies had been converted to Christianity through the activities of several Western missionary societies. Missionaries used the agencies of school, hospitals (or dispensaries/clinics), colporteur,

67 J.H. Morrison, 'Plateau Societies Resistance to Jihadist Penetration' in E. Isichei (ed) *Studies in the History of Plateau State, Nigeria*, London: Macmillan, 1982, pp. 136–150.

68 For example the Tiv in the Benue valley.

69 Logams, p. 297.

70 Yusufu Turaki, *The British Colonial Legacy in Northern Nigeria: A Social Ethical Analysis of the Colonial and Post-Colonial Society and Politics in Nigeria*, Jos: Challenge Press, 1993.

71 Matthew Hassan Kukah, *Religion Politics and Power in Northern Nigeria*, Ibadan: Spectrum, 1993.

72 Toure Kazah-Toure, *Ethno-religious conflicts in Kaduna State*, Kaduna: Human Rights Monitor, 2003.



itinerant evangelism, and Bible translation to achieve that feat. By the 1950s missionaries in central Nigeria were concerned about raising a strong Christian leadership that would challenge Hausa/Fulani domination.

Thus Christian political activism in the Middle Belt began among the Berom, and the tin-mining camps on the Jos Plateau were its arena.<sup>73</sup> Tin mining sufficient to have economic significance started on the Jos Plateau in 1910.<sup>74</sup> The Berom, being farmers, did not pay attention to mining activities in their midst, which at the early stage, was limited in quantity and area. Much of the labour force for the mines was therefore recruited from Northern provinces such as Kano, Borno, Kastina, and Sokoto. However, there was an increase in tin mining after 1926, with the introduction of draglines. This was revolutionary, as Logams tells us,

One excavator in its lifetime removed about 3 million cubic yards of alluvial soil, creating huge artificial mounts on farmland or on places where it was placed to process for tin. In the late 1920s the draglines were the latest innovations in tin mining machinery, combining the operations of excavating and elevating with automation. It floated on a pontoon over a flooded area of tin bearing ground, which it raises by means of a chain of buckets and washes the alluvial earth for tin on board. The tailings are dumped behind it in the previously worked-out area of the tin deposits.<sup>75</sup>

The effect on the Berom was the destruction of their farmland, forcing them to take to mining in the tin fields as “pick and shovel and head-pan labourers” at very low wages—out of which, of course, they had to pay tax. Hausa/Fulani, Yoruba, and Igbo, who were more experienced, filled the skilled and technical jobs. As tin mining grew, labourers were conscripted from among other Middle Belt groups and societies—Benue and Southern Zaria, in particular. With an increasing cash economy and taxes to be paid, workers agitated for higher wages in the mining fields. Miners, both skilled and semi-skilled, formed unions to demand wage increases and better living conditions in the mining camps. Christian miners met in church, with particularly those from the Middle Belt united in their concern over the underdevelopment of their

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73 Charles Kopkama Gonyok, “A History of Labour in the Tin Mining Industry on the Jos Plateau, 1903–1960,” PhD Thesis, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, August, 1986, p. 387.

74 Musa A.B. Gaiya, “Missionary activities on the Jos Plateau, 1900–1960” PhD Thesis, University of Jos, 1996, p. 134.

75 Logams, p. 237.

societies, compared with the situation in Islamic societies in the north. Logams has shown that between 1885 and 1960 Islamic societies had eight commercial/trade centres, as opposed to only one in the Middle Belt, a trade centre in Naraguta, which had been established by the Hausa/Fulani in 1873,<sup>76</sup> and later moved to Jos, and was controlled by Hausa/Fulani—mainly from Bauchi. Workers at these centres used tin and columbite to make farm implements and jewellery. But it was a curious development as Logams (himself a Berom scholar) wondered why Berom reaction to their social, political and economic plight was “directed not against the European tin miners and the government of British administration in the North, but rather it became lashed out on the migrant labour force on the Jos Plateau, a reaction that was mainly spear-headed by the Berom.”<sup>77</sup> But it should be realised that those who were directly in charge of the Berom labourers in the mines and later tax collectors for the British government were migrant workers, especially those from the far north of Nigeria. In the 1920s the British had recognised the Hausa/Fulani political structure within the Jos Native Town and used it for administering the Native Town and for the purpose of tax collection. Muslim tax collectors became notorious on enforcing tax payments, sometimes for the personal benefit.<sup>78</sup>

Thus, the church became the melting pot of Christian politicians—particularly, from the 1940s. Of interest to Berom politicians was obtaining control of the municipal council, then called Jos Native Authority. Hausa/Fulani had established a political institution in their settlement in Naraguta, near Jos. The first chief of the Hausa/Fulani community was Bunu Abdul Kadir, a vassal of the emir of Bauchi.<sup>79</sup> With the arrival of the British and the creation of Jos, most of the Hausa/Fulani community moved to Jos, as Gaiya tells us,

The new Sarki of Naraguta, Barde, the son of the Galadima Bauchi, refused to live in Naraguta. He chose to found a new settlement to the northern part of the present Jos Native Town. A large number of his subjects moved with him. This new settlement became the nucleus of the Jos Native Town. Perhaps Barde saw the potentials of Jos with the rapid increase in the volume of tin ore being mined there from 15lbs in 1901 to

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76 Gaiya, p. 133.

77 Logams, p. 336.

78 *The History, Ownership, Establishment of Jos and Misconceptions about the Recurrent Jos Conflicts*, Jos: Plateau Indigenous Development Association Network, 2010, catalogued instances where Muslim chiefs of Jos were sacked by the British government for embezzling taxes.

79 Gaiya, p. 133.

600 tons in 1910. Also by 1915 a light railway line had been extended from Zaria to Jos bypassing Naraguta town. The natives of Jos, the Afizere and Anaguta, like Gbagi in Kaduna, fled to the surrounding foothills and concentrated in taking care of the farmlands in the plains. They could not see the immediate relevance of the tin mining activities. Thus, the Jos Native Town was completely Hausa/Fulani.<sup>80</sup>

The British colonial authorities recognised the Hausa/Fulani political institution in Jos in their attempt to implement Indirect Rule Policy. It also created Plateau Province out of Bauchi Province in 1926, making the chief of Jos independent from the emir of Bauchi. Thus, the head of the 'Native Town Council' was the Hausa/Fulani chief, and in that capacity he controlled the 'native treasury' made up mainly from taxes. With the new awareness they acquired in the tin mines, and with exposure to Western education given by the missionaries, the Berom began to contest the legitimacy of the Hausa/Fulani chief of Jos and his control of the 'Native Town Council' and to put pressure on tin miners to compensate Berom farmers for acquiring their lands. To put more pressure on the British to address this and other matters,<sup>81</sup> the educated Berom formed the Berom Progressive Union (BPU loosely translated in Hausa as 'Jam'iyyar Yan Kasar Jos, i.e., a congress of the sons of the soil of Jos) in 1946,<sup>82</sup> and the Foron SUM church was its meeting place.<sup>83</sup> In the minds of the Berom, as in those of other peoples within the Middle Belt, Christianity was not only a mark of identity; it represented liberation both spiritually and politically. The two major achievements of the BPU were the unity of hitherto decentralized Berom groups and societies and the appointment of Rwang Pam, a missionary protégé and close friend of Suffill,<sup>84</sup> as chief of Berom in 1947 and with pressure from

80 Gaiya, p. 134.

81 These other matters include, the call on the government to compensate them for land destroyed as a result of the mining activities and the proposed resettlement of the Berom, whose land had been taken away, to 'New Zawan' in Jema'a in present-day Kaduna state.

82 Gonyok, p. 388. Logams has a 1945 date p. 389, 391.

83 Suffill, the Scottish missionary, was at Foron then.

84 Bulus Tok Bot pointed out that Tom Suffill was a factor in the choice of this man, as the District Officer consulted him before the nomination. It is in this light that when His Royal Highness Rwang Sanda Pam, was promoted to a second class chief for his dynamism, he attributed the promotion in particular and the progress of the Berom nation in general, to the positive influence of the SUM missionaries in the land, among whom the Suffills were the longest serving ones and the most influential. In the words of Pam, 'In thinking of the promotion I can see that the real reason is that the mission has helped us Berom to become a people [...]' No doubt, this eulogy was directed to all the SUM

BPU chief of Jos in 1955, thereby replacing the Hausa/Fulani chief, an action the Hausa/Fulani almost all Muslims have challenged.<sup>85</sup> The troubles in Jos that exploded in 2001 and 2008, leading to the loss of lives and destruction of property worth millions of naira, are at least partly traceable to this late-colonial decision, the other is the contestation for the ownership of Jos; matters the Berom considered concluded.

Similar political developments led to the formation of the Southern Zaria Freedom Movement. The initial impetus was trade unionism in the tin mines on the Jos Plateau. Later, the socio-economic conditions of the Southern Zaria societies and the subordination of the Southern Zaria non-Muslim groups and societies under the emirates became an overriding concern. The people of Kagoro provided the lead. The British had appointed a Hausa/Fulani Muslim, one Muguntu,<sup>86</sup> as chief of Kagoro in 1930.<sup>87</sup> After Muguntu was deposed another non-indigenous person was made chief of Kagoro and remained in that position until his death in 1944. At that moment Kagoro people, under the banner of the Southern Zaria Freedom Movement, insisted that “a son of the soil” must be made chief of Kagoro. Gwamna Awang, a missionary-trained young man, convert and friend of the Archibalds, who had taught at the SIM primary school and was later appointed assistant district scribe, was appointed the chief of Kagoro in 1945. He was an active member of the Southern Zaria Freedom Movement. He reigned for sixty years—one of the longest tenures for a Nigerian ruler.

It was these ethnic and sub-national groupings, like the Berom Progressive Union and the Southern Zaria Freedom Movement, which coalesced to form the Non-Muslim League (NML) in 1949. That, in turn, metamorphosed into a regional movement, the Middle Zone League (MZL). The first president of the NML and MZL was Rev. Vrengkat Obadiah David Lot of the SUM church. The Middle Belt movement grew out of the Middle Zone League; its goal was the creation of an autonomous Middle Belt region out of Northern Nigeria. The most powerful members of the Middle Belt movement were, of course, Rwang Pam, the chief of Jos, and Gwamna Awang, the chief of Kagoro. Both chiefs were

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missionaries in general and to the Suffills in particular, for Rwang Pam was ‘[...] so closely associated with Rev. and Mrs Suffill during their many years of missionary service with the SUM at Foron’.

85 Zarah Mohammed, *Who Owns Jos North lgc: The Historical Background of the Hausa-Fulani in Jos North*, Jos: n.p, n.d.

86 In Hausa, this name means wickedness. He was removed in 1933 for failing to remit sufficient tax, either because the Kagoro people refused to pay the taxes or he had misappropriated them.

87 Logams, p. 416.

members of Northern House of Chiefs, equivalent of the British House of Lords. The Middle Belt identity was Christian, and it seemed to allay Western missionaries' fears about what might happen to Christians under the rule of a Northern Nigerian government dominated by Muslims. Lowry Maxwell expressed such a concern in 1952:

For it is precisely in the matter of a sense of solidarity and mutual loyalty that one great danger lies for our non-Moslem people. If they do not stick together in these days of a new governmental order when the executive and legislative work of Nigeria is being transferred to African hands, they may find themselves being exploited by the Moslem peoples of the North. The only unifying force for the non-Moslem is the Christian Church.<sup>88</sup>

Thus the politics of the Middle Belt, particularly those of Plateau State (especially as it emerged in 1996) and Southern Zaria (now Southern Kaduna) from 1950s onwards were very much influenced by religious considerations. For Southern Zaria, the presence of an emir in the predominantly non-Muslim community of Kafanchan near Kgoro was an eye sore. This grudge was partly responsible for the first religious riot in northern Nigeria in Kafanchan in 1987. A visit to the town recently (23 April 2012) shows scars (burnt or demolished buildings) of an aftermath of recent communal riots between Muslims and non-Muslims.

The intractable difficulties in the politics of Plateau State is the debate on the ownership of Jos between Hausa/Fulani (who now call themselves *Jasawa* meaning natives of Jos) and mainly the Berom, and more recently the denial of indigenship to Hausa/Fulani since Jos does not belong to them in spite of their long stay and investments in the city. Thus Hausa/Fulani Muslims have no access to political, economic and social benefits of Plateau State. And to secure firmly the control of the throne of the Chief of Jos whom the Berom call *Bwong Gwom*, the Berom have exhumed the bodies of past Bwong Gwoms, Rwang Pam and Fom Bot and reburied them in the palace in the city of Jos.

### Concluding Remarks

In all these altercations, Christians were using religion as a symbol of their political identity and thus mixing religion with politics; similar to the teaching

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88 In Logams, p. 201.

and practice of Islam where there is no distinction between religion and politics. The consequences of these developments for national cohesion, peace, and mutual understanding are enormous. The immediate consequence was the politicising of religion. This is not a new phenomenon in Islam, since in Islam there is arguably less of a distinction between religion and politics or economics, but it is a new development in modern Christianity, which has typically (albeit only recently and partially) accepted separation of church and state. So Christians in the Middle Belt are confused between, in principle, the privatisation of religion, and in practice, the public role of religion in creating political cleavages. As Lamin Sanneh rightly argues, this weakness in missionary Christianity was clearly demonstrated in the Shari'ah debates that have taken place in Nigeria since 1999.<sup>89</sup> This ambivalence by Christian politicians was seen in the Shari'ah debates since 1978.

The seed of ethno-religious tension and conflict was sown during the Middle Belt struggles and came to the fore in 1987 in the Kafanchan riots. Today, religious conflicts have become a recurrent event in northern Nigeria, and most of the conflicts between Muslims and Christians have been in the Middle Belt. These conflicts have so polarised the two groups that dialogue has become difficult. Christians have tended to demonise Islam. Islam is of the devil and must be fought, as a Nigerian preacher told his congregation:

Many believers have misinterpreted the Bible by saying that if your enemy slaps you on the right cheek, turn to the left also. This is the time for Christians to be alert to the words of God and to put on the whole armour of God. I do not say that Christians should burn down mosques, which contain only mats and bottles, compared with cathedrals containing organs, pews, pulpits and other expensive materials. But you should not allow such ugly incidents as the ones which happened in the North to repeat themselves. You must know that God has given you authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions and over all the powers of the enemy. You should no longer turn the left cheek; rather, you should know that you have been given power to cast out devils. All that has been happening is from the devil. You are soldiers of Christ. Fight the good fight.<sup>90</sup>

89 Lamin Sanneh, "Shar'ah Sanctions as Secular Grace?" *Transformation* 20/4 2003, pp. 232–244.

90 Falola, Toyin, *Violence in Nigeria: The Crisis of Religious Politics and Secular Ideologies*, Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 1998, p. 285.

Even Muslim and Christian academic studies of this phenomenon are not detached.<sup>91</sup>

Finally, politics of the Middle Belt may have introduced into the Nigerian polity what has become a notorious national problem, the “indigene and settler” phenomenon. This is an idea that maintains that a citizen of Nigeria can claim a certain place in Nigeria as home only if his/her ancestors were born there. This, perhaps, explains why some of the conflicts and violence in northern Nigeria, and indeed in Nigeria as whole, are ethnic, rather than purely religious.<sup>92</sup> It has been suggested that in order to solve this problem, the question of who is an indigene of a particular place should be resolved constitutionally.<sup>93</sup>

This study has tried to show the immense contributions of Scottish missionaries in Central Nigeria, but also how they indirectly inspired Christian nationalism as a means of preserving the church in Northern Nigeria from destruction by the increasingly pro-Islamic Northern Nigerian government. But by doing that missionaries polarised the North along religious lines. The solution, to our minds, lies in religious understanding and transparent dialogue between Muslims and Christians. At the moment, religion and politics cannot be separated. It therefore means that religion should transcend divisions, purify Nigeria’s body politics and serve as a tool for national cohesion and development. Religious bodies should operate as part of a civil society (as watchdogs) by providing a sense of direction to governments in Nigeria. The mediatory role being played by religious bodies in conflict areas such as Plateau and Kaduna is a step in the right direction. One of these religious bodies is a

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91 See for example, Matthew Hassan Kukah, *Religion Politics and Power in Northern Nigeria*, Ibadan: Spectrum Books Limited, 1993; Ali B. Lamido, ‘Islam as a barrier to the Growth and Mission of the Church in Wusasa diocese’ (D.Min Trinity Episcopal School\for Ministry Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 2005); Yusufu Turaki, *The British Colonial Legacy In Northern: A Social Ethnical Analysis of the Colonial and Post-colonial Society and Politics in Nigeria*, Jos: Challenge Press, 1993; Ado-Kurawa, Ibrahim, *Domestication of Shari’a in Nigeria*, Kano, Transwest Africa, 2002; Ibrahim Ado-Kurawa, *Shari’ah and the Press in Nigeria: Islam versus Western Christian Civilization*, Kano: Kurawa Holdings Limited, 2000; Ibrahim Ado-Kurawa, “Archbishop Carrey, Lady Rose and Religious Tolerance in Northern Nigeria,” <http://www.kanoonline/ibrahimado.2001>.

92 For example Ife and Modakeke conflicts in Ile-Ife, Igbo and Hausa/Fulani conflicts in Jos and Kano and Berom and Hausa/Fulani conflicts in Jos.

93 David Jonah Jang, Governor of Plateau State, in *Daily Trust* Tuesday 8th December 2011. A critical assessment of the phenomenon has been done by Dung Pam Sha in *The Politicisation of Settler-Native Identities and Ethno-Religious Conflicts in Jos, Central Nigeria*, Ibadan: Stirling-Horden Publishers Ltd, 2005.



non-governmental organisation called Inter-Faith Mediation Centre, based in Kaduna and founded by a Muslim imam, Sheikh Muhammad Nurayn Ashafa, and a Christian priest, Pastor James Morel Wuye. They tell the story of what led to the establishment of the Centre:

We both, in the past, had been involved in war of words through various publications, "The Youth Christian Association of Nigeria news bulletin," "The Whole Truth," and the "National Council of Muslim Youth Organisations' News Bulletin" among others. In these papers we express radical, provocative ideas from the standpoints of our religions, on which we would refuse to negotiate for any reason. These uncompromising attitudes, in the past, had resulted in a tense atmosphere, which did not allow room for dialogue or for any form of interaction between us. Everyone was trying to outwit the other.... To our very greatest surprise, as this discussion progressed; we were both startled by some discoveries. Hidden behind the turbaned Imam was a gentleman, not the violent man that the Pastor has assumed he was. Similarly, the suited Pastor was a bird of the same feather as the Imam. We found that we had a lot of things in common.<sup>94</sup>

Just when we were finishing this paper, we read in the *Daily Trust* (a Nigerian national daily) the story that Imam Muhammad Ashafa and Pastor James Wuye were being honoured with an honorary doctorate of law by the University of Massachusetts in Boston, United States of America "for their contributions to religious peace."<sup>95</sup> The search for peace and religious harmony should go beyond the efforts of the Imam and Pastor; government should be seen to be transparent in its management of public wealth, apt and just in distribution of basic social amenities and show of commitment to reduce unemployment among the teeming youth. This might help to reduce youth restiveness seen in the activities of what has become popularly known as Boko Haram.

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## “She Worships at the Kikuyu Church”

### *The Influence of Scottish Missionaries on Language in Worship and Education among African Christians*

*Vicky Khasandi-Telewa*

#### 1 Introduction

This chapter examines the legacy of the Scottish missionaries in Kenya in the area of language use in worship and in education. The Scottish missionaries emphasised the use of the local vernacular to enable the new converts read and understand the Bible and church doctrine clearly. Many years down the road we still find this phenomenon whereby the vernacular is widely used in churches. I survey the trends of language use in education and worship both in Kenya and in Diaspora, among Kenyan Christians. Since missionaries faced linguistic challenges the chapter explores the obstacles they faced as they arrived at these policies and practices and establishes how successful they were in this. I conducted a survey by interviewing and issuing out questionnaires to African Christians in Diaspora in the Greater London Area. I also visited PCEA churches to see what they have in their church libraries, as well as visiting the Kenya National Archives. This was supplemented by secondary data from libraries and the Internet. I found that the missionaries in general and the Scottish in particular played a significant role in laying the foundation of the language use in education and worship manifested in Kenyan Christians today.

This chapter is in two parts: in the first part I examine the background to the Scottish Missionaries in Kenya, their establishment, challenges and contribution to education. Here the aim is to demonstrate their input in the lives and education of Africans in spite of negative attitudes, suspicion and logistical challenges. In the second part I consider the attitude to language use in education and worship among local Kenyans and those in Diaspora. Here, I present results of a survey conducted among African Christians in London. Consequently, I assess these and analyse the possible influences of Scottish missionaries to this state of affairs.

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### 1.1 *Background to the Scottish Missionary Establishment*

First it is worth noting that it is not easy to single out the role of the Scottish missionaries per se as distinct from the missionaries from the other Union members as their work was closely interlinked. Nevertheless, it is apparent that Scotland, though small was very actively involved in mission work and evangelisation of Africans as compared to England and Wales. Yet due to pressing conditions at home Scottish missionaries found they had to liaise with London to be able to be effective and find logistic support to accomplish their burdens of evangelising those in the distant lands. Glover (1970: 289) notes that

After the Union, the contribution of the Scots to Britain's influence abroad, and in particular to the development of the Empire was altogether out of proportion to the size of their own country...Their philosophical attitude to the difficult climates and unhygienic conditions may have been due to the discomfort in which many spent their boyhood at home.

Also they were hard to distinguish from the adventurous explorers and colonial empire builders both in the eyes of their fellow countrymen and in the eyes of their African targeted audiences. I juxtapose the attitudes expressed by two distinct opinion holders below both who demonstrate the misunderstanding and exploitation the missionaries found themselves encountering. On the one hand the colonialist empire builders viewed them as a rich source of guinea pigs that could venture into the dark unknown continent and so to 'clear the bush' for them. Roland (1970: 120) notes how useful the missionaries were to colonialists. Not only were they useful in spreading the English language but they also made the work of the colonialists easier by venturing into difficult areas and 'civilising' the 'natives'.

Obviously, these were not the key objectives of the missionaries, nevertheless they were significant 'side effects' or, more positively, serendipity of their efforts as they paved the way for other settlers with diverse aims to occupy Africa. Some of the later generations of the very Africans the missionaries sacrificed their lives and comforts in order to strive to convert for a better life have looked back at their gallant efforts rather cynically. The famous poet Okot P'Bitek (1970:130), for instance, regarded the missionaries' efforts as no different from earlier invaders that had assaulted a people's sacred lives:

We hear echoes of the same battle cry [St Augustine's, 'all the gods of the gentiles are demons'] from the 15th Century onwards when hordes upon hordes of barbarians from Europe disguised as Christians leapt from

ships Bible and gun in hand, to attack, plunder, murder and enslave the inhabitants of the whole world. The writers of that long period of western domination set out to justify the colonial system by preaching that the world was sick and needed western suppression (rechristened civilisation) in order to survive.

This is an unfortunate misunderstanding as many of these missionaries made great selfless efforts to achieve a divine mission they strongly believed in. Numerous missionaries lost their lives to attack by wild animals, malaria and other tropical diseases and suffered homesickness as they sacrificed their very lives to help a people in need of salvation. We need to judge them in the dominant theoretical standing of the time as Kantian Enlightenment was what mainly guided their great efforts. In this postmodern era, where all religions and, indeed, lifestyles, are considered acceptable people tend to regard them as being discriminative but in their time they were being philanthropic and full of sacrificial love.

As if that is not enough, even their own brethren at home did not fully support their work abroad. In fact, they faced opposition from within the ranks of the home churches with some claiming the Africans were not worth converting. This forced convinced Scottish missionaries to seek support from other quarters such as the non-denominational London Missionary Society. This mixture of denominations contributes to the challenges in distinguishing the work of Scottish missionaries apart from other Christian groups.

The profuse challenges notwithstanding, many Scottish missionaries felt that the need to evangelise Africans overrode those set backs. At the turn of the nineteenth century many ventured overseas to spread the gospel to the unreached. The East African Scottish Industrial Mission first established a base in Kibwezi not far from the coast. There was a desire to move even further inland and in 1898 after overcoming many challenges along the way, they settled for Kikuyu land, in modern day Kenya, which was a preferred site for many other missionaries from other nations. Diverse mission groups established themselves in Kikuyu land.

These Scottish missionaries were not as well received as they might have hoped as there was already bad blood between the local community and other white people. They met a lot of resistance and hostility from the Kikuyu and the colonial government was ruthless in pacifying them. Nevertheless, they were a determined lot and an opportunity availed itself to them due to a desperate situation that ensured because the land became plagued by a severe famine and diseases also afflicted many (Muriuki 1974). Their arrival was, therefore, quite timely as the missionaries provided much relief in



medical services and famine relief among the many destitute. This helped them get appreciation and to entrench them, making their work of evangelism easier.

In fact they grew so much that in 1906, they spread further north into Kikuyuland whereby Arthur Barlow established another mission at Tumutumu in Nyeri area. Their medical services expanded and the education they offered in mission schools provided the colonial government with 'readers' that provided assistance with evangelisation, medical services as well as teaching others in the so called 'bush schools'. Soon, former warriors who embraced basic literacy were able to work as junior clerks and paid hands for the colonial government (p. 178).

As mentioned earlier, Kikuyuland held a special attraction to diverse missionary groups. The American Gospel Missionary Society (GMS) established its mission at Thembigwa at the same time the Church of Scotland Mission (CSM) settled at Kikuyu in 1898. The Gospel Mission Society later occupied Kambui (from 1902) and Ng'enda (1906). Other missionaries soon flooded the place including the Church Missionary Society, African Inland Mission and Roman Catholics (Wamagatta 2007). This area was popular as the climate was favourable to white people as compared to harsher areas, among other considerations.

The Scottish missionaries' work further expanded in 1948 when Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA) was formed. This was done by the merging of the work of the GMS in Kenya with that of the CSM. The Americans faced a lot of challenges that forced them to relinquish their work to the Scots. It also shows how positively the Scots were perceived among other groups as to be chosen to continue the work of the GSM. There were other pressing issues that forced the dwindling GSM to choose to merge with the CSM, some which were of its own making and others beyond its control. Wamagatta (*ibid*) sums them up as follows:

At the core were chronic financial problems which kept worsening with time as the size of the People's Church of Christ dwindled due to schism and natural attrition. The uncompromising stance taken by the mission during the 1929–30 female circumcision crisis also cost it dearly when it lost about a quarter of its adherents which translated to the loss of the financial support that they had previously given to the mission. The Great Economic Depression of 1929–35 made the mission bankrupt. The failure of the mission to train and hand over much of the responsibility to its African converts proved to be another nail in its coffin. Finally, the mission's inability to comply with the persistent government

pressure for increased educational efficiency finally forced it to merge with the CSM.

This merger greatly benefited the CSM as the missionaries were now able to access Kiambu, Murang'a and Nyeri districts where they had been unable to reach before. They had been largely confined to Thogoto area of Kikuyu (which, folk etymology has it to be a mispronunciation of *Scotland* by the Kikuyus). The GSM needed the merger as its missionaries were fewer and the support from America very low. Linking up was the only way to continue running their education programmes successfully. Nevertheless, even though initially the merger was a partnership between the two mission societies, by and by the support from America dwindled and the CSM became dominant. With time the PCEA lost its American People's Church of Christ flavour and even fully adopted sprinkling instead of immersion in baptism as was done in Scotland (Wanyoike 1974).

It is worthwhile to point out here that co-operation among missions was common, especially when it came to education. This is one of the reasons why trying to distinguish each mission's achievement as distinct from others becomes difficult. For instance, when it became necessary to expand into secondary education for Africans the Alliance High School was founded on March 1 1926 by the Alliance of Protestant Churches consisting of The Church of Scotland Mission together with the Church of the Province of Kenya (CPK), Africa Inland Church (AIC), and the Methodist Church. Each of these ran primary education but when it came to secondary education it became necessary to cooperate so as to achieve better standards for this magnitude of need.

It would be incomplete to close this section without mentioning the challenge the missionaries faced concerning female circumcision or as is often called 'female genital mutilation'. This was a very controversial issue and 1929–1930, a time of reckoning for missionaries. Some attempted to take a non-compromising stand and condemned it as barbaric, much to their peril. Female circumcision might look repulsive and outrightly condemnable to an outsider but one needs to understand the complex attractions from an insider's perspective. There were too many deep-rooted beliefs, customary practices and significance attached to it that required a more informed and understanding approach to win the hearts over first before attempting to convince the community to eradicate the practice. Muriuki (1974) explains the very prominent position FGM held in Kikuyu society:

Compared to the various ceremonies that every Kikuyu underwent from birth to death, none was more significant than initiation. Its importance

was underscored by the fact that it was the basic prerequisite for the attainment of full adult status...initiation conferred social status, and the erstwhile youths became full members of the community.

p. 118–119

Granted Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) has many gross health dangers as explicitly illustrated in Toubia (1993) it is still surprising that the practice has had such deep roots and desirability among its very 'victims'. Those that took a harsh and patronising stance faced a revolt and, in fact, this was one of the main reasons that led Africans to rebel against the missionaries and form African independent churches that promoted their own customs including FGM. Lynn Thomas (e.g. Thomas 2000) has explained in great detail, the dilemmas faced by missionaries and the colonial government in trying to eradicate FGM. At times they were forced to advocate for a 'milder' form so as to prevent early pregnancies and abortion especially among the Meru neighbours. It was all to do with the reverent attitude they had towards the education and other ceremonies that accompanied the actual 'cut' that were crucial and complex. Peterson (2006) also explains this as he analyses the autobiographies of two people who lived through the period of the missionaries. Many tribulations of missionaries are captured by these authors.

## 1.2 *Related Literature*

Wamagatta (2007) provides an informed discussion of the formation of the PCEA church in Kenya. He traces the origins to the American GSM and Scottish CSM and systematically outlines the deterioration of the GSM due to circumstances of their own making and those beyond themselves such as the Great Depression that led to bankruptcy and the World Wars that led to staff shortage. These among other reasons led to the merging of the two missions with the CSM being the beneficiary, reaping where they did not sow. However, the fact that the Scottish Mission was chosen instead of the proposed AIM shows its success and well organised missionary work.

It is common to find many PCEA establishments in Kenya bearing the memorial name 'Arthur'. We have plenty of Arthur Schools, such as the famous one in Kariokor Nairobi, Arthur Memorial libraries, Arthur wings in hospitals and Arthur dormitories in schools, among others. Arthur is a popular name among the PCEA in Kenya as there were two prominent Arthurs involved in Scottish mission work in Kenya. These were Arthur Barlow and John William Arthur. Brian G. MacIntosh's Ph. D dissertation 'The Scottish Mission in Kenya, 1891–1923' is a most informative summary of the lives and works of these and other famous Scottish Missionaries in Kenya. The information on the lives and

times of some of the Scottish missionaries provide very good insight on their legacy on language of worship and education in Kenya and Diasporas. In particular, the information on the two Arthurs: Arthur Ruffell Barlow, Church of Scotland missionary and linguist, who was born in Edinburgh in 1888 and John William Arthur, Church of Scotland medical missionary in East Africa, who was born in Glasgow in 1881 are particularly informative.

A case in point, is how we learn of Arthur Barlow's interest in, and grasp of the Kikuyu language and dialects that meant he was often employed as a translator and his intimate knowledge of the Kikuyu people made him a trusted counsellor. We are also told of how this got him in trouble with the white settler community in his early days as we find out that he was sent back home when at 17 he was found to interact too closely with the Kikuyu. He partook of their foods and participated in their traditional dances something the white community considered dangerous to their perceived superiority and high standing. Barlow's work with the Kikuyu language continued, he prepared a grammar which became a standard and initiated a bible translation. He was very knowledgeable of the Kikuyu language and customs thus became a counsellor on many of these questions. He also wrote prolifically, including a dictionary and Kikuyu grammar and idiom.

John William Arthur was also a prominent missionary working in Kikuyu land. He was concerned with the health department as well as with its evangelical and educational work. One of his notable achievements was opening the mission's first hospital thus greatly helping to treat many of the numerous tropical diseases plaguing both settlers and missionaries, as well as the natives. Today the health division has developed so profoundly that it has specialist units such that people are referred to the specialist Eye Clinic from all over Kenya, whereby quality services are provided at a discounted price affordable by ordinary people. During John William Arthur's tenure the baptized converts grew from none to well over 10,000. Arthur worked closely with other missions in the Alliance of protestant missions and was a spokesman for the interests and rights of natives. Nevertheless there were many challenges these faced the most prominent being the fiasco over female circumcision. The local Kikuyus valued female circumcision so much that the hardliner stance taken by missionaries caused many converts to desert and revert to traditional life. Among those that had gained some education and saw its value preferred to form their own Kikuyu Independent Schools where they could get the best from the missionaries while upholding their valued customs.

Having outlined the background of the Scottish missionary work in Kenya I will now look at their legacy hundreds of years down the line. I will assess the influence of their language policy and attitudes to languages on the current

attitudes to language use in Kenya today and among Kenyans in the UK Diaspora.

## 2 Language in Worship

The primacy of language in the spreading of an ideology cannot be over rated. Missionaries found it imperative to learn the languages of their potential converts in order to understand them and reach their souls. This was often an arduous task especially as Africa is highly multilingual. Even anthropologists and some philosophers discovered this necessity and went about learning different mother tongues of the groups they studied. In spite of his well-known criticism of much of the work of the early western folk in Africa, whether as missionaries, educators or simply adventurous explorers, Okot P'Bitek 1970: 42–49 still praises those that made an effort to study African languages:

If David Hume and Rousseau were the high priests of the superiority of western culture in that they placed Christianity at the top of the ladder of 'progress', and what they considered were the religions of other peoples at the bottom...the important contributions of these outstanding scholars is that they brushed away the cobwebs that cluttered much of the nineteenth century speculative writings on African religions by carrying out systematic research using the languages of the peoples they studied.

Osabutey-Aguedze (1990:27) reiterates:

It is universally acknowledged that the language of a people is an embodiment of its philosophy, aspirations and hopes, desires and anxieties, predilections and antipathies, and the underlying motives that actuate, in their daily life, individuals of such a people. While the psyche of the African is not easily fathomed, there is a great possibility of discovering, to an appreciable degree through the medium of their languages and the fundamental principles of their early thought, which, indeed, subsequently became a great dynamic in shaping the destiny of some great nations and empires, their outlook on life, the impelling forces which inspire them with a noble emulation and the undesirabilities which drive them into aversion.

In endeavouring to learn their languages so as to reach the Africans there were many hurdles to overcome by the Scottish missionaries. There were numerous

languages, some spoken by just a few, and diverse dialects of each language. Nonetheless the missionaries were fully persuaded about the need to spread the gospel to all creatures that they continued sending more and more abroad to spread the gospel. A distinguishing characteristic of their work involved the learning of the languages of the local people they evangelised to so as to reach the heart of the people. In this we learn the Scottish missionaries were slightly better off than their English counterparts as they were endowed with the Scottish flair for languages that their English counterparts were not quite distinguished in (Glover *op cit*).

The same problem faced American GSM missionaries. Wamagatta (2007) notes some of the challenges new missionaries faced when they arrived in Kenya. He gives an example of the Knapps at Thembigwa mission who could not preach as they were hindered by their lack of knowledge of the Kikuyu language. They therefore had to accordingly spend most of their time learning the language which, Wamagatta confesses, is not easy for Caucasians to master. They had to seek assistance from another missionary Lester Severn of the AIM, who had much experience in the study of the Swahili and Kamba languages. Since these are all Bantu languages with time the new missionaries were able to learn the language and even published a copy of the Kikuyu vocabulary. By 1902 they had so mastered the language that they were now able to translate some church songs, the Lord's Prayer and some portions of the Gospel of Luke.

This shows how much the missionaries valued the local languages as a channel to reach the natives. In fact the inspiration for this paper was drawn out of my observation in my seven years of living in London, of many African Christians in Diaspora appearing to prefer to patronise churches where vernaculars are used as opposed to the mainstream churches. In particular I focussed on Kenyan vernaculars, in particular, Kikuyu as it was in those areas that Scottish missionaries were most active.

I also observed the apparent rigidity with which the PCEA holds onto its Kikuyu services even in Nairobi and non-Kikuyu areas such as Meru. I lived in Thogoto while attending the Kikuyu Campus of University of Nairobi and observed how full the Kikuyu service of the PCEA was, compared to the English one. There were two services held at the Church of the Torch mission, the heart of Presbyterianism in Kenya [in fact, in] East Africa. To move with the times they have introduced an English service but it is clear that this is not the key service. The Kikuyu service is the longer, better attended and apparently preferable one. Thus, I was prompted to investigate the roots of this adherence to Kikuyu. As a linguist this interested me as I am a believer in language maintenance especially when it comes to languages threatened with extinction (UNESCO 1953, 2003). The interest in using Kikuyu for services is now so

entrenched in PCEA that even in modern day Kenya there is still the preference of using Kikuyu for church services even in the cosmopolitan capital, Nairobi! It is not always treated kindly by those from other ethnic groups as the issue of ethnicity has become so politicised that it is almost synonymous with 'tribalism'. I thus conducted a survey of attitude to use of language in worship among Kenyan Christians in the UK Diaspora as well as from other Africans in Diaspora to gauge these attitudes to language use in worship. This leads us to part two of the paper which deals with this survey.

### 3 Methodology of Research

I used observation including participant observation during my stay in London to collect data on church practices and language use. I also conducted a survey by issuing out 20 questionnaires randomly to African Christians in the Greater London area with questions regarding their worship preferences (see appendix). From the Kenyan context I used ethnographic methods especially participant observation as I attended services nearly every Sunday for a year in Thogoto area of Kikuyu, which was the biggest centre for the PCEA. To compile this paper I also had to investigate various sources. These are the Kenya National Archives and published and unpublished primary and secondary sources. The archival materials include diaries, newspapers, periodicals, reports, minutes of meetings, correspondence. Secondary sources include dissertations, theses, journals and books that I also consulted in order to corroborate and complement the primary materials. Further the Internet provided more information relevant to this paper.

#### 3.1 *Findings*

I now present the responses from the twenty questionnaires that were returned. I was actually privileged to get a 100 percent response rate from the respondents. The results are presented below:

It was apparent that many African Christians who chose to go to their 'home' churches are motivated by language as well as other factors. For 70% of the respondents they chose to attend these churches because of language related reasons. A respondent attended a Roman Catholic Church and switched to Apostolic church says:

Language was a strong motivation.

You express yourself better in your own language; your language is important no matter how small your community. It has got a special meaning to your life.



Another respondent also thought the same:

Language phraseology has an effect on meanings; the Word is the same though; right attitudes make things OK for me.

Most of those that preferred to have their own languages used in worship indicated that it made them feel a closer relationship with God when they could express themselves in their own language. One pointed out:

Language is your identity, which has a rich meaning; your original language has an impact in your life.

However, there was also a case whereby one respondent seemed to enjoy chanting in Latin during the Roman Catholic services. I remember how Latin was used well into the 1970s in Catholic churches in Kenya. The priest would chant some phrases in Latin and the congregation would chant back, little understanding what they were saying. It was because there was need to communicate in people's own languages that the mass was translated into local languages. Indeed language has always had a special meaning when it comes to worship as can be seen in the insistence on Arabic for Muslims, Sanskrit for some Vedic scriptures, and some congregations still use Latin in Roman Catholic services, especially during ceremonial rites. Somehow the choice of language seems to create a certain sense of belonging. The respondent did not seem to mind that she did not understand the Latin chants. She seems to enjoy the mystical aura of the unfamiliar language. She remarked:

Although Latin songs are sung some times, this keeps the tradition going, and makes me feel closer to Jesus.

For 30% of the respondents, though, the language used did not matter in their choice of church to attend. Nevertheless, they still preferred these 'home' churches for social and cultural reasons. Most cited freedom of expression in song and dance, a feature they claimed was lacking in many of the mainstream UK churches. One respondent chose a church because of

Dynamism of their worship, having been with R.C. renewal, it's dynamic and accommodates others with guitars and other musical instruments. "There is too much conservatism and inflexibility in the other UK churches"; and there are too many various churches among the Pentecostals due to lust for money.

Some of these others' attitudes are sampled below:

It [language] is not a barrier, as long as I understand it.

Main language used is English; I prefer that interpreter is used if another language is preached in

I find my church to be livelier than the UK churches, and we have all night prayers very often, unlike the UK churches which do not have any all night revivals

We use drums (ngoma) and hosho, and services are conducted in a manner that I am more familiar with

A Shona respondent

For one respondent, however, there is need for one to adapt to a new environment. Even though she enjoyed and would have preferred the vibrant dynamics in worship with lively song and dance she philosophises thus:

Miss the ones at home on the part of music; "otherwise when you in Rome you do what the Romans do."

We see here that there is a conservatism still practised in many parts of Africa that has been lost in the liberal Diaspora. Some Christian worshippers crave the originality of the old time Christianity and go to great lengths to find a church that has some semblance of that. We see here that some respondents considered the wearing of trousers by women to be an 'abomination' a thing that can shock many in the UK who have seen women wear trousers since they born.

In my own Church we interpret everything in English so everyone is carried along. We also pray a lot more, express ourselves more, and there is impact in worship and an outpouring of expression. We are in no hurry for time, and I feel more of the presence of God. The women who minister do not wear trousers.

The respondent believes that women should not wear trousers according to Deuteronomy 22:5 that talks of women being forbidden from wearing men's clothes and vice versa, this being an abomination in the sight of the Lord. Therefore it was shocking to find women ministers wearing tight trousers on the pulpit. She was glad to find (after much searching) a church where this was not the practice. We can see from the above quote that the issue of time was also a factor, she was surprised at how much worshippers seem to be in a hurry to finish the service and leave. To her, church was not only a place of worship

but also socialising. She preferred the minister taking his time in preaching and after that for the worshippers to take time and socialise, as there was a lot of loneliness in the UK:

I do miss the specials, singing and fellowship amongst brethren at home however. Also the five-fold ministry, my bond with my friends at home is missed. There are cultural misunderstandings at times, though being here has its advantages. It is difficult to be embraced by some, and takes time before they make you feel welcome.

Another issue that arose is the dynamics of money. Some worshippers were influenced in their choice of church by the handling of the monetary question. One of the respondents left his earlier church because, he claimed the pastor was more interested in making money than in preaching the gospel and ministering to the needs of the congregation.

My old Church's pastor was after money from believers

Similar sentiments were also expressed by two other respondents who were put off by the monetary concern and apparent discrimination on class basis among the congregation and even ministers:

UK Churches are after money as I've visited most. When you are in need, no one seems to be available, including pastors and officers; they rank people by their dress and looks, money or status.

Pastor was a hypocrite & would discard presents for fear of being bewitched; access to the pastor was restricted to a 'higher class'.

For this respondent the common curse of witchcraft in Africa was still felt even in the churches. For many in Africa there is dread of witchcraft and its fear-some effects. However, it is worthwhile to point out that this practice was not expressed among the Kenyan Christians in Diaspora. For the PCEA Christians and indeed many mainstream churches in Kenya one of the first things one has to discard when joining a church is witchcraft. In fact, most of the songs sung condemn adultery, witchcraft, drunkenness as among the 'worst sins' and it is the immediate abandonment of these that demonstrates to the world that one has now become a Christian. On the contrary in the Central Africa and West African churches there was still an apparent fear of witchcraft.

A few other responses to the question on choice of church are expressed below:

I feel very comfortable with Shona being used in church. Besides in my house and when I am with my family this is the only other place that I get to communicate in my own language, and my daughter gets a chance to learn her own mother language.

Cultures and preaching of the word are different. Love is strong here e.g. in bereavement cases. There is more tithing and offering because people know the reason why they tithe whereas due to lack of money it was not prevalent at home.

The Church is dominated by a Yoruba group. Sometimes the preacher breaks into his own language which is fine with many attendants there, but feels tribalistic to me. I however understand the preference for own language as it has an impact.

So we have seen some of the reasons people choose to attend churches where their languages are used. It is clear that though language is important there are other sociocultural reasons that contribute to this choice. We have also seen that the PCEA emphasis on the use of Kikuyu has impacted on the present use of Kikuyu in PCEA churches worldwide, even in the capital city and in cosmopolitan areas. The contribution of missionaries like Arthur Ruffell Barlow to the development of the Kikuyu language and its use in worship cannot be underrated.

Indeed, language is a strong marker of identity and helps people feel united even in far away places. For those in Diaspora it is even more appealing to find a church where one's native language is used in worship. Many people in Kenya feel good worshipping in their local languages, especially when it comes to singing and praying. The Kikuyu are also a people that settle in diverse places without much trouble. This has some historical causes due to the settler colonialism system adopted by the British in Kenya. Since Kikuyuland was so attractive to many settlers, they rendered the locals landless. They had to move to other parts of Kenya so they got used to settling wherever they find a suitable place. They usually moved in groups and the church was one way of helping them maintain their Kikuyu identity and also try to compensate for their alienation from home. This PCEA preference for the Kikuyu language suits them well.

We will now examine language in education.

#### 4      **Language in Education**

Having examined language in worship we now turn our attention to language in education. Scottish missionaries were as involved in education as they were

in conversion of souls. This is especially the case as the ideology of the day (Kantian Enlightenment) demanded not just a bringing of the gospel light to the inhabitants of the Dark Continent but also opening up of their minds through western education. This often meant disregarding any forms of education the Africans had that had theretofore been used to bring up responsible family members, as irrelevant and immoral. Wamagatta (2007) points out how mothers were accused of instilling a love of sensual enjoyment into their children from babyhood. It was further assumed that the mothers also “taught them that violation of the seventh commandment of our Decalogue is honourable” (p. 79).

Indeed there was often a conflict between the informal traditional education systems that encourage apprenticeship and character building and the formal knowledge oriented western mode being introduced by the missionaries. On the issue of female circumcision, in particular, which was a very important traditional education rite of passage among many Africans, the missionaries were strictly adamantly against, leading to a debacle. Besides, the missionaries had to get involved in the provision of education because the Africans were illiterate and yet needed to be able to read the Bible and understand catechism. Furthermore, there was a lack of government schools for Africans. As Philp (1936: 90) a CSM missionary put it, “the mind...must be opened to receive new ideas, and this cannot be done without education... In seeking to reach the hearts of the Africans, therefore, the mind cannot be ignored.”

#### 4.1 *Aims of Education*

Many of the Christian missionaries' aims of educating the Africans were not exactly the same as the government would have liked. The main aim of the missionaries was to convert the unconverted and spread the gospel light. Education was just a channel through which this could be achieved. The case of the GMS highlights this. Education was simply part of the mission's gospel package (Wamagatta 2007) since he points out the GMS was emphatic that education devoid of the gospel would do more harm to the Africans than good. He cites the missionary Knapp who alleged that education made “a worse rascal of the unsaved than he was before; for he has means to exercise his rascality to a greater advantage than he did before he learned to read” (ibid: 8). Indeed by enabling the pupils to be able to read the Bible many became converted. Education was also important for Africans as the missionaries could get helpers in the mission work from among the educated converts. They were in dire need of catechists, clerks, teachers as well as evangelists among other helpers. This became even more necessary when missionaries became fewer from

problems back home such as the Great depression and ill health due to malaria and other deadly tropical diseases. Education also encouraged enlightened Christian couples to wed and raise Christian children to further the missionaries' work so its value cannot be overemphasised.

#### 4.1.1 Africans' Aims

The African, on the other hand, attended school for various reasons some not directly at par with the missionaries. Most Africans valued mission education as they could become literate and look for jobs in the government and on white settlers' private farms. Once they were able to read and write, therefore, many deserted school leading to a very high drop out rate. This was very frustrating to the Scottish missionaries. We are told, for example that on one occasion, the Kiambu DC, W. Isaac, offered young men in Kambui a monthly wage of 20 rupees (\$6.65). This was irresistible as the missionaries could only afford \$2.00 or six rupees a month (Wamagatta 2007:8). Even to the committed converts this was a big temptation in the face of abject poverty among many African families.

Apart from improving their prospects for better employment some went to school simply to earn some money. At one time the missionaries reverted to offering their pupils a little money to keep them in school as many of their peers were working on settlers' farms and so the pupils appeared disadvantaged. They could not sustain these payments, however, due to financial constraints and in the process lost many of their pupils/convertes. We are told that in 1908, the Scottish mission lost a great many pupils when they could not continue paying them to attend school (see Macpherson 1970).

In addition to these motives, many Africans also went to school for linguistic reasons. Even though most of the missionaries spent many years struggling to learn the language and idiom of the Africans to whom they ministered, many Africans still found it necessary to learn the English language. They still felt it was advantageous to speak to the missionaries and settlers in the English language. Thus, many Africans went to school with the express aim of learning the English language. Once they had mastered it enough they dropped out of school and sought employment. This way they were able to access opportunities that those without this advantage could not: they could earn bigger wages.

Finally, some other pupils went to school to evade recruitment into the government's forced labour service because pupils were exempt from such service when school was in session. On the other hand, some other parents allowed their children to go to school because their educated children would increase their influence and status in the

With these conflicts in the aim of school among missionaries and their pupils we get a picture of how frustrating it was for the missionaries to sustain their education work. Nevertheless a few stayed on and completed their education some becoming catechists and evangelists to continue the mission work in Kenya.

#### 4.2 *Instruction*

The Scottish missionaries in Kikuyu land followed the general trend among other mission stations whereby they provided a broad enough curriculum but whose emphasis was religious education with the aim of converting the soul. The vernacular was used for the initial education as the young could otherwise hardly comprehend what was being taught. For the initial two years they learned basic reading and writing, arithmetic, agriculture, hygiene and games, in addition to the all important religion. On successful completion of the elementary education pupils were promoted to the intermediate schools that went up to class four where other subjects were gradually added to cater for the more advanced pupils. These included geography, Swahili, English, drawing, teaching, preaching and typewriting. The medium of instruction was still mainly Kikuyu. The few that completed these successfully got promoted to junior secondary schools whereby the language of instruction shifted from vernaculars to English. Nevertheless, the education that the missions offered was still considered largely shallow by the government. Many of the teachers were unqualified (Philp 1936: 89–90).

This prompted the government to introduce a standardized vernacular examination for the Kikuyu teachers in 1924. The aim was for improving the standards of education and getting rid of unqualified teachers. The examination included papers in arithmetic, history, hygiene, Swahili, geography and agriculture. Also from 1926 teachers could join the government run Jeanes School and acquire a primary teacher's certificate (see Macintosh 1969).

It is interesting that even as early as this time the missionaries appear well informed of what is now commonly understood to be the theoretical and practical advantage of educating a child in a language s/he understands well, before introducing a second or foreign language. I have argued elsewhere of this importance (Khasandi-Telewa 2010) and, indeed, many scholars and theorists have urged for the noteworthy pedagogical rewards of this position which are evidenced consistently in academic writing (Benson 2004; Baker 2001; Phillipson 1992; Skutnabb-Kangas 2000; Cummins 2000). Not allowing a learner to be instructed in their first language initially is referred to as 'submersion by Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) where she compares it to shoving the learner into the deep end of a pool without having taught them how to swim and holding them



there. Benson (2004) adds that with difficulties such as 'low levels of teacher education, poorly designed, inappropriate curricula and lack of adequate school facilities, submersion makes both learning and teaching extremely difficult, particularly when the language of instruction is also foreign to the teacher' (p. 2). These are supported by Cummins' (1996, 2001) *interdependence theory* and the concept of *common underlying proficiency* which both aver that there is a positive transfer of skills once a learner is comfortable with literacy in the first language and is now learning a second language. It is also highly argued for by proponents of linguistic human rights such as Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) and Phillipson (1992, 1998).

Thus, whatever their motives for insisting on vernacular education the missionaries were on the correct path as demonstrated by arguments in theories of preferable use of language in education.

There were some conflicts arising due to differing aims of education among the missionaries and Africans, as well as between the government and missionaries. For instance only the Scottish CSM and the Roman Catholic schools were commended by the government for providing technical education that helped Africans become self reliant. The government accused other missionaries of providing education that was not practical enough though these defended themselves by pointing out the fruits of their labours. It was evident in the cleaner, more hygienic villages, successful small industries, carriage transport, carpenters, masons, stone dressers, drivers and clerks (Cagnolo 1935).

## 5 Conclusion

This paper has shown the role of Scottish missionaries in the development of a vernacular identity in worship and education in Kikuyu land in Kenya. This reflects upon them favourably as compared to some e.g. the French, who saw nothing good in Africa, not even the languages, forcing Africans to learn their languages and prompting them to hate their vernaculars. I have shown the challenges the missionaries faced through the years as they strove to bring the gospel light and education to brighten up the Africans' souls and minds. I have then assessed attitudes to choice of churches that use vernaculars in worship among Africans in the UK Diaspora showing the roles language plays in these choices. Finally I have analysed language in education among the Scottish missionaries in Kenya and their influence on the language use in PCEA churches today even in cosmopolitan areas. The language policies in Kenya today show some of this Scottish missionary legacy though many have been overturned by

petty bourgeoisie that wanted to maintain colonial influences and denigrate African languages.

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## Appendix

### *Religious Practice for Immigrants Questionnaire*

The following questions are simply to establish worship trends of respondents who are immigrants to the U.K. No part of this research will go to any bodies/organisations except the researcher. All responses will be anonymous and strictly confidential. There is no right or wrong answer, so please feel completely at liberty to give your honest opinion.

- (i) Which Church (es) do you attend in the UK?
- (ii) Is it/are they the same as the one (s) you attended 'back home'?

Yes ☐

No ☐

- (iii) What are the reasons you choose to attend it/them?
- (iv) What language(s) is/are used in the services?
- (v) Comment on any relationship between the language used in the Church and your attitude towards the Church.
- (vi) Do you have any other comment on the Church in the UK as compared to the one(s) at home?
- (vii) Are there any other reasons why you prefer this Church/these churches compared to local UK Churches?

## *Contemporary Perspectives*





## “A Very Definite Radicalism”

*The Early Development of the Scotland–Malawi Partnership, 2004–09*

*Kenneth R. Ross*

### Introduction: Scotland and Malawi 1859–2009

The year 2009 marks the completion of 150 years of interaction between Scotland and Malawi (formerly Nyasaland). Links between the two nations began with David Livingstone's journeys up the Zambezi and Shire rivers to Lake Malawi in 1859.<sup>1</sup> Not

only his life of friendship and engagement with the “Nyasa” people—but even more, his death in central Africa—galvanised the people of Scotland to make a commitment to this particular region long before the borders of the modern nation of Malawi had been set. In the mid-1870s, both the Church of Scotland and the Free Church of Scotland established missions in Malawi—the former in the south, the latter in the north.<sup>2</sup> Before long, Malawians were coming to Scotland for further training, and a two-way movement of people and ideas between the two nations was underway.<sup>3</sup>

From the beginning it was a relationship involving different sectors of society and comprising many aspects. Livingstone's vision of Christianity and commerce as a solution to the evil of the slave trade in Africa ensured that both the churches and the business community were highly involved in the effort to transform the Central African economy. Alongside the church work, with its emphasis on education and healthcare, the African Lakes Company was established to focus on fulfilling the commercial aspect of Livingstone's vision.<sup>4</sup>

1 See David Livingstone and Charles Livingstone, *Narrative of an Expedition to the Zambezi and its Tributaries, and of the Discoveries of Lakes Shirwa and Nyassa, 1858–1864*, London: John Murray, 1865; Andrew C. Ross, *David Livingstone: Mission and Empire*, London & New York: Hambledon and London, 2002.

2 See Andrew C. Ross, *Blantyre Mission and the Making of Modern Malawi*, Blantyre: CLAIM, 1996; John McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi, 1875–1940*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977; 2nd ed. Blantyre: CLAIM, 2000.

3 This paper draws in parts on an earlier, shorter article which appeared as Kenneth R. Ross, “No One Can Shave Your Head in your Absence”: Scotland and Malawi Today,” *Edinburgh Review*, Vol. 118 (2006), pp. 25–30.

4 See Hugh W. Macmillan, “The Origins and Development of the African Lakes Company, 1878–1908,” Ph.D., University of Edinburgh, 1970.

The relationship took a directly political form when, in the late 1880s, it seemed that southern Malawi might become part of Portuguese East Africa. A popular campaign in Scotland and a heavily subscribed public petition persuaded the British Government that this must not be allowed to happen, and Nyasaland came into being as a British Protectorate.<sup>5</sup> Likewise in the 1890s, when Cecil Rhodes attempted to incorporate Nyasaland in his British South Africa Company, it was the Scottish missions which frustrated his ambitions and secured Nyasaland's Protectorate status.<sup>6</sup> As Roland Oliver summarises:

Nyasaland (later Malawi) was a shaving from the north-eastern corner of Rhodes' empire, which Lord Salisbury took under direct imperial control, because British missionaries were already established there...who have made plain their antipathy to Chartered Company rule.<sup>7</sup>

In these developments the Scottish involvement was decisive. As George Shepperson observed,

the Scots' pioneering of British Central Africa and their spirited opposition to the possibility of its passing to Portugal in the late 1880's may be envisaged, from one angle, as the attempt by a group of peoples who had all the aspirations of a nation but little of the structure and substance of one to make a final fling at nationhood by acquiring at last the Caledonian colony which had been denied them since the failure of the seventeenth century Darien venture.<sup>8</sup>

Later, in the 1950s, when Nyasaland did fall into the clutches of the racist Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, it was debates in the Church of Scotland General Assembly which did much to persuade the British Government that independence was the proper path forward for Malawi.<sup>9</sup> Still later, in the early 1990s, when Malawians began their struggle to break free from the shackles of a decadent one-party system, the influence of the Church of Scotland proved

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<sup>5</sup> See Ross, *Blantyre Mission*, pp. 85–104.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 109–116.

<sup>7</sup> Roland Oliver, *The African Experience*, London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1991, p. 181.

<sup>8</sup> George A. Shepperson, "External Factors in the Development of African Nationalism, with Particular Reference to British Central Africa," *Phylon: The Atlanta University Review of Race and Culture*, Vol. XXII/3 (1961), pp. 207–228 [212].

<sup>9</sup> See Andrew C. Ross, *Colonialism to Cabinet Crisis: A Political History of Malawi*, Zomba: Kachere, 2009; K. Nyamayaro Mufuka, *Missions and Politics in Malawi*, Kingston, Ontario: Limestone Press, 1977.



again to be a significant source of support.<sup>10</sup> Malawian President Bingu wa Mutharika did not lack justification when he declared, at the celebration of the 150th anniversary of David Livingstone's arrival, that "the people of Scotland have always stood behind the people of Malawi."<sup>11</sup>

Through all those years, the "come and go" between Scotland and Malawi has continued, touching the experience of countless families and communities in both nations. In the military, the civil service, the legal profession, engineering, agriculture, religion, education, healthcare, commerce—in almost every sector of national life—there is a history of shared engagement. Less tangible, but not less influential, are the personal influences. There are Scots whose lives have been immeasurably enriched by the opportunity to share in the love and the laughter of community life in Malawi. There are Malawians who have discovered that the apparently dour Scots can be the truest and most loyal of friends. David Rubadiri, former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Malawi, captures something of the quality of these relationships:

Malawi is very much a Scottish country because of the early presence of the Scots Mission here.... Malawi is a Scotsman's country. The friends we knew and lived with are people who, though they've retired back to Scotland, are people who are in spirit with us here. I know it doesn't make sense to put it that way, [but] what I'm saying is that when you have lived and experienced at a spiritual and human level, human issues and problems being asked and answered, those you've experienced all those questions and answers with never leave! So though I know they are in Scotland, each time I move around Malawi, I feel them around....because they are part and parcel of a great experience.<sup>12</sup>

### Relations Rekindled Today

In 1961, prior to independence, George Shepperson drew attention to the affinity between the two nations:

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- 10 See Kenneth R. Ross, "Malawi's Peaceful Revolution 1992–94: the Role of the Church of Scotland," *Scottish Church History Society Records*, Vol. XXVII (1997), pp. 280–304.
  - 11 President Ngwazi Dr Bingu wa Mutharika, Speech at the Celebration of the 150th Anniversary of David Livingstone's Arrival in Malawi, Kamuzu Stadium, Blantyre, 11 April 2009.
  - 12 David Rubadiri, cit. Billy Kay, *The Scottish World: A Journey into the Scottish Diaspora*, Edinburgh & London: Mainstream Publishing, 2006, p. 205.

The predominant European culture in Nyasaland until very recent times has been Scottish: in fact, the histories of Scotland and Nyasaland pursue remarkably parallel courses. Both are poor; but both have distinctive educational traditions which have reinforced the conviction of their many migrants that they are worth better jobs than their homeland can offer them. From such conditions, there has sprung up in both countries a very definite radicalism, at home and abroad.<sup>13</sup>

The close relationship between the two nations has been sustained since Malawi's independence in 1964, and it became apparent around the time of the millennium that something was stirring in Scotland–Malawi relations. Strathclyde University, which incorporates David Livingstone's alma mater Anderson College, and Bell College, the higher education institution closest to his birthplace, demonstrated this with the creation of the Malawi Millennium Project, which has caught the imagination of a new generation of Scots and completed significant development projects in Malawi.<sup>14</sup>

This fresh enthusiasm has given rise to a new round of networking, bringing together groups, large and small, whose work expresses the close relationship between the two nations. The Lord Provosts of both Glasgow and Edinburgh gave their support as a formally organised Scotland–Malawi Partnership came into being in 2004. Having become a registered charity in 2005, the Partnership functions as a civil society alliance that brings together a wide variety of organisations concerned with Malawi, with the aim of increasing collaboration and multiplying best practice. Its stated objective is “to inspire people and organisations of Scotland to be involved with Malawi in an informed, coordinated and effective way so that both nations benefit.”<sup>15</sup> Simultaneously, in Malawi, a Committee was formed to build up the Malawi end of the partnership.

This rekindling of Scotland's relationship with Malawi has coincided with the early years of the devolution settlement under which certain powers were devolved to the Scottish Parliament while others continued to be exercised from Westminster. Though foreign affairs is a “reserved power” at Westminster, May 2005 saw the Scottish First Minister, Jack McConnell, making an official visit to Malawi. A reciprocal visit to Scotland by President Bingu wa Mutharika, on the occasion of the seminal Scotland–Malawi Conference in November

13 Shepperson, “External Factors” p. 212.

14 See <http://www.strath.ac.uk/projects/malawi>.

15 *Scotland Malawi Partnership Strategic Plan 2008–11*, Edinburgh: Scotland Malawi Partnership, 2008, p. 3.

2005, featured the signing of a Cooperation Agreement between Scotland and Malawi. The Agreement states,

Scotland and Malawi have a long history of collaboration, particularly in health and education. Both countries share a wish to build upon this history by actively engaging through partnership. This is a reciprocal partnership based upon sharing experiences and skills. It is *an opportunity to learn from each other* and to recognise the needs of our two countries.<sup>16</sup>

It identifies civic governance and society, sustainable economic development, health, and education as broad themes on which collaboration will be developed. Through the newly established International Development Fund, the Government began to make grants to support initiatives in these areas, with £2.4 million granted in 2005.<sup>17</sup>

When the Scottish National Party came to power in May 2007, there was some uncertainty about whether it would continue the Malawi commitment that had become something of a flagship policy of the preceding Labour administration and was particularly identified with the personal commitment demonstrated by Jack McConnell as First Minister. However, the result of an extensive consultation exercise was a substantial increase in the funding committed to the International Development Fund, rising from £3 million to £6 million per annum in 2008–09 and 2009–10, and to £9 million in 2010–11. Moreover, among six distinct international development programmes, the Malawi Development Programme is the only country-specific one, and it has a ring-fenced allocation of £3 million. In practice, it is this programme to which the lion's share of the available Scottish Government resources for international development has been committed. For the financial year 2008–09, the Malawi programme received an allocation of £4.2 million, exceeding the ring-fenced £3 million.

Following the completion of an independent review in 2008, the Government affirmed the themes agreed in the initial Cooperation Agreement: civil society development and governance, sustainable economic development, health, and education. Within and across those strands, cross-cutting themes have been identified:

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16 Cooperation Agreement between Scotland and Malawi, November 2005, "Malawi After Gleneagles: A Commission for Africa Case Study," Report of the Scotland-Malawi Partnership Conference, November 2005, pp. 5–6, see <http://www.scotland-malawipartnership.org> – my italics.

17 Scottish Executive New Release, 4 November 2005.

- Vocational training and education
- Gender issues and equality
- Enterprise development
- Strengthening the context for enhanced human rights and civil society
- development

These emphases are geared to meet priorities identified by the Government of Malawi, and there is a commitment by both Governments to continuing consultation.

Additionally, the programme on core funding for Scottish-based international development networking organisations is concentrated on the two main international development networking and membership organisations in Scotland—the Network of International Development Organisations in Scotland (NIDOS) and the Scotland–Malawi Partnership (SMP). The purpose of the support offered by the government is that the organisations will “effectively represent and co-ordinate the interest of the sector, hold best practice seminars and ensure effective information exchange and dissemination.”

The fact that the links between Scotland and Malawi extend far beyond any partisan basis has been demonstrated by the evidence of strong cross-party support in the Scottish Parliament for reinvigorating the relationship. This led to the formation in 2005 of a Scottish Parliament Cross-Party Group on Malawi, co-convened by Karen Gillon, MSP, and Michael Matheson, MSP. Its aim is to:

develop and enhance links between Scotland and Malawi and to provide a forum for discussion on these matters. In particular the group will focus on links between the two parliaments and between civil society in each country. In order to achieve this, the group will work with parliamentarians from each legislature, with Malawians living in Scotland and with other organisations working in Malawi.<sup>18</sup>

This agenda was taken forward by the visit to Malawi, in February 2006, of a Scottish Parliamentary delegation, including representation from all parties.

When the European and External Relations Committee reported to Parliament on its inquiry into international development in September 2008, it was apparent that cross-party consensus remained strong. Jackson Carlaw, a Conservative member, illustrated this when he stated:

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<sup>18</sup> Register of Cross-Party Groups, Scottish Parliament.

By focusing primarily on Malawi, the Government—within a relatively short time, it must be noted—ensured that our association and contribution were widely recognised by the Scottish public. That is of enormous value and, indeed, is not always the case when aid is given. Moreover the people of Malawi have appreciated this engagement, which has genuinely strengthened the links between the two countries. Like many members, I have met those who have volunteered their services. The rewards extend in both directions.... I believe that Jack McConnell produced the goods....<sup>19</sup>

The Parliamentary debate revealed that in many constituencies throughout the country, the connection with Malawi is finding expression at local level. The cross-party consensus is driven by the grassroots movement which holds MSPs accountable for providing appropriate support for this vital element of Scottish life.<sup>20</sup> It is, moreover, at this civil society level that the aspiration for a reciprocal relationship can take effect. Jack McConnell illustrated this in the Parliamentary debate of September 2008, when he spoke of a visit he had recently made to Nairn Academy, a school which had been developing a twinning with a counterpart in Malawi:

The most telling comment yesterday came from a girl who is in her sixth year at Nairn Academy. When asked to describe how she had changed as a result of her visit, she said that she and her colleagues would, for the rest of their lives, be less greedy and more appreciative and have a greater understanding of the rest of the world. That is why I want to highlight the importance of the people-to-people relationships, whose role is central to ensuring that we make the most of the resources and the effort that we put in.<sup>21</sup>

The Government-to-Government relationship draws its vitality and finds its effectiveness from the multitude of links made by civil society—schools, universities, health boards, local government, community groups, faith-based organisations, and so on.

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19 The Scottish Parliament, Official Report 17 September 2008, pp. 35–36.

20 As Malcolm Chisolm, Chair of the Europe and External Affairs Committee, summarised: “It was clear throughout the inquiry that there is substantial support across Scotland for building on our links with Malawi.” *Ibid.*, p. 15.

21 *Ibid.*, p. 25.

### Friendship and Respect: Seeking a Reciprocal Model

It is here that the Scotland–Malawi Partnership, as a civil society alliance, has a key role to play. The Partnership exists as an independent charitable company and is at pains to clarify that it is not an arm of Government. While it values very highly its close working relationship with the Scottish Government, it is deliberately a non-governmental body and is therefore free to offer constructive criticism of Government policy or action, when required to do so. With the full support of the Scottish Government, the Partnership seeks to forge a new model of international relations. It has stated its identity and vision in these terms:

It pioneers a new approach to North–South relations, one built on friendship and respect between two nations built up over generations of close collaboration. It works today on the basis of mobilising a network of Scottish-based commitment to Malawi in order to develop best practice and maximise impact, ensuring that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts.<sup>22</sup>

This vision has brought together an alliance which is ground-breaking in the range and diversity which it brings to the quest for a vibrant civil society–based approach to the development of the relationship.

In mid-2009, there were 128 organisations in the Partnership, full members paying an annual membership fee of either £25 or £50, depending on the organisations' respective annual income. These include primary and secondary schools, Universities and Colleges, faith-based organisations, independent charities, community groups, commercial companies, the health sector, city councils, and a cross-party group in the Scottish Parliament (which is administered by the SMP). Additionally, 132 men and women have become (non-voting) Associate Members, paying a £10 annual membership fee. These people bring a wide range of experience and expertise, with many having spent significant parts of their lives in Malawi. The willingness of so many to freely offer their time, energy, and expertise to the development of the Partnership means that the value of the funding which supports the running of the office is multiplied many times over. By drawing together the personal and organisational bilateral links which were already in existence, and by stimulating the formation of new ones, the Scotland–Malawi Partnership has succeeded, in a relatively short time, in creating a capacity at civil society level for the implementation of an

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<sup>22</sup> Peter A. West & Kenneth R. Ross, "Foreword," *Scotland Malawi Partnership Strategic Plan 2008–11*, Edinburgh: Scotland Malawi Partnership, 2008, p. 2.

innovative approach to international development. Its website is a primary source of information and guidance for those working between Scotland and Malawi. It also frequently offers workshops, seminars, and conferences on relevant topics in Scotland, so as to increase the skills and knowledge of those engaged in work with partners in Malawi.

Where both Government and the civil society alliance meet a considerable challenge, however, is in their ambition that the partnership be genuinely two-sided. Memories in Malawi are long enough to for many to remember an earlier colonialist idea of partnership, which Lord Malvern, in a moment of candour, described as the partnership between the rider and the horse.<sup>23</sup> In today's neo-colonial world, it would still be easy to develop a partnership where authority and initiative lie entirely at the Scottish end. A very different aspiration was evident, however, at the Scotland Malawi Partnership Conference organised by the SMP and hosted by the Scottish Parliament in November 2005.<sup>24</sup> The inadequacies of a donor–recipient model of international development were trenchantly exposed, and the value of a relationship grounded in mutual respect and a commitment to learn from each other was affirmed and celebrated. The challenge ahead is to determine how such a relationship can be developed and sustained.

A primary obstacle to a two-way partnership is the extent of the disparity in resources between the two partners. At the time of the 2005 Conference, the per capita GDP in Malawi was US\$605, while in Scotland it was US\$27,147.<sup>25</sup> In other words, the average Scot was 45 times better off than the average Malawian. No wonder that Scots visiting Malawi were struck by the shocking level of poverty which blights people's lives and were determined to take action to alleviate it. This positive commitment has motivated much of the current renewal in relations between Scotland and Malawi. No one could question the good intentions behind this initiative, but it can easily be undermined by two sets of dynamics.

The first is that the relationship of the two countries comes to be understood as one narrowly defined by their economic disparity and excluding other aspects of the relationship. The second is an approach that might help Malawi financially but would reduce the relationship between the countries to a very unequal, uncomfortable one in which prosperous Scotland, "Lady Bountiful," shared a small part of her bounty with her impoverished old friend Malawi.

23 Colin Cameron, Malawi Honorary Consul in Scotland, Scotland Malawi Partnership meeting, Glasgow City Chambers, 7 February 2006.

24 See "Malawi After Gleneagles."

25 *International Cooperation at a Crossroads: Aid, Trade and Security in an Unequal World*, United Nations Development Programme Report 2005, New York: UNDP, 2005.



The more the dynamics might move in this patronising, disempowering direction, the more they would undermine the relationship of mutual respect which is the key to authentic partnership. Matthews Chikaonda deftly made this point at the Scotland Malawi conference in 2005, when he quoted the Malawian proverb "No one can shave your head in your absence."<sup>26</sup>

Despite the good intentions with which it began, the Scotland–Malawi Partnership has not been able to escape from the forces which make for imbalance and inequality. The Scottish end of the partnership can, perhaps, be seen as a victim of its own success. The more it has established itself and extended its influence, the more the balance tilts towards concentrating energy and initiative on the Scottish side of the partnership, and consequently, exposing the relative weakness of the Malawi side. The strength of its delivery in mobilising a strong civil society network in Scotland has won the confidence of the Scottish Government. It also benefits from the establishment of a distinct Government programme to provide "core funding for Scottish-based networking organisations." Provision of a Government grant enables the Scottish partner to run a small but highly effective office. Success breeds success, and that participant in the Partnership enjoys growing confidence from its membership and the wider Scottish community.

By contrast, in Malawi there is a distinct lack of resources to develop an effective hub for the Partnership. While there could be no question of the commitment of members of the Malawi Board, in principle, to the idea of the Partnership, given the inherited weakness of civil society in Malawi and the consequent lack of a resource base from which to develop a coordinating function at the Malawi end of the Partnership, there has not been sufficient impetus to enable it to become a functional reality in Malawi.

It has to be acknowledged that besides the fundamental reality that Malawi is a country with relatively sparse material resources, both the colonial government and the one-party regime which succeeded it systematically inhibited the development of the kind of associational life which would make for an active civil society. Even the democratic era has seen a sustained effort to concentrate power at the centre of the political system, leaving civil society very weak.<sup>27</sup> This poses a serious threat to the realisation of the core vision of the Partnership. The spectre of Lord Malvern hovers over its efforts.

The greater the Partnership's success at the Scottish end without corresponding development at the Malawi end, the more it is likely to lapse into the

<sup>26</sup> "Malawi After Gleneagles," p. 104.

<sup>27</sup> See further Kenneth R. Ross, *Here Comes Your King! Christ, Church and Nation in Malawi*, Blantyre: CLAIM, 1998, pp. 168–171.

patterns of paternalism and neo-colonialism from which it was meant to escape. This risk is highlighted through the difficulties which the Partnership has experienced in creating a meaningful and constructive role for Malawians living in Scotland. The presence of a relatively small, but nonetheless significant Malawian community in Scotland is clearly an opportunity for the development of two-way partnership. Efforts have been made to build this kind of relationship, but on the whole, participation of Scottish-based Malawians in the development of the Partnership has been rather limited. It seems likely that the ethos and mode of operation of the Partnership, (no doubt, in subtle and unintended ways) inhibits large-scale participation of Scottish-based Malawians. This is something that the Partnership is committed to address, sensing that the Malawian diaspora in Scotland may hold some of the keys to the development of an authentically reciprocal partnership.

For those with the civil society partnership at heart, both in Malawi and in Scotland, it is therefore crucial that capacity be developed on the Malawi side which is equivalent, though not necessarily identical to, what is available to the Scottish side. At the time of writing, the Partnership has prepared a grant proposal to be presented to the Scottish Government for the appointment of a full-time Coordinator in Malawi. Given the level of enthusiasm evident on the ground in Malawi, it is hoped that such an appointment will galvanise the development of a vigorous membership organisation there.

The Malawi Board of Directors strongly backs the proposal and sees it as key to its development as an instrument of governance within the partnership network. Assisting the Malawi Board to meet this challenge has been one of the Scottish end of the Partnership's principal objectives for the 2008–11 period.<sup>28</sup> The hope is not that Malawi will woodenly copy the Scottish approach but that the Scottish experience will give it a model by which to develop its own distinctive, complementary way to foster a civil society at home and build on the partnership's interaction between the two nations. Meanwhile, lessons in reciprocity are being learned in one of the distinctive dimensions of the relationship between Malawi and Scotland: church life.

### Church Life: The Rise of Twinning

The churches, and particularly, the Church of Scotland and the CCAP (Church of Central Africa Presbyterian), have historically been the mainspring of Malawi-Scotland interaction. With participation in church life declining in

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28 *Scotland Malawi Partnership Strategic Plan 2008–11*, p. 17.

Scotland, it is observable that the relationship of the two nations has come to rest on a broader institutional base. Nonetheless, church life has remained an important resource for sustaining and developing the connections between Scotland and Malawi. In contrast to the numerical decline evident in the Church of Scotland, the CCAP has grown prodigiously in Malawi, particularly since independence in 1964. It now has more than 3 million members, and it is a dynamic presence in every part of the country.

The Church of Scotland still appoints staff to serve in Malawi, albeit in much smaller numbers than in earlier times, and it supports programmes of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP). Perhaps, even more significant is the growth of a notable feature of church life: a movement among local congregations to form a "twinning" with a counterpart in another country. As this movement has spread during the early years of the twenty-first century, it is often Malawi to which local congregations looked for a "twin." At the time of writing, some fifty Scottish congregations are actively pursuing a twinning with a Malawian counterpart. In several cases the church-to-church links are complemented by parallel school-to-school relationships. This development has been widely welcomed in Malawian communities, both urban and rural.

The enthusiasm with which such twinings have been embraced on both sides shows the hold on the popular imagination still exercised by the Scotland–Malawi relationship, and twinning also offers a model of relationship which is transferable to the wider development of active links between the two nations. There has been a move away from a headquarters-led approach to partnership and toward a local-to-local approach. There has been an upsurge of presbytery-to-presbytery links within regions and in local communities, ties between one congregation and another. In the Church of Scotland, for example, the *Church Without Walls* Report, something of a charter document as the Church entered the twenty-first century, called on congregations to: "research an area of the world church and establish a personal partnership with a congregation or project."<sup>29</sup>

In short, these kinds of relationships have become known as "twinings." Rather than depending on a specialist missionary, congregations are taking ownership of particular relationships and developing them through direct involvement. To some extent, this is making a virtue out of necessity. Those who spend their entire lives as missionaries, and the missions around which congregations built their global horizons in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, are fast disappearing. If congregations are to continue having an active

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29 *Church of Scotland General Assembly 2001, Report of the Special Commission anent Review and Reform*, Edinburgh: Church of Scotland, 2001, p. 36/5.

overseas connection, they have to find a new model through which to work. Twinning is an idea whose time has come.

For congregations that have become involved in twinning with counterparts on other continents, it has been a mind-blowing and faith-stretching experience. The Church of Scotland General Assembly of 2007 heard, for example, from members of a congregation from Ruchazie, generally regarded as being among the most deprived areas of the city of Glasgow. They spoke movingly of how their church and community had been affected by a twinning with the congregation in Baula, in northern Malawi. They described it as a “life-changing experience” and spoke of how they had come to think of people in Baula as part of their own family. The visit of Malawians to Ruchazie had had a startling effect. People stopped in the streets to greet them; young people, in particular, struck up a rapport with the visitors. Many more people have come to the church as a result of the Malawi connection, speaking with the minister and church members about what it has meant to them. The church has gained the attention of the community in a new way. A genuine missionary impact is being made, and the church members are clearly excited by the discovery of new dimensions to their faith and new possibilities for their Christian witness.<sup>30</sup> One Assembly Commissioner, Aaron Stevens, commented,

The enthusiasm of their reports, and sincerity with which they shared their positive experiences was both moving and convincing. Churches that become involved in twinning benefit from that involvement.<sup>31</sup>

Coming to appreciate how much they stand to gain from the twinning experience has been the big learning curve for the Scottish congregations which have become involved with it. Often, they have begun with a charity model—imagining that it would be noble and altruistic to help a community that is much less fortunate. As the twinning has developed, however, they have realised that it is much more of a two-way exchange than they had imagined could be possible. For growing numbers of Scots, twinning is proving to be a transformative experience as their own life, and it has had a great impact on their life perspectives. Likewise, on the Malawian side, the relationship has often begun with hopes of financial assistance (e.g., money to maintain the church building) but has developed into something much more mutual and comprehensive as

30 Church of Scotland General Assembly 2007, authorised recording of proceedings on 21 May 2007.

31 Aaron C. Stevens, “In Fatherlands and Foreign Countries: Congregational Twinning as a Missionary Practice for the 21st Century,” unpublished paper, 2007, p. 5.

Malawians have come to understand more of the struggles which their Scottish counterparts face.

### **“A Very Definite Radicalism”: Toward a Two-Way Partnership**

One of the great unresolved questions of our time is that of how to reverse the widening of the divide between rich and poor. The unprecedented levels of prosperity being enjoyed in the Western world contrast unacceptably with the deepening levels of poverty being experienced elsewhere—especially, in Africa. For sixty years bilateral and multilateral aid programmes have addressed this issue, with Western Governments being challenged to devote 0.7 percent of their GDP to overseas aid. However, analysts are increasingly recognising the limitations of large-scale Government-to-Government aid as a lever to raise levels of economic development. Dambisa Moyo has gone so far as to argue:

More than US\$2 trillion of foreign aid has been transferred from rich countries to poor over the past fifty years—[with] Africa the biggest recipient by far. Yet regardless of the motivation for aid-giving—economic, political or moral—aid has failed to deliver the promise of sustainable economic growth and poverty reduction.<sup>32</sup>

Moyo argues that aid creates a vicious cycle:

The cycle that chokes off desperately needed investment, instils a culture of dependency, and facilitates rampant and systematic corruption, all with deleterious consequences for growth. The cycle that, in fact, perpetuates underdevelopment, and guarantees economic failure in the poorest aid-dependent countries.<sup>33</sup>

Whatever the merits of such an argument, it is demonstrable that large-scale aid programmes do not have all the answers when it comes to combating poverty.

Drawing on the “very definite radicalism” identified by Shepperson as characteristic of the interaction of Scotland and Malawi,<sup>34</sup> the two small nations have embarked together on an alternative path. The robust quality of the

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32 Dambisa Moyo, *Dead Aid: Why Aid Is Not Working and How There is Another Way for Africa*, London: Allen Lane, 2009, p. 28.

33 Ibid, p. 49.

34 Shepperson, “External Factors,” p. 212.

debate and the manifest commitment to deepen mutual understanding, apparent, for example, at the 2005 Scotland–Malawi Conference, suggests that the relationship will run on different lines from the donor–client pattern familiar in the world of international aid. The conference was radical in its willingness to question received wisdom and to open up new lines of analysis.

A significant lead in this regard was offered by Thandika Mkandawire, who noted that the standard approach to development is the *quid pro quo*: The West offers aid, provided that the recipient Governments adopt the “good policies” and “good governance” promoted by Washington’s consensus. He then went on to ask, “What if those policies and institutions being promoted as ‘good’ are in fact the wrong ones, or simply not feasible at the current levels of development?”<sup>35</sup> The renewal of the Scotland–Malawi relationship therefore began with some fundamental questioning of received wisdom and an openness to innovative approaches.

The distinctive genius of the Scotland–Malawi Partnership is its grounding in the friendship—both individual and institutional—which has built up between the two nations over the past 150 years. Though the language of friendship and “auld alliance” is often used by politicians and diplomats to characterise the relationship of two countries, it is rare that this is so deeply grounded in the genuine affection and practical activism of ordinary citizens. Quite intentionally, the Partnership does not have any large, centrally funded aid operation. Rather, it functions by uniting the great variety of organisations and individuals which operate bilaterally between the two nations. At one level this ensures that it remains a very modest operation—a poor relation, if value is attached only to the level of annual budgets. However, the members of the Partnership greatly add value to their modest budgets by the strength of the relationships which they enjoy and the depth of mutual understanding which they have built up. Benefits flow in both directions, and a cumulative effect is built up, allowing good experiences to inspire further initiatives. Only after a longer time will it be possible to assess the effects of this model of interaction on both Malawi and Scotland. Nonetheless, at this early stage it can be demonstrated both that a distinctive new model has been developed and that it is having an energising and inspiring effect both in Scotland and in Malawi. It champions the principle once stated by David Clement Scott, who did so much at an early stage to inculcate good relations between Scotland and Malawi: “Mutual respect is the lesson we so much need to learn at this time.”<sup>36</sup>

35 “Malawi After Gleneagles,” p. 35.

36 David Clement Scott, *Life and Work in British Central Africa*, December 1897. The depth of Scott’s own respect for Malawian life and culture is evident in his monumental work:

The Scotland–Malawi Partnership still has much to prove. It remains to be seen whether it can have a lasting impact on any significant scale and whether it can fulfil its aspiration to be a genuinely reciprocal undertaking between the people of the two nations. What is clear at this stage is that the Partnership has helped to mobilise an impressive range of civil society actors, both in Scotland and Malawi, has provided a structure which gives cohesion to the whole effort, and provides practical assistance to increase the effectiveness of its members. The outstanding challenge at this stage is to attain balance, equity, and reciprocity between the two sides of the Partnership. The further it can go in meeting this challenge, the more it will fulfil its ambition to break new ground in regard to international development.

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## Scottish Warriors in KwaZulu-Natal

*Cultural Hermeneutics of the Scottish Dance (Isikoshi)  
in the Nazareth Baptist Church, South Africa*

*Magnus Echter*

### Introduction

The Nazareth Baptist Church (NBC), one of the largest African Initiated Churches of South Africa, is famous for the dance performances at the church's annual festivals.<sup>1</sup> While the majority of the dance attires could be classified as neo-traditional Zulu style, the young men dance as 'Scots' (*isikoshi*), wearing tartan like-skirts and pith helmets. The invention of this dance by Isaiah Shembe, the founder of the NBC, dates back to the late 1910s and constitutes an intriguing example for the construction of new identities through the appropriation of the colonial Other, making use of the 'tribal warrior' image of the Scottish regiments within the British Empire.

Almost a hundred years later, the dance has become a traditional activity within the church, and the performers have to defend their innovations against the criticisms of the elders, who refer back to the version legitimized by the founder. As one of the most striking religious practices of the NBC, the sacred dance—and especially, the intriguing Scottish dance—has received its share of scholarly attention, with interpretations covering the range from resistance through symbolic inversion to the enculturation of Christianity, or even the transformation of a military tradition into religiously motivated nonviolence. This study juxtaposes these academic interpretations with the views of the actors and explores how the young men, through dancing, negotiate their identity within the church and beyond, and reinterpret, in the twenty-first century, the cultural significance of Scotland in Africa.

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<sup>1</sup> The research for this article in 2008 and 2009 was made possible by funding from the DFG (German Research Council). My thanks go to the people of the Nazareth Baptist Church, especially to the members of the church's student organisation (NaTeSA) at the University of KwaZulu-Natal for their hospitality, and their invaluable help as research assistants, transcribers and translators.

## Historical Background

Isaiah Shembe (c.1870–1935), a lay preacher and healer active at the margins of different mission churches, founded the Nazareth Baptist Church (*iBandla lamaNazaretha*) near Durban in 1910, at the time when the British colony of Natal became part of the Union of South Africa. According to one oral tradition within the church, it was the mission churches' rejection of converts wearing African traditional attire that led Shembe to start his own congregation.<sup>2</sup> Guided through visions sent by God, Shembe established religious practices that included elements from both mission Christianity and traditional Zulu religion but also served to distinguish the new church from both strands of preexisting religious tradition.<sup>3</sup> One of the most prominent distinguishing features was the corpus of hymns which Shembe composed. As outstanding examples of Zulu poetry, the hymns matched the Old Testament feel of Babylonian loss and suffering with the fate of the Zulu people and combined it with the hope of the New Jerusalem, a New Jerusalem Shembe realized in the form of the holy city of eKuphakameni. As well as making use of the Bible, the hymns built upon Zulu clan hymns and reclaimed the disempowered Zulu kingship within the spiritual realm at a time when the British colonial state had dispelled any remnant of autonomous traditional authority by brutally putting down the Bambatha rebellion in Natal. In that time of rapid social change, white settlers regarded Black Christians, and especially those who broke away from the mission churches, as a threat to their supremacy. Consequently, the missionaries, who were losing members of their congregations to the new church, were quick to attack their opponent for defying white control and for seducing native women.<sup>4</sup> But Shembe weathered these allegations and managed to avoid open conflict with state power. Maybe because he

2 Before the founding of the Nazareth Baptist Church, Shembe sent people he healed to other churches for baptism. He decided to start his own congregation only when the American Zulu Mission rejected his converts because they were dressed in traditional attire. For this oral tradition see Becken 1965: 103.

3 The clearest break with the mission churches was the observance of the Sabbath, introduced sometime between 1911 and 1923 (Heuser 2003: 114–119), and the introduction of dancing, which was regarded as an African form of worship (see e.g. Papini 2004: 49–51). On the other hand, Shembe was fiercely opposed to the traditional religion in the form of the 'cattle cult', and he took great care that his rituals differed from traditional ones, as e.g. the puberty rites (Roberts 1936: 62, 123).

4 Natal governor McCallum held in 1906 "that Ethiopianism, which has for its cry 'Africa for the Blacks', is the mainspring of the movement" that stirred rebellion (Guy 2005: 248). For the charges against Shembe see Gunner 1988: 214–218, Papini 1999: 248 f.

fiercely opposed overt political involvement, his church became regarded as a stabilizing influence in the face of newer, more radical forms of Black organization.<sup>5</sup> By the time of Shembe's death in 1935, the Nazareth Baptist Church had a membership of several thousand and owned sizeable plots of land.<sup>6</sup>

Although the church was well established, its coherence depended on the charisma of its leader. Isaiah Shembe's son and successor, Johannes Galilee Shembe (1904–76), initially felt unsure whether he could follow in his father's footsteps, and maybe by way of compensation, it was he who codified the church's beliefs and practices—most notably demonstrated in the publication, in 1940, of the church hymnal, which includes the liturgy for morning, evening, and Sabbath prayers.<sup>7</sup> Still, despite the increasing institutionalization, the structure of the church remained centered on the charismatic leader. This became clear after the death of Johannes Galilee Shembe, when both his brother, Amos Shembe (1906–95), and his son, Londa Shembe (1945–89), claimed leadership of the church. This conflict led to the split of the church, and the majority section led by Amos Shembe left eKuphakameni and founded a new holy city, eBuhleni, nearby.<sup>8</sup> The eBuhleni branch, led since 1995 by Amos Shembe's son, Vimbeni Shembe (b. 1933), has grown continuously. In 2008 one minister of the church estimated the membership to number between one and four million, and close to fifty thousand people attended the July festival of the same year.<sup>9</sup> The smaller eKuphakameni branch underwent difficult times after Londa Shembe was shot in 1989 but has experienced something of a renaissance since 1998, when Vukile Shembe (b. 1980), Londa's son, ended the leaderless period.<sup>10</sup>

### Dancing in the Nazareth Baptist Church

Within the Nazareth Baptist Church, two forms of worship can be distinguished: praying (*ukukhonza*) and dancing (*ukusina* or *umgidi*). The praying

5 See Papini 1997: 17, 1999: 249–251, 2004: 54.

6 According to Roberts (1936: 102) ten thousand people went on the pilgrimage to the holy mountain. She lists the church holdings at the time of Isaiah Shembe's death, and estimates their worth at 25,000 South African Pounds (equal to pounds sterling) (ibid: 71).

7 J.G. Shembe was anxious about his abilities, but proved to be successful in the charismatic qualities of healing and dealing with witches (Roberts 1936: 80, 111).

8 As one of the prominent events in church history, the schism has received its share of scholarly attention. See Becken 1978, Oosthuizen 1981a, 1981b, Masondo 2004, Tishken 2006.

9 Interview with Sipho, 2008-07-06. 50,000 is my estimate.

10 See Heuser 2008: 42 f. The church's spokesperson estimated membership at 300,000 in 2003, Heuser's 'guesstimate' was 10,000 (ibid: 50, note 19).

category includes the daily prayers and the Sabbath services, consisting of communal prayers, a sermon, and the singing of hymns. The religious dance proper takes place only at the church's festivals. Throughout the year the leader of the church visits various temples, and wherever he stays, church members assemble. The main festivals are the pilgrimage to the holy mountain iNhlankakazi in January and the July congregation in the holy city eBuhleni/eKuphakameni, but the church's yearly ritual cycle consists of many more such congregations.<sup>11</sup> At these church gatherings, and only there, the members of the church dance in full attire. There are four groups of dancers and four types of attire: neo-traditional one for the groups of virgins, married women, and older men, respectively, and the Scottish outfit, worn by the younger men.<sup>12</sup> The dances take place at the command of the leader—usually on Sundays, Tuesdays and Thursdays, but not on Saturdays. That the dancing, rather than the more everyday praying, is regarded as the highest form of worship by church members might be due, in part, to its public performance at the great festivals.

Dancing was not part of the religious practices from the beginning. According to Johannes Galilee Shembe, the son and successor of Isaiah Shembe, his father was at first “totally opposed to all forms” of dancing, and introduced it only in 1919 (Fernandez 1973: 42).<sup>13</sup> Before that, church members performed European-style processions only (Mthethwa 1989: 248). It is likely that as Isaiah Shembe drew converts from both mission churches and Zulu traditional religion, some traditionalists began dancing on church premises, and this dancing forced or inspired Shembe to create dances for the Nazareth Baptist Church. Thus, the reluctant decision to include dance as a form of worship may have reflected a shift in church membership as converts from African traditional religions gained in influence over converts from mission churches.<sup>14</sup> From the point of view of the mission Christianity of the time, dancing was certainly a heathen practice, and the sacred dance of the Nazareth Baptist Church can indeed be linked with religious practices of Zulu tradition, and

11 I participated in the congregations at eBuhleni July 2008, Dunnhauser Aug. 2008, Nhlankakazi Jan. 2009, Ntabankulu Mar. 2009.

12 These are the usual dance attires. The group of virgins has four more, but these are worn only once a year as part of the July festival. One of those is also a Scottish outfit, with tartan skirts. For the attires see Brown 1995: 131–136, Papini 2002, 2004, for the virgins' attires Muller 1999: 172 f.

13 Newspaper evidence of dancing in the church dates from 1917. See Heuser 2003: 224.

14 See Brown 1995: 128–131, Heuser 2003: 224–227, Papini 2004: 49–52. The abovementioned oral tradition linking the foundation of the church with the rejection of traditional clothes by mission churches might also reflect these inner-church conflicts.

especially, with wedding dances expressing lineage identity (*isigekle*) (Erlmann 1996:189, Mthethwa 1989: 248). At the same time, the introduction of dancing reflects a change in Isaiah Shembe's attitude toward African traditions, and he increasingly appropriated traditional elements into the religious practices of his church. Another example is the hymns that form the basis of the dancing. These hymns— an outstanding example of Zulu poetry and a testimony to Isaiah Shembe's artistic genius—are based, in part, on the songs of the Zulu descent groups and military regiments (*ihubo*) (Berglund 1976:198 f., Mthethwa 1989: 248). Thus, Bongani Mthethwa interprets the dancing in the NBC as continuing African spirituality and underscores the religious importance of dancing by pointing out, “no man, witchdoctor, diviner, chief or priest can solemnize a wedding. It is the dance, *ukusina* that sacrileges the marriage” (Mthethwa 1989: 246).

But Isaiah Shembe did not simply introduce traditional dances into his church; he created his own form of dancing. While the music and the steps resembled their Zulu predecessors, the songs—the hymns with their artistic intertwining of Old Testament rigour and Zulu history and oral tradition—were something new. And the most obvious distinction from Zulu tradition was the European outfit of the dancers. In the early 1920s married women wore white blouses and black skirts, the younger ones wore the same blouses with blue skirts, and the men wore red kilts and white jackets—the prototype of the Scottish dance uniform. In 1924 only one old man danced in the traditional skin loincloth (*umutsha*), and Shembe introduced the neo-traditional uniforms for men, women, and virgins, which dominate the dancing performances today, only in the early 1930s.<sup>15</sup> This complex introduction of dancing into the church is remembered in the church today, as one leader of a Scottish dance group explained:

When prophet Isaiah Shembe came to the east, you know Zulu people used to dance traditional dance, so he preached to them, taught them God does not like you to drink, doesn't want you to do this, to do that, you should pray all the time. And there was a time when there were no prayers, people were just lazying around, and they started to dance the traditional dance. And that made him so worried, you know, praying to God: What am I to do with these people because they are now singing all

15 For the early dance uniforms see Brown 1995: 114–116, 129–130; pictures taken by the Durban photographer Lynn Acutt in the 1930s show the same range of dance uniforms as today. See album d9 at Killie Campbell Africana Library, Durban (<http://campbell.ukzn.ac.za>).

those songs with explicit content, it is more like his soul was taken away from him, and God told him: no, you must teach them that they must dance like this.... So at that time he did not want to adopt that traditional regalia because he was just only starting, and it was going to be more like, you know, at that time, 1910, you remember our African history, you were more oppressed, so he just started with this, shirts and everything, you see, it only started with the second leader, iNkosi iLanga [Johannes Galilee Shembe] so iNkosi iLanga decided: no, maybe it should stop, Scottish should stop dancing, then he started to introduce the *injobo*, now the traditional regalia, like you should use the leopard skins so that you look beautiful.<sup>16</sup>

INTERVIEW WITH NKOSINATHI, 2009-01-25

It was thus through a process of cultural syncretization, through the reweaving of disparate strands of African and European traditions that Shembe created something new: the sacred dances of the Nazareth Baptist Church.<sup>17</sup> This also is remembered in the oral traditions of the church:

If you can see the difference, we have a traditional attire that side, and this here is more like a European attire. And what Shembe was saying, or what Shembe was doing, was combining the two. Even though we are wearing the European attire, but look at what we are carrying: the shield and this [cow tail whisk]. And what we are doing: we are doing the traditional dance.

INTERVIEW WITH MDUDUZI, 2008-07-27

Part of this process was the appropriation of Scottishness. Its possible sources and meanings will be discussed in the next section.

### Cultural Hermeneutics of the Scottish Dance

The sacred dance is one of the most striking features of the Nazareth Baptist Church—at least, with regard to public visibility. Among the neo-traditional dance uniforms, the Scottish attire stands out, and as such, it has received its fair share of scholarly attention. This outfit consists of a white shirt with green

<sup>16</sup> I have changed the names of all my informants.

<sup>17</sup> For a discussion of syncretization and related concepts see Adogame, Echtler & Vierke 2008.



tie, a black skirt, black-and-white-socks, black boots, and a pith helmet. Younger boys wear a red-and-white checked skirt instead of the black one, and a headband instead of the helmet (Brown 1995: 135f). Regarding the source of inspiration for Shembe's creation, most authors opt for the Highland regiments of the British Empire. While many Scots traveled to and lived in Southern Africa, bringing with them their craftsmanship and entrepreneurial skills, their Christianity and political radicalism (and thus having a decisive impact on the colonial and apartheid society), the military regiments were the prime carriers of the invented Highland tradition, and thus contributed most to the construction of Scottish identity on the global scale.<sup>18</sup>

African appropriation of Scottish identity markers has been well established since Ranger (1975) described the competing bands of the East African coast. In South Africa Zulu king Cetshwayo was fascinated by the kilted bagpipe players of the Ninety-first Highlanders (Princess Louise's Argyllshire Regiment) who officiated at the surrender of the Zulu kingdom in 1879 (Papini 2002: 86f), and a union demonstration in the run-up to the beer-hall riots in Durban in 1929 was "headed by a brass band preceded by a native in Highland costume—a kilt" (LaHausse 1990: 112).

Aiming to pin down Isaiah Shembe's inspiration for the creation of the Scottish-style attire worn by his parishioners, a number of scholars have indicated how he might have come into direct contact with Highland regiments. The earliest exposure could have been during the Anglo-Boer war (1899–1901). It is rather unclear what Shembe did during the war, and he stated only that he was displaced from the Boer farm near Harrismith where he had been living as a tenant when the British invaded. Yet there is one oral tradition within the Nazareth Baptist Church that claims that he worked as a cook for a Boer general, and thus was part of the Boer war camp for some time.<sup>19</sup> Based on this evidence Papini (2002: 89f) argues that

given the visibility and combat prominence of the eight kilted regiments and Scottish yeomanry, it seems more than likely that his first exposure to the image of the dauntless Highlander came at this time.

He goes on to maintain that therefore Shembe's appropriation of markers of Scottish identity was singular for the African context because it was based on

18 For the history of Scots in South Africa see MacKenzie and Dalziel 2007; for Scottishness and the military Hyslop 2002.

19 For Shembe's autobiographical statement see Papini 1999: 279, for the oral tradition Papini 1992: 24.

“an experience of the Highlander phenomenon *in the theatre of war*,” something that is of some importance for his interpretation of the attire’s meaning, as discussed below. Shembe may also have come into contact with a Highland regiment during the Bambatha Rebellion (1906), when the second battalion of the Cameron Highlanders was stationed in Pietermaritzburg (Klopper 1991: 211). Brown (1995: 117), for one, is doubtful about this connection, however, as there is no evidence that Shembe was in Natal, let alone Pietermaritzburg, at the time. Given the fact that many Highland regiments were based in South Africa at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century—including South African regiments like the Transvaal Scottish who wore kilts—Brown argues that “is likely that the exact military unit will never be identified” (*ibid.*, 118); even if it were, it remains unclear what would be the analytical gain from such information regarding the meaning of the Scottish dance uniform in the NBC. Nevertheless, she concludes that “it is probable that there is at least a generic military source for this outfit,” although “the possibility that Shembe was familiar with one of the many Highland dancing societies found in South Africa cannot be discounted” (*ibid.*). This would be the third (this time, non-military) possible source of inspiration for Shembe’s Scottish outfit: the public performances of cultural societies. The Natal Caledonian Society, which had organized Highland games in Durban since 1883, ran a number of annual events in public spaces of the city by the time Shembe arrived in the Durban area in 1907 (Papini 2002: 89, note 15).

These are the various intercultural encounters might have inspired Isaiah Shembe to create the Scottish dancing outfit for his church. Within this context academics have tried to reconstruct the meaning of this cultural innovation, and a number of authors have offered different interpretations so far. But because of the scarcity of evidence, no definitive answers are to be had. Isaiah Shembe never offered any explanation regarding the design of the dance attires, or at least, no such explanation has entered into academic discourse. His son and successor, Johannes Galilee Shembe, explicitly rejected any meaning behind them beyond the charisma of his father or its divine source. When Fernandez interviewed the church leader, he inquired about the symbolic meanings of the costumes and then breached the topic of the dance:

I pursue the topic and ask Shembe about the meaning of the different uniforms worn by the various dancing teams at the July festival. The older men and the unmarried mature women wear traditional garb, but the young men, the young girls and the married women all carry small umbrellas. “Why is that?” I ask. Shembe responds with some impatience that there is no special meaning there. “These were visions my father had.

Everyone always wants to know the meaning. The simple meaning of all is to be found in God and Christ”.

FERNANDEZ 1973: 41

This referral to the charisma of the church founder and to Christianity did not, of course, satisfy scholars looking for the meaning of the Scottish dancers, as it is indeed of limited help in decoding the cultural hermeneutics of the sacred dance. With no explanations to be had from the religious experts, the scholars had to look for contextual evidence. Muller, who focussed on ordinary female members of the church, rather than on its upper male hierarchy, likewise found little to be gained from direct questioning, as she had been “unable to find anyone who can provide an insider’s explanation for these outfits” (Muller 1999: 172). Consequently, she interprets the attires of the virgins by contextualising them, because they “resemble attire worn by others outside of the religious community” and suggests “that they are to be ‘read’ as inscriptions of colonial encounters” (ibid., 172f). It is within this paradigm of interpretative anthropology—with ‘culture as text’ as the key metaphor and focus of the inscription of meaning (Geertz 1980)—that the significance of the Scottish dance attire has been analysed so far. As such, these interpretations of the material culture of the dance show how different cultural currents were interwoven in practice, how cultural meaning was constructed below the level of explicit discourse.

Klopper argues that the Scottish attire drew upon spectacular symbols of state power: not only the Highland regiments of the British Empire, with their kilts, but also (owing to their resemblance) the skin loincloth (*umutsha*) worn by the regiments of the lost Zulu kingdom. The subversion of a symbol of colonial power is thus achieved through this double bind, this cultural syncretization, as Shembe designed a dancing outfit

linked to the suppression of blacks in Natal in an attempt not only to establish some continuity with the past but also to appropriate and thus transform the powers vested in symbols popularly associated with state activities calculated to disrupt the lives of Zulu speakers living in rural Zululand—Natal in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

KLOPPER 1991: 211

Muller makes a similar argument with regard to the numerous attires of the group of virgins—both traditional and modern, and including a Scottish outfit—which embodied “the historical encounter in the 1930s between European and African, between colonizer and colonized, between (from the

European perspective) civilized and uncivilized,” and were thus designed to be imbued with “the material power of the European colonizer on the one hand, and the moral power of Nguni tradition on the other” (Muller 1999: 75). Brown links the reference to Western uniforms not with Zulu tradition, but with Christian symbols. She argues that Isaiah Shembe himself wore outfits resembling military dress and that he tried to imitate depictions of Christ in religious texts, especially in the set-up of pictures taken of him. She goes on to say that this “fusion of military dress with the imagery of Christ...suggests that Shembe was using these symbols to project an image of power, of invincibility and compassion” (Brown 1995: 123).

Beyond this empowering aspect of the dance attires, Heuser emphasises the transformation of meaning through the religious re-contextualization. Shembe's use of the Scottish uniform as part of the sacred dance (understood as a prayer to God), as the highest form of worship within the church, “embodies a critique of African history and a critique of imperial expansion at the same time” (Heuser 2008: 47). Referring to newspaper reports of the 1920s, which represent the dancers as looking just like soldiers, but the dancing also as a war dance transformed into a religious event, Heuser argues that the sacred dance enculturated African worldview into Christian worship, that it constituted an autonomous religious sphere and thus inverted the military symbols and internalised a new ethic of non-violence. Through this inversion the prayers danced in kilts symbolise a re-conciliation with life, and tell of Shembe's conversion to Christianity.<sup>20</sup>

Less theological but even more extensive is Papini's interpretation of the Scottish attire. His starting point, like Klopper's, is the similarity between the Scottish kilt and the Zulu skin loincloth (*umutsha*), which led to a mutual, flash of recognition of the similarity between Zulus and Scots in nineteenth-century South Africa (Papini 2002: 85). According to Papini, Isaiah Shembe gained privileged insight into this affinity between the two ‘warrior tribes’ as a cultural broker in the Boer camp in the Anglo–Boer War (1899–1902), where

Boer accounts admiring Highlander fearlessness under fire gave many Africans within earshot (especially intimate listeners such as cooks to the generals) an impression of these mettlesome, untrousered ‘civilised savages’ that made unmissable the parallel between their blind courage and that of the Zulu ranks only twenty years earlier (in 1879).

Ibid., 91

20 See Heuser 2003: 234 f. The newspapers referred to are *The Star* (1924-07-15) and *Ilanga* (1923-08-03). See *ibid.* 229, 235.

What is more, his position enabled Shembe to learn about subaltern Scottish history, about how the British Empire dispossessed the Scottish Highlander as 'savages' of their land, and how it used them as 'warriors' in the colonial wars to dispossess further people. In this extended parallel, the fate of the Scottish Highlanders was an omen for the future of the Zulu, and the creation of the Scottish attire Shembe's warning to his followers. According to Papini's interpretation, the Scottish attire served

as mnemonic vesture for the kinaesthetic meditation of the colonised upon a danger present but not always clear: one of becoming, worse than imperialism's victims, its hapless instruments,

and, more generally, as precaution against colonial and apartheid identity politics, as the Scottish dancers reminded

performers and spectators, in each and every liminal moment, that the supreme value of any bounded identity lies in an ecumenical inclusivity, beyond all claims to being primordially fixed in perpetuity.

Ibid., 104

Klopper judges her interpretation to be "necessarily speculative" (Klopper 1991: 211), although she tries to back it with circumstantial evidence, and that is certainly true of all the interpretations presented here. With the scarcity of evidence, different interpretations are possible, and the plausibility each depends largely on the argumentative skill of the scholar. There has been also more pragmatic, less hermeneutic interpretation of the Scottish attire—for example, the argument that the close imitations Scottish costumes served as a decoy to thwart the investigative colonial gaze wary of a Zulu renaissance which dances in traditional attire might have fostered (Papini 2002: 82). Other speculation pointed to the financial benefits that the church members' new clothing brought to the church leader who had control over the process of production—especially when a person's salvation depended on the ownership of the whole set of outfits (Brown 1995: 125).<sup>21</sup> But while these strategic

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21 Direct evidence for strategic considerations exists for Johannes Galilee Shembe, who explained his new invention, the 'candle mass', consisting of night-time dancing: "You see, Dr Sundkler, we have our preaching and teaching. That is alright. But give these people a real mass worship—and they will never forget it" (Sundkler 1976: 181). For the strategic use of dancing to increase the charisma of the leader of the church's minority branch see Heuser 2008.

considerations might be plausible, they do not exclude cultural hermeneutics, and above all, while they might offer explanations for Western uniforms or a variety of new outfits, they cannot explain why Shembe choose to create a Scottish attire for his sacred dance. In the following I do not try to criticise the interpretations described so far, nor add another one. Rather, I will relate these interpretations of Isaiah Shembe's invention of the 1920s to the present-day practice in the church and try to develop an understanding of what it means to dance with the *isikoshi* in the twenty-first century.

### Scottish Dancers Today

My analysis of the *isikoshi* groups in the sacred dance of the Nazareth Baptist Church is twofold. On the one hand, I describe the meaning of the Scottish attires from the actors' point of view—the point of view of the young men dancing rather than the old men holding leading positions within the church's hierarchy—and relate these views to the reconstructed meaning of the attire's creation almost a hundred years ago. On the other hand, I move beyond the meaning of the attire to the meaning of the dance, to what it means to the young men to be dancing with the *isikoshi* group. This second step also implies a critique of the textual metaphor and considers dancing as a practice in its own right.

When I asked the young men dancing in the Scottish outfit about the significance of this attire, the most common answer was that they did not know. As such, my findings largely mirror Muller's reported lack of insiders' explanations (Muller 1999: 172). But occasionally, dancers would venture some interpretation. Several times, I was told that they were safe-keepers of the Scottish dress until the time when white converts would join the sacred dance and dance in what is really their dress. This answer, or at least its frequency, might in part be due to the fact that a white stranger was asking the questions. But it also reflects the self-confident universal claims of the church, which is also reflected in the story that the church's leader Vimbeni Shembe brought the 2010 Soccer World Cup to South Africa to coincide with the church's hundredth birthday and to facilitate its global outreach. Thus, the Scottish attire was linked with the church's transcending ethnic and racial barriers—at least in theory, if not yet in practice—although the provisional character of the cultural cross-dressing somewhat undermines the deconstruction of these very categories, as argued by Papini (2002: 104).

Another explanation argued that Shembe created the Scottish attire in order to convince those modernized Zulu who rejected their cultural tradition to participate in the dance, which is what God commanded him to do:

When Shembe was sent down here, he was told [by God] that these people have forgotten their roots, they have taken the things of the white people, they are no longer doing what I want them to do which is their culture, now you have to take them back, you have to give them what they want, what they like, and while they are doing that, then you say, ok, ok, come with that, come with that.

INTERVIEW WITH MDUDUZI, 27 July 2008

This kind of explanation seems to echo the internal struggles between converts of mission Christianity and converts of Zulu traditional religion from the early years of the church, when a sacred dance combining traditional dance forms with Western uniforms might have satisfied both factions.<sup>22</sup>

A third kind of explanation linked the Scottish attire with the uniform of soldiers, either unspecified, or identified with the soldiers who fought at Isandlwana, the site of the most famous Zulu victory in the Anglo-Zulu war:<sup>23</sup>

Ok, this is called *isikoshi*, as you know there are Scots, so this is more like their uniform.... Because South Africa was colonized by England and the army that fought in Isandlwana, part of them were *isikoshi*, were Scottish. So in order to take that mentality [*i.e.*, the subaltern] out of the people, so no, no, no, those styles are not just there, we are defeating them, we have taken their war material and we are wearing it and we are doing the traditional dance with it.

INTERVIEW WITH MDUDUZI, 27 July 2008

Of course, this link with the history of Zulu struggles against the British Empire opens up the way for the interpretations focusing on the subaltern appropriation and subversion of colonial power discussed above. But this relation between the soldiers and the dancers is ambiguous, and different dancers attached different meanings to it. One dancer compared the state of mind he reached while dancing with that of the Zulu warriors of old, who did not feel fear when a spirit came over them (*-vuka usinga*) (interview with Vusumuzi, 25 January 2009). Another one emphasised the difference between soldiers and dancers, because as dancers “we fight with the spirit, we don’t fight with

22 For the faction fights see Brown 1995: 128–131, Heuser 2003: 224–227, Papini 2004: 49–52.

23 A Zulu saying links the Highlanders with Isandlwana: “And an old lament runs (inaccurately, strictly speaking, but with unerring spirit), ‘the Highlanders finished us at Isandlwana’ (a British defeat, therefore presumably is meant rather the invaders’ victory at the battle of Ulundi)” Papini 2002: 86.



guns like soldiers" (interview with Manqoba, 25 January 2009). While the first meaning could be interpreted as empowerment through the appropriation of military symbols, as argued by Klopper (1991), Brown (1995), or Muller (1999), the second meaning could be taken to signal the religious recontextualization and inversion of military references, as argued by Heuser (2003). The strict separation of the realm of the church from the evil outside world may also include an ethic of nonviolence that is internalised through the dancing (Heuser 2003: 235); this hypothesis is supported by the story of a third dancer. He considered the sacred dance to be an activity that kept him safe from the corrupting influences of the secular world outside the church:

I used to do karate, used to have the brown belt in karate, but they told me that I should stop doing that, because there is no need, there won't be any incident where you have to fight. I grew up in the township there I used to beat a lot of guys, but they told me that if you follow the teachings of the prophet you don't have to fight any more, so I just gave it up.... I practice [dancing] on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and on Saturday I'm in church, then on Monday and Wednesday I do some social duties, you know, like I have these youngster, some other are orphans, you know I visit them, I help them with their school homework and everything, I just do that.

INTERVIEW WITH NKOSINATHI, 25 January 2009

Within the last type of explanation, there was already a move from the meaning of the dance uniforms to the significance of the dancing itself. When dancing produces certain states of mind, and twice-weekly dancing rehearsals affect the life-style of an adolescent, academic analysis is no longer concerned with hermeneutics of a cultural text, but with the understanding of a bodily practice. With a renewed interest in dance within the science of religion comes a call for a shift in methodology, a critique of the 'culture as text' approach, which offers valuable insights into the production of cultural meaning but is little concerned with what the dancers are actually doing, with their dancing as rhythmic movement of the body. As Lamothe argued in her recent attempt to develop "a theory of religion as practice and performance" (2005: 101): "When all we do is read and write, everything looks like a text, including dance" (*ibid.*, 115).<sup>24</sup> For the remainder of this study, I will be concerned with the Scottish dance as kinaesthetic experience and performance art.

24 For similar arguments see Potter 2008, Samudra 2008.

At one point, instead of asking the young men about the meaning of their dance attire, I asked them why they danced with the Scottish group, and not with the one in neo-traditional attire (*injobo*)—which they could do, because all men form one group within the church, unlike the women, who are divided into virgins and married women. The most frequent answer was very pragmatic: because the Scottish attire was much cheaper, and they could not afford the traditional outfit. But beyond that, they told me, the Scottish dancing is for the young, is much more energetic, more fun and more creative, and they talked about how the movement of the dance brings about a special state of mind, brings them closer to God—that is, they talked about the experience of dancing and of the performance of the dance, and they talked about what dancing meant to them.

Church doctrine teaches that the sacred dance is the highest form of worship within the Nazareth Baptist Church, but for the dancers this extraordinary, divine character of the dance is based on the actual experience of dancing. During specified days dancing lasts for about five hours, and it takes place in all kind of weather, from scorching midsummer sun to cold rain atop the wind-swept holy mountain. While the dancing of the different groups is basically the same, based on the church's hymns, the slow, serene moves of the women contrast with the more energetic dancing of the men, and the dancing of the Scottish group is the most intense, by far. Following the rhythm of the music, with the drums and the horns played by the members of the dance group who are not dancing at the time, and the repetitive dance moves continuing for hours on end, the dancing seems to have certain effects on the dancers. They claim to be driven beyond fatigue and pain, beyond the feeling of the heat, and, in the case of skilled dancers, driven into altered states of consciousness. Two experienced Scottish dancers try to describe their experience:

Like I am saying when you dance you don't control yourself, it is more like we are in a trance. Someone will look at you and see you smiling, maybe you are feeling some other sounds from the outer world, maybe you are seeing some other things, it happens to me, I do not control myself when I am dancing.... I do crazy things, I can even do a somersault, that is how it feels, it is just the spur of the moment, you can just slip into your stomach flat, that is how you feel, they can't control you, they can't touch you, it is not allowed because they don't know how you are feeling at that moment.

INTERVIEW WITH NKOSINATHI, 25 January 2009

In fact it is the biggest prayer we have here, it is the biggest prayer. What Shembe said, he said when you are kneeling and praying, Satan can come

to you and say: Ok, you are praying with this mouth, yesterday you [were] telling a lie with this mouth, yesterday you were insulting somebody with your mouth, and now you are praying and you are doing everything wrong. But when you are doing this dance, you forget about everything that you have done. Your mind is there, you don't think of anything, and he said, then you are in the situation, where you can't think of anything, then it's your time to pray, when you pray God will hear you, because it is more like a meditation, when you have done it up to a particular state, then you feel that "I can't even feel the stone under my feet" then you are doing it, then you can pray, God will hear you.

INTERVIEW WITH MDUDUZI, 27 July 2008

This experience of the sacred while dancing probably provides the deepest level of understanding of what dancing means to members of the Nazareth Baptist Church. The loss of control, the prayer beyond words, the movement of the body dissolving ordinary consciousness reminds of van der Leeuw's notion that "man is danced"<sup>25</sup> or, in Lamothe's words, the dancer's ability "to represent his *individual* body as a medium for the generation of kinetic images of (his *dissolution* in) a rhythmic unity of life" (Lamothe 2005: 120, italics hers). Speaking or writing of in this sense embodied experiences proves to be rather difficult precisely because they ordinarily need not or even cannot be verbalized.<sup>26</sup>

While this experience of dancing provides a central meaning for the sacred dance, it is not specific to the *isikoshi* group. What makes the Scottish group special is the way they perform the dance. According to church orthodoxy, the dancing of all four groups—virgins, married women, traditional men and 'Scottish' men—is basically the same and follows Isaiah Shembe's choreography. What marks out the Scottish is their inventiveness, as they constantly alter their styles and add new moves. These innovations are subject to a fierce competition between the Scottish dance troupes from different temples and

25 "Der Mensch wird getanzt" (Leeuw 1957: 36).

26 On the "difficulty of rendering into analytical discourse those bodily practices consultants do not express verbally" see Samudra 2008: 665; for the kinaesthesia of dance see Potter 2008. Interestingly, when church members talk about dancing, they use the metaphor of 'prayer', while at the same time emphasising that dancing is anything but verbal prayer. Likewise, the modern dancer Isadora Duncan called her dancing 'prayer' or 'revelation', and Lamothe in turn refers to Duncan's dancing as 'soul language' (Lamothe 2005: 119f). It seems hard to avoid metaphors of language when talking or writing about bodily practices.

regions, and they have led, time and again, to conflicts with the leadership of the church. An evangelist (*umvangeli*) of the church who is in charge of the Scottish dancers comments on these innovations:

There is the thing called style, I don't know what the Zulu word is for this, this word is not a Zulu term, I am not sure if it is correct to say variations put in the hymns. It's just like when one is cooking, it doesn't end by putting meat, potatoes, carrots, onions, all these things that have been put together but there is still more that is needed, like knorrox soup, spices, salt, curry powder, yes, now you spice the food. It is the same with the dance there is knorrox soup that people add on top of what Shembe taught them. Shembe gave them as it was but then people added theirs.... Its not allowed especially with the Scottish, let me emphasize this, it is not allowed with the Scottish, and it's not permitted to happen because it is not happening according to what Prophet Isaiah taught. There are too many things added as if he made a mistake. It is not allowed just like food, if you put more than necessary spices and salt and many other stuff at the end it is not edible, it is the same thing that is happening to the dance.

INTERVIEW WITH BONGANI, 19 July 2008, conducted in ZULU, transcribed by  
SICELO MPUNGUSE, translated by MUZIWANDILE HADEBE

So from the point of view of the elders, all the innovations in the dance are illegitimate, and they try to discourage the young men from dancing in this way. But in this they are rather unsuccessful, because the dancers' freedom to create their own styles, to work the spectators, and to compete with others is the reason dancing is so much fun, is central to what it means to dance with the *isikoshi*. As a leader of a Scottish dance troupe explains:

Like I am the leader of the group, so it is more like I designed, we are not, you know, when the drum beats, we are not going to be quick, we are going to be slower, it starts with that, the way we sing it has to be a little bit slower, the way we dance, we have to focus more on energy and power, that is how the styles, how we derive our style. And when we turn, you know, it is verse number two when we are turning, facing sideways now, we have to do it this way. So the leader of the group designs all the styles. And he interprets and instructs the group: This is how we are going to dance. This is what makes us different, we from uMlazi, this is how we dance.

INTERVIEW WITH NKOSINATHI, 25 January 2009

Of course, he knows this means breaking the rules, and if called to order, he will acknowledge the authority of the prophet. But pushing the limits is part of

the game, because to stick to the rules would remove the competition, remove all the fun, make for boring dances like those the women dance:

But it is all one and the same thing, it is not supposed to be different. I will tell you one thing, we are doing one thing you can call it illegal according to prophet. It has to be the same, you have to go to the ladies and dance for the same tune, it is the very same style, you know the maid-ens you saw them, they all dance the one and the same style, it does not matter that you come from uMlazi or KwaMashu, its uniformity, there is uniformity.

For us, we are the guys, we have some egos, you know, I want to be different from you. I can call it an African tradition, you know the prophet came to Africa, so with lots of ego, I want to be different from you, I want to put more power into what I do, more than you do, so that's how the differences come to be. Yeah, yeah, sideways, they point this side, you know others won't do that. Others will take their shields and put them above their heads. That's how it is different. It is like, you know, like a leopard you see, beautiful with the spots, you see, that is how you distinguish between a leopard and a zebra, it is like that. I want to attract more crowd, you know, we want to attract more crowd, this is how we are going to do it.

INTERVIEW WITH NKOSINATHI, 25 January 2009

It is this creation of distinctive styles that separates the Scottish dancers from the other groups, and that turns their dancing into a performance art. To achieve this the dancers work hard and practice several times a week to hone their dancing skills. While they acknowledge that to dance is their religious duty and a prayer to God, they nevertheless also dance to entertain the spectators and to impress the young women watching. Papini (2004: 55) argues that the sacred dances that Shembe invented reclaimed a tradition of religious dance beyond the competition of Shaka's regimental dances and the "courtship eroticism" of colonial dances for entertainment, and the dancers thus performed "neither clan-praise bombastic nor crowd pleasing antics, but rather a choreography of contemplation and glorification." In this sense the Scottish dancers of the twenty-first century partly subvert the rigid orthodoxy of the church and re-establish links with other strands of Zulu traditional and popular culture. Through their artistic appropriation of the dance, they give new meaning to a "Scottish" style within the Nazareth Baptist Church. A hundred years ago the Scottish dance subverted colonial power, but now it represents the most unruly and creative part of the church's congregation and subverts the church's hierarchy and Zulu conservatism. Yet, because most of the Scottish

dancers are deeply dedicated to their religion, they contribute to the vibrant life of the church by performing its most beautiful dance.

### Conclusion

In the late 1910s, not ten years after founding the Nazareth Baptist Church, Isaiah Shembe introduced dancing as a form of worship into his church. In a process of cultural syncretization, he made use of Zulu traditional dances, combined them with the church hymns he had composed, and designed Western-style dance uniforms. One of these early uniforms was the Scottish, which combined a kilt like-skirt with heavy boots and pith helmet. While neo-traditional outfits replaced the other Western dance uniforms in the 1930s, the Scottish attire has remained one of the four main dancing uniforms until today.

Quite a few scholars have tried to read the meaning inscribed into these Scottish dance attires. As sources of inspiration for Shembe's invention, they identified with either one of the Highland Regiments on duty in South Africa, or with the Highland games performed by the Natal Caledonian Society. The first line of interpretation argues that the appropriation of military symbols subverts colonial power and thus, empowers the dancers of the church. A second reading of the Scottish outfits emphasises the transformation of the meaning of the military uniforms through the religious re-contextualization and proposes that the military symbols are inverted in the religious dance, which both offers a critique of colonial and Zulu militarism and claims an autonomous religious sphere of nonviolence based on the conversion of the church's founder. The third reading starts with mutual recognition between Zulus and Scots, who, based on the similarity of kilt and skin loincloth, acknowledge each other's identity as 'savage warriors'. According to this interpretation the hidden meaning inscribed in the Scottish dance attire is a warning to the Zulu of the danger of being dispossessed and misused by the British Empire, just as the Scots were in the past.

In the second part of the study, I confront these academic interpretations of the meaning inscribed into the Scottish dance attire, as Isaiah Shembe created it, with the meaning that the attire carries for the dancers in the twenty-first century. One of the actors' explanations of the meaning of the Scottish attire is that it is the outfit for future White converts to the church, and that as the current dancers, they are only its guardians. As such, that is an additional twist to the interpretation of the outfit deconstructing essentialist colonial identity politics, because the cultural cross-dressing transcends identities only temporally. On the other hand, this explanation points to the self-confident

claim of the universality of a religion that can move beyond ethnic or racial identities.

A second explanation claims that the Scottish outfit was created to make it easier for modernized Zulus who rejected indigenous traditions to participate in the sacred dance. This explanation points to a conflict between factions influenced by Zulu traditional religion and mission Christianity that characterized the early history of the church. A third explanation links the Scottish uniform with soldiers from the Anglo–Zulu War. This reference remains ambiguous, as some dancers consider the appropriation of military symbols as empowering, while others emphasise the difference between soldiers and dancers, and thus proclaim an inversion of military violence through the autonomous religious sphere.

Beyond the meaning ascribed to the attire, there is the meaning of the dancing itself, and this is of greater significance to the dancers. In considering the actors' point of view, I move beyond the meaning inscribed into the attire to the meaning of the dance itself, considering it not only as cultural text, but also as practice in its own right, as bodily experience or artistic performance. Church doctrine proclaims that the sacred dance is the highest form of worship, but for many of the dancers this is not something learned, but experienced. In dancing the dancer can experience the sacred as a rupture of the everyday existence. It seems that the rhythmic movement of the body can lead to altered states of consciousness. As a bodily experience dancing lies beyond the explicative power of the "culture as text" metaphor, but also, perhaps, beyond the reach of scientific representation (at least in this textual form). This experience of the sacred through dancing is the most important meaning of the dance for the dancers in the Nazareth Baptist Church, but it is not specific to the Scottish dance groups. What makes them special is the way they perform the dance.

This is the second aspect of the practice of dancing. What characterises the Scottish dancers is their artistic creativity as they constantly invent new moves and styles in their dance performances. This continuous innovation is driven by the competition between the different dance troupes, and leads to recurrent conflicts with the church leadership, who consider all innovation as illegitimate derivation from the ways of the prophet. While the Scottish dance attire might have been subversive of colonial power at the beginning of the twentieth century, the Scottish dancing at the beginning of the twenty-first century is subversive of church authority and orthodoxy. But it is precisely this tension, this testing of the limits of creative freedom that makes the *isikoshi* the most exiting and most beautiful form of sacred dance in the Nazareth Baptist Church.



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### Interviews<sup>27</sup>

Bongani, evangelist of the church, 19 July 2008

Manqoba, Scottish dancer, 25 January 2009

Mduduzi, Scottish dance group leader, 27 July 2008

Nkosinathi, Scottish dance group leader, 25 January 2009

Sipho, minister of the church, 06 July 2008

Vusumuzi, Scottish dancer, 25 January 2009

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27 I have changed the names of all my informants. The interview with Bongani was conducted in Zulu, transcribed by Sicelo Mpungose, translated by Muziwandile Hadebe; all others were conducted in English, transcribed by the author.

## Jamaica Scottish Connections

*Geoff Palmer*

I was born in Munro College district in the parish of St Elizabeth in Jamaica in 1940. My father's surname was Palmer. He came from the same parish. My mother's surname was Larmond (Lamond) and she came from New Green district, in the adjoining parish of Manchester. It is believed that New Green is a contraction of Greenock, one of the Scottish ports that traded extensively with Jamaica during slavery. The other major Scottish ports were Port Glasgow and Leith.

I was taken to Jamaica's capital, Kingston, when I was a few months old. Earning a living in Jamaica was not easy. My father emigrated to America, and we lost contact with him when I was four. My mother emigrated to London when I was seven and left me in the care of her eight sisters and their aunt, Auntie Eliot. We lived on John Street in Kingston, Jamaica. Elgin Street was three roads away, on the main road, which ran into the parish of St Andrews, where rich white Scottish people were prominent.

I went to North Street Congregational Church and School. The school was on Princess Street. The Church (Freeman Chapel) was completed in 1839, one year after slavery was abolished in 1838. Many Scots helped to build the church, using bricks that formed the ballast of slave ships returning to Jamaica after depositing their valuable cargoes of sugar, rum, spice, and coffee to English and Scottish ports. The names of some of these Scottish people were on memorial plaques on the thick brick walls of the church. Most of those Scots had died of yellow fever. On the ornate wooden altar was a scroll which carried the title Scottish Achievers. The list read: Bruce, Wallace, Napier, Burns, Scott, Watt, and Livingstone. No one knew who had put it there, but in very small print, at the bottom of the list, was the statement, "Made in Kirkcaldy."

My attendance at church was more consistent than my attendance at school. My aunts accompanied me to church; they did not accompany me to school! I frequently won the prize for regular attendance at church. Christianity and the English language are two of the legacies of British (Scottish) slavery in Jamaica and other British colonies in the Caribbean. The Scottish teacher taught us various songs of Robert Burns. She also taught us "how to queue" in the play-yard in the hot sun, because it was queuing, she said, that made the Scots so well behaved! I learned what I could in school, and when I left for London in 1955, I excelled at three things: cricket, Scripture and a few lines

from a few of Burns's songs. I did not know who Burns was, but my aunts' Calvinistic Christianity disapproved of what he said about lassies and lads in rye fields!

It took my mother from 1948 to 1955 to save £86 to pay my passage to join her in London. I travelled on my own from Jamaica to London and arrived during a heavy fall of snow on 10 March 1955. I had not seen my mother since 1948. She recognised me; I did not recognise her. I was one month short of my fifteenth birthday and had to complete the month before I could finish elementary school and go to work in the local grocery shop to help my mother with the bills. I failed the test to enter the local comprehensive school and was enrolled at Shelburne Road Secondary Modern School in London after I was classified as Educationally Sub-Normal. One of the questions on the test paper was, "Where is Big Ben located in London?" I had been in the country less than a week! However, within two months, as a result of my cricketing abilities, I was picked for the "up-market" London School-boys' Cricket Team. The headmaster (Mr. King) of Highbury County School, the local grammar school, needed a cricketer, and he secured my transfer from Shelburne to Highbury in September 1955, although my strongest subjects remained cricket and Scripture.

I left Highbury in 1957 and secured a job as a junior laboratory technician at Queen Elizabeth College, London University. Getting to work during the Notting Hill Gate Race Riots was a daily ordeal. It was not clear why a group of white men would want to chase black people down a road and assault them, because we would not or could not have done the same to white people in Jamaica. The British army would have killed us.

Professor Chapman, the zoologist at the college, encouraged me to get the qualifications I needed to get into university. By 1961 I had gained the specified entrance requirement for various British universities. None would admit me, because I did not fit the "overseas student category": I was an immigrant. Professor Chapman helped me to get into Leicester University, to study for a degree in botany—which I attained with Honours in 1964. As a result of my botany degree, I was offered two jobs in London. One was in a betting shop; the other was as a potato peeler in a restaurant. I took the potato peeler job because it was closest to botany! At the end of 1964, I applied to Prof. Anna MacLeod, at Heriot Watt College, for a place to study grain science for my Ph.D. She took me under joint supervision with Sir Edmond Hurst, of the Chemistry Department at Edinburgh University. I gained my Ph.D. in 1967 from Edinburgh University and completed a post-doctoral fellowship at Heriot Watt University before working as a researcher for the brewing industry on the science and technology of malted barley in Surrey from 1968 to 1977. I returned to the Heriot Watt University as a lecturer in 1977 and became professor in 1991 and was given the

OBE for my research and advisory work on grain science and technology in 2003. In the same year I was also given the William Darling Award for my charity and race relations work by the City of Edinburgh Council. I am now Professor Emeritus at Heriot Watt University, having retired in 2005. In 2009 I was delighted to be awarded an honorary degree by the University of Abertay, Dundee, and another by the Open University in 2010. The high commissioner for Jamaica, His Excellency, The Honourable Burchell Whiteman, attended the graduation in Dundee. A reception was held for him and his wife in Edinburgh and Scottish friends of Jamaica, Jamaicans, and Scottish civic leaders attended: a true homecoming/gathering of Scottish historical connections.

During my period as a student in Edinburgh from 1964 to 1968, I found it interesting that many Jamaican students had local family connections in Scotland (which I did not have). Others had parents and grandparents who were educated at Edinburgh University. This link between Jamaican students and Scotland fascinated me. Also, some of these students had Scottish surnames like members of my family. Scottish surnames in my family are: Lamond (Larmond), Walker, Gordon, Eliot, Mowatt, and Gladstone Wood.

The year 2007 was the commemoration of the two hundredth year since abolition of the British slave trade. I looked through a Jamaican telephone directory and found listed about twenty-five hundred people named Campbell and about a thousand people named Reid, Grant, Gordon, Clarke and Stewart, respectively. There were large numbers of people named Graham, Anderson, Wallace, Sharpe, Stirling, Whyte, Wedderburn, Morrison, McFarlane, McKenzie, and a host of other Mc- and Mac-linked names. About 70 percent of the names in my Jamaican telephone book were Scottish surnames. The names of three of the national heroes of Jamaica who fought against the British for freedom and were executed are: Sharpe (in 1832) and Bogle and Gordon (in 1865). More recently, the names of the Jamaican women who dominated the hundred metre races at the Beijing Olympics are: Fraser, Simpson, and Stewart. Their companion, Campbell-Brown, won the two hundred metres. Edinburgh, Culluden, Dundee, Dunfries, Glasgow, and Grantstown are place names in Jamaica. What's in a name? In this case a history that links Scotland, Jamaica, and Caribbean territories to British slavery in the New World.

Now, in order to control Spanish domination of the New World, the English decided to take some of the lands of the New World from them. For example, the Spanish (represented by Christopher Columbus) landed in Jamaica in 1494. The English took it from them in 1655.

Scotland's influence in Jamaica increased significantly after 1707, when the Act of Union was signed. Article 4 of the 25 Articles was the first of the articles to be signed—and it was approved with the greatest majority. It gave the Scots increased trade with England and the plantations in the Dominions.

One of the earliest Scottish immigrants to emigrate to Jamaica—even before the Act of Union—was Colonel John Campbell. He arrived in Jamaica in 1700 and settled in the parish of St Elizabeth, where I was born. By 1774 there was a large group of Campbells from Argyll, in the western part of Jamaica. It was this kind of Scottish kinship which allowed Scottish men to dominate the business of slavery in the island of Jamaica. Jamaica Street, built in 1763, in Glasgow reflects the past commercial importance of Jamaica to Glasgow and Scotland. There may be other Jamaica Streets in Scotland, but there is a Jamaica Street also in the New Town of Edinburgh.

In contrast to the activities of Scots in the Caribbean, on the mainland of America, Scottish tobacco lords such as Glassford, Oswald and Buchanan—whose names are now streets in Glasgow—made large fortunes in the early and mid-1700s from slave-grown tobacco instead. The importance of Virginia tobacco in this trade explains why there is a Virginia Street in Glasgow. The increasing bounties from slave-grown tobacco and sugar and the protection given to this trade by the British navy encouraged the Scot James Tompson, to write the jingoistic song *Rule Britannia* in 1740. Uncertainties regarding the morality of slavery were dealt a mortal blow when in 1753 the renowned, well-respected philosopher David Hume stated that black people were inferior to white people—an unproven prejudice that still exists today. The Scot Archibald Dalziel from Kirkliston (1740–1810) concluded in his book that Africans were better off in slavery than at home in Africa. This was put forward as a justification for slavery, but the evidence that slaves disagreed with this contrived conclusion of self-interest clearly contradicts this: An untold number of slaves, killed themselves to avoid enslavement that turned black people into property.

Between the 1740s and the 1780s, dominant Scottish families such as the Wedderburns, the Malcolms, the Grants, the Stirlings of Kier, and the Ewings and Hamiltons made large fortunes from their plantations in Jamaica. They were the new millionaires of Scotland. The Grants built Grantown-on-Spey and Achiestown. James Wedderburn bought Inveresk Lodge and married into the aristocracy, and the Stirlings bought William Cunningham's expensive mansion in Glasgow, which is now the Gallery of Modern Art.

The slave master James Ewing built the Necropolis in Glasgow. Many Scots helped to run the white slave-masters' government in Jamaica. The Wedderburns managed William Cunningham's slave plantation in Jamaica, like many others keeping the enterprises churning out income. Others were paid, as doctors, to extend the short working lives of slaves. The Grants were innovative slave masters. They installed a Watt engine in their rum-producing distillery, Monymusk, in Jamaica. Greenock was one of the major sugar towns of the world, boasting solidly built sugar warehouses which were built to last. They are housing



projects today. Perth grew as a city as a result of the linen clothes it made for Caribbean slaves, and Scottish fish exports to the slave islands declined sharply when slavery was abolished, depriving ex-slaves of a major source of food.

By 1800 about 30 percent of the slave plantations in Jamaica were owned by Scots, and the poet Samuel Coleridge was alarmed at the dominant control that Scottish slave masters had over the business of British slavery. The Wedderburns, the Stirlings, and other slave masters left many mixed-race children in Jamaica. One of the most famous was an illegitimate son of James Wedderburn called Robert Wedderburn. Today, one of the white descendants of James Wedderburn is Lord Dundee; from another part of the family comes Lord Bill Wedderburn, a descendant of James Wedderburn's mixed-race slave son Robert.

Robert was manumitted but never shirked his responsibility to protest the evils of chattel slavery during his stay in Scotland and London. According to the English/British slave law of 1661, a chattel slave had "no right to life," which meant that a black slave was not considered human. In contrast, "indentured labouring" was a form of seventeenth-century exile—almost invariably for whites. Some Scots were sent to British Caribbean islands to serve their penal terms, called their "political sentence." This treatment is also referred to as "slavery." However, these exiled white labourers had a "right to life." The bulk of black British slaves arrived in the Caribbean during the eighteenth century. Unlike the children of black slaves, the children of indentured labourers were free and could not be sold, and their 'slavery' did not have to be abolished legally. In addition, despite the unacceptable conditions suffered by untold numbers of children in the factories of the past, and the present crime of trafficking, their brutality cannot be compared with the enormity of centuries of chattel slavery. Such comparisons are dishonourable.

In 1762, within the confines of chattel slave law, Richard Oswald from Caithness Manse in Scotland was in partnership with Archibald Grant. They owned Bance Island, a veritable slave supermarket in the Sierra Leone River. Slave ships docked, then bought, transported, and sold their slaves in Jamaica, and then proceeded to other territories. When Oswald died he left about £50 M at today's value. This wealth was augmented by the wealth of his wife, the daughter of Alexander Ramsay, who died a rich slave owner. In the 1820s James Ewing, from Glasgow, owned the largest sugar cane plantation in Jamaica. He used some of his money to help build the Necropolis in Glasgow. At his death in 1853, Ewing left about £25 M at today's value. Another pernicious Scottish slave master was John Gladstone, the father of the famous British prime minister, William Ewart Gladstone. John Gladstone was born in Leith and owned many slave plantations in British Guiana and Jamaica. His estate is at Fasque, near Aberdeen. When he died in 1851, he left about £65 M at today's

value. Other “minor” Scottish slave masters contributed toward the building of Bathgate Academy, Inverness Academy, Dollar Academy, Harmony House, The Edinburgh Royal Hospital, and other institutions.

Between 1700 and 1800 the histories of Jamaica and Scotland became significantly entwined. The small number of Scots in Jamaica in 1700 expanded rapidly. In 1800, there were about three hundred thousand slaves, ten thousand Scots, and about ten thousand English people in Jamaica. *The Caledonian Mercury* exclaimed in 1797 that slavery was financially beneficial to Britain and Scotland.

From about 1790 to 1806, this wealth was controlled and protected by the powerful Scottish politician, Henry Dundas, Member of Parliament for Midlothian, and then Edinburgh, and a graduate of Edinburgh University. As he looks down today from his forty-two-metre statue in St Andrew Square, one is reminded of Dundas’s influence on the British navy and that in 1782 Admiral Rodney beat the French and the Spanish to keep Jamaica British and maintain British dominance in the Caribbean. At that time, Jamaica was more important than America, providing more than half the income from the Empire.

The financial importance of Jamaica was well known, and Robert Burns wrote a glorious toast to Rodney and the British sailors lost in 1782 during the naval Battle of the Glorious 12th of April (also known as The Battle of All Saints). Later, Dundas ordered the invasion of Haiti, in an attempt to stop Haitians from getting their independence from France in 1804. He feared that Jamaica could be lost in a similar way. In Parliament he frustrated the abolition process by persuading most Scottish MPs not to vote for abolition. He also delayed William Wilberforce’s abolition plans, amending them by introducing, in 1792, the word (and concept of) *gradual* into the politics of the abolition process.

Dundas, later Lord Melville—also known popularly as the “uncrowned King of Scotland” or “Henry IX”—selected governors for British slave islands and encouraged Scottish kinship and patronage practices to improve and protect the profitability of slavery, especially in Jamaica. For example, he used his position as a governor of the Bank of Scotland to fund slavery for Scotland’s commercial benefit, and he made William Lindsay (Lord Balcarras) governor of Jamaica. Balcarras quelled the final rebellion of the Jamaican maroons and transported many Jamaicans to Nova Scotia for life.

Despite all the horrors of slavery in Jamaica—where the working-life expectancy of a field slave was about five years—in 1778 the Scottish court ruled that the Jamaican slave Joseph Knight was a free man, despite the claims of his master, Sir John Wedderburn, for his property right to have Knight returned to him. The ruling indicated that although chattel slavery was legal in Jamaica, it was not legal in Scotland, a truly embarrassing display of legal hypocrisy!

The earliest activities that indicated that slavery would not be tolerated came from the slaves themselves, who fought and died and made plantation slavery a dangerous way to make a living. The histories of Caribbean slaves such as Tacky, Gladstone, Bussa, and Sharpe—who were all hanged for fighting for freedom—testified to this danger. In Britain the push toward abolition started in earnest in the 1790s. Aided by petitions from men and women from Scotland and the rest of Britain, and the activities of abolitionists such as Sharpe, Clarkson, Macaulay, Equiano, Dickson, and William Wilberforce eventually managed to get the British slave trade abolished in 1807 by an act of Parliament. Dundas had no direct political influence on the abolition process after 1806, because his impeachment for the mismanagement of funds of the British Navy was initiated by Samuel Whitbread II, M.P., leader of the Whig party in 1805 and head of a very wealthy brewing and land-owning family. The House of Lords failed to impeach Dundas, but his political life was over in 1806, the same year that prime minister William Pitt (the Younger) died regretting that he had not done more to abolish slavery. Henry Brougham, a Scot and co-founder, in 1802, of the *Edinburgh Review*, represented yet another position on abolition: He supported it because he felt that “breeding” of slaves could compensate for the reduction in the slave population caused by abolition of the slave trade.

Abolitionists such as Buxton, Thomson, Stephen, Sturge, and Macaulay helped to convince the British Parliament that slavery should be abolished. In 1823 Buxton and his abolitionist colleagues founded the Society for the Mitigation and Gradual Abolition of Slavery—the inclusion of “mitigation” and “gradual” in the name suggested that although Dundas was no longer on the political scene, his greedy creed of British (Scottish) self-interest still had an impact on the timing of when the slaves would be freed. In addition to being a major player in the abolition movement, Buxton was a powerful figure in the brewing industry and was Master of the Brewers’ Hall in London in 1824. Brewers’ Hall comprised a collection of rich British brewers who had business contacts with the guild halls of other industrialists. Buxton’s mother was a Hanbury, and his brewing company was Trueman, Hanbury and Buxton. Buxton’s wife, Hannah Gurney, was the sister of Elizabeth Fry, the prison reformer. Hannah’s father was a Quaker and a banker. Elizabeth was married to the Quaker Joseph Fry, the chocolate industrialist.

The Quakers were the first group of people to promote the abolition of slavery (in 1783). The support of Buxton’s Quaker family and his contacts in industry would have increased his ability to influence the government’s stance on ending slavery. Buxton also gave financial support to Elizabeth Fry’s prison reform work. Buxton, dressed in black and wearing glasses, and Elizabeth Fry adorn the back of the current Bank of England £5 note.

The end of British slavery coincided with the Industrial Revolution in Britain, when local factories replaced distant plantations. Whitbread and Buxton both came from rich and powerful brewing families, and both were against slavery. Whitbread was influential enough to end Dundas's political domination of British slavery in 1806, and Buxton was influential enough to help secure the emancipation of slavery in 1833–1834. Although the money from slavery helped to initiate and nourish the Industrial Revolution in Britain, it is possible that the new nineteenth-century industrialists regarded the old industry of slavery as almost redundant to future development. The financial and social influence of Whitbread and Buxton tend to support, to some degree, Eric Williams's (1944) view that the abolition of slavery was not solely a moral issue, but was driven by the new economic forces emerging from the Industrial Revolution in Britain. In 1825 Wilberforce passed the reins of the abolition movement to Buxton. The view that Wilberforce's efforts to end slavery were based solely on Christian values requires re-examination, because his choosing Buxton to be his successor, over all the other abolitionists, meant that Wilberforce understood that legal chattel slavery could not be brought to an end by Christian values alone. Financial and social influence also would be required to change the law and set the slaves free. It would seem that in the early nineteenth century, the battle to end British slavery was fought, to a significant degree, between the old wealth and self-interest of the slave owners and the new wealth and influence of industrialists such as Whitbread, Buxton, and Sturge.

Although the moral commitment of Whitbread and Buxton to end slavery was important, it should not be overlooked that between 1750 and 1825 brewing had become a very rich Britain-based industry. It provided significant money to the government as tax, and the industry itself had very little to gain from British slavery. Beer was taxed on malt, not sugar, and it was illegal to use sugar in beer production until 1847—nine years after slavery was abolished. A large number of brewers were M.P.s and like other industrialists (e.g. Joseph Sturge), they were rich enough to promote industrial development at home instead of supporting a slavery network that was becoming increasingly difficult to justify politically, morally, and financially.

It has been stated that about twelve to sixteen pounds of sugar were used then to sweeten tea made from one pound of leaf tea. The confection industry also required vast quantities of sugar. But new sources of cheaper sugar were being produced in and exported from Cuba, Brazil, and India. By the end of British slavery in 1838, the price of sugar and the production of sugar had fallen sharply in British-held Caribbean territories; the slide into long-term poverty of ex-slaves there had begun. Indian sugar and slave-grown Cuban and Brazilian sugar topped up sugar losses from the Caribbean. If the cause of

abolition had been only about the immorality of slavery, then Cuba and Brazil—both of which still had slavery in place—would not have found such viable markets for their sugar. Wilberforce's choice of Buxton to effect abolition of British slavery was important because the wealthy and committed Buxton would have had significant industrial support and effective lobbying power in Parliament. For effective action in a cause, however moral, practical drivers are essential for good intentions to succeed: Often, people have to be convinced that self-interest is not the only justification in business.

As this Scottish/Jamaican history unfolds, some people are alarmed that a 'man of the people' such as Robert Burns was prepared to improve himself financially by becoming a 'slave driver' in Jamaica. He knew how it changed the lives of men who went to Jamaica and returned rich and 'more acceptable' to the upper crust of British society. Indeed, slavery money improved marriage prospects for one seeking a wife with money of her own and a 'good family.' Burns and Highland Mary were booked to sail to Jamaica in 1786, but his poems sold well, he did not sail, and Highland Mary died alone in Greenock. However, we are left with Burns' invitation to Highland Mary to sail to Jamaica, "Will ye go to the Indies, my Mary."

Another love of Robert Burns was Mrs. Clarinda Maclehose. She sailed to Jamaica in 1792 to see her husband, a slave master. Burns had given her the song "*Ae Fond Kiss*" in 1791 before she sailed. When she met her husband in Jamaica, he told her he was quite happy where he was, cohabiting with one of his slaves (his ebony woman) and his mahogany children. As instructed, Mrs Maclehose returned to Scotland in 1793. On one of my visits to Jamaica, I sat on the high ground of an old slave plantation in the parish of St. Mary. The slave master's house was behind me, and the *closed* slave plantation below me stretched into the distance beyond a river over which an ominous rain-filled cloud hovered. The plantation now grows wild bushes instead of sugar cane. Through the haze I imagined black slaves toiling in the hot sun below. I wondered what Mrs. Maclehose thought of her husband and his new Jamaican family and whether the Jamaican descendants of Mr. Maclehose know that they are linked directly to Burns, the present homecoming/gathering (2009) and the famous love song that Burns wrote for Clarinda Maclehose.

The Scottish surnames of many Jamaicans reflect not only names taken from slave masters; many surnames reflect genetic (blood) ties that are centuries old. In 1824 Rev. William Knibb stated that Jamaican slavery was inhuman. Knibb fought to end this terrible slavery. He came to Scotland in 1833, hoping to persuade Scotland's fifty-three to fifty-five M.P.s to vote to end slavery, but self-interest determined the votes of most of them: They not only avoided the debates on abolition; most of them did not vote for it. Many did not even turn up to vote.

Knibb was not well received in those areas of Scotland which benefited economically from Jamaican slavery. However, he begged the Scottish people to help end slavery: "I plead for thousands of children of Scotsmen in slavery, children left by their parents...to the horrors of West Indian slavery." This plea must have embarrassed the Stirling family, because before his death in 1749, James Stirling admitted that he had at least twenty-three children in Jamaica with slave women. Knibb's Memorial Church and High School are in Trelawny, Jamaica. Today, they are even more famous because Usain Bolt was a pupil at Knibb's High School.

The proud motto of the Jamaican nation is "Out of many, one people." Like those of other nations, Jamaicans are the descendants of the different people who have lived on the island. This cultural and genetic heritage cannot be changed. Some have tried, and rightly failed, to deny this history. In many ways an appreciation of Jamaican/Scottish history would have prevented the mistake of the Scottish government's spokesperson who said that the two-hundred-fiftieth Burns' Birthday Home-coming celebrations were for those with "Scottish Blood" or "Scottish Affinity." Initially, only North Americans, Australians, and New Zealanders were invited, but Jamaicans and other Caribbean people were not. Burns knew the geographic and monetary value of Jamaica as a slave colony. He was less aware of the geography and the monetary value of North America, Australia, or New Zealand. The "Slave's Lament" of the Burns of 1792 was written by a wiser Burns than the Burns of 1786, who was about to sail to Jamaica to be, in his own words, "a slave driver." The essence of great people is that they try to correct the errors they have made, as Burns did. The role Scotland (or England or France) played in New World slavery should be acknowledged and where possible, education and aid should be given to mitigate the debilitating poverty that this slavery has left behind. In Scotland the morality of supporting Africa is recognized. However, the general absence of support for the British Caribbean, in general, and Jamaica, in particular, is immoral.

Sadly, the consequences of slavery to which I refer are still with us today. The population of Jamaica is 2.8 million and is a direct result of the large numbers of slaves that were put on the island two hundred years ago for profit. Jamaica has a slavery-derived poverty in which an unacceptable number of families cannot find paid work, and there is no benefit system like Great Britain's. This poverty, generated by greed, has not been given suitable attention since the abolition of slavery in 1838. The Baptist preachers Bogle and Gordon became aware that ex-slaves could not earn enough to feed and clothe themselves and their families. Petitions for help addressed fell on very deaf ears and were soon forgotten.



In 1865 Bogle, Gordon and some of their followers were found guilty of staging the Morant Bay Rebellion, in which many people died. Bogle, Gordon, and many others were hanged. Modern Jamaica has inherited this old problem of trying to feed its people. By contrast, in 2008 the empty family house of a slave master, John Gladstone, located at Fasque, near Aberdeen, Scotland, was up for sale at £7 M. Some of its contents were sold for about £2 M. The estate remains, but two small games tables made during slavery from Jamaican satinwood sold for £21,000 at Christie's. Such a sum would transform the lives of many families in Jamaica or elsewhere in the Caribbean. Such are the lopsided consequences of our slavery. The gross waste of the potential of the poor should not be tolerated.

People like the late Nelson Mandela of South Africa have shown that revenge is not a sensible solution to the problem, yet in any human society unfairness must be challenged and changed. Therefore, we must develop an approach that makes life better for those who suffer most. Those who still deny the inhumanity of chattel slavery should read with understanding the words of that popular hymn "Amazing Grace," written by John Newton (1725–1807), an ex-slave ship captain—a man who saw the agony of black slaves as he transported and sold them into slavery. Newton's hymn of extreme contrition is meant to mirror the extreme and wretched ill-treatment that was inflicted on black African people as they were forced to become New World (*e.g.* Jamaican) chattel slaves. Turners' painting, *The Zong*, also reminds us of the savagery of that wretched time of our history.

To conclude, the descendants of slaves of British slavery have surnames that in many ways indicate one source of their enslavement. Although both black and white people have various views about the socio-historical importance of a British surname, one thing is clear: without New World slavery, the life, the culture and the politics of the New World would be very different today. New World slavery has made us what we have become. Some have inherited the wealth and the blame; others have inherited the poverty, along with negative images that are difficult to change and therefore, need immediate and honest attention. The links between Jamaica and Scotland even extend to the flags of both countries: The cross of St Andrew is central to both. Our joint history is permanent and cannot be changed by denial. The past not only helps us to see ourselves 'as others see us'; it also reminds us of our responsibilities and indicates that we must change ourselves for the better. Equality laws have meant little in a world where the benefits of our chattel slavery are being enjoyed whilst its history and poverty are denied and ignored.





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