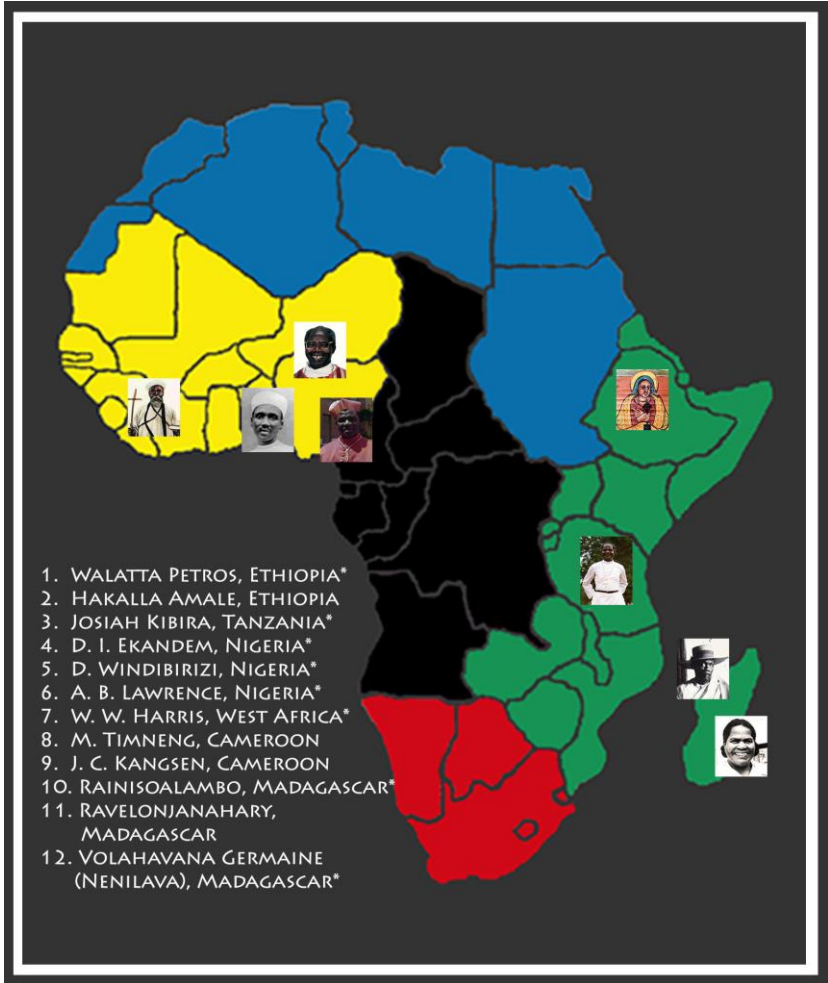


JOURNAL OF AFRICAN CHRISTIAN BIOGRAPHY



CUMULATIVE VOLUME, JUNE-DECEMBER 2016

JOURNAL OF AFRICAN CHRISTIAN BIOGRAPHY

Original Biographies from the *Dictionary of African
Christian Biography*

Cumulative Volume 2016 (June to December)

The ***Journal of African Christian Biography*** was launched in 2016 to complement and make stories from the on-line *Dictionary of African Christian Biography* (www.DACB.org) more readily accessible and immediately useful in African congregations and classrooms.

Published in monthly installments with an annual cumulative volume available on line or in print, the *JACB* is intended to promote the research, publication, and use of African Christian biography within Africa by serving as an academically credible but publically accessible source of information on Christianity across the continent.

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Preface to the *Journal of African Christian Biography*, Cumulative Volume June-December 2016

The editors are pleased to offer the first annual cumulative volume of the *Journal of African Christian Biography*, the monthly scholarly publication that was launched in June of 2016. Since then, the life stories of twelve individuals who played vital roles in and through their faith communities have been published online as free downloads. But it is important that a selection of *DACB* stories be more readily available to those without access to the internet. As I mentioned in the fall 2016 newsletter of the *DACB*, each issue of the journal is available in its e-journal, on-line version, where it is configured either as A4 or 8.5 x 11 format printable as booklets, ready for local printing and binding or stapling. Our intention is to make it easy for academics and church leaders in various parts of Africa to make print copies of the journal available to their students, colleagues or church members. And so it is with this cumulative volume.

This cumulative volume contains a scintillating taste of the thousands of biographies to be found in the *DACB* itself: *Wallata Petros* and *Hakalla Amale* from Ethiopia; *Josiah Kibira* from Tanzania; *Dominic Ignatius Ekandem*, *David Windibiziri*, and *Abiodun Babatunde Lawrence* from Nigeria; *William Wadé Harris*, the great prophet-evangelist of West Africa; *Michael Timneng* and *Jeremiah Chi Kangsen* from Cameroon; and *Rainosoalambo*, *Ravelonjanahary*, and *Volahavana Germaine (Nenilava)*, three *Fifohazana* revival leaders from Madagascar. In this collection, five of the biographies were authored by three women and five male authors wrote the remaining eight.

This inaugural volume is offered as a harbinger of successive annual volumes to come. It is our hope that it will find its rightful place in the libraries of institutions, scholars and church leaders, and in the teaching and preaching content of those charged with preserving, cherishing and transmitting the African Christian story in all of its unique character and vibrancy.

The Editors
December 2016

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The Stories of Walatta Petros and Hakalla Amale
Dictionary of African Christian Biography
Journal of African Christian Biography
Vol 1, No 1 (June 2016)

The Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life survey made public on August 15, 2010 showed that Africa is the most religious continent in the world.¹ The share of Africans who described religion as “very important” in their lives ranged from 98% in Senegal to 69% in Botswana. That compared with 57% of Americans, 25% of Germans, and 8% of Swedes.

The study also reported that the number of Christians in sub-Saharan Africa had increased more rapidly than the number of Muslims, from 7 million in 1900 to 470 million in 2010. Today, approximately one out of four Christians in the world resides in sub-Saharan Africa, with a continental tally of 542 million, making it the religion of a majority of Africans south of the Sahara.²

It is fitting that the inaugural issue of the *Journal of African Christian Biography* should feature the stories of two very different Ethiopian women—one a pious noblewoman from the highlands, the other a peasant from the south.

Anyone with a nodding interest in Ethiopia will at once associate the country with the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, a venerable institution tracing its roots back to a micro calamity that took place some seventeen centuries ago. Accompanying their uncle Meropius on a voyage that was to have taken them from Tyre to India, two young Syrian brothers were the only survivors of a massacre that took the lives of all hands on board—retaliation for the crew’s miscreant behavior at an Ethiopian Red Sea port where the ship had stopped the day before to take on fresh water. Frumentius and Aedesius were taken to Aksum, where they became tutors to Prince ‘Ezānā, first-born son of Emperor ‘Ellä-‘Améda. They could not have been aware that their protégé was destined to become the Aksumite Empire’s greatest ruler, and its first Christian emperor. Frumentius was subsequently consecrated bishop by

Athanasius, then Patriarch of Alexandria.

From that time, the heartlands of Ethiopia have remained adamantly and profoundly Christian despite relentless, at times severe, pressure by Muslim invaders who succeeded in obliterating all traces of Nubian Christianity. Roman Catholic Jesuit missionaries came perilously close to eliminating the Orthodox Tāwahaḍo Church when they persuaded King Susānyos (1572-1632) to proclaim Roman Catholicism the official religion of his realm, but were stymied by Wälättä Pēṭros (Ge'ez: ወለተ፡ጴጥሮስ, 1592–November 24, 1642), the sainted religious and monastic leader whose story is featured below.

The first four centuries of the Ethiopian church were marked by an impressive scholarly productivity which included the translation of the Bible into Ge'ez. For the next eight hundred years (700-1500), the country was effectively cut off from most of the Christian world. Academic speculation tends to the view that it was during this period that the Church's theology and practice became suffused with the distinctively Hebraic and monastic traditions that today distinguish it from all other Christian traditions. Today, as the official religion of the only country on the continent to have decisively thwarted nineteenth century European colonization, the Orthodox Church continues to be integral to Ethiopian self-definition, particularly among highland Ethiopians.

Unfortunately, while surviving Ahmed Gran's religiously driven campaign of religious and cultural genocide in the mid-sixteenth century, the Orthodox Church suffered enormous losses, particularly throughout the south. Thousands of Orthodox churches were destroyed, and with them a vast, millennium-old accumulation of liturgical and historical vellum manuscripts. Conversion to Islam was the easiest key to survival.

It was only toward the end of the nineteenth century that faltering efforts were mounted by the Orthodox Church to recoup its losses. These attempts were only partially successful, however. For despite its longevity, and possibly because of its close ties with brutally imposed Ethiopian imperial power, Orthodoxy was less than welcome even in those parts of the country not directly overrun by

Muslim invaders. Since conversion to the state religion had often been legislated and violently coerced, religious Orthodoxy and imperial oppression were inseparable.

Among the large populations of unwilling converts were culturally, religiously and linguistically distinctive peoples in Harerge, Bale, Sidamo, Gamo Gofa, Kefa, Ilubabor, and Welega provinces. Difficult to pacify, and on the fringes of mainstream Ethiopian life, these peoples became the imperially sanctioned province of foreign missionaries from the West, through whom, it was hoped, *pax Ethiopiana* might be achieved. Western missionary education and medicine, offered in Amharic, would eventuate in pacification and a sense of inclusion in the national “we.”

Roman Catholic and Anglican missionaries who arrived in the mid-nineteenth century made cooperation with the Orthodox Church in Tigre their *modus operandi*. But by 1935, eight Protestant mission agencies—some denominational, others non-denominational, most of them evangelical—were at work in Southern Ethiopia: the Sudan Interior Mission (SIM), the Bible Churchmen’s Missionary Society (BCMS), the Seventh Day Adventists (SDA), the United Presbyterian Mission of the USA, the Church Mission to the Jews, Evangeliska Fosterlands-Stiftelsen (EFS - Sweden), Bibeltreue Freunde (until 1911, part of EFS), and Hermannsburger Missionsanstalt. Obligated to temporarily suspend operations when the Italians briefly (1935-1941) occupied the country during the Second World War, missionaries discovered communities of flourishing evangelical faith when they returned after the war. Between 1950 and 1975 these agencies were joined by numerous others, variously engaged in evangelism, education, and community development.

Today the largest Protestant denomination in the country is the Word of Life Evangelical Church (Kale Heywet), related to erstwhile Sudan Interior Mission, an international mission agency now known simply as SIM International. While other significant Protestant churches in Ethiopia include the Evangelical Church Mekene Yesus (Lutheran), the Seventh Day Adventists, and a number

of dynamic groups tracing their roots to missionaries from the Reformed, Baptist, and Pentecostal/Full Gospel traditions, this book is about the Kale Heywet Church. More narrowly, but significantly, it is about the largest and arguably the most dynamic of its many culturally delineated branches, the Wolaitta Kale Heywet Church, without whose hundreds of dedicated evangelists the astounding growth of Christianity throughout the south would be inconceivable.

Meanwhile, the Orthodox Täwəḥədo Church, with an estimated membership of some 36 million, continues to thrive as a powerful influence in the life of the nation.

It is only fitting that this pilot issue of the *Journal of African Christian Biography* should showcase two Ethiopian women who—apart from their deep piety and profound influence on their faith communities—could not be in more stark contrast. One, a noblewoman, born to privilege, well educated, powerfully connected to the top echelons of the country's structures of power; the other, a poor peasant, illiterate, kidnapped as a young woman to become the third bride of a polygamist. Both women have left their indelible mark on Christianity in that land. And here are their stories.

Jonathan Bonk, Editor

Endnotes:

1. This was among the discoveries of the Pew-Templeton Global Religious Futures Project. The Future of World Religions. <http://www.globalreligiousfutures.org/>. More than 25,000 sub-Saharan Africans responded in face-to-face interviews in more than 60 languages. A summary of the research by *Huffington Post* (June 15, 2010) reported that religion was “very important” to more than three-quarters of the population in 17 of 19 sub-Saharan nations. According to the survey, 98 percent of respondents in Senegal say religion is very important, following by 93 percent in Mali. The lowest percentage was reported in Botswana, 69 percent, which is still a healthy majority. The study is part of the Pew-Templeton Global Religious Futures Project. More than 25,000 sub-Saharan Africans responded in face-to-face interviews in more than 60 languages (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2010/04/15/survey-finds-africa-is-more-important-than-ever-before_n_539704.html -- published initially on June 15, 2010 and updated on May 25, 2011).

2. See “Profiles of the 270 largest of the 10,000 distinct religions worldwide,” in *The World Christian Encyclopedia: A Comprehensive Survey of Church and Religions in the Modern World*, ed. David B. Barrett, George T. Kurian, and Todd M. Johnson, 2nd ed., 2 vols. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), vol. 2, pp. 3–12. The latest figures are provided by Todd M. Johnson, Gina A. Zurlo, Albert W. Hickman, and Peter F. Crossing at the Center for the Study of Global Christianity, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. They appear in their article, “Christianity 2015: Religious Diversity and Personal Contact,” in the *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, Vol. 39, No. 1 (January 2015), pp. 28–29. There are signs, however, that by 2070 Islam will have

become the fastest growing religion in the world. See Emma Green, “Islam Could Become the World’s Largest Religion After 2070,” in *The Atlantic* (April 2, 2015). Her source is the Pew Research Center’s report, released on April 2, 2015, “The Future of World Religions: Population Growth Projections, 2010–2050. Why Muslims Are Rising Fastest and the Unaffiliated Are Shrinking as a Share of the World’s Population,” (<http://www.pewforum.org/2015/04/02/religious-projections-2010-2050/>).

Walatta Petros
1592 to 1642
Orthodox
Ethiopia

Saint Walatta Petros (Ge'ez: ወለተ፡ጴጥሮስ, Wälättä Peṭros, 1592–November 24, 1642) is one of thirty women saints in the Ethiopian Orthodox Tāwəḥədo Church and one of only six of these women saints with hagiographies. She was a religious and monastic leader who led a revolt against Roman Catholicism, defending the Ethiopian Orthodox Tāwəḥədo Church when the Jesuits persuaded King Susənyos (1572-1632) to proclaim Roman Catholicism the faith of the land. Her name means “Daughter of [St.] Peter.” Her followers wrote down the story of her life about thirty years after she died, in 1672, with a monk in her monastery named Gälawdewos serving as the community’s amanuensis (this hagiography has been translated into English).

She was born in 1592 into a noble family, her mother was named Krəstos ʿƏbaya (In Christ lies her greatness) and her father was named Baḥər Säggäd (The [regions by the] sea submit[s] [to him]). Her father adored her, treating her with great reverence and predicting that bishops and kings would bow down to her, giving her the name of the man upon whom God built his church, Peter.

She was married at a young age to Susənyos’s chief advisor, Mälkäʿä Krəstos (Image of Christ). After all three of her children died in infancy, she grew tired of the things of this world and determined to leave her husband to become a nun. Not long after, in 1612, Susənyos privately converted from the Ethiopian Orthodox Tāwəḥədo Church to Roman Catholicism, and over the next ten years, he urged those in his court, including her, to convert as well, finally delivering an edict banning orthodoxy in 1622. When Walatta Petros first left her husband, around 1615, he razed a town to retrieve her and she returned to him so that more people would not be harmed. Then she discovered that her husband had been involved in the murder of the head of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tāwəḥədo

Church and she again determined to leave her husband, starving herself until he let her go. She immediately went to a monastery on Lake Ṭana and became a nun at the age of 25, in 1617. There she met, for the first time, Ǝḥətä Krəstos, the woman who became her constant companion in life and work and the abbess of her community after Walatta Petros's death.

Walatta Petros lived quietly as a devout and hard-working nun and might have remained as such if the king had not banned orthodoxy. Her hagiographer reported that she did not want to keep company with any of the converts, so she took several nuns and servants and fled her monastery, going 100 miles east of Lake Ṭana to the district of Şəyat. There she began to preach against Roman Catholicism, adding that any king who had converted was an apostate and accursed. The king soon heard of these treasonous remarks and he demanded that she be brought before the court. Her husband and powerful family came to her defense, and so she was not killed, but was sent to live with her brother in around 1625, on the condition that she stop her teaching.

However, she soon fled him (taking the same nuns and servants) and moved from Lake Ṭana to the region of Waldəbba, about 150 miles north, which was then drawing many monks and nuns who refused to convert and were fomenting against the new religion. While there, Walatta Petros had a vision of Christ commissioning her to found seven religious communities, a charge she only reluctantly took up. She left and went to the region of Şallamt, east of Waldəbba, and again began preaching against conversion. The angry king again called her before the court, and this time she was sentenced to spending Saturdays with the Jesuits, as the head of the mission, Afonso Mendes, worked to convert her.

When this was unsuccessful, the king banished her, alone, to the Ethio-Sudan borderlands, Žəbay, a hot and barren place. There she endured many hardships, but many monks and nuns who did not want to convert found her and became members of her community. Due to the kindness of the queen, Ǝḥətä Krəstos was allowed to join her. Thus, Žəbäy was the first of the seven communities prophesized.

After three years the king relented and she went with her followers to live in the region of Dambəya, on the northern side of Lake Ṭana, setting up her second community, Čanq^wa. More men and women followed her there, and when sickness broke out, she moved her followers to Məşəlle, on the southeastern shore, her third community.

Finally, in 1632, fifteen years after Walatta Petros had become a nun, a disheartened Susənyos rescinded the conversion edict and died just a few months later. Walatta Petros was revered as a heroine for her resistance to early European incursions in Africa. For the next ten years, Walatta Petros's community continued to grow and the next king, Fasilädäs, looked on her with great favor. She set up her communities at Dämboza, Afär Färäs, Zäge, and Zäbol. Then, after a three-month illness, she died, twenty-six years after she had become a nun, and was buried at the monastery or Rema on Lake Ṭana.

In 1650, Fasilädäs gave land to establish her monastery at Q^waraşa, on Lake Ṭana, which remains her monastery today. Walatta Petros's fame continued to grow over the next century, and her monastery became an important sanctuary for those fleeing the wrath of the king, for whom she performed many miracles, as recorded in her hagiography.

Unfortunately, the edition of her life published in 1912 was based on one manuscript, and that very corrupted, so most of the research about her published before the recent English translation and edition, based on twelve manuscripts of the hagiography, contains incorrect information about her life.

Wendy Laura Belcher
Princeton University

Hakalla Amale
c.1905 to 1991
Kale Heywet Church
Ethiopia

Hakalla Amale was the first woman to be converted in the Kambatta Hadiya area. She is remembered for her strength in enduring persecution in the early days of the church.

She was born in Kaburbaya, Ballessa, Hosanna Shoa, Ethiopia, to Amale Kassamo (father) and Faysse Lamonko (mother) and spoke the Hadiya language. She became the third wife of Ato Jate Malegu who kidnapped her and forced her to marry him. His first two wives had given him only daughters and he trusted that Hakalla would give him sons. In fact, she bore him three sons, Assefa, Estefanos, and Eshetu.

Hakalla first heard the gospel from her uncle's son, Shigute Dadda, and came to faith in Christ at the age of eighteen, the same year she gave birth to her first son. She learned to read the Bible—a very rare achievement even for men at that time. Her family on both sides tried to force her husband to divorce her because of her faith, but he refused because she had given him a son. Hakalla was beaten with hippopotamus leather and forced to chew that same leather as a sign that she would deny the faith. But she would not deny Christ. In the late evenings, her brother and Shigute visited her to pray and strengthen her faith.

While Hakalla was pregnant with her second son, the persecution increased. The village elders came to her home, forced her outside, and demanded that she deny Christ, threatening to curse her if she refused. On that particular day she was preparing a traditional medicine which people believed made labour and delivery easier. In their presence, she drank the medicine in the name of Christ. The men then cursed her. Hakalla was willing to die rather than deny Christ. Later that day, she gave birth to a healthy second son and the people saw that the power of Christ had overcome the curse. Hakalla was then ordered not to communicate

with her neighbors at all. In spite of this the number of believers kept growing. When her relative, Ato Aba Gole believed, his conversion eased the persecution. Later, her husband believed. Hakalla witnessed in her own village and often walked or traveled by horseback to distant villages to witness and preach.

Hakalla is known for her strong witness in her family which led her husband, children, and grandchildren to Christ. She was the first woman to serve when the Dubancho church was established. A strong advocate of women's literacy, Hakalla traveled to Lemu, Kambatta, Shone, Sike, Wolayta, and visited many congregations even as far away as Ambo and Addis Ababa to teach women to read. She was a strong support when the women's group was organized and she was invited to join the Women's General Assembly at the national level to give her testimony. She was also the only woman with strong enough faith and determination to be allowed to enter prisons. She served Christian prisoners by traveling long distances to take them fresh food. She was also a model of hospitality and entertained many Christian guests and students, as well as some of her persecutors. Even in her old age she led the women's prayer group in the local church. She wrote a song: "Lord Jesus, my heart is longing to be with you" (*"Wedante Yesus hoi libey yinafkal"*).

In her eighty-fifth year, she told her children one day that she felt ill. Two days later she passed away.

Belaynesh Dindamo

Women's Office

Kale Heywet Church

Sources

Sources for the story of Hakalla Amale

This article, submitted to the *DACB* in 2002, was researched and written by Belaynesh Dindamo of the Kale Heywet Church Women's Office in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. It is based on the author's interviews of Hakalla Amale, and on eyewitness accounts by her son, Assefa Jate (a KHC leader) and by KHC Pastor Ato Kedamo Mechato.

Sources for the story of Walatta Petros

This article, submitted to the *DACB* in 2016, was researched and written by Wendy Laura Belcher, Associate Professor in the Department of Comparative Literature and Center for African American Studies at Princeton University in Princeton, New Jersey, USA.

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Recent Print and Digital Resources Related to Christianity in Africa

Samson Adentunji Fatokun, editor. *Christianity and African Society: A Festschrift in Honour of Pastor (Dr.) Gabriel Olandele Olutola*. Ibadan, Nigeria: University of Ibadan, Department of Religious Studies in conjunction with BookWright Publishers, 2013. Pp.xvi, 584. No price given. ISBN978-978-088-928-9

The book is a collection of scholarly articles that survey Africa's contact with the Christian Faith. The book makes a critical assessment of the impacts of Christianity on African society from inception till date. Chapters are approached by different scholars from historical, theological, sociological, cultural, political, technological, and gender perspectives. In sum, the book brings out the distinctive areas Christian presence has positively and otherwise impacted on Africa as a continent by way of interaction.

Allen Anderson. *To the Ends of the Earth: Pentecostalism and the Transformation of World Christianity (Oxford Studies in World Christianity)*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2013. Pp. xvi, 311. \$26.95. ISBN-13: 978-0195386424 ISBN-10: 0195386426

No branch of Christianity has grown more rapidly than Pentecostalism, especially in the southern hemisphere. There are over 100 million Pentecostals in Africa. In Latin America, Pentecostalism now vies with Catholicism for the soul of the continent, and some of the largest Pentecostal congregations in the world are in South Korea.

In *To the Ends of the Earth*, Allan Heaton Anderson explores the historical and theological factors behind the phenomenal growth

of global Pentecostalism. Anderson argues that its spread is so dramatic because it is an "ends of the earth" movement-- Pentecostals believe that they are called to be witnesses for Jesus Christ to the furthest reaches of the globe. His wide-ranging account examines such topics as the Azusa Street revival in Los Angeles, the role of the first missionaries in China, India, and Africa, Pentecostalism's incredible diversity due to its deep local roots, and the central role of women in the movement. He describes more recent developments such as the creation of new independent churches, megachurches, and the "health and wealth" gospel, and he explores the increasing involvement of Pentecostals in public and political affairs across the globe. Why is this movement so popular? Anderson points to such features as the emphasis on the Spirit, the "born-again" experience, incessant evangelism, healing and deliverance, cultural flexibility, a place-to-feel-at-home, religious continuity, an egalitarian community, and meeting material needs-- all of which contribute to Pentecostalism's remarkable appeal.

Exploring more than a century of history and ranging across most of the globe, Anderson illuminates the spectacular rise of global Pentecostalism and shows how it changed the face of Christianity worldwide. (from the cover)

Jacob Kehinde Ayantayo and Samson Adetunji Fatokun, editors.
Religion and Security Issues: Proceedings of 2013 Biennial International Religious Studies Conference. Religious Studies Series, Volume 5. Ibadan, Nigeria: University of Ibadan, Department of Religious Studies, 2015. Pp. xiii, 414. No price given. ISBN 978-978-946-901-7

Security challenges have resonated in world news and in the local media in the in the last three decades or so, more than ever before. Fomenting insecurity continues to be a good business for those who invent as well as those who invest in arms. The world would be a better place if these reprobates can be put out of a job. This carefully

selected compendium insists that war should not be the solution to our grievances. The collection makes an interesting reading. *Prof. I. Deji Ayegboyin, Department of Religious Studies, University of Ibadan.* (from the cover)

Galawdewos (Author), Wendy Belcher and Michael Kleiner (Translators). *The Life and Struggles of Our Mother Walatta Petros: A Seventeenth-Century African Biography of an Ethiopian Woman.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015. Pp. xxxvii, 500. ISBN 978-0-691-16421-2

This is the first English translation of the earliest-known book-length biography of an African woman, and one of the few lives of an African woman written by Africans before the nineteenth century. As such, it provides an exceedingly rare and valuable picture of the experiences and thoughts of Africans, especially women, before the modern era. It is also an extraordinary account of a remarkable life--full of vivid dialogue, heartbreak, and triumph.

The Life and Struggles of Our Mother Walatta Petros (1672) tells the story of an Ethiopian saint who led a successful nonviolent movement to preserve African Christian beliefs in the face of European protocolonialism. When the Jesuits tried to convert the Ethiopians from their ancient form of Christianity, Walatta Petros (1592-1642), a noblewoman and the wife of one of the emperor's counselors, risked her life by leaving her husband, who supported the conversion effort, and leading the struggle against the Jesuits. After her death, her disciples wrote this book, praising her as a friend of women, a devoted reader, a skilled preacher, and a radical leader. One of the earliest stories of African resistance to European influence, this biography also provides a picture of domestic life, including Walatta Petros's celibate life-long relationship with a female companion.

Richly illustrated with dozens of color illustrations from early manuscripts, this groundbreaking volume provides an authoritative and highly readable translation along with an extensive introduction.

Other features include a chronology of Walatta Petros's life, maps, a comprehensive glossary, and detailed notes on textual variants. (from the cover)

Martin Meredith, *The Fortunes of Africa: A 5000-Year History of Wealth, Greed, and Endeavour*. New York, NY: Public Affairs, 2014. Pp. xxii, 745. \$35.00 ISBN 978-1-61039-459-8 (HC) / 978-1-61039-460-4 (EB)

Africa has been coveted for its riches ever since the era of the Pharaohs. In past centuries, it was the lure of gold, ivory, and slaves that drew fortune-seekers, merchant-adventurers, and conquerors from afar. In modern times, the focus of attention is on oil, diamonds, and other valuable minerals.

Land was another prize. The Romans relied on their colonies in northern Africa for vital grain shipments to feed the population of Rome. Arab invaders followed in their wake, eventually colonizing the entire region. More recently, foreign corporations have acquired huge tracts of land to secure food supplies needed abroad, just as the Romans did.

In this vast and vivid panorama of history, Martin Meredith follows the fortunes of Africa over a period of 5,000 years. With compelling narrative, he traces the rise and fall of ancient kingdoms and empires; the spread of Christianity and Islam; the enduring quest for gold and other riches; the exploits of explorers and missionaries; and the impact of European colonization. He examines, too, the fate of modern African states and concludes with a glimpse of their future.

His cast of characters includes religious leaders, mining magnates, warlords, dictators, and many other legendary figures—among them Mansa Musa, ruler of the medieval Mali empire, said to be the richest man the world has ever known. “I speak of Africa,” Shakespeare wrote, “and of golden joys.” This is history on an epic scale. (from the cover)

Lamin Sanneh. *Disciples of All Nations: Pillars of World Christianity* (Oxford Studies in World Christianity). New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2007. Pp. xxii, 362. \$21.95 ISBN 978-01-9518961-2

Long the dominant religion of the West, Christianity is now rapidly becoming the principal faith in much of the postcolonial world--a development that marks a momentous shift in the religion's very center of gravity. In this eye-opening book, Lamin Sanneh examines the roots of this "post-Western awakening" and the unparalleled richness and diversity, as well as the tension and conflict, it has brought to World Christianity.

Tracing Christianity's rise from its birth on the edge of the Roman empire--when it proclaimed itself to be a religion for the entire world, not just for one people, one time, and one place--to its key role in Europe's maritime and colonial expansion, Sanneh sheds new light on the ways in which post-Western societies in Africa, Asia, and Latin America were drawn into the Christian orbit. Ultimately, he shows, these societies outgrew Christianity's colonial forms and restructured it through their own languages and idioms--a process that often occurred outside, and sometimes against, the lines of denominational control. The effect of such changes, Sanneh contends, has been profound, transforming not only worship, prayer, and the interpretation of Scripture, but also art, aesthetics, and music associated with the church. In exploring this story of Christianity's global expansion and its current resurgence in the non-Western world, Sanneh pays close attention to such issues as the faith's encounters with Islam and indigenous religions, as well as with secular ideologies such as Marxism and nationalism. He also considers the challenges that conservative, non-Western forms of Christianity pose to Western liberal values and Enlightenment ideas.

Here then is a groundbreaking study of Christianity's role in cultural innovation and historical change--and must reading for all who are concerned with the present and future of the faith. (from the cover)

Lamin Sanneh and Michael J. McClymond, editors. *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to World Christianity*. London, UK: Wiley Blackwell, 2016. Pp. 784. \$225.00 ISBN 978-1-4051-5376-8

The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to World Christianity presents a collection of essays that explore a range of topics relating to the rise, spread, and influence of Christianity throughout the world.

- Features contributions from renowned scholars of history and religion from around the world
- Addresses the origins and global expansion of Christianity over the course of two millennia
- Covers a wide range of themes relating to Christianity, including women, worship, sacraments, music, visual arts, architecture, and many more
- Explores the development of Christian traditions over the past two centuries across several continents and the rise in secularization (from the cover)

JOSIAH KIBIRA OF TANZANIA

ECUMENICAL STATESMAN

Original Biographies from the *Dictionary of African
Christian Biography* with commentary by
Dr. Dana Robert, Director of the Center for Global
Christianity and Mission and *DACB* Editorial
Committee Member

Journal of African Christian Biography
Volume 1, Number 2 (July 2016)

The ***Journal of African Christian Biography*** was launched in 2016 to complement and make stories from the on-line *Dictionary of African Christian Biography* (www.DACB.org) more readily accessible and immediately useful in African congregations and classrooms.

Published in monthly installments with an annual cumulative volume available on line, the *JACB* is intended to promote the research, publication, and use of African Christian biography within Africa by serving as an academically credible but publically accessible source of information on Christianity across the continent.

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“Bishop Josiah Kibira of Tanzania, Ecumenical Statesman”

***Dictionary of African Christian Biography* *Journal of African Christian Biography* Vol 1, No 2 (July 2016)**

This issue of the *Journal of African Christian Biography* focuses on Bishop Josiah Kibira (1925-1988), first African Bishop of the Northwestern Diocese of the Lutheran Church in Tanzania, and the first African President of the Lutheran World Federation (1977-1984). Kibira's name is familiar to anyone who has visited the headquarters of the All Africa Conference of Churches in Nairobi, the site of the Bishop Kibira House (www.aacc-ceta.org/). His memory is increasingly evoked in Bukoba, Tanzania, where in 2013 was opened the Bishop Kibira University College at Tumaini University Makumira (www.jokuco.ac.tz/). JoKuCo trains teachers and is affiliated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania. Kibira was also the subject of a 2010 documentary film entitled *Bishop Kibira of Bukoba: An African Lutheran*. Produced by his son, a prominent independent filmmaker, the film is a sensitive portrayal of his life and ministry and includes interviews with people who knew him.

The articles contained in this issue give overviews of Kibira's contributions. But a few points worth noting suggest why his memory is more relevant today than ever before. First, he was a second generation Christian who was active in the East African Evangelical Revival. As one of the *Balokole*, the “awakened” ones, he brought a strong sense of God's presence into his life task. During the East African revival, some participating men and women entered into marriages of partnership rather than those arranged by the extended family. Josiah Kibira and his wife Martha Jeremiah married each other across economic and clan differences, united by their common relationship in Jesus Christ. They practiced mutual confession and a high standard of monogamous commitment as part of their evangelical spiritual practices. As inspiration for Christian couples at mid-century, they modeled commitment to marital partnership as Christian witness at a transitional time when urbanization, modernization, and political independence swept the continent.

The Kibiras' adoption of the concept of the “new clan” of Jesus Christ was reflected in his study, *Church, Clan, and the World*, published in Sweden in 1974. A pioneer work of ecclesiology by an African theologian in

the immediate post-colonial setting, the book reflected on how the African Jesus-centered “new clan” related to the old ethnic clans. Kibira did research on the relationship between church and clan in three Tanzanian villages, in light of the challenges of inculturating the gospel. His book strongly emphasized the need for African churches to lead themselves while simultaneously building their identities as part of the world church. A second major contribution of Kibira was thus in the difficult work of negotiating the separation from Lutheran missionary paternalism, while retaining valued connections with the world church. As bishop and then head of the Lutheran World Federation, he was thrust into difficult situations where he had to reject longtime missionary personnel, despite his gratitude for their contributions to African Christianity. Being a denominational church leader in the transitional period from colonialism to independence was highly stressful and no doubt took a huge toll on Kibira’s health.

Caught in the squeeze between the old missionary paternalism and the new independence both in church and state, Kibira contributed to the development of post-independence African ecclesiology, missiology, and ecumenical relations. The challenges faced by his generation of church leaders was well expressed when he wrote, “Let me emphasise here, that as long as the African Church is dependent upon Western Churches, it cannot attain real freedom of mind. Are we allowed to criticise and think independently without the threat (and consequent fear) of losing our traditional and universal connection, our financial aid, and in some cases, our theological dialogue with other churches; especially those from which we have emerged?” (p. 63, *Church, Clan and the World*.) He supported the development of African theology, noting bluntly that “Time has come that African theologians stop copying other people's ideas. It is no longer feasible to expect foreigners to do the thinking for us.” (p. 111) Kibira similarly embraced the identity of African churches as themselves missionary churches, part of the flow of ministry to and from all six continents (p. 122-123). As full and equal partners, African Lutheran churches should take their rightful place in the global community of Lutheran churches. He concluded his book with these prophetic words: “That mission is a concern for the whole Church and therefore cooperation and partnership among all Christians are of highest importance and necessity. Our problems are common and worldwide if only we care to understand.” (p. 127)

A third major aspect of Kibira’s contribution was in pioneering

African contributions to ecumenism. Kibira's ecumenical spirit came from the interdenominational piety of the East African revival. But it also came from his close relationship with his sponsor Bishop Bengt Sundkler, who sent Kibira to study for an advanced masters' at the Boston University School of Theology, a well-known locus of ecumenical and missional theology in the early 1960s. Upon Kibira's return to Tanzania, he was consecrated bishop as the hand-picked successor of Bishop Sundkler. One of his most significant but least noted ecumenical roles was to head the worship at the Uppsala Assembly of the World Council of Churches in 1968. That an African Lutheran would lead worship on behalf of the host Lutherans of Sweden was a highly visible symbol of the hoped-for post-colonial world church. Unfortunately, the reputation of the Uppsala Assembly as the contentious and divisive "social justice" meeting of the WCC has overshadowed the kind of positive statement made by Kibira's leadership in that setting.

Bishop Josiah Kibira's ecumenical commitments are especially important to remember today in an era of intense growth and competition among African Christians. Just as the life of Bishop Josiah Kibira repudiated western missionary colonialism and paternalism, it also reproaches some African church leaders who are busy building their own kingdoms. The biography of Josiah Kibira reminds us that leadership requires the self-sacrificial development of a public ecumenical missional ethic, in which unity for the sake of Christ's kingdom triumphs over divisive ambitions. Bishop Kibira's life points prophetically to the present, when African Christians are taking their places as international leaders of the world Christian movement.

Dana Robert, *DACB* Editorial Committee Member and *JACB* Associate Editor

**Josiah Mutabuzi Isaya Kibira (Article 1)
1925 to 1988
Lutheran Church (Balokole Mvt)
Tanzania**

By Angolowyse Malambugi

Josiah Mutabuzi Isaya Kibira was born at Kasyenye, Bukoba, Tanzania in late August 1925. He was Haya by tribe. His father's name was Isaya Kibira and his mother, one of two wives, was Esteria. A week after his birth Josiah contracted a fatal illness from which he somehow miraculously recovered. In response, his father gave him the names Josiah Mutabuzi. Josiah means "the Lord heals" and Mutabuzi, a Haya tribal name, means "He is a savior."

Josiah's father died in 1929 when he was four years old. Josiah was the last child born to his mother Esteria who had three other sons and two daughters. His father's last words were "My sons still carry on what I wanted to do and could not achieve."

Josiah was baptized by a German missionary when he was a small boy. After his father died, his mother took on the responsibility of raising him. Josiah, who was very grateful for all that she did for him, wrote about her in 1960, saying, "I was raised by my mother. She tried to teach us how we should follow the Lord and that we had to go to church. She also taught us to pray and sing. I especially learned from her how to pray in faith and very simply. (...) I am always thankful for her efforts." She died in 1984 at the age of 106.

At the age of fifteen, Josiah Kibira was confirmed by a German missionary. He received his early education at Kashenye Village School. Then he had four or five years of schooling at the Kigarama Mission School. At Kigarama Josiah composed songs which he taught to the choir. He also liked theater. He taught ordinary subjects at Kashenye Village School. One day he baptized an old woman who was seriously ill and she recovered.

After passing the examination at Kigarama, he started attending Nyakato Government Secondary School on February 2, 1942. Joel Kibira, his elder brother, was responsible for paying the school fees. Josiah was a tall, slim, attractive young man who showed a talent for leadership.

Wilfred Kilyanga, Josiah's closest friend, commented on his friend's life saying, "Many feared Josiah because he was an extraordinary person."

He was very demanding and serious in all his endeavors and always accomplished what he had decided to do.” (Per Larsson 6)

While at Nyakato, Josiah was such a devoted Christian that he was made a church elder. During this time he led evening prayers, taught Bible knowledge to lower classes, and was the choir leader for a group of evangelical students.

For a while he passed through a period of spiritual darkness and rebellion. Josiah said that people thought he was a good Christian at that time while, in reality, he was living a hypocritical life. He even told his schoolmaster, “Let me get old; after that I shall devote myself to spiritual matters.” (Larsson 7)

Two Anglican preachers from the Katoke Teachers' Training College visited Nyakato and preached for three days at Nyakato Secondary School. After listening to their message, Josiah was personally convicted and, at midnight on March 21, 1947, he made a confession of faith, claiming Jesus as his personal savior after saying a simple prayer, “Lord Jesus, come into my heart.” Thus he received Jesus into his heart and believed that he had been forgiven his sins. He confessed his sins to his roommate Wilfred Kilyanga who also confessed his sins to him. The next day Josiah publicly declared his new life in Christ. At that time Josiah was a church elder in the school congregation. As a result of this experience, he changed his hypocritical life and started to live a true Christian life. Kibira said that from that time on he remained a true Christian by his own personal conviction.

Now Kibira felt that he had been liberated and set free. When he completed his education at Nyakato, Mr. Shan, the headmaster, wrote on Josiah's school certificate that he was “exceptionally good” (Per Larsson 9). We now know that Kibira belonged to the revival movement led by the two preachers from the Teachers' College.

From Nyakato Secondary School Kibira went on to attend Tabora Government School in 1948 in order to study to become a teacher. Tabora was also the center for political and nationalistic feelings for Tanganyika which was under British rule at the time. At Tabora Kibira had the opportunity to meet Julius Nyerere and Rashid Kawawa who were to be the future political leaders of an independent Tanganyika. Years later, when Kawawa, a faithful Muslim, visited Bukoba he did not miss the chance of meeting Kibira.

After finishing his studies at Tabora Government School, Kibira graduated as a Grade I teacher. Afterwards he was assigned to teach in church schools in Bukoba and was posted at Kigarama.

On November 25, 1951 Josiah married Martha Yeremiah, also a member of the revival movement. They had five sons and four daughters. Martha recalled that when her husband was a teacher at Lukange in Karagwe District they had only one room and she cooked outside.

The church asked Kibira to come on staff and become the second master at the newly opened secondary school at Kahororo. As a result from 1951 to 1957 Kibira taught in some reputable schools. The Evangelical Church of Buhaya at that time was supported by three missions: the German Bethel Mission that had been there since 1910, the Church of Sweden Mission, replacing the Bethel Mission that left the Buhaya church due to the second World War, and the Danish Missionary Society that joined in the 1950s.

The German Bethel Mission gave Kibira a scholarship to study theology at Bielefeld in order to become a pastor. Consequently he, his wife, and their children left for Germany in 1957. At Bielefeld Kibira fearlessly spoke in favor of the independence of the Buhaya church. He continued practicing revivalism that was new to some Germans. He said that missionaries were also sinners who needed a savior just like Africans (Per Larsson 14).

He finished his theological studies in Germany in 1960 and returned to the Evangelical Church of Buhaya with his family. He was ordained on December 4, 1960 at Kashura church. He was assigned a position at Ndolage congregation, near the Lutheran hospital. Per Larsson writes that after his ordination Kibira never became an ordinary pastor, because of his spontaneity and somewhat explosive temperament. (Larsson 15)

After a while, Kibira left for Germany to finish his theology degree at the Mission Academy in Hamburg. As he did very well he was able to begin a masters in theology. In 1960 Bengt Sundkler, a missionary and lecturer at Uppsala University in Sweden at the time, was elected the first bishop of Buhaya Church. Sundkler had good relationship with Kibira and decided to help him find a place to do a masters of theology. After he found a program at Boston University (U.S.A.), the Lutheran World Federation provided a scholarship for Kibira's studies in Boston from 1962 to 1964.

In May 1964 Kibira wrote to Bishop Sundkler saying that he had finished his program so successfully that he was being offered the opportunity to pursue doctoral studies at Boston University. Sundkler was not in favor of the idea and Kibira returned to Tanzania.

The synod elected Kibira assistant bishop in 1964 even though

many missionaries disapproved of his election because they feared his radical views and his outspoken attitude; moreover, Kibira was not a Yes man. Nevertheless Kibira became the first African to be elected bishop of the Evangelical Church of Buhaya. He remained an outstanding, undisputed, powerful, and creative leader in this role for more than twenty years.

Kibira excelled both in leading the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, Northwestern Diocese and in initiatives in the international community. Sundkler states that a bishop's task is first to serve the local church and secondly the universal church.

Kibira's involvement with the international community of believers can be traced back to the 1961 World Council of Churches (WCC) General Assembly held at New Delhi, when the Evangelical Church of Buhaya became a new member of the WCC. At this meeting Sundkler proposed that Josiah Kibira be a member of the Faith and Order Commission.

In October 1965, Kibira was invited to be the keynote speaker at the All Africa Conference of Churches General Assembly held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The title of his keynote address was "A Living Church in a Changing Society." His Addis Ababa speech made him so famous that at the WCC General Assembly in Uppsala, Sweden in 1968 he was asked to lead the opening worship at the Uppsala cathedral on July 4. Kibira received a lot of attention and was soon considered one of the outstanding personalities in the shaping of the assembly. In 1970, the Lutheran World Federation General Assembly held in Evian, France elected Kibira in absentia chairman of the Commission on Church Cooperation.

In 1977 at the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) General Assembly held at the University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, Kibira was the first African to be elected president of the Lutheran World Federation, a position he held up to 1984. His election was a great honor for Tanzania, the host country, and for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania. In honor of this special occasion, Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere hosted a banquet at the State House and invited the new LWF president and many international guests.

Kibira's legacy to the international church can be summarized in the words of Friedrich Koenig, the German editor of the Lutheran World Information who had closely followed Kibira's initiatives and contribution to the LWF throughout the years. Koenig wrote these words in 1985 when Kibira resigned as bishop of Bukoba:

It would be worthwhile to list and in the future to take up many of the recommendations that undaunted African man of the church made in

life about basic foundations for peace and about the right understanding of the Reformation church's task of mission. Then no one will be able to overlook the words of Josiah Kibira. Lutheranism owes its first senior representative from Africa many thanks for his unswerving veracity, his pious witness to his faith and above all his encouraging example for the youth to whom he was especially committed.

Kibira died on July 18, 1988. In remembrance of his commitment to the cause of the ecumenical movement, the main building at the headquarters of the All Africa Conference of Churches in Nairobi, Kenya was named after Kibira. [1]

Kibira can be described as a very gifted leader who excelled in his leadership roles as local parish pastor and on the international scene as president of the Lutheran World Federation (1977-1984). We can underline several key areas which summarize Kibira's life work. He was committed to the quest for justice--especially for Africa. He was very much devoted to discipleship and to the cross. He was a strong advocate for the ecumenical movement and for his church but he was also committed to the universal church.

[1] Author's Note: I first heard Kibira preach in 1972 when he visited Makumira Theological College (now Tumaini University). When I was a member (1992-2003) of the General Committee of the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) representing all Protestant member churches in Tanzania, one of the General Committee meetings held in Doula, Cameroun, September 10-14, 1996, had on its agenda the task of naming the buildings at the headquarters of AACC in Nairobi. Kibira's name was one of many names proposed for this honor. I stood up and spoke in favor of Kibira's name for the main building. I was then assigned to collect more information on Kibira. After my return to Tanzania, I sent the necessary information to the General Secretary of the AACC, José Chipenda.

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Samson Mushemba, president of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania and successor of Josiah Kibira as bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, telephone interview by author, May 10, 2007.

Josiah Nsangila, 51 years old, from Nshamba/Muleba, Tanzania, interview by the author at Mbeya city on August 24, 2006.

Philemon Tibanenason, 63 years old, from Bukoba, interview by the author at Dar es Salaam city on December 25, 2006.

This article, received in 2007, was researched and written by Rev. Angolowisye Isakwisa Malambugi, former chairman of the Moravian Church in Tanzania, Southwest Province, lecturer at Teofilo Kisanji University (formerly Moravian Theological College) in Mbeya from July 1995 to December 2006, and part-time lecturer at Open University of Tanzania from 1999 to the present. He was also Project Luke fellow in Spring 2007.

Josiah Kibira (Article 2)
1925 to 1988
Lutheran Church (Balokole Mvt)
Tanzania

By Stephen J. Lloyd

Josiah Kibira was a bishop in the Lutheran Church in Tanzania. He also served as president of the Lutheran World Federation (1977-1984). In his ministry and leadership, he put forward a view of the Church as both global and local; he brought together the center and the periphery.

From a small fishing village on the shores of Lake Victoria to the presidency of the Lutheran World Federation, Josiah Kibira knit the concerns of both the local and the global church together into a single garment. He came in contact with numerous strands of the Christian tradition, which drove him to profound theological reflection on the nature and meaning of Christianity for Africa, as well as the significance of Africa for Christianity. Kibira was able to see the potential within different streams of theology, but he also saw the dangers. No one thinker had “the whole truth,” but rather he sought to give all voices a place at the table.

Early Life

In late August of 1925, in Bukoba, Tanzania, Esteria Kibira gave birth to a son. She lived with her husband, Isaya Kibira, and a co-wife; they were members of the Haya ethnic group. Only days after his birth, the child became desperately ill, and it was not clear whether he would live. When the child pulled through the sickness, Isaya named him Josiah Mutabuzi. Josiah is a biblical name meaning “the Lord heals,” and in the Haya language, Mutabuzi means “he is a savior.” Isaya died while Josiah was still young, and he remembered being raised by his devout mother. As he said, “[my mother] tried to teach us how we should follow the Lord and that we had to go to church. She also taught us to pray and sing. I especially learned from her how to pray in faith and very simply.” [1]

Josiah’s father played a pivotal role in bringing Christianity to Bukoba. According to the historian Bengdt Sundkler, the kings of the Bukoba region were not particularly keen on having Christian missionaries in the area. They were the guardians of the traditional moral order and feared that white foreigners would undermine them. King Mukotani said, “If

the whites are allowed to teach everywhere, what will not this new religion do? Will not then even our rivers and forests 'believe?' Will our sacred trees escape and not be cut down like ordinary trees?" [2] It was only after the German colonial government put pressure on these leaders that the White Fathers built catholic mission stations in the area. Yet it was not at these stations that Isaya came in contact with Christianity. He was a fisherman and trader who traversed the banks of Lake Victoria in his canoe. Crossing into Uganda, Isaya and his fellow traders came in contact with the Anglican Church Mission Society. Over the course of five trips and several years, missionaries and Buganda converts introduced Isaya to a whole new world of roads, bridges, education, and modern medicine. It was also here that he learned about Christianity. Back in Bukoba, Isaya taught people what he had learned and gathered a community of believers around him. As Christianity was not popular in the region, they met secretly in a cave by the banks of the Lake. When Pastor Ernst Johanssen from the German Bethel Society came to Bukoba in 1907, he did not need to plant a church—rather he built on the foundations already laid by Isaya. [3] As Isaya died, he said "My sons still carry on what I wanted to do and could not achieve." [4]

The Bethel missionary at Bukoba baptized the young Josiah, and as he came of age, he received an early education at Kashenye Village School and religious instruction from the missionaries. At fifteen, he was confirmed. [5] The German missionaries were particularly sensitive to African culture. Bruno Gutmann, Traugott Bachmann, and Ernst Johanssen believed that God was present within and (imperfectly) revealed through African religion, social order, and customs. Because of this, it was not the objective of German missionaries to completely overturn African culture; on the contrary, they wanted to preserve and Christianize it. The objective of the missionary was only to introduce a people (*Volk*) to the gospel. In the same way that missionaries believed that Africans knew about God before their arrival, they also believed that Africans already had a God-given sense of ethics. According to this view, Christianity and African religions shared an ethical basis. To be sure, the German missionaries were not completely tolerant; they argued that some aspects of traditional culture were contrary to the gospel. Nevertheless, even those elements of traditional culture, social order, and religious rites that contradicted the gospel could be Christianized and used in the service of a people's unique Church (*Volkskirche*). Finally, German missionaries believed that the greatest danger for Africans came from European "civilization." Espousing a romantic view, they believed that modernity, with its accompanying

migratory labor, free market economies, and a sense of individualism, destroyed the stable social fabric of African village and church life. [6] While these exact points may not have been made within a catechism class, Kibira was a product of a missionary education that attempted to reconcile the gospel with African culture. As Kibira matured as a theologian, he too would tackle the question of what it meant to be both African and Christian.

Higher Education

Kibira proved to be an apt student, and continued his education at the Kigarama Secondary School. He wrote hymns, participated in the choir, and took an interest in theater. It was also at Kigarama that Kibira began his lifelong ministry. According to Angolowisye Malambuigi, at Kigarama, Kibira baptized a sick elderly woman who miraculously recovered. After passing his examination, Kibira went on to the Nyakato Government Secondary School in 1942. He was a fastidious Christian in those days, and his friends remembered him as both earnest and hard working. He excelled in academics, led prayer services, and conducted Bible studies. The church leadership even made Kibira an elder. [7]

But his Christian religion gained another dimension at this time. Kibira came in contact with a movement that made him reconsider his previous life. [8] Beginning in the 1930s, the fires of the Balokole revival swept through the East African Protestant mission churches. Balokole, meaning “the saved ones,” criticized the lax attitude of “lukewarm Christians,” and called people to a sincere faith and high standards of morality. The Balokole formed their own kind of clan, separating themselves from their nominal Christian neighbors, attempting to live an exemplary life that refused to compromise with the “world.” Even so, for the most part, the Balokole remained within the Protestant Churches. [9]

Two Anglican preachers of the Balokole tradition arrived at Nyakato in March 1947 and preached for three days on the necessity of sincere conversion and an uncompromising position toward the world. These words resonated with Kibira, and forced him to re-narrate his own life. He decided that he had been a hypocrite up to that point—his outward actions may have appeared holy, but he had not really committed himself fully to Christ. At midnight on March 21, 1947, Kibira said the following prayer, “Lord Jesus, come into my heart.” He confessed his sins to his roommate and declared himself reborn the next morning. [10]

The Balokole movement provided Kibira with new possibilities. Through the movement, he met Martha Yeremiah. The two were no doubt drawn together by shared experience and piety, and they married. Traditionally, however, the marriage would not have happened. As Kibira recalled,

According to Customary Law I had no right to marry this woman as she was of a royal family and I came from a quite simple fisherman's family. I had myself obtained the consent of my wife. She had got permission from her father to marry a young man whom she would choose. [11]

They were both members of the Balokole movement, and they chose each other. This marked a new pattern of social arrangements in East Africa.

Both the German missionaries and the members of the Balokole movement were committed to local communities. Nevertheless, both German Lutheran missionaries and the Balokole had ties with various world-wide movements. By the middle of the 20th century, local Protestant bodies throughout the work were linked into global networks that came in contact at ecumenical conferences and in universities. In 1957, after spending some time as a teacher in Tanzania, Josiah went to the Bethel Mission's Kirchliche Hochschule in Beilefeld, West Germany. There he studied to be a minister. [12] He brought revivalist methods to Germany, and in doing so upset the standard European/missionary hierarchy. The paternalistic assumption of missions was that converts learned at the feet of white missionaries. Yet Kibira claimed that missionaries needed to be humbled before Christ in the same way that Africans did. This also meant that white missionaries did not have unique access to Christ and the Christian tradition, and therefore did not deserve unique leadership within the Churches. [13]

Bishop at Boston University

Kibira was an outspoken advocate of an independent Lutheran Church. He was an exacting Christian with a radical bent. The combination could prove to be upsetting and perhaps a little frustrating or even terrifying to missionaries who supported the status quo. Yet one white missionary found in Kibira a worthy leader. Bengt Sundkler, who will long be remembered as a skilled linguist, ethnographer, historian, and missionary, was appointed bishop of Bukoba in 1960. Kibira had both too grand a vision and too little patience to make a good village pastor—he did not fit comfortably into one

parish. Yet rather than focusing on this as a problem, Sundkler saw the potential for leadership. At the 1961 meeting of the World Council of Churches in New Delhi, Sundkler nominated Josiah Kibira to be a member of the faith and order commission. [14] Likewise, working in conjunction with the Lutheran World Federation, he found scholarship money to send Kibira to Boston University, where the latter studied from 1962 to 1964. Sundkler remembered visiting Kibira at Boston, saying that his protégé had adopted local American customs. When Sundkler arrived, Kibira took him around to various students at the school, introducing them to “my bishop from Bukoba.” According to Sundkler, this was “a thing that only Americans could do.” [15] At Boston University, Kibira studied with Sundkler’s old acquaintance from Sweden, Nils Ehrenström. Ehrenström, who was a veteran of the Life and Work movement, taught as professor of Ecumenism at Boston University from 1955 until 1969. [16] By 1964, Kibira earned his masters at the School of Theology, and had an offer to begin work on a doctoral dissertation. Sundkler, however, had other plans for him. [17]

Kibira returned to an independent Lutheran Church in Tanzania—formed in 1963. Across Africa, “the winds of change” were blowing, and increasingly more Africans demanded their independence from Europeans in all areas of life. [18] This was a call that many missionaries heeded. Sundkler knew that the time for an African bishop had come. In conjunction with the pastors and the diocese, it was decided that Sundkler would carry on acting as bishop with an African assistant. In 1964, the synod elected Kibira. He was consecrated in September of the same year, 100 years after the first African Anglican bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther. The consecration was very much an ecumenical event; Moravians, Anglicans, and Lutherans all participated. Kibira would not be Sundkler’s assistant for long. Only three months later, Sundkler returned to Sweden, leaving the diocese in the hands of his former assistant. Kibira worked as bishop of the Northwestern Diocese of the Lutheran Church in Tanzania for the next two decades. [19]

Global Leader

Sundkler stepped aside so that Kibira could come into the limelight. As bishop, Kibira was able to develop his ecclesiological vision for Africa on the ecumenical stage. In October of 1965, Kibira gave the keynote speech at the All Africa Conference of Churches in Addis Ababa. In his speech, entitled “A Changing Church in a Living Society,” Kibira utilized and synthesized the various streams of thought that he had been learning and developing over

the course of his life. He identified a number of tensions facing the Churches in Africa. Reflecting some of the older German theologies, Kibira called on the church in Africa to be authentically African. The Churches in Africa, he argued, needed not only political but also spiritual freedom to fully come into themselves. He wrote:

Both ecclesiological and theological freedom are lacking in African churches. There is need for change of the church's ecclesiological foreign image and [to] make it more indigenous. This change must affect church buildings, liturgy, forms of worship, and symbolism...We depend mostly on advisors from Europe and America. Our Theological Boards are very inadequate as long as they reflect American, Swedish, or German Lutheran theologies rather than African theologies...Research into African religious beliefs has revealed that nearly all Africans believed in God. Some tribes possessed an elaborate religious system including superstition, magic and ancestral worship, taboos, and reverence of the sacred and the aged. If this is true, then theologians are needed today to find out what all these African beliefs have in common...[and] these data must be evaluated in light of the Christian message. [20]

Yet after affirming this, Kibira went on to note how spiritual freedom posed a serious challenge to unity. Differences in thought, practice, and opinion could easily cause friction, and Kibira did not want to superficially do away with difference to find the lowest common denominator of agreement. To do so, after all, would only limit freedom of thought. His solution to this problem was one of unity amid diversity. "We are Lutherans," he wrote, "we know 'in whom' and 'what' we believe. We have particular emphasis in our doctrine; especially in this precious one—'Justification by faith alone'—and in many others. But this, our very heritage, is our challenge." [21] Kibira argued that Lutherans needed to make their position clear within ecumenical discourse, seeking to share the insights of their own particular body with the rest of the Church. Even if the unique insights of each denomination conflicted, all needed to participate in the dialogue from their own unique position. There was also much to be gained from such open conversation. Kibira wrote, "We [Lutherans] rejoice because we have a relatively clear understanding of our confession...Yet, at the same time, we would be wrong if we would bluntly say: 'We have the whole truth.' Such a generalization would be 'killing faith.'" [22] In this way, diversity could be maintained while unity and fuller depth of knowledge was established through conversation.

The freedom to be African also gave rise to another tension. At Addis Ababa, Kibira talked about two kinds of “tradition.” He said there are traditions—with a small “t”—that represent the unique characteristics and textures of African cultures and societies, and there is Tradition—with a large “T”—that include the Gospels, the Epistles, and Church history. Thus, there was a kind of tension between the local dimension of a specific Church and the universal dimension of the whole Christian church. Here, he addressed the question of indigenization, writing,

There are many good traditions in the African culture which have made an impact on groups of people. These traditions convey unique values. We must be careful before we abandon them as Christianity is introduced. If they are indigenous, then we need to give them Christian meaning and root the Gospel into the African soil. At this point it has to be mentioned that the real “indigenizer” is the African himself. [23]

Again, Kibira placed himself in the tradition of German missionaries. There was, however, one key difference: the foreign missionary was not to be the one to indigenize the church. On the contrary, it would be the African Christians themselves. African Christians understood both traditions and Tradition; they were the ones who could best understand how to root Christianity in African soil. Much of Kibira’s work focused on understanding how African concepts of kinship could dialogue with Christian ideas of fellowship. He attempted to root Christianity in indigenous African worldviews while at the same time offering a model of fellowship to the wider church.

Tradition, regardless of small or large “T’s,” was a chain that related people to their spiritual and familial ancestors. Kibira recognized still another potential problem. He wrote, “Chains can bind; become rigid and sterile.” Many Protestant Churches became set in their ways, the worship became cold, and the general level of commitment dropped. Kibira argued that the Churches needed revival. [24] Much in the same way that his own faith and commitment to the Church was deepened by his experience with the *Balokole* movement, Kibira called on the Churches to always rekindle their spiritual energies, and direct them toward the world.

The main emphasis of the revival has always been “JESUS.” The *Abalokole* maintain that in order to be a Christian, one has to accept Jesus Christ the Son of God as his personal Savior, and that this cannot be achieved unless one repents and puts right the things one had damaged during one’s rebellion and then receives in faith God’s

forgiveness. The Christian's life then becomes a walk in the light and a willingness to repent daily of all sins. From this forgiveness, Christians have a special gift of joy in their lives that cannot be ignored. Out of this spiritual discovery many revival Christians have volunteered to leave their jobs and work for the Church as evangelists and ministers. [25]

Kibira knew that Africa faced major need in the areas of food security, migratory labor, women's and family problems, healthcare, and education. For Kibira, a highly motivated and spiritually charged Church could use its energies to build diaconal, or service, ministries in all of these areas. He wrote, "The church has the responsibility to preach the Gospel to all. But after that it will find that it cannot escape being busy with people. To uplift them, to change their ethnics for the better and to dress their wounds, to feed the hungry and others." [26]

Yet for all of the energy that revival gave to the Churches, it posed still yet another a threat. Sometimes revivals led to theological ideas and practices that fell outside of the Christian tradition and divided the body of Christian believers. Therefore, the revival and the established Church had a lot to gain from each other. As Kibira wrote, "The principle task confronting the official Church is the willingness to listen to the revival. It is only in this was that well-trained theologians will be able to offer their constructive criticism of the revival." [27] Thus, at the Addis Ababa conference, Kibira was able to see the potential and the dangers of various streams of Christian thought in the 20th century. From his position at the confluence of the local and global church, he wanted to put these different strands into engagement with each other. This engagement was not always going to be easy. In fact, it could lead to considerable tension. But the tension itself served a constructive purpose for the whole church. The different strands of Christian thought each had something to offer the whole body, and they each served to check the potential dangers of the other.

Kibira's ideas were so well received that he was asked to lead opening worship at the Uppsala Cathedral at the 1968 meeting of the World Council of Churches. His reputation also quickly advanced within Lutheran circles. In 1970, Kibira was elected chairman of the Commission on Church Cooperation for the Lutheran World Federation General Assembly. Perhaps the greatest honor came, however, when Kibira was elected president of the Lutheran World Federation in 1977. He was the first African to hold the position. It was an exciting moment for African Lutherans and a great honor to the Lutheran Church in Tanzania. The president of Tanzania, Julius

Nyerere, was so pleased with Kibira that he called a state banquet in the bishop's honor. As president of the LWF, Kibira worked tirelessly to keep ecumenism, social justice, and faithful discipleship on the federation's agenda. He held the post until 1984. [28]

Josiah Kibira died in 1988 after suffering from Parkinson's disease. It was a great loss for both the church in Africa and the world. Kibira was born in a small village by the banks of Lake Victoria, and he eventually died there. Yet during his life, he was part of a global movement, and found himself learning from and leading people in Asia, Africa, Europe, Latin America, and North America. His life witnessed to the fundamental nature of the Christianity in the 20th century—it was both local and global. Kibira was no stranger to the tension of multiple localities being brought into one universal body. As the recent debates over homosexuality in the Anglican Communion demonstrate, local practice, interpretations of scripture, and traditions can lead to conflict at the global level. Yet rather than view these tensions as inevitable points of fracture and schism, Kibira's theology allows for the tensions between local bodies to be constructive at a global level; he showed one could embrace the history and tradition of both church and society, while at the same time exploring new possibilities. Ultimately, Jesus is the focal point of this ecclesiology. The image is almost Eucharistic: the world Church comprises many different people, who often hold radically different views; nevertheless, they all gather at the table around Christ, sharing their experiences, and learning from each other. Looking forward into the 21st century, Kibira's theology provides an excellent blueprint for a world Church. It is not a church without conflict. It is not a church that ignores various members of the body. It is a radically inclusive space, where all are expected to be true to themselves, and all are asked to be humble and learn from each other.

Endnotes:

1. Angolowisye Isakwisa Malambuigi, "Josiah Mutabuzi Isaya Kibira," *Dictionary of African Christian Biography*, <http://www.dacb.org/stories/tanzania/kibira.html>.
2. King Mukotani quoted in Bengt Sundkler and Christopher Steed, *A History of the Church in Africa* (Cambridge, 2000), 594.
3. Sundkler and Steed, 595-596.
4. Isaya Kibira in Malambuigi.

5. Malambuqi.
6. Klaus Fielder, *Christianity and African Culture: Conservative German Protestant Missionaries in Tanzania, 1900-1940* (Brill, 1996), 72.
7. Malambuqi.
8. Ibid.
9. Paul Gifford, *African Christianity: Its Public Role* (Indiana University Press, 1998), 152-153. Gifford's description of the *Balokole* movement is rather limited and somewhat negative.
10. Malambuqi.
11. Kibira quoted in *The East African Revival: History and Legacies*, eds. Kevin Ward and Emma Wild-Wood (Routledge, 2016), 122. This volume also provides deeper insight into the East African revivals.
12. Ibid.
13. This argument is influenced by Robert J. Houle, "The American Mission Revivals and Modern Zulu Evangelism," *Zulu Identities* (University of KwaZulu-Natal, 2009), 231-35. He argues that when young Zulu migrants underwent sanctification by the Holy Spirit at revivals, it gave them enough spiritual capital to challenge the authority of both white missionaries and the elders.
14. Malambuqi.
15. Marja-Liisa Swantz, *Beyond the Forestline: The Life and Letters of Bengt Sundkler* (Gracewing Publishing, 2002), 256-57. Nils Ehrenström was handpicked by the famous ecumenist Nathan Söderblom to go to the Geneva Ecumenical Institute.
16. Ibid.
17. Malambuqi
18. "The Winds of Change" was the title of a famous speech given by Harold Macmillan on February 4, 1960. "In the twentieth century, and especially since the end of the war, the processes which gave birth to the nation states of Europe have been repeated all over the world...The wind of change is blowing through this continent [Africa], and, whether we like it or not, this growth of national consciousness is a political fact." The speech made the agenda of decolonization of Africa clear.
19. Swantz, 196-97.
20. Josiah Kibira, *Church, Clan, and the World* (Lund: Gleerup, 1974), 62-63.
21. Ibid., 66.
22. Ibid., 68.
23. Ibid., 67.
24. Ibid., 67-68.

25. Ibid., 99.
26. Ibid., 90.
27. Ibid., 100.
28. Malambuigi.

This article, received in 2016, was written by Stephen J. Lloyd, a doctoral candidate at Boston University and an affiliate of the Center for Global Christianity and Mission under the direction of Dr. Dana Robert. The article originally appeared on the CGCM website *A People's History of the School of Theology* (www.bu.edu/sth-history/prophets/josiah-kibira/).

Recent Print and Digital Resources Related to Christianity in Africa

Elina Hankela. *Ubuntu, Migration and Ministry: Being Human in a Johannesburg Church*. Studies in Systematic Theology, Vol. 15. Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill Academic Publishers, 2014. Pp. x, 272. \$89.00 Paperback. ISBN 978-9004271869

Ubuntu, Migration and Ministry invites the reader to rethink *ubuntu* (Nguni: humanness/humanity) as a moral notion in the context of local communities. The socio-moral patterns that emerge at the crossroads between ethnography and social ethics offer a fresh perspective to what it means to be human in contemporary Johannesburg. The Central Methodist Mission is known for sheltering thousands of migrants and homeless people in the inner city. Based on ethnographic fieldwork, primarily conducted in 2009, Elina Hankela unpacks the church leader's liberationist vision of humanity and analyses the tension between the congregation and the migrants, linked to the refugee ministry. While relational virtues mark the community's moral code, various regulating rules and structures shape the actual relationships at the church. Here *ubuntu* challenges and is challenged (from the cover).

Dick McLellan. *Messengers of Ethiopia: Ethiopian National Missionaries, Bearers of Good News in the Omo River Valley*. Kingsgrove, NSW, Australia: Richard J. McLellan, 2010. Pp. 235. Paperback. ISBN 978-0-646-52476-4.

This book ... is the sequel to Dick McLellan's first book, *Warriors of Ethiopia*. Dick wrote "not to tell our missionary stories, but to record the stories of the men and women of Ethiopia who took the story of Jesus into the dark places of Ethiopia." In this second book, Dick brings to life more of the lives of these Ethiopian messengers, people who, as "lambs among wolves", went out to bring peace, hope and reconciliation (from the cover).

Dick McLellan. *Warriors of Ethiopia: Ethiopian National Missionaries, Heroes of the Gospel in the Omo River Valley*. Eastwood, NSW, Australia: Richard J. McLellan, 2006. Pp. 234. Paperback. ISBN 978-0-646-46870-9.

This little book is about [the intersection between an Australian missionary and] Ethiopian evangelists. It is a brief record of [twenty eight]

of these chosen men of God who left their fields, the familiarity of their culture, the security of their families and who, with Bible and water bottle in hand and confidence in their Saviour, took the message of Jesus Christ over the mountain ranges and beyond the rivers to those who had never heard of Him. (from the Foreword).

Stephen Offutt. *New Centers of Global Evangelicalism in Latin America and Africa*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2015. Pp. xiii, 192. \$90.00 ISBN 978-1107078326

This book shows that new centers of Christianity have taken root in the global south. Although these communities were previously poor and marginalized, Stephen Offutt illustrates that they are now socioeconomically diverse, internationally well connected, and socially engaged. Offutt argues that local and global religious social forces, as opposed to other social, economic, or political forces, are primarily responsible for these changes (from the cover).

Claude Prudhomme. *Missionnaires et Églises en Afrique et à Madagascar (XIX e–XX e siècles)* Anthologie de textes missionnaires, written by Annie Lenoble-Bart (dir.) \$92.90 ISBN 978-2503526485

L’Afrique et Madagascar ont été, aux XIXe et XXe siècles, un continent parcouru en tous sens par des missionnaires, catholiques comme protestants. Ils ont laissé beaucoup de témoignages. Cette anthologie réunit des documents inédits – souvent à usage interne – qui permettent de revivre un certain nombre de faits saillants de leurs actions, ordinaires ou extra-ordinaires. La variété des textes et des illustrations emmène le lecteur du Maghreb à l’Afrique du Sud ou du Sénégal à la Tanzanie voire aux Congos ou en Zambie, du Burkina Faso à Madagascar en passant par toute la côte du Golfe de Guinée, le Rwanda ou le Burundi. Autant d’occasions d’évoquer, appareil scientifique à l’appui, la Mission dans tous ses états, ses difficultés et ses réalisations, dans des époques et des milieux différents. (détail de l’ouvrage)

Damien Mottier. *Une ethnographie des pentecôtismes africains en France. Le temps des prophètes*. \$52.31 ISBN 978-2806101419

L’essor des pentecôtismes ne cesse d’interpeller. En France, la plupart de ces Églises sont des Églises « africaines ». On en recense plusieurs centaines en région parisienne. Les migrants viennent bien entendu y « chercher Dieu ». Mais aussi tout autre chose : des permis de

séjour, un logement, un mari. Bref, une vie meilleure. Cet ouvrage est consacré à la manière dont cette espérance sociale a été prise en charge par des prédicateurs et à leurs méthodes, à leurs succès, à leurs échecs. (detail de l'ouvrage)

Sarah Pugach. *Africa in Translation: A History of Colonial Linguistics in Germany and Beyond, 1814–1945*. Pp. xi, 303, \$80.00. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2012. ISBN 978-0472117826

The study of African languages in Germany, or Afrikanistik, originated among Protestant missionaries in the early nineteenth century and was incorporated into German universities after Germany entered the "Scramble for Africa" and became a colonial power in the 1880s. Despite its long history, few know about the German literature on African languages or the prominence of Germans in the discipline of African philology. In *Africa in Translation: A History of Colonial Linguistics in Germany and Beyond, 1814–1945*, Sara Pugach works to fill this gap, arguing that Afrikanistik was essential to the construction of racist knowledge in Germany. While in other countries biological explanations of African difference were central to African studies, the German approach was essentially linguistic, linking language to culture and national identity. Pugach traces this linguistic focus back to the missionaries' belief that conversion could not occur unless the "Word" was allowed to touch a person's heart in his or her native language, as well as to the connection between German missionaries living in Africa and armchair linguists in places like Berlin and Hamburg. Over the years, this resulted in Afrikanistik scholars using language and culture rather than biology to categorize African ethnic and racial groups. *Africa in Translation* follows the history of Afrikanistik from its roots in the missionaries' practical linguistic concerns to its development as an academic subject in both Germany and South Africa throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. "Africa in Translation is a thoughtful contribution to the literature on colonialism and culture in Germany and will find readers in the fields of German history and German studies as well as appealing to audiences in the large and interdisciplinary fields of colonialism and postcolonialism." —Jennifer Jenkins, University of Toronto (from the cover).

Lamin Sanneh. *Beyond Jihad: The Pacifist Tradition in West African Islam*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2016. Pp. 400. ISBN-13: 978-0199351619 ISBN-10: 0199351619

Over the course of the last 1400 years, Islam has grown from a small band of followers on the Arabian peninsula into a global religion of over a billion believers. How did this happen? The usual answer is that Islam spread by the sword--that believers waged jihad against rival tribes and kingdoms and forced them to convert. Lamin Sanneh argues that this is far from the case. *Beyond Jihad* examines the origin and evolution of the Muslim African pacifist tradition, beginning with an inquiry into Islam's beginnings and expansion in North Africa and its transmission across trans-Saharan trade routes to West Africa. The book focuses on the ways in which, without jihad, the religion spread and took hold, and what that assimilation process means for understanding the nature of religious and social change.

At the heart of this process were clerics who used educational, religious, and legal scholarship to promote Islam. Once this clerical class emerged it offered continuity and stability in the midst of political changes and cultural shifts; it helped inhibit the spread of radicalism, and otherwise challenged it in specific jihad outbreaks. With its roots in the Mali Empire and its policy of religious and inter-ethnic accommodation, and going beyond routes and kingdoms, pacifist teaching tracked a cumulative pathway for Islam in remote districts of the Mali Empire by instilling a patient, Sufi-inspired, and jihad-negating impulse into religious life and practice. Islam was successful in Africa, the book argues, not because of military might but because it was made African by Africans who adapted it to a variety of contexts. (from the cover)

Shobana Shankar. *Who shall enter paradise? Christian origins in Muslim Northern Nigeria, c. 1890–1975* (New African Histories). Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2014. Pp. xxx, 209. \$32.95, Paperback. ISBN 978-0821421246

Who Shall Enter Paradise? recounts in detail the history of Christian-Muslim engagement in a core area of sub-Saharan Africa's most populous nation, home to roughly equal numbers of Christians and Muslims. It is a region today beset by religious violence, in the course of which history has often been told in overly simplified or highly partisan terms. This book re-examines conversion and religious identification not as fixed phenomena, but as experiences shaped through cross-cultural encounters, experimentation, collaboration, protest, and sympathy.

Shobana Shankar relates how Christian missions and African converts transformed religious practices and politics in Muslim Northern Nigeria during the colonial and early postcolonial periods. Although the British colonial authorities prohibited Christian evangelism in Muslim areas and circumscribed missionary activities, a combination of factors—including Mahdist insurrection, the abolition of slavery, migrant labor, and women’s evangelism—brought new converts to the faith. By the 1930s, however, this organic growth of Christianity in the north had given way to an institutionalized culture based around medical facilities established in the Hausa emirates. The end of World War II brought an influx of demobilized soldiers, who integrated themselves into the local Christian communities and reinvigorated the practice of lay evangelism.

In the era of independence, Muslim politicians consolidated their power by adopting many of the methods of missionaries and evangelists. In the process, many Christian men and formerly non-Muslim communities converted to Islam. A vital part of Northern Nigerian Christianity all but vanished, becoming a religion of “outsiders.” (from the cover).

DOMINIC IGNATIUS EKANDEM,
DAVID WINDIBIZIRI AND
ABIODUN BABATUNDE LAWRENCE:

NIGERIAN CHRISTIAN LEADERS

Original Biographies from the *Dictionary of African
Christian Biography* with commentary by
Dr. Michael Ogunewu, *DACB* Liaison Coordinator and
Dr. Deji Ayegboyin, *DACB* Advisor and *JACB*
Contributing Editor

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**Dominic Ignatius Ekandem, David Windibiziri and
Abiodun Babatunde Lawrence:
Nigerian Christian Leaders**

Bolaji Idowu, the former prelate and patriarch of the Methodist Church Nigeria, in his *magnum opus*, *Olodumare: God in Yoruba Belief*,¹ described Africans as, in essence, “incurably religious.” In that work, Professor Idowu called attention to the fact that, for Africans, religion is synonymous with life itself, because they believe that virtually every event within their environment has religious or spiritual overtones. John Mbiti, another outstanding doyen in the study of religions in Africa, began his introduction to the classic *African Religions and Philosophy* with the words: “Africans are notoriously religious.”² Indeed, while the western world increasingly regards its context as secular and scientific, the people of Africa have always considered their environment to be otherworldly and spiritual.

This conviction is illustrated in the growth of religions such as Christianity throughout Africa. Expressions of African religiosity have spread throughout Europe and the Americas. African-led churches are becoming increasingly conspicuous and are growing at a tremendous rate while European mainstream churches are in decline. For these reasons, scholars of world Christianity maintain that now, more than ever before, Christianity, which was formerly considered the religion of the Global North—of Europe and North America—has become the religion of the Global South—that of Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

Africa in Early Church History

The history of the Early Church bears witness to the fact that Christianity is not foreign to the African continent. Indeed, Christianity arrived in North

¹ E. Idowu Bolaji, *Olodumare: God in Yoruba Belief*, revised and enlarged edition (Lagos: Longman, 2005), 5.

² John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (London: Heinemann, 1976), 1.

Africa in the early centuries. By the middle of the third century, the Roman provinces of North Africa had become a flourishing mission territory with a relatively high concentration of dioceses and bishops. Undoubtedly, it was a dynamic, vigorous, and productive church.³ The later decline and ultimate disappearance of North African Christianity can be traced to its relative failure in the area of inculturation.⁴ Incidentally, there are no indications that the influence of the celebrated North African Church extended to West Africa.

Christianity's Contact with West Africa

It was not until the fifteenth century that Roman Catholic missionaries from Portugal made attempts to plant Christianity in Africa. At that time they introduced Christianity in four major areas in West Africa—São Tome and Príncipe, Elmina (present-day Ghana), Benin, and Warri (the latter two in Nigeria). In so doing, they had to confront the challenges of converting the numerous adherents of African indigenous religion and Islam.

By and large, the efforts of the Portuguese Catholic mission enterprise in the middle ages failed. During this second phase of Africa's contact with the Christian faith, the commercial interests of the Portuguese in gold, ivory, and slaves as well as the daunting health problems prevented any but the shallowest of roots to be struck. Besides, as the Portuguese did not take into consideration the African spiritual vision or questions of indigenization, the churches they established were very European in structure, worship, and practice.

It was only in the 19th century that West Africa witnessed the emergence of an enduring and successful missionary enterprise. This time the Protestant churches of Europe and North America dominated the initiative followed by the Roman Catholics who resumed their missionary efforts almost half a century later. The untiring efforts of these missions laid the foundation for the permanent establishment of the Christian faith in

³ See, for example, Francis Anekwe Oborji, *Trends in African Theology since Vatican II: A Missiological Orientation*, thesis (Roma: Pontificia universitas urbaniana, 1998), 49.

⁴ Oborji, 50.

West Africa after the initial failure of the Portuguese. During this age vibrant churches sprang up, missionary institutes were founded, schools were built, and hospitals and other social services flourished in sub-Saharan Africa. The missionaries were successful because they helped create an African clergy and an elite. It must be emphasized, however, that European mission efforts only succeeded to the extent that the local peoples were assimilated during the transmission of the gospel in their own languages. Many indigenous agents, most of them anonymous, worked to translate the Bible into African languages while others served as interpreters and vanguards who carried the Gospel into the hinterlands. Andrew Walls corroborated this fact when he observed that “Modern African Christianity is not only the result of movements among Africans, but has been principally sustained by Africans and is, to a surprising extent, the result of African initiatives.”⁵

Nigerian Christianity

We will use the West African country of Nigeria as a case study to illustrate the above statements. Christianity was successfully planted in Nigeria from the 1840s on, albeit in a fragmented form, thanks to the efforts of various denominations and missionary societies who evangelized the sub region. The numerical strength and geographical distribution of the missions speak to the success of these efforts. The Wesleyan Methodist Mission led the foremost positive attempt by sending Rev. Thomas Birch Freeman and his aides to Badagry, in southwest Nigeria, on September 23, 1842. Immediately after the Methodists, the Church Missionary Society founded the Anglican Communion in December 1842. Other missionary outfits followed in quick succession: the United Presbyterian Church (1846), the Southern Baptist Mission (1850), the Roman Catholics (1860), SIM/ECWA (1893-1901), Sudan United Mission (1904), the Seventh Day Adventists (1914), and the Salvation Army (1920). The Classical Pentecostals, who are foreign as far as their origins are concerned, came in subsequent years. In due time, reactions to foreign missionary Christianity produced other

⁵ A. F Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History, Studies in Transmission of Faith* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), 86.

expressions of the faith which are still visible in the country today. While nationalistic feelings led to the emergence of Ethiopian churches like the Native Baptist Church (1888), the United Native African Church (1891), the African Church (1901), Christ Army Church, and the United African Methodist Church (*Eleja*-1917), the desire to have Christianity incarnated in African culture gave birth to the *Aladura* churches. These indigenous churches strive to indigenize Christianity by encouraging the use of local dialects in their services in Bible reading, preaching, and singing. The most recent groups are the home grown Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements. These denominations have worked cohesively and made significant contributions to Christianity in the country. Today, Nigeria has become a stronghold of the Christian faith.

As a religious faith, Christianity has made its home in Nigeria. In less than two centuries, it has become a phenomenon that can only be ignored at one's peril. Apart from its ongoing large scale contributions to the social and economic development of the nation, today it has become a force to be reckoned with even within the political domain. It is impossible to ignore the influence of Nigerian Christian ministers within world Christianity. Ministers from across the denominational spectrum have at one time or another occupied prominent positions within the international Christian community. Nigerian Catholics can boast of a number of cardinals—a fact that heightens speculation that a Nigerian pope may emerge within the Catholic Church in the near future. Likewise, not only does the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) represent the largest national body of Anglicans in the global communion, it is also a powerful force within worldwide Anglicanism. The Methodist Church Nigeria (MCN) is a major branch in the World Methodist Church (WMC). Prelate Sunday Mbang, a former head of the MCN, was elected chair of the World Methodist Council in 2001.

Similarly, Nigerian Indigenous and Pentecostal Churches are making waves across the world. Virtually all the notable African Indigenous Churches in Nigeria are today firmly established in such places as Britain, France, and the U.S.A. Many scholars of African Christianity now agree with Ruth Marshall's view that, "Nigeria has been the site of Pentecostalism's

greatest explosion on the African continent, and the movement's extraordinary growth shows no signs of slowing."⁶

The Stories

This double issue of the *Journal of African Christian Biography* (August-September 2016) tells the stories of eminent leaders from denominations within the customarily defined geographical areas across the country. The story of Dominic Ignatius Ekandem, one of the few Nigerian Catholic priests to attain the high office of cardinal, comes from the eastern part of the country where the Catholic Church dominates. Secondly, we have a biography of David Windibiziri, the first archbishop of the Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria. His story comes from the northern part of the country, which is the stronghold of SIM/ECWA and Lutheran churches. In the final story we read about Abiodun Babatunde Lawrence who was the founder of the Holy Flock of Christ Worldwide, one of the *Aladura* churches predominantly found among the Yoruba in the southwestern part of the country.

About the Author: Chief Olusegun Obasanjo

These three biographies, carefully chosen to represent prevailing strains of Nigerian Christianity, were all written by an elder statesman, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo. He is the former military head of state of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (February 1976 to October 1979) and a two-term civilian president from 1999 to 2007 in the new democratic dispensation. In his capacity as a statesman, the United Nations appointed him special envoy for Africa in 2008. Since then, he has overseen democratic elections across the continent. Currently, he is the special envoy of ECOWAS to Guinea Bissau.

Chief Obasanjo wrote these stories as a Ph.D student of National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN). It is exceptionally prudent that he chose to write the biographies of one Catholic, one Protestant, and one

⁶ Ruth Marshall, "Pentecostalism in Southern Nigeria: An Overview" in *New Dimensions in African Christianity*, ed. by P. Gifford (Ibadan: Sefer: 1993), 16.

Indigenous church leader from the east (Ekandem), the west (Babatunde), and the north (Windibiziri) of the country.

In writing these stories, Chief Obasanjo expressed his support for the *DACB* and its' endeavor to document the history of African Christian leaders in the growth of Christianity across the continent:

My research and written work for the *DACB* have widened my horizon and made me appreciate better what must not be taken for granted – the work and leadership of Africans in propagating and spreading the Gospel in Africa. Their complementary efforts to those of foreign missionaries are vitally and crucially significant for where Christianity is in Nigeria today and where it will go in the future. The work and objective of the *DACB* will preserve the past, capture the present, and inspire the future.⁷

Indeed, the legacy of these African pioneers sheds a crucial light on the current state of Nigerian Christianity and its significance in the future. These three biographies only tell part of the bigger story.

Michael Ogunewu, *DACB* Liaison Coordinator

Deji Ayegboyin, *DACB* Advisor and *JACB* Contributing Editor

⁷ Interview with Chief Obasanjo, quoted in *DACB News Link*, issue 11, November 2015.

David Lonkibiri Windibiziri
1934 to 2014
Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria (LCCN)

David Longibiri Windibiziri grew up in the Lutheran Church of Christ (LCCN) in Nigeria. He was baptized in the church, became a minister, and rose through the ranks to become archbishop.

Introduction

The Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria was started by the Sudan United Mission. The idea for the ministry emerged in a monthly periodical entitled *Sudan and the Regions Beyond* that was published in 1889-1890. Dr. H. Grattan Guinness published the journal to stir up interest in the Sudan which was closed to missionary efforts at the time. His daughter, Lucy, was married to the German-born Briton, Dr. H. Karl W. Kumm who had been a member of North Africa Mission. In North Africa Kumm had learned Arabic and Hausa. Kumm and Lucy worked very hard to make the ideas of Dr. Guinness become reality.

On November 13, 1902, Kumm and a few other individuals in Sheffield, England established a mission organization named Sudan Pioneer Mission (SPM) Evangelical Churches. After Kumm consulted some of his contacts in Europe, the United States, South Africa, and Australia, the name of the mission was changed from SPM to Sudan United Mission (SUM) on June 15, 1904. Branches were then established in Europe. Pastor Pedersen of Denmark who had heard Kumm speak at the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh in June 1910 established a Danish Branch on November 22, 1911. After discussion with the British Branch of the SUM, Pedersen became convinced that Yola (Nigeria) in the Sudan would be the sphere of influence and missionary activity of the Danish branch.

The journey of the church in Nigeria began with founder Dr. Niels Bronnum and his wife, and accompanying missionaries Margaret C. Young and Ms. Dogner Rose. The couple arrived in Nigeria and started their trip up the Niger River by boat on February 18, 1913. While in the British Missionary Station in Rumasha, near Lokoja, Margaret died of malaria shortly after giving birth to their first son, Holger, in June 1913. Margaret was buried in Rumasha while Dogner Rose took their son to Margaret's family in Scotland. This allowed Bronnum and Rose to continue their missionary journey to Numan, Bachamaland. They arrived on October 5,

1913. Bronnum obtained the necessary approval from the British Resident in Yola to begin his missionary work. He built stations where unpaid Nigerian evangelists settled to farm. They taught Christian principles in villages and hamlets under Bronnum's supervision.

The first five indigenous pastors, namely Habila Alyedeilo. Ezra Gejere, Shall Holma, Theodore Pwanahomo and Ahnuhu Jebbe, were ordained in 1948 after intensive theological training. In 1955, the name of the church was changed from Sudan United Mission to Lutheran Church of Christ in Sudan. Almost a year later, the church became independent of Danish supervision and control and was renamed the Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria. Before the Second World War, mission stations had been opened in Numan, Lamurde, Guyuk, Shelleng, Dumne, Pella, Dilli and Njoboliyo. More stations followed after the war. Numan became the headquarters of the church and the seat of power for its pastors, teachers, doctors, nurses, artisans, farmers and administrators.

This was the situation when Bishop Akila Todi, the first African leader of the LCCN and a Bachama by tribe, fell ill. Windibiziri was elected to take over in 1987 as bishop of the LCCN. When Bishop Akila Todi retired after leading the church from 1960 to 1986, the LCCN was a one-diocese church based heavily in Numan, the capital of Bachamaland.

Birth and Early Life

David Lonkibiri Windibiziri was born around 1934 in Purokayo village, Guyuk Local Government in Adamawa State. His cognomen, Lonkibiri, is a Kanakuru name which means "born at night." His father, Saghar, was Sarkin Dawakai (chief or owner of many horses) in Guyuk. By local standards Saghar was wealthy as he owned many horses and cattle. He was a Longuda by tribe and belonged to the kingmakers' clan. He was often approached for advice and guidance by district officials and local authorities concerning chieftaincy matters. David's mother was Deremiya, another Kanakuru name which means "surrounded by people." She belonged to the rainmakers' clan. Thus David was born and bred in a traditional home environment along with his siblings - one half-brother, Umaru Zalmadai, and one sister, Sintiki. His mother had had seven children but only two of them survived—the other one being a half-brother with a different father. She believed that her children had been killed by witches except for David whom they could not kill because he was a wizard. When David grew up, he told his mother repeatedly that it was malaria that had killed his siblings but that always

caused his mother to laugh and ask how a mosquito bite could kill a human being.

Young David followed his father and learned to imitate what he was doing. As a child, he enjoyed swimming and riding on a corn stalk, pretending that it was a horse. With the other boys, he went to the bush to hunt birds, rats, and bush fowls. During the rainy season, they herded goats and sheep and enjoyed their milk. During the dry season, they could let the goats and sheep roam free because the harvest time had passed. This gave them free time to go hunting. Following local custom, they wore armlets to prevent them from being bitten by snakes or being harmed by evil spirits in the bush.

In 1947, a friend named Lonkiboni encouraged David Lonkibiri to join the baptismal class held by the evangelist in Purokayo village. It took some time for David's father to agree to this because he thought it was a diversion that would make his son lazy if he was pulled away from farming. Later David said that he was grateful to his father and to God for this opportunity which led to his baptism in November of 1949. This important event made him a member of the world's largest tribe, the tribe of Jesus Christ.

Education

By being baptized David had been diverted from the religion, trade and occupation of his father. In 1951 and 1952, he attended Numan Training School which later became Numan Teacher's College. Upon finishing his primary education, he worked for a short while in the mission bookshop. He would have preferred to go to the evangelists' school but for some reason, he pushed himself to attend Kofare Agricultural School in Yola for one year instead. He continued in the School of Agriculture (Samaru, Zaria) for another year and the School of Accountancy (also in Zaria). Afterwards he joined the Numan Native Authority as an agricultural assistant. Why was he drawn into agriculture rather than mission? David himself could not answer the question except to say, "It was what God wanted and not necessarily what my father or I wanted."

Marital Life

At the age of 21, David married Margaret, née Zufa Hassan. They had six children who are all deeply rooted in Longuda traditions and culture and in

ministry within the LCCN. David and Zufa had a fulfilling marriage in which they found happiness and joy and mutual love for each other. They were described as a shining example of what a Christian marriage should be.[1]

Christian Life and Ministry

For David Windibiziri, his service with the Numan Native Authority was both a challenge and an opportunity to show his Christian character in real life situations where his faith, beliefs and ethics were tested. It was an opportunity to show what Christianity was all about to co-workers and peers, both traditionalists and Muslims. It meant evangelizing at home and at work. David believed that he could not live a dualistic life, separating the sacred and the secular, that new Christians have to live their Christian witness everywhere. It was not easy nor was it adequately appreciated among the people with whom they lived and worked. But for David, there was no other way. Christianity was a total way of life at home, at play and at work, in the church and in the office.

In 1958, David left the Agriculture Department and went to work in the Accounts Department. After two years, he was sent to the Institute of Administration, Zaria, to study secretarial work and accountancy for eighteen months. Upon completion of his course, he was posted to Bauchi as an accountant. Here, he began to feel a stronger attraction to the work of mission and evangelism. In Bauchi, he told one of the pastors that he would like to go to the Theological College of Northern Nigeria (TCNN). This desire took some time to materialize because he did not easily find sponsors. He had no hesitation about committing to this ministry even though he knew that government work held better prospects and opportunities.

He prayed constantly for someone to sponsor his theological training. God miraculously provided a solution when the friend of a missionary who was a retired teacher in Denmark agreed to pay his tuition and living expenses. David realized that this was a direct answer to prayer but also a call to Christian ministry. In 1967 David left government work and entered TCCN where he completed his theological studies in 1970. He was appointed pastor of Majamia Almasihu Jos in January 1971 and ordained in 1972. He worked in Jos for six years. He faced many challenges but was able to surmount all of them. As a district pastor, he found his earlier experience in local and regional services very helpful.

When Guyuk Local Government was created in 1977, his people,

the Longuda, invited him to serve as councilor in the new local government. The public announcement was made before he was contacted. It was difficult for him to say no. He said, "I saw this as a temptation to leave my work as a pastor." He accepted but for only one term and he later returned to his job as a pastor. But as portfolio councilor for Education and Social Welfare from 1977 to 1979, he left an indelible mark on the lives of his people. When he returned to church work he was asked to serve as secretary to the Rt. Rev. Akila Todi. He also doubled as administrative secretary of the church for almost eighteen months, before leaving to pursue further studies in the U.S.A. in 1983.

In the U.S.A., he completed an M.A. in New Testament Theology at Luther North Western Seminary. In the second year of his studies, his wife, Margaret, and their youngest son, Hanim, joined him. The objective was to pursue a Doctor of Ministry degree at Luther Seminary. He and his family had a favorable impact on his colleagues in the program and on the entire seminary family.

When David Windibiziri arrived at the Minneapolis airport, David Olson of the Minneapolis Area Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (1987-2001) was there to welcome him. He subsequently became his lifelong friend. He attested to Windibirizi's humility and confidence, his concern for the country, its agriculture, and industry as well as international relations and inter-religious dialogue and his vision to plant a million trees to counter the advance of the desert.[2]

Upon returning to Nigeria in September 1985, David Windibiziri was appointed pastor in the new Federal Capital Territory of Abuja. His assignment was to establish an LCCN congregation and church there to cater for the many LCCN members who had moved to Abuja. He also discovered a great number of unreached peoples' groups in the area which led him to develop an outreach ministry in Abuja and Kontagora. David's assignment in Abuja was a key period in his development as a church leader. He was on this assignment when he was elected to succeed Bishop Akila Todi.

In addition to his studies in the U.S.A., he attended a three-month course in Christian Mass Communication in Evangelism at Radio Voice of the Gospel in Addis Ababa in 1976 and a church administration course for four years in Madras (now Chennai), India, in 1981. He travelled internally and internationally to attend conferences, seminars and workshops, lecturing and presenting papers.

Leadership of LCCN

Windibiziri was consecrated bishop on February 22, 1987, thus becoming the second bishop of the LCCN, the successor to Akila Todi (bishop from 1973 to 1986) who could not continue due to poor health. It must be underlined that Todi was neither tribalistic nor myopic about his successor. If he had been, it would not have been easy for Windibiziri to succeed him.

Windibiziri was an evangelist, a servant leader, a visionary and an innovator. As soon as he became bishop, he took steps to outline necessary changes for modernizing the church. Under his leadership, the LCCN expanded beyond the borders of Numan and Adamawa State to become a national church with global contacts and partnerships. He successfully launched training programs for pastors. In 1994 for the first time, seventy-seven pastors were ordained in one ceremony by Windibiziri. He expanded the Bible College (Bronnum Lutheran Seminary) to a degree awarding institution, affiliated to both Ahmadu Bello University and the University of Jos.

Windibiziri's episcopate suffered from the disruptive church politics between the Bachama and the Longuda members of the LCCN. Windibiziri was of the Longuda tribe. The Longuda are the second major tribal group after the Bachama who were first attracted to the Gospel when the Danish Sudan United Mission came to the area in 1913. In the late 1960s, the Longuda people left the LCCN en masse and joined the Baptist Church in protest over certain issues connected to the relationship of the two tribes within the LCCN. Afterward only a few Longuda remained in the Lutheran Church. As a result, the church came to be identified as a Bachama church. It was no little surprise to most people when Windibiziri, a Longuda, became bishop of the LCCN after Todi.[3]

Windibiziri detested the idea of "African time," that is, the practice of not being punctual. He believed that time is a commodity that must not be wasted. He worked to reform this attitude and to make everybody conscious of time.

Windibiziri encouraged women to go into the ministry. Although women have played critical roles for many years in the LCCN, they have not been accorded the attention and positions they deserve. The theological orientation of the first missionaries was an obstacle to the growth of the leadership of women and youth in the church. According to Dr. Musa Gaiya, Windibiri's predecessor Akila Todi "was very conservative in his theology. For example, he opposed the ordination of women and dancing worship.

According to him, dancing in God's house was a sin." [4]

Rev. Naomi Martin was the first LCCN female pastor ordained by Windibiziri in what was considered a major reform that ensured the inclusion of women in church leadership and administration. He had a strong vision for women's leadership in the LCCN, insisting that 40% of the leadership be made up of women according to his friend Bishop David Olson. As of February 2015, there were thirty female pastors in the LCCN. Naomi Martin has this to say about her experience:

The time I was ordained in 1996 was a hard time for the bishop and the church as there was division in the LCCN. The bishop and others like him stood by me. They loved and cared for me. They ensured that whatever the church was doing, I was included. They also made sure they included women. The late bishop had the mind to empower women. He sponsored me on workshops and programs abroad. [5]

I remember when we were at the Lutheran World Federation Forum in Geneva in October 1995; he stood very firmly and declared that if there is any woman that is educated and wants to be ordained, he would be the first to support her. There was opposition among the other bishops, including the bishop of Ethiopia who vowed that no woman would be ordained under his watch.

Windibiziri's position was, however, well received and respected among many of the Western bishops. [6]

Windibiziri was also a pioneer in providing leadership opportunities for the youth and inviting their participation in the life of the church.

During the 1980s and 1990s Muslims and Christians in the Northern Nigeria were locked in a serious religious conflict. They disagreed about membership in the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC). Nigeria had been an observer for many years and some northern states wanted to legislate Islamic Sharia Law. The youth expressed increasingly radical views about Christian militancy and they wanted revenge – "to retaliate, to kill and burn as they saw the Muslims doing." [7]

The LCCN caught the vision of an Interfaith Dialogue Center where Christians and Muslims could meet to dialogue on matters of mutual interest and to resolve conflicts before they snowballed into violence. From November 2 to 6, 1993, an initial conference was organized at Miango, Plateau State. Papers were presented on the following topics: "Dialogue Between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria: How Feasible?"; "The Theology of God's Word from the Biblical and Qur'anic Perspective"; and "The

Influence of Politics on Religious Dialogue.” Participants included Christian and Muslim leaders, some of which were women and youth leaders. Windibiziri felt that it was a positive experience, with frank and open discussions, and sometimes confrontations. Time was spent identifying the historical, political, and economic causes of the conflicts. The religious aspect of the conflicts was not neglected, especially since general ignorance of each group’s beliefs played a role in creating tension and bitterness when it bled into the media and public preaching. One of the recommendations of the conference was to encourage the development of more education programs for both Muslims and Christians so they could learn about their own beliefs and that of their counterparts. This would help avoid inflammatory statements and actions. [7]

The first five conferences between 1995 and 2005 were sponsored by the LCCN through the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). However, in accordance with the principle of mutuality, the sixth conference was sponsored by the Muslim Community through the Nigeria Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA). Initially, issues of mutual concern in the area of religion and ethics were discussed at the conferences such as “Secularism and Religious Pluralism” and “the Importance of Moral Conscience in Improving Co-existence.” Later more political issues were addressed such as “The Role of Religion in Sensitizing Politics,” “The Role of Religion in Poverty Alleviation,” and “The Position and Rights of Women in Society.” This effort, spearheaded by the LCCN under Windibiziri’s leadership, was the forerunner of the Nigeria Inter-Religious Council (NIREC) established nationally at the beginning of the 21st century. The sultan of Sokoto, a Sarki Muslim, and the president of the Christian Association of Nigeria are co-chairs of NIREC. The position of secretary is filled alternately by a Christian or a Muslim. Windibiziri had this to say about the effort:

We soon found that although we have been living together as neighbors for many years, there is considerable ignorance about one another and our faiths. It has, therefore, been very much a learning period. We have been able to analyze our situation and background and already at the first conference we remarked that most of the causes for crises and confrontations were not basically religious, but based on historical, political, social and economic issues.”[8]

The lessons that came out of this exercise and the interaction fostered confidence, trust, and mutuality and built a relationship between the two communities, particularly in Adamawa State. The achievement came amidst

heavy criticisms of Windibiziri who, nevertheless, continued to believe in the rightness of what he was doing and forged ahead. The Youth Fellowship once criticized him with an ominous prediction that while he was busy trying to foster good relationships with the Muslims, he would one day wake up and find out that his church had been burnt to ashes and all his members had deserted him.

Windibiziri encouraged Christians to participate in politics. The early missionaries, in accordance with their pietistic traditions and culture, were very conservative. They did not allow their converts to participate in politics or to be involved in profit-making ventures. But Windibiziri, because of his experience and background, put an end to that. He fiercely encouraged LCCN members to participate actively in politics and to undertake profitable and profit-making commercial ventures. However, he insisted on clean politics and doing business with integrity and honesty as good Christians who must be salt and light in the world.

Windibiziri also fostered the formation of international church partnerships. In 1988, the ELCA reoriented its mission approach and emphasis along the lines of the paradigm of “accompaniment.” This meant that the ELCA would actively seek to partner with other congregations. Missionaries would be sent out to churches under a new plan which encompassed accompaniment in mission. But this is how it all happened:

It so happened that the newly installed bishop of the Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria, David Windibiziri, was a graduate of Luther Seminary, and his advisor, David Olson, was elected to be the bishop of the Minneapolis Area Synod of the ELCA in 1989. In the following year, church leaders from Minneapolis visited Nigeria and formalized their companion synod relations with the hopes of finding congregations that would be willing to participate in the companion congregation program.”[9]

From that small beginning, church relationships have grown, and at the moment, the Minneapolis Area Synod has partnered with fourteen congregations in the LCCN.[10] This can be attributed to Windibiziri’s wise leadership and influence because he saw the need to pursue such an agenda. His church partnership and outreach programs were both national and international.

Another area where Windibiziri brought his non-theological training and experience to bear on his mission work as a church leader was in the area of agriculture. His previous training in agriculture led him to focus his attention on tree planting. As a result, he established the Agro-

Forestry Department of the LCCN, an effort that coincided with the overall plan of the Lutheran World Federation at the time. Windibiziri was able to get support from the Lutheran World body for his tree planting campaign, but unfortunately, it did not meet with understanding from the grassroots.

Personal Qualities

When it came to character, Windibiziri was a servant of God with tremendous patience and humility. But at the same time, he was a determined and committed leader and administrator. While Dr. Musa Gaiya (who wrote the biography of his successor Akila Todi) may have mistaken his patience and humility for weakness, he nevertheless acknowledged his success in the area of church growth because it was so phenomenal. Even his adversaries respected him for his achievement in creating five dioceses which helped the growth and outreach of the church. This writer came into contact with Windibiziri's disarming patience and enchanting humility when Rev. Boniface Shenmi, one of the chaplain visitors to the prison in Yola, invited him to mediate and reconcile the different groups in the LCCN.

The growth of the church under Windibiziri was described as spectacular. Rev. Lautai acknowledged that Windibiziri was the only one who talked about church growth and expansion in the early days. In an interview with him, Lautai said that Windibiziri's most important achievement was, "church growth and church growth." He was both a great church leader and a great missionary. He was also described as "a charmer and a disarmer." His personality and appearance did not evoke anger or dislike, no matter how you felt about him. He was a perfectionist to the core. His catch-word was "Whatever you have to do, do it well." He was a family man and a great father to his children. At their golden marriage anniversary in 2005, David and his wife recognized how blessed they were with their seven children, their foster daughter Kuwi, and their nine grandchildren. [11]

The membership of the LCCN, which stood at about 1.7 million in 1987 when Windibiziri took over as bishop, increased to almost 2.7 million by the time he retired as the archbishop fifteen years later in 2002.

David Lonkibiri Windibiziri died on October 16, 2014 at the age of 80.

Notes:

1. From *Transition to Glory Funeral Programme for David L. Windibiziri* (LCCN:2014). The tribute of David's wife Margaret says it all:

Since the day we got married 59 years ago, we were joined together under the promise that what God has joined, no man should put asunder. But now death has separated us. It pains me a lot that I was unable to take care of you when you were hospitalized. This was not my making, but due to my ill-health. I am grateful to many people that took care of you in different ways. May God bless them all. I am grateful for many things that you have taught me. You taught me not to hold grudges against anybody, but rather love everyone and be hospitable to any person that comes my way. I am thankful for your words to me while I was in serious pain at the hospital, when you said: "God is aware of all your pain and suffering, and He will bring healing at his own time. And we are all in the hands of the Lord." These words have really comforted me knowing that your hope and trust is in that Lord on your sick bed. *Baba*, you are now at peace with all the problems and suffering of this world. I love you, but God loves you most. Till I come to meet you at the feet of our Lord Jesus Christ, Rest in Peace.

2. Here is the original tribute by David Olson from a conflation of *Transition to Glory Funeral Programme for David L. Windibiziri* (LCCN: 2014) and Nicholas Pweddou, *A History of the Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria*, published by the LCCN, Numan, Nigeria:

He arrived at the Minneapolis airport the summer of 1983, a weary traveler amidst a sea of humanity in Nigerian robes, to pursue his Doctor of Ministry degree at Luther Seminary. There I was "uncle" to the twelve international churchmen enrolled; he soon became their natural leader. Thus, these two Davids began a quarter-century kinship. In 1986, I visited him in Nigeria two days after his election as bishop, and one year before I was elected to the same office. God! He has a sense of humor. We shared more and more. Nancy and Margaret became dear friends on our next visit, and they returned the favor by staying in our Minneapolis home for a 3-month study visit. It was personal, not formal. We shared faith in Jesus, concerns for our people, our churches, our countries, God's world. At his consecration, echoing Bishop Akila Todi, my friend, said, "The hunter's son has become the second bishop." But his model was the

Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ. He was pastor to the pastor-shepherds among LCCN's many shepherds. As I read over some of his many speeches over his fifteen years, published in "Reflections and Presentations," I recalled how grateful he was for all those who had served before. We all stand on the shoulders of people before us. This was David's combined humility and confidence as your second bishop. Every speech includes concern for your nation, for agriculture and commerce, for neighboring countries and other religions. Talk of agro-forestry: he had a vision to plant one million trees, to replenish and stop the desert's erosion for long after we're gone.

I rejoice that LCCN continues to grow. In our much-divided and violent world, I give thanks for David's leadership in Muslim-Christian dialogue through the Interfaith Dialogue Center. After meeting him at a Seminary, I was pleased to attend the dedication of Bronnum Seminary, a church institution that will outlive us all. He was also visionary in insisting that 40% of church leaders be women. As with the Lutherans in America, there were times of tension, division, and parties at odds. Your archbishop was always pastoral and respectful, not argumentative or confrontational. Divisions come and go; some area healed. David was a healer. A bishop who raised his own chickens might not know about money. Just the opposite: he led many launchings successfully, raising millions of naira to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ. I commend your church for accepting the archbishop's decision to create five dioceses and grow God's gifts of leadership. We are grateful for the smooth transition to the leading of Archbishop Nemuel, not always easy in Africa or America. It is now thirteen years since I completed my terms as bishop of the Minneapolis Area Synod. Bishops Craig Johnson and Ann Svennungsen share your grief and our faith that the archbishop is among the great cloud of heaven witnessing our tributes and continuing our ministries. In my own heart, I have loved David as a brother. We spoke by phone days before his death. Our families have been intertwined since Ar and Hanim studied in America, and I was able to serve as their "uncle" here. Serving on a hospital board here, we provided needed medical care for Margaret once and again. Today, we rejoice that she is recovered at home in Guyuk, the Mama to your dear departed Baba. Thanks be to God for Archbishop David Windibiziri.

3. Details of the dispute: Under Todi's episcopate, a Constitution Committee was established to review and update the constitution of the LCCN. The committee recommended, among other things, re-organizing the single diocese into six dioceses. However, some individuals felt that the leadership of the church was going to end up in the "wrong Longuda hands" and saw the division into multiple dioceses as another means of weakening the Bachama hold on the church. They orchestrated a dispute and division within the church. David pulled through the reorganization with the majority of the church members with him. A small splinter group which the LCCN called an "anti-diocese" moved out of the main body and called itself a "non-diocese." At that point, five bishops were appointed for the five new dioceses and Windibiziri's title was changed to archbishop in 1995. Efforts to reconcile the two groups did not succeed. While this writer was in prison in Yola in 1996-1997, with the permission of prison authorities, he made an attempt to reconcile the two when the issue was brought to him by one of the leaders but to no avail. When he became president, Bola Ige and Jerry Gana also attempted to resolve the issue without success. The two groups have since existed separately. It should be seen as the way of expanding the Christian mission and work in the areas concerned.

4. Dr. Gaiya's full biography of Bishop Akila Todi can be accessed here:

www.dacb.org/stories/nigeria/todi_akila.html.

5. Conflation of Interview with Rev. (Mrs.) Naomi Martin, First Female LCCN Ordained Pastor by David Windibiziri and Asriel S. T. Myatafadi and Others: *A Century of God's Faithfulness, 1913-2013 Reflections on the LCCN*, 2014.

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Archbishop Nemuel Babbar, current head of the LCCN.

Eri Windibiziri, eldest surviving child of David Windibiziri.

Elizabeth Holtegaard, Associate and Volunteer Secretary of David Windibiziri from 1970 on.

Rt. Rev. William Lautai, First Bishop of Yola Diocese.

Rt. Rev. Benjamin Futuda, Bishop of Abuja Diocese.

Mrs. Michal Bongi, Secretary of LCCN Board of Trustees.
Andrew Kalang, former Administrative Secretary under David Windibiziri.
Rev. (Mrs.) Naomi Martin, First Female LCCN Ordained Pastor by David
Windibiziri.

Abiodun Babatunde Lawrence
1898 to 1943
Holy Flock of Christ Worldwide

Abiodun Babatunde Lawrence joined the Cherubim and Seraphim (C&S) *Aladura* Movement in 1926 and soon became one of the prominent leaders. This movement had started in Lagos in 1925 as one of the Yoruba *Aladura* or “Owners of Prayer” movements. It began through the ministry of Moses Orimolade Tunolase with the assistance of a young and energetic woman, Christianah Abiodun Akinsowon. During the first four years the movement gained prominence and attracted elites within the Lagos community. However, from 1929 schisms threatened the unity of the movement as the principal leaders parted ways in succession. Lawrence, later nicknamed “Major” Lawrence by Orimolade, was one of the leaders who broke away and established his own version of the C&S movement, named the Holy Flock of Christ (HFC) in 1932.

Birth and Early Life

Lawrence’s father originally came from Ikole Ekiti, but was raised by Brazilians in the Brazilian quarter in Lagos, Nigeria. His mother, who originally came from Ijebu, was a popular yam seller. Lawrence was born in Lagos on December 25, 1898. His names *Abiodun* and *Babatunde* are cognomens, what the Yoruba usually call *oruko amutorunwa* (distinguishing epithets that a child brings with him or her into the world). *Abiodun* is a combination of two words *Abi* (to be born) and *Odun* (festival). Usually, a name such as *Abiodun* is given to a child who is born during festive periods. The combination of the names *Abiodun* and *Babatunde* was unique. The traditional name *Abiodun* suggests that he was not only born during a festive period, but also on the actual day of a festival—Christmas Day 1898. The second one, *Babatunde*, also has a traditional connotation. *Baba* in Yoruba means father, while *tunde* literarily means “he has come again,” thus *Babatunde* means “father has come again.” Such a name is usually given to a male child who is born immediately after the death of his paternal grandfather. The belief is that the deceased grandfather has returned to the family, a practice in keeping with the Yoruba belief in re-incarnation.

It is believed that Lawrence’s parents received a revelation or

prediction while he was an infant that he would grow up to be a leader followed by many people. As he grew up, he developed the habit of looking at issues from a spiritual point of view. His peers reported that they felt that the spirit of God was upon the young boy.

He attended St. Peter's Primary School, Faji, Lagos, where he excelled and out-performed many of his peers and classmates. Very early in his life, people identified him as a man who loved to be a peacemaker, a mediator, a reconciler, and one who was eager to render help and assistance in whatever way possible to members of his family, neighbors, peers and colleagues. He was also known for being philanthropic.

Christian Involvement

Lawrence became a committed Christian while he was a member at St. Peter's Cathedral, a church within the Anglican Communion in Ita Faji, Lagos. Those who knew him described him as "worshipping the Lord with all his heart, mind and soul." He was also known as a bold, serious, and enthusiastic member of the congregation. He served as a "sideman" or usher, an executive member of the Young Men's Christian League, an executive member of the Young Men's Christian Union, and a Sunday School teacher. He was involved in prison visitation and ministration to inmates, particularly by helping prepare prisoners to re-integrate society after their release and discharge.

Lawrence studied printing at the Church Missionary Society (CMS) Printing Press and worked at the Railway Printing Press, Ebute Metta, until February 1934 when he resigned to become a full-time pastor. His colleagues at the CMS Bookshop and Printing Press, Ogunmefu and E. J. Fasoro, who were also his neighbors, observed a special call of God in young Lawrence's life, and his potential to be a steward in "the vineyard of God." Although young and enthusiastic, many observed that his humility and God's anointing enabled him to know how to work closely in the company of elders.

Joining the C&S Movement

By what some believe was divine intervention, Elder W. A. Akinyemi, the father of Dr. W. A. M. Akinyemi, persuaded him to join the C&S movement in Lagos in 1926. The C&S movement grew out of the ministry of Moses Orimolade Tunolase in collaboration with Christianah Abiodun Akinsowon, a

young, beautiful and charismatic lady (later Mrs. Emmanuel).[1] Orimolade and Christianah Abiodun ministered together as a father and daughter team. Christianah Abiodun offered visions and predictions while Orimolade conducted healing sessions and performed miracles. It was unbelievable for Lawrence's colleagues, friends, and mates to see him join what they thought was such a pedestrian movement meant only for peasants. Lawrence was highly intelligent and a respected young man in society.

Soon Orimolade appointed eminent leaders to help attend to those who needed prayers and healing because alone he could no longer handle everything. He called them "the Praying Band." [2] Lawrence's qualities showed up immediately in the C&S, and Orimolade picked him to be one of "the Praying Band." Members of the movement believed the Band was divinely chosen because it was the group in charge of spiritual matters. The group was handpicked by Orimolade after a session of fasting and praying. He picked seven, replicating the example of the disciples who appointed seven men of good report for material distribution in the first church.[3] However, Band members held spiritual positions, assisting Orimolade in all matters of special fasting, prayers, and spiritual warfare. Led by E. A. Davies, they became the inner core of the original *Aladura* or C&S Movement. Along with Orimolade, these seven leaders became responsible for the spiritual well-being and progress of the C&S.[4]

Soon Lawrence enjoyed a close relationship with Orimolade who made Lawrence the head of the "visioners" and "seers." It was Orimolade himself who added the title "Major" to Lawrence's name, just as he had added the title "Captain" to Christianah Abiodun's name. Therefore, members of the movement always referred to Lawrence as "Major Abiodun Babatunde Lawrence" even though he had never been in the military. Lawrence was acknowledged as a leader among his peers. Followers believed the Lord was with him and used him mightily to support his leaders. He was an unparalleled visionary within the movement. Under Orimolade and Davies, Lawrence, as Spiritual Leader, carried out the following: Spiritual preparation, guidance and leadership of the movement, revival and convention preparations, oversight of the visioners, administration, interpretation of visions and dreams, prayer warfare in healing ministrations, and words of exhortations to members. Delivered, weekly, monthly, and annually, members believed his words were divine messages. Therefore, even though Lawrence may not be described as a co-founder with Orimolade of the C&S Movement as was Christianah Abiodun, he was certainly Orimolade's right-hand man.

Separation from the C&S Movement

In spite of Lawrence's position within the hierarchy of the C&S Movement, over time visions and signs appeared to point Lawrence to a more prominent calling. In October 1926, Lawrence had a prophetic revelation. But he kept it to himself and did not reveal it until it was actualized in 1932 after the establishment of the Holy Flock of Christ Organization. Second, in 1928, many people reported seeing a star over the residence of Lawrence on 49 Kakawa Street, Lagos. The star was seen as such a mighty sign and indication among C&S members that Orimolade himself had to go to see it. Third, many people claimed that they observed either the same star, or a similar star, in the same place at 10:30 pm on December 12, 1933, shortly after the establishment of the HFC. Lawrence's supporters agreed that the stars were signs and an indication of divine attestation, testimony, and approval of the work that Lawrence was doing within the C&S movement under Orimolade and would continue to do in future.

In 1928, shortly after the anniversary of the Convention/Revival of the C&S, which had gone well, disagreement suddenly arose over matters arising within the movement. It is not very clear what the genuine root of the discord was, but it was severe enough to cause the first schism. Regrettably the misunderstanding and the rancor between the two founders of the C&S Society, Orimolade and Christianah Abiodun, grew worse and became more acrimonious. Efforts by some elders in the church to settle the misunderstanding met with failure. In early 1929, Orimolade, with supporters on each side fuelling the conflict, wrote a letter to Christianah Abiodun, advising her to form her own separate society. It was probably not her desire to break away but the actions of her followers, which she did nothing to control, suggested otherwise. Whatever the cause, the split was complete and, at least for that time, irreversible.

That year, Christianah Abiodun established her own society, another variation of the C&S *Aladura* movement, which she named The Cherubim and Seraphim Society. Orimolade's party in which Lawrence remained for the time being, opted for the name The Eternal Sacred Order of Cherubim and Seraphim Society.

Three days after Christianah Abiodun established her branch of the church, Orimolade sent the seven leaders of the Praying Band to Okun Ibeju to pray on matters that had led to the disagreements that split the Movement. The seven moved out as requested by Orimolade to Okun Ibeju,

a beach on the Atlantic Ocean, about ten miles from Lagos toward Epe. It was a quiet location where there were no distractions—an ideal solitary location for prayer. One of the prayer points requested by Orimolade was prayer for Lawrence’s safety, potentially a ruse to win Lawrence to Orimolade’s side over the matters in contention.

C&S members believed that God sent the following messages through Lawrence in a vision at that prayer retreat:

Do not believe in sweet talk. Do not desist from praying night and day against dangers that threaten the body. Do not look for help from people; only look up to God who only can empower. Carry the cross now and be ready to tell Moses Orimolade and all the members the truth because you can only dwell with the Lord by being always truthful.

The divine messages were communicated to Orimolade, but he chose not to heed them. Therefore, another rift developed within the *Aladura* Movement. The seven members of the Praying Band, the spiritual leadership group of the original C&S Movement departed from Orimolade and formed the Holy Cherubim and Seraphim Aladura Movement (HC&SAM) under the leadership and chairmanship of Davies with Lawrence as the Spiritual Leader. However, this breakaway body could not cohere for long. Another split occurred which finally separated Lawrence from the stump of Orimolade’s group led by Davies.[5]

Lawrence eventually became discouraged and disenchanted because the messages he uttered were ignored and rejected by some members. He said that people preferred to turn to fads or fashion. In Lawrence’s view, the leaders of the movement had abandoned holiness and adopted rather shameful and unchristian practices. He contended that the love of the flesh had taken the place of the spiritual and the holy.

Founding of the Holy Flock of Christ Organization

Because of these deviations, Lawrence decided to call on God for direction. On February 20, 1932, he went on his annual prayer tour to Olorunkole Hill, near Ibadan, Oyo State. He considered two main prayer points: that all nations should be born again spiritually and that spiritual worship should not become a thing of the past in the world. As soon as he returned from the tour, he went straight to Ibeju beach in Lagos and went on a Lenten fast for forty days during the Lent of 1932.

On his return from Ibeju beach, he went to the HC&SAM to deliver

his message after the Wednesday service on April 13, 1932. His message was that the Lord wanted him to disassociate himself from the HC&SAM. He was direct, absolute, and determined. Many people became despondent and sad when they heard his message. As might be expected, some people condemned him, as a “selfish and self-centered man” who was not satisfied with his position. Others declared that they would go with him wherever he went. Three leaders from the HC&SAM decided to follow him: C. B. Olumuyiwa, D. K. Idowu and J. O. Adefope. Many of the prominent members of the HC&SAM decided to follow Lawrence because they saw the Spirit of God on him. They saw him as an instrument in the “vineyard of God.” This was the beginning of the Holy Flock of Christ (HFC) with its emphasis on mystery and the leading of the Spirit. Lawrence described the founding of the HFC in his first report:

We prayed for 36 days. On the dawn of May 15, 1932, after the Morning Prayer, 321 names were voluntarily added to the register of this Holy Flock of Christ. In the evening prayer meeting, the Almighty God surrounded us with His rainbow. Two women went into labor in the morning and three christening/naming ceremonies were performed. In the morning service of May 15, 1932, the name of this organization was given from above as HOLY FLOCK OF CHRIST. The glory sign appeared on children, adult males and females. The children’s and females’ glory sign was so much. Forty days after the Pentecost day, the liturgy, rules and regulations to be used in this organization were given to us from above, which we are using now presently in the Flock.

The Lagos Branch of the HFC met in the houses of the four former leaders of the HC&SAM who joined Lawrence’s group. It was necessary to ensure that the first branch was solidly founded and healthy before venturing out to form others. Saturday night vigil was particularly popular. When members of the HC&SAM saw the glory of God being manifested in the HFC, they sought to join. On August 13, 1941, their request was formally brought to Lawrence. He responded that for their request to be considered, they had to agree to some corrections in doctrines in some areas, such as vision, prayers and praying, dreams and dreamers, and the roles of spiritual workers within the HC&SAM. The HC&SAM did not formally reply to the corrected points, so Lawrence did not give them a formal reply. He insisted that the message of God was that the HFC should remain separate and distinct from any *Aladura* movement. Mixing with or combining with other churches was out of the question.

With the HFC formally established, from April 13 to May 14, 1932, daily prayer was held in Lawrence's house at 49 Kakawa Street focusing on three prayer points: all souls should become spiritually born-again, true spiritual worship should not become a thing of the past in the four corners of the world, and Jesus Christ should breathe on worshippers afresh according to His promises in the Gospel. Spiritually-minded people made it a point of duty to attend the daily morning prayers and reported visible blessings of the Holy Spirit in their daily businesses and affairs. The prayers culminated in the name "Holy Flock of Christ" being revealed and affirmed for the new organization at the morning service that was held in Campus Square. After the service, everybody present retired to Lawrence's house to register their names in the new HFC Organization. The spiritual message to all members that evening was that the HFC would be made a covenant to the world if all members were spiritually and heavenly minded.

Growth of the HFC

On August 29, 1932, Lawrence, in his capacity as Spiritual Head of the HFC organization, took the group on their first evangelical tour. The tour started with Mr. J. O. Osinbowale, and their first port of call was Epe. From there, they moved through Atijere to Ibadan, Fiditi, and southward to Odogbolu and Okitipupa, all in the Yoruba-speaking southwest region of Nigeria. Later he was joined on the tour by some lady members: Emily Ogunlana, Elizabeth Adefope, E. O. Olumuyiwa, Joanna Talabi and Dorcas Talabi. Witnesses attested to great works of healing, ministrations and exhortation. The report of the first evangelical tour was prepared when the team returned to Lagos on October 17, 1932. It was read by Mr. Osinbowale to the joy and satisfaction of all members.

It was during the first evangelical tour that Senior Spiritual Elder C. B. Olumuyiwa started the process of purchasing a permanent site to house the HFC. Everyone searched earnestly and eventually the group felt that the Lord was leading them to 45 Okepopo Street in the city of Lagos. Meanwhile, on May 21, 1933, Lawrence, in his capacity as the Spiritual Leader of the organization, appointed officers and trustees.[6] Then on September 29, 1933, all the officers and members of the HFC moved to the new location of their "House of Prayer," which remains the headquarters of the organization.

With a permanent "House of Prayer" and a fairly extensive work of leading and administering the growing work of the HFC, on February 13,

1934, Lawrence decided to move into the HFC's permanent accommodation where he became a full-time minister, evangelist, and church planter. For almost ten years he lived there under various conditions. In total, he planted fourteen churches in the Lagos, Ijebu, and Oyo areas. His followers described him as being steadfast in prayer and fasting, courageous, loving, generous, and hospitable. They say he exemplified what Christian leadership should be—self-abandoning, righteous, empathetic and self-sacrificing. Through his actions, he became a father for the fatherless, hope for the hopeless, help for the helpless, and a provider of jobs for the jobless. Lawrence was always calm, cool, serene, calculating, unimpulsive, gentle, humble, forgiving, and patient. He was described as a giver who never counted the cost of giving. Above all, the members of the HFC remember him as a prayer warrior and a shepherd who administered the church well.

The HFC after Lawrence

Lawrence moved back to his own house at 18 Oke Suna Street, Lagos, on October 11, 1943 when his illness became terminal. He died on October 19, 1943. Lawrence was survived by two children, a son and a daughter, both now deceased. His son was called Babatunde or "Tunde" and his daughter Oluyinka or "Yinka." Both took an active interest in the affairs of the HFC and married in the church. Tunde rose up in the hierarchy to become Senior Spiritual Elder. His children survived him. Only two of these children played notable roles in the affairs of the HFC. Tunde's late son was in the HFC's musical band and a member of the choir. Yinka's children are very involved in HFC affairs. Femi is an Elder and he pastors the HFC's branch in Maryland, USA. He is well known among pastors and evangelists in the United States. Yinka's daughter, Feyi, is a visioner and a worker among women in one of the branches in Lagos State.

Between 1943 and 2015, the leadership of the HFC rested on the shoulders of seven different men in succession. After Lawrence, Prophet Emmanuel Adeseye was the *Alakoso* or "Coordinator" from 1943 to 1946. He was followed by Spiritual Elder D. K. Idowu, Coordinator (1946-1955); Spiritual Leader Most Ven. Joseph Olukoya Adefope (1955-1977); Ven. S. I. Ogunfowora, Coordinator, (1979-1980); Most. Ven. Moses O. Osisanya (1981-1983); Spiritual Leader Most Ven. Joseph Oluremi Osinbowale (1984-2012); and Most. Ven. Josiah Adetola Adefope (2013-2015).

The two Adefopes who have led the church are brothers of the same parentage. The older Adefope, Joseph O., who left Orimolade with

Lawrence, was much older in age than his brother Josiah. The older Adefope was a powerful preacher and visioner. With good administrative skills and a sense of humor, he was able to pilot the affairs of the HFC for decades. The present Spiritual Leader, Josiah Adetola Adefope, is a “chip off the old block.” A seasoned civil servant like his brother, he has a good hold on the HFC. To his credit, he delegates his duties to able assistants but oversees quite effectively the general administration of the church. Venerable J. O. Babalola is the General-Secretary.

At the time of the writing of this biography in January 2015, the HFC, founded by Lawrence, remains a strong and spiritually dynamic but low-key praying and worshipping band organization, headquartered at 45 Okepopo Street, Lagos. There are about seventy-five branches worldwide, mainly in Ogun, Osun, Lagos, Kogi and Edo States of Nigeria. There are also branches in Philadelphia and Maryland in the United States of America and in Israel. The HFC is a blend between modern day Anglican /Methodist /Baptist liturgy and style and modern Pentecostal churches. The main thing the HFC has in common with other *Aladura* congregations is the wearing of white garments in most, not all, of their services. Members do not put on the white garments in their various homes and wear them all day. Instead they put them on during services and prayer meetings. It is a church that believes in prophecy and members see visions, dreams and hear voices which they relay to the other members of the church.

The HFC is over 80 years old today. Within the *Aladura* movement, it is a distinguished member of the Organization of African Independent Churches (AICs).

Notes

1. Brief biography of Orimolade. Orimolade was born about 1879 in Ikare, Akoko in present day Ondo State. He was a prince but also born crippled in one leg, because of the circumstances surrounding his birth. It is believed that before he started his ministry, he received a vision that instructed him to bathe in the water of a nearby flowing stream. He obeyed and partially recovered from his disability, but he limped throughout the rest of his life.

Although Christianity was new in the area during Orimolade’s formative years, he was one of the early converts and adopted the name “Moses” on his baptism into the Methodist Church. As he grew up, he became more prayerful, spending much time in the study of the Bible. In

1916 he set out from his native town of Ikare preaching the gospel in and around Yorubaland, the Middle Belt, and the Northern part of Nigeria. Between 1916 and 1924, the record indicates that Orimolade visited Kaba, Ilorin, Kaduna, Jos, Zaria and Kano.

Orimolade returned to Lagos in 1924 and decided to settle in Lagos where he stayed with the sexton of Holy Trinity Church, Ebute-Ero. He was soon known for his powerful prayers and healing sessions, for which he was nicknamed *Baba Aladura*, "the Praying Father." As he went around preaching, he did not initially attempt to establish a church but he directed converts to the church of their choice nearest to them. That notwithstanding, people filed up to his home for prayers.

Christianah Abiodun Akinsowon, later nicknamed "Captain" Christianah Abiodun Emmanuel, joined Orimolade's team in 1925 after she had been in trance for some days, and was restored after Orimolade prayed for her. Soon afterwards, they developed a strong father and daughter relationship in their work. Orimolade was forty-six years old and Christianah Abiodun was eighteen. It was a powerful combination. Scores of people came for prayers and divine guidance through visions and predictions given by Abiodun while Orimolade conducted healing sessions and performed miracles. The group increased by leaps and bounds and, after several revelations, adopted the name Cherubim and Seraphim (C&S) Society. The name of the church was registered in November 1925 with seventy disciples, as they were called, forty-five men and twenty-five women. It was symbolic of the seventy disciples that Jesus sent out in twos in the Bible.

2. In order to satisfy the yearnings for both work and recognition, Orimolade constituted another group of elders and called them "Patriarchs." While the Praying Band was in charge of spiritual matters the Patriarchs took charge of administration. Other groups followed. But one that was very significant was "the Army of Salvation" composed of loyal and energetic young men who performed security and safety functions as guards and ushers on important occasions and processions.

3. Acts 6.

4. The seven members of the Praying Band were: Lawrence, E. A. Davies (father of lawyer H. Q. Davies), H. A. Phillips, C. B. Olumuyiwa, D. K. Idowu, J. A. Phillips, and J. O. Adefope who joined Lawrence when he founded the Holy Flock of Christ (HFC).

5. Orimolade was heartbroken and shattered by the factionalization and break-up of the C&S Movement. He withdrew from Lagos and moved initially to Osholake Street in Ebute-Metta, and later to Ojokoro near Agege

where he died on October 19, 1933.

6. Lawrence appointed the following officials within the HFC: Mr. C. B. Olumuyiwa, Senior Spiritual Elder (SSE); D. K Idowu, J. O Adefope, L. I. Gabriel, J. Ayo-Coker, and M. A. Thomas, Spiritual Elders (SE); T. A. Oyesanya, E. O. Ayodele, S. I. Ogunfowora, J. O. Fakeye, M. I. Oje, F. A. Okutade, M. O Osisanya, J. O Onagoruwa, G. A. Martins, and J. O. Richards, Superintendents; E. A. Macaulay, J. A. Abodunrin, James. O. Taiwo, Theophilus Akin, P. A. Odutade, S. M. Odusanya, and S. S. Aiyelabola, Assistant Superintendents; Samuel S. Cdumbu, Deacon; Ms. Sarian Fiyakola Taiwo, Deaconess.

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Oral interview with Spiritual Leader Most Venerable J. A. Adefope. Holy Flock of Christ, Lagos, January 8, 2015.

Oral interview with Venerable J. O. Babalola, General-Secretary of Holy Flock of Christ, Lagos, January 9, 2015.

Dominic Ignatius Ekandem
1917 to 1995
Catholic Church

Dominic Ignatius Ekandem was born into the Royal family of Chief (*Okuku*) and hailed Ekandem from the patrilineal group of Nnung Adia Nkpo. He was born on June 23, 1917, in Obio Ibiono village in the present Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria, a year before the First World War ended and the year of the beginning of the Russian Revolution. Obio Ibiono was small, remote and rural, and so far from the center of activities in Nigeria at that time, that not even *Obong* (Chief) Ekandem, Dominic Ekandem's father, knew that there was a World War going on, or what the Russian Revolution was about, if he had even heard of it. On June 23, 1917, what was important to him was that he had a second baby son, born to him by his second wife. Ekandem's mother was Nnwa Ibong Umana Essien. She was the second daughter of Ibong Umana Essien of Ibiono Ibom clan, the same clan as her husband *Obong* Ekandem. In the clan, each family had its own deity apart from the supreme deity, Abasi. The deity of Nnung Adia Nkpo was *Ekandem*, and this was the origin of Ekandem's name. In addition to the village deity, the common deity to all Ibibios is Idiong.

Obong Ekandem, Dominic's father, was not only a village head, he was also the custodian of the royal shrine and the Chief Priest of the village as well as acting as the judge and arbitrator in quarrels and disputes within the village. He was also one of the eminent kingmakers of the Ibiono Ibom clan and the only chief entitled to bestow the royal crown on the king. No paramount ruler of Ibiono can be recognized except by being crowned by the *Okuku* of Obio Ibiono, who at that time was Chief Ekandem. As Chief Priest, Chief Ekandem would pray to the deities and offer sacrifices for himself, his family, and the village, especially during the new yam festivals. Young Dominic participated in these rituals and began to be initiated into the services of the supernatural deities. Recalling the experience, Dominic said:

Early in my life my father associated me with pagan worship. I often carried the victims (fowl, or goat, water and mashed yam) to be offered in sacrifice to the gods, invoked to bless and protect us and help us to grow as virtuous children and useful citizens. I often shared the remains of the food of the gods with my other brothers and felt very hopeful of future good results.[1]

There is a common saying among the Ibibios that it is only the child whom the father loves who is initiated into the worship of *Idiong*. Dominic Ekandem was born into royalty and consequently to induction into the veneration of *Idiong*. By the time he was born, his father Etuk Ubo Ekandem was the *Obong* of Obio Ibiono, a rank that came with power, respect and dignity. As the chief priest, he worshipped and made animal sacrifices to the gods, which the members of his family were expected to partake in eating. As a royal chief, *Obong* Ekandem had thirty-two wives in accordance with the traditional practice of his time. Failure to have such a great number of wives was construed as a sign either of weakness, illness or abject poverty. Strength, virility and relative wealth were among the qualities necessary for selection as an *Okuku* of Obio Ibiono.

When the young Ekandem was born, his father nicknamed him Tom (derived from TomTom) because of his attractive appearance. Tom developed a very close tie with his mother, always playing around his mother's hut. Early in his life and development Tom, or Dominic as he came to be known, enjoyed the care of both father and mother, both of whom were descended from royalty. However, he did not have his mother's care for long, as she died when he was only eleven years old. Dominic's mother was a leader in her own right. She was a hardworking farmer and a petty trader with a proven reputation for honesty and fairness: qualities that helped her as a female leader of the village.

Dominic's father, Chief Ekandem, was friendly not only with the white colonial masters, but also with slave traders. He was an authority in decision-making between his people and the colonialists and an intermediary between his people and the Colonial District Officer (CDO). As a result of his steadfastness and commitment to duty, he was appointed a warrant chief. This added to his status and caused the CDO to entrust him with the care and administration of prisoners in the Ibiono Ibom area. Dominic said that his father's authority and position as a chief, as well as the number of his wives and children (about thirty), and his work as a court clerk, messenger and interpreter, conferred special status upon him. He earned enormous respect, admiration and prestige. He evidently had some understanding of English, since he acted as an interpreter, despite his lack of a formal western education. As a chief, he had a big compound to accommodate his wives and children and several large farms where they and his servants worked to produce crops to feed the entire household.

Chief Ekandem wanted his son to have a good education and training, and so he sent him to live with teachers who had a good

reputation for learning and discipline. In the early 1920s, he lived with teachers in various villages including Odu Abak, Midim, and Ikot Ofun, before returning to his home village to formally start school in 1924. Chief Ekandem was a disciplinarian and he wanted to bring his children up with strict discipline as well as love and protection. Dominic's first guardian was the one who made the biggest impression: Mr Akpan Philip Inwang. Chief Ekandem placed Dominic in his custody, and he took Dominic to school in the nearby town of Itu. Being mentored by different guardians in various places meant that Dominic did not mix very closely with people at home, but it stood him in good stead for "CKC (Christ the King College) Onitsha, where he was educated among almost complete strangers." [2]

An important point to note here is that the present Assumptions Catholic Church in Obio Ibiono owes a lot to Philip Inwang, who could arguably be called the patriarch of Obio Ibiono Catholic Church. Prior to the arrival of Catholicism in 1921 with Fr. Biechy, who offered the first Holy Mass, Obio Ibiono was dominated by the Qua Iboe Church. Qua Iboe was the name adopted by the mix of the Presbyterian Missionary Society and the indigenous African Church, which appealed very much to the people of the area. As the village chief, Chief Ekandem had introduced the Qua Iboe Church into the village. Although he was not a convert, he allowed his children to attend the church programs, although they did not attend as members since they were not baptized. However, a quarrel broke out between Chief Ekandem and the Qua Iboe Church when they learned that he planned to have himself and his sons initiated into the pagan cult of Ubio Ekong. This was meant for warriors who proved their mettle by presenting the skull of an opponent they had defeated in combat. Chief Ekandem was adamant and withdrew his children from the church. He proceeded with the initiation ceremonies and, to further spite the Qua Iboe Church, he went to Anua Catholic Mission, negotiated with the resident priest and introduced the Catholic denomination into his village. Dominic Ekandem later recalled, "Thus my father was responsible for my conversion: first as a Protestant and later as a Catholic. I doubt if he himself knew the difference between the two." [3]

In 1928, Dominic completed his Standard I education at St. Peter's Primary School at Ikot Mbang and then transferred to St. Joseph's Primary School at Anua to continue his education. Early in the 1920s, Fr. Biechy had begun his missionary advance into the then remote and little-known land of Obio Ibiono. As was his habit, Chief Ekandem struck up a friendship with the Irish missionaries and Fr. Biechy was partly responsible for the furthering

Dominic's education. Some years later, when he was a bishop, Dominic recollected:

The friendly relationship between my father and the missionaries appeared to have prepared the way for my vocation. When the time came, some years afterwards, and I manifested my desire to study for the priesthood, I had no difficulty in obtaining my father's consent even though he was still a pagan.[4]

This was in spite of the fact that Dominic's priesthood came at a cost to his father.

In 1928, when Dominic was only eleven years old, he suffered a great tragedy. He had hardly settled down to his studies in Anua when his mother died, Dominic having been brought home the day before by his father. After the mourning and burial, Dominic went back to school, struggling not to let the death of his mother affect his education. He was able to turn the pain of his tragedy into a determination to pursue academic excellence. His only regret later was that his mother was not baptized before she died.

In 1932 Dominic passed his First School-Leaving Certificate of Education, also known as Standard Six Examination. His performance enabled him to continue his further education.

Dominic's upbringing at St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Anua, not only provided him with an education but also contributed to his spiritual formation. This caused him to reconsider his initiation into the cults and African Traditional Religion and led to his conversion to a new religion. On June 23, 1925, at the age of eight, Dominic was baptized by Rev. Fr. J. Hanson and was given the name Dominic. From then on he no longer went by the names Tom or Udo: only Dominic. To baptize means to immerse or plunge and Dominic took the plunge and became immersed as a new creature in Christ. In 1926, at St. Peter's Parish, Ibiono, he received his first Holy Communion. It is somewhat surprising that Chief Ekandem not only gave consent to the Christianization of his children but positively encouraged them to embrace the Catholic faith, which he held in high esteem. In 1928 Dominic was confirmed and adopted the name Ignatius.

Priesthood beckoned and Dominic answered the call in 1933. He entered the seminary in Onitsha to study for the Sacred Priesthood. His environment was unfamiliar and he was not among his tribesmen, but he found himself among friends. He later reminisced:

I was the only student from my tribe in the Junior Seminary at Onitsha when I started off, but fortunately, I found myself among

sincerely genuine friends, companions, devoted brothers and deeply religious Seminarians. The thought of giving up and running home quickly deserted me. Nobody attempted to quarrel with me. I noticed no discrimination. Small and young as I was, nobody attempted to enslave or boss over me.[5]

The priests and teachers were equally supportive and helpful during those difficult days away from home. Rev. Fr. Leo William Brolly, who doubled as the Principal of CKC and the Rector of the Seminary, took care of Dominic in a fatherly way. The seminary turned out to be a happy home and congenial environment for him. It was his experience in the seminary that gave him the idea for a national seminary of Nigeria later on.

In 1938, after the Junior Seminary course, Dominic was sent to do probation (field work) in Calabar, so as to have field experience for the priesthood. He taught for three years at Sacred Heart College in Calabar and was also involved in liturgical services. In 1941, he began his Senior Seminary training. His family background was a stumbling block in the way of his becoming ordained, but his father's sacrifice and a dispensation from Pope Pius XII succeeded in securing his ordination as a priest on December 7, 1947. He was ordained by Archbishop Charles Henry of Onitsha in Ifuho Church, which later became his Cathedral Church.

Dominic's path to ordination was an uphill climb. In the view of the expatriate missionaries, the son of a chief and priest of African Traditional Religion (with thirty-two wives) could not be ordained as a Roman Catholic priest. If he was going to teach the truth and convince people to follow the message of Christ and that of the Church, he must first of all convince his father. It was a difficult but not impossible task, and Dominic set out to do it. One of the greatest achievements of his life, he believed, was getting his father baptized in the Catholic Church. This took place in 1945, in Anua. Chief Ekandem was treated no differently from the other people being baptized. There was no special regard for his age or position, as "we are all equal in the presence of God." Chief Ekandem submitted to the sacrament not only for the salvation of his soul but also due to the honor and respect he had for his son: it was believed that it would be improper for the son of a pagan to become a priest. Only after he had taken just one of his remaining twenty-eight wives as his "legal" wife, was Chief Ekandem baptized and named Paul. The old man died a committed Catholic in 1955, barely a year after seeing his son consecrated as the first African Catholic bishop in Nigeria and, indeed, in Anglophone West Africa. Chief Ekandem paid a high price for his son to become a priest. In addition to Chief Ekandem's sacrifice

for his son, a letter of dispensation was required from Rome. This only came two years after Chief Ekandem's baptism, in 1947. Chief Ekandem had nevertheless remained hopeful that Dominic would become a priest.

After ordination, Rev. Fr. Dominic Ekandem blessed his father and spent a few months in Ifuho Mission. Subsequently he was appointed to assist Rev. Fr. Murray, who was sent to start a new parish in Afaha Obong. The grounding Ekandem had received at home through the guardianship of Philip and others, his time at the Junior Seminary, probation and his time at the Senior Seminary all combined to provide the tools he needed to be a successful assistant, well fit to work with Rev. Fr. Murray. Looking back on his life and work as assistant priest in Afaha Obong, he reminisced:

I was very fortunate to have Rev. Fr. Joe Murray, now a missionary in Kenya, as my superior. Having realized that I was, by the grace of God, a priest like himself, he overlooked all other differences between us and started to prepare me by word and example for the task ahead. He ordered. I obeyed. We agreed not to disagree.[6]

The working conditions in Afaha Obong were, to say the least, not the best, but both Fr. Murray and Fr. Ekandem bore it well. Fr. Murray, expressing his appreciation for Ekandem, maintained that: "All Nigerian Catholics of goodwill accept or reject a priest for what he is – a good priest, another Christ, or a bad priest, a false Christ – not because of his color, race or tribe, notions which would destroy the unity and universality of the Church." [7]

Ekandem was initiated into pastoral ministry and evangelization through the long-lasting education he received from Murray, who was an inspiring teacher. They had a "harmony comparable to that resulting from the combination of white and black on the keyboard of a harmonium or piano." Murray and Ekandem provided pastoral and missionary care to the people of Afaha Obong which had outstations at Nto Edino, Nko, Urua Akpan, Okon, Ukana, Urua Iyang, Midim and Obong. Murray led the way in pastoral and evangelical visits to the outstations. This was known as "trekking" and he bore its hardships with great sacrifice and equanimity. Over the years, Ekandem came to appreciate the value of trekking, especially as an opportunity to make contact between priests and parishioners and to discuss and share in people's problems. It was while living and working with missionaries like Murray that Ekandem cultivated the spirit and skills that enabled him to be successful in his pastoral ministry.

In the early days of 1952, Bishop Moynagh appointed Ekandem as parish priest of Abak. As a pastor, certain aspects of the life of the parish

were of special interest and concern to Ekandem. First was the welfare of the members of his parish. He made visits and went trekking to ensure that through contact, consultation, discussion and encouragement a caring community could be established. His second particular concern was evangelization. For Ekandem, it was not enough for the faithful to know their catechism and support the Church: they must also evangelize and win converts. He preached and encouraged evangelization through personal contact, both in groups and through individual home visits and connections. He came to realize that the task was made lighter and more fruitful when he worked with and through pious societies in the Church. He therefore organized the laity of his parish into various pious societies under the patronage of particular saints. He entrusted them with specific responsibilities and duties while trekking or making pastoral visits: one of these duties was the construction of rest houses for teachers and priests. He drastically reduced the confusion and difficulties which often attended pastoral visits by making the pious societies maintain these rest houses and provide food and cooking utensils for the use of visiting priests and teachers. This meant that the priests and teachers could travel lightly and accomplish more pastorally. The Legion of Mary was one of the pious societies established by Ekandem at Afaha Obong mission station. The Legion was introduced into Africa by Bishop Moynagh at Ifuho in 1932 as the first *Presidium* of the Legion in the continent. Evangelization was a mission shared by all the societies and as a result, the Church grew.

Ekandem also gave special attention to the issue of Christian marriage. He encouraged as many couples as possible to undergo the Sacrament of Marriage. He made it a point of duty to see that Christian couples received adequate preparation prior to their wedding. He established marriage preparation quarters in the central station of the parish for would-be couples, mostly women, who came for a period of about three months. The future brides were instructed in home economics and in the Christian faith, especially as it pertained to motherhood and being a wife. The marriage quarters served as a school of Christian doctrine with a special emphasis on Christian marriage and family life. Instruction was provided by expert teachers with relevant experience. Ekandem helped couples resolve the problems preventing them from getting married such as the incomplete payment of a dowry. He would contact the parents and plead for the wedding to go ahead. Ekandem succeeded in getting many marriages blessed and solemnized, thereby increasing the number of Christian families in the parish and in the vicariate. Bishop Moynagh

commended his efforts in this regard.

The third issue that concerned Ekandem was the spirituality of the laity, especially with regard to the Sacrament of Penance, corporal works of mercy, and generosity to the Church as demonstrated through Sunday collections. To encourage the spirituality of his parishioners, he introduced the First Friday and First Sunday devotions and made them important activities of the parish. In his pastoral ministry he also gave special attention to the training of catechists and teachers. There were few priests, and pastoral needs were great so the assistance of catechists and teachers was indispensable in spreading the Word. In Ekandem's assessment, the catechists were the greatest and most important group of pastoral agents and leaders, after the priests. These catechists and teachers were generally men of intelligence, industry and integrity, who taught not only in words but also through their exemplary Christian lifestyles.

Ekandem had always admired the quality of "taking the initiative," which he found in most missionaries he associated with. He took on this virtue and utilized it in his pastoral ministry. This led to another issue that caught his especial attention. When serving as a priest in Abak, he saw to the development of a junior seminary for the vicariate of Calabar. He was convinced that it was an essential part of his duty to recruit and train candidates for the priesthood. As early as 1948, the seminary started out of Holy Family College, where a special group of students who showed interest in the priesthood were "set aside" and lodged in a separate cottage within the college compound. Fr. Michael Hays, the principal of the college, was dissatisfied with this arrangement and he spoke out against it until Ekandem completely separated the seminarians from those pursuing secular education. With the approval of Bishop Moynagh, Ekandem put up some structures at Afaha Obong. By the end of 1952 the seminary was firmly established there – a place where, according to Ekandem, the Catholics had shown great faith, commitment and a positive disposition towards the Church. Thus, Queen of Apostle Junior Seminary was born, and Ekandem was the seminary's first rector. Through donations, Ekandem was able to mobilize the resources to build and sustain the seminary.

Ekandem achieved all this in the first six years of his pastoral ministry. He worked with committed men and women, and his ministry was successful. He also had the support and encouragement of a man of God in Bishop J. Moynagh who was consecrated Bishop and Vicar Apostolic of Calabar in the year Ekandem was ordained.

In 1950, Rome made Calabar a diocese and made His Lordship the

Most Rev. J. Moynagh its first bishop. He set out to organize and built this vast diocese. He built schools, hospitals and development centers. He opened convents, established parishes and trained leaders for both the Church and the state. The continent of Africa owes its first contact with the Legion of Mary to Bishop Moynagh. He was a man of vision, foresight, high intelligence, and intellect: a great shepherd. He also labored relentlessly for the indigenous priests. He sent many of them, including Ekandem, on special visits abroad.

In 1954 Moynagh gave modern Anglo-West Africa its first indigenous Catholic bishop: His Lordship the Most Rev. Bishop D. I. Ekandem. That year, the diocese of Ikot Ekpene was created and Ekandem appointed to administer it. Earlier, in 1953, Moynagh had acted on his vision for the good of the church in Africa, and had asked Rome to appoint Ekandem as his auxiliary bishop. He wanted to emphasize that the church in Nigeria must grow with its own indigenous bishops. Rome agreed, and so Ekandem was the first indigenous Catholic bishop in Nigeria, and in West Africa.

This happened seven years after Ekandem's ordination. He was preaching at Essene Parish Church for teachers in the Calabar diocese when a priest arrived with a letter for him from Bishop Moynagh. He finished preaching, then took the letter and excused himself. Once out of sight, he opened the letter and read its contents. He was visibly agitated but managed to maintain his composure. He returned to his audience and told them that he had been asked to report to Calabar upon receipt of the letter. He did not tell them why, but reassured them that there was no cause for anxiety. He assured them that all would be well and that it was all for good. And all was well. In the letter, Moynagh informed Ekandem that Pope Pius XII had appointed him to the office of bishop, and that he would be the Auxiliary Bishop of Calabar. About two weeks before the consecration, Ekandem withdrew to an undisclosed mission house for a period of quiet prayer, reflection and rest. He needed prayerful silence and solitude to grasp the full meaning and implication of his new responsibility.

Coinciding with the 50th anniversary of the Catholic Church in Calabar, Ekandem was consecrated as bishop on May 23, 1954. Moynagh's efforts had paid off with the elevation of Ekandem to the bishopric, the youngest in the Catholic Church and a shining example and inspiration to all other Nigerian priests.

The consecration of Ekandem as the auxiliary bishop of Calabar was a milestone for the Catholic Church in Nigeria. The event was designed

to coincide with the Golden Jubilee of the advent of Roman Catholicism in Calabar, and was held at the Sacred Heart Cathedral Church, Calabar. Since it was the first time in the modern era that an African bishop was being consecrated in West Africa, it was an international event, which drew people from all walks of life, from both Africa and Europe. Apart from Ekandem himself, the two happiest men on that occasion were his father, Chief Paul Ekandem, and Bishop James Moynagh, who had brought it about.

Ekandem saw his episcopal elevation as a cross, and he so he chose the cross with a crown of thorns as his episcopal insignia and his motto was *in the Cross is Salvation*. After the various rounds of receptions and celebrations, he settled back down to his pastoral ministry. He exercised it in three principal capacities: as auxiliary bishop of Calabar diocese, as the vicar general of Calabar diocese, and as the father-in-charge of St. Joseph's parish, Anua. For the next nine years, Anua was his home and pastoral base until in 1963 he became bishop of that ministry.

How did he perform as a bishop? The indigenization process that was taking place at the political level in 1950s Nigeria did not bypass the church. Speaking about the night of his ordination to the priesthood, Ekandem commented: "In College I used to wonder what I would be... sometimes, I thought I'd like to be a doctor to heal my people's ills... sometimes a lawyer to plead their cause... or maybe an architect to plan and build for them... now I am all these: I am a Priest." [8] He was a priest who saw his life and ministry as a means through which God would uplift his people in their spiritual and temporal welfare. He believed and insisted on catholicity in its entirety:

Those who have chosen to be Catholics want nothing but Catholicism in its entirety. We Nigerians do not like adulteration, whether of food or of drinks. Hence, the sincere Catholics do not want and do not need a watered-down Catholicism either by ignoring healthy principles or in the name of adaptation. Nigeria needs the Faith, the whole Faith and nothing but the Faith. [9] He believed that the Church was a sort of commonwealth, belonging equally to all, since in the theological and traditional language of the Church, she is described as universal. The Church belongs to every nation equally and therefore, although she could be described as a national church, she would be without national vices, corruption or limitations. For Ekandem, the Church in Nigeria must be every inch Catholic and rigorously so. On the other hand, it must be Nigerian. In his view, it was up to Catholic leaders - theologians and philosophers - to bring about necessary and useful

adaptations in order to make the Church relevant to Nigeria and Nigerians. To promote the incarnation of the Church in Nigeria, Ekandem urged and invited Nigerian philosophers and theologians to bring their scholarship to bear upon the Nigerian situation.

Ekandem believed that the viability and self-reliance of the incarnated church depended upon indigenous priests whose training must be given a national tone. In a letter dated August 27, 1956, he wrote to the Apostolic Delegate, the Most Rev. J. R. Knox, appealing for a common Majority Seminary for Nigerian students. These are some of the reasons he gave:

1. Languages and customs of another tribe can easily be picked up by students in a common institute. Such knowledge would prove most useful to priests, who at different periods of their ministry are bound to meet men from almost every tribe in Nigeria.
2. It will help to lessen strife and misunderstandings among Nigerian tribes.
3. The cry of every true and selfless Nigerian today is "one Nigeria." The training of her priests in a common institute will help to create and stabilize that union.
4. Where priests and vocations are few, frequent communications between the various Dioceses may bring encouragement and perhaps relief. It may even be more economical to do so.[10]

After a delay caused by the Nigerian civil war, the National Seminary of St. Paul ultimately took off. As of March 2015, the Seminary has produced 267 priests, three of whom have become bishops. Priests of the order of the Missionary Society of St. Paul are serving as missionaries in eighteen countries in Africa, Europe, North America and the Caribbean.

Ekandem's philosophy of education was founded on the mission given to the Church by Christ to "teach all nations" and directed by Vatican II. In a sermon on April 11, 1971, in Port-Harcourt, he held that education consists essentially in preparing a person for what they must be and what they must do here below, in order to obtain the sublime end for which they were created. The Church is in favor not only of character training and religious formation but also of the study of secular subjects because education brings fulfillment and appreciation of the beauty of God's creation. Ekandem emphasized that Catholics should support and promote education everywhere. Parents have the primary rights and are primarily responsible for the

education of their children: those rights and responsibilities come to the family from the Creator and they can neither be surrendered nor infringed by any power on Earth. However, the state also has definite duties towards education: parental and state efforts must be complementary. The Church must not be uninvolved in general education but also accept its grave obligation to see to the moral and religious education of all her children – boys and girls – equally.

Modeling his life and work on his mentor, Moynagh, Ekandem further developed existing secondary schools like Holy Family College, Abak, St. Frances, Ikot Ataku, Regina Coeli, Essene, St. Vincent, Oti Oron, St. Columbus, Ikwen, Cornelia Connelly, Uyo, St. Augustine, Urua Inyang, and Holy Child Teachers' Training College, Ifuho. Ekandem consolidated these and also established Holy Trinity School, Mbiakong, St. Kizito, Adiasim, and Adiaha Obong Secondary School, Uyo. He also established Loreto Girls Juniorate at Afaha Obong for nurturing and training indigenous woman in vocational and religious work as a counterpart to Queen of Apostles Seminary, which he had founded earlier.

In 1954, Bishop Ekandem led the founding of the Federation of Catholic Teachers' Association. The purpose was to enhance the quality of teaching and improve the welfare and well-being of teachers. It was to unite teachers in a spirit of charity so that they would improve themselves and help one another as architects and builders of a Christian Nation. Ekandem surmounted all obstacles to establish the Association.

In the area of health and social services, Ekandem encouraged the building of health units in villages which were far away from hospitals. Dispensaries and maternity units were built throughout his diocese. In addition to this, he was the proprietor of two hospitals: St. Mary's hospital, Urua Akpan, Ikot Ekpene; and Mercy Hospital, Abak. It is pertinent to mention that these hospitals and health units were very useful during the civil war. Not only did they provide healthcare, but they also served as refugee centers. In economic and social services Ekandem made the joys, hopes, grief and anxieties of the poor his own, in accordance with the statement of Vatican II.

He built a civic center in Ikot Ekpene with departments for domestic science, marriage guidance, vocational training, adult education, typing training, agriculture, industry and manufacturing; a

cooperative unit and a place for children with special needs. After the civil war, he founded the Holy Child Children's Home for orphans and the destitute.

He promoted African culture in two ways: by positively encouraging and promoting the good elements in the culture and condemning the bad. He encouraged the revival of culture in the seminary and sponsored research into African names in Christian initiations. This resulted in a book: *Annang, Efik, Ibibio Personal Names – A Cultural Study 1974.*"[11]

It deserves mentioning that when Ekandem became the Bishop of Ikot Ekpene in 1963, he faced the challenges of the new Diocese stoically and successfully. His participation in the Second Vatican Council in 1965 was the experience of a lifetime. According to Ekandem it was a transformative event and he believed that there was hardly anybody who was in Rome for the Council who went home unaffected.

By the time Ekandem returned to Nigeria, the politico-military event which was to have impact on all aspects of Nigerian life was smoldering. As the crisis, which had started on January 15, 1966, was moving towards breaking point, the Catholic bishops of Nigeria urged caution and moderation. However, it seems the bishops were not able to work together in unison and so their episcopal efforts for peace and a joint statement were ineffectual. Some Catholic bishops' delegations were sent to the Federal and regional centers. However, the eminent delegation sent to Ojukwu in Enugu, (including Ekandem) met a brick wall, as Ojukwu was poised for war. Ekandem was disheartened that Ojukwu, who was a Catholic, did not listen to his "spiritual fathers." Incidentally, Ekandem was out of the country when the shooting war broke out on July 6, 1967 and he could only return home through Cameroon. Apparently, some Biafran soldiers watched him closely when he returned. The war taxed his charity, generosity and kindness to their limits, but he never gave up on his amity.

Happily, the war came to an end and rehabilitation, reconciliation and reconstruction began in earnest. Ekandem remained passionately committed to his flock and to all those who were in need throughout the crisis of the civil war. With other clergymen he worked tenaciously for peace, which unfortunately did not come about until the war had run its full course. The treatment of south-eastern seminarians in Igboland after the civil war disconcerted

Ekandem and the other bishops from his area. This led to the establishment of Bigard Memorial Seminary in Ikot Ekpene on December 5, 1976. Ekandem commanded the respect of his clergymen because of the way he treated them, and also because he had seniority by virtue of his age and his vocational status. After the civil war, Ekandem became the Apostolic Administrator of Port-Harcourt diocese. He held this position from 1970 to 1973.

Rome officially announced the elevation of Dominic Ekandem to the cardinalate at noon on April 27, 1976. The news was communicated to the new cardinal the following day in a congratulatory letter from Monsignor D. Causero, the acting Apostolic Pro-Nuncio in Nigeria. Thus, Ekandem became the first Nigerian bishop to be made a cardinal. Cardinals of the Holy Roman Catholic Church constitute the senate or supreme council of the Church for the Holy Father, the Pope, and assist him as his chief counselors and helpers in governing the Church. From 1917, when the Code of Canon Law was promulgated, to be made a cardinal a person had to be a priest and, according to Canon 232, he had to be one of "outstanding learning, piety, judgment and ability." There is no fixed number for cardinals, but it is the prerogative of the Pope to select those on whom he wants to confer the dignity of a cardinal. When a pope dies or resigns, cardinals have the privilege of electing his replacement.

Cardinal Ekandem's response to his appointment was both humble and instructive:

For me this is a moment made possible only by Almighty God, our Heavenly Father through our Holy Father Pope Paul. I give thanks to God for the great honor bestowed on my country. For myself, I can only repeat that I am a Catholic Priest. This is what is really important. Whatever honor may be attached to that priesthood in my humble person, I accept it on the solemn understanding that I was ordained a priest of God to minister to the people, and if necessary, to die for the people.[12]

He called for prayers and characteristically declared "nine days of fasting and prayer with jubilation." All Nigerians appreciated this great honor done to a worthy compatriot.

Those of us in government were overjoyed and we congratulated the new cardinal, celebrating with him and describing him as a great Nigerian who made us proud. The entry of a Nigerian into the highest governing body of the Church confirmed and consolidated Ekandem's belief

in the catholicity of the Church while maintaining and sustaining its relevance for Nigeria. His Eminence Dominic Cardinal Ekandem had always been both a particular and a universal person. His elevation was an encouragement to continue being both rigorously African and rigorously Catholic. He fulfilled both roles. As an experienced priest, missionary and patriot, Ekandem counseled young missionaries to be happy with their place in the priesthood of Christ, and not to waste time worrying or arguing over money and material wealth. He adjured them to go out to their mission fields as ambassadors of Christ, bearing in mind that as Nigerians, they were also ambassadors of their homeland, Nigeria.

Ekandem was the president of the National Episcopal Conference of Nigeria for six years, beginning in 1973. His successor, Archbishop Arinze, had this to say about his leadership: "Dominic Cardinal Ekandem was gentle, friendly, quiet, dependable, persevering and disciplined. He was encouraging in his leadership style." [13]

Ekandem was elected the first president of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) in his absence on August 27, 1976, and he nurtured that institution. His peers in the Catholic Bishops Conference were universally positive and commendatory in their opinions on his leadership style and his achievements. Although they had periods of disagreement, he managed to resolve them.

Two events concerning Rome, apart from Vatican II, had a tremendous impact on Ekandem. On August 6, 1978, Pope Paul VI died. As was customary for a cardinal, Ekandem joined the conclave to select the new pope. Not only was he among the electorate, he was also a possible candidate, as are all cardinals. It was historic for Ekandem, and for Nigeria. The second event was the visit of Pope John Paul II to Nigeria in February, 1982. As the most senior clergyman, Ekandem had a pivotal role to play in the Pope's visit. In his welcome address, Ekandem expressed his confidence and faith in the anticipated blessings of the Pontiff:

Your coming is a great consolation for us, your flock. It satisfies the longing desire of all, since we know you have come to bless us, our nation, our people, our government, rulers in their various categories, missionaries, their collaborators, and all those who have been waiting with anxious expectation for your august arrival. All will be spiritually enriched in many ways. [14]

In his homily, the Pope referred to the first encounter of early missionaries with Nigeria and the generous and open-minded reception given to them.

With the creation of the new Federal Capital Territory of Abuja in

1976, Ekandem spearheaded the establishment of Abuja as a separate ecclesiastical jurisdiction. To his surprise, he was appointed to the new ecclesiastical territory in 1989. A man of foresight, he immediately relocated to Suleja. That was three years before the Federal Government officially moved to Abuja. With the appointment, Ekandem graciously cut his umbilical cord with Ikot Ekpene. Bishop Etukudoh was subsequently appointed to be the Bishop of Ikot Ekpene in 1988, resolving the problem of succession. Ekandem laid the foundation of the See of Abuja and remained in charge of the archdiocese of Abuja until he retired in 1992. Three years later in Garki, Abuja, on November 24, 1995, Dominic Cardinal Ekandem died. He was buried on December 2, 1995.

Dominic Cardinal Ekandem has been variously described as a pastor without equal, a true conservative nationalist, and a shepherd among shepherds, whose unquestioning obedience to constituted authority led some clergymen to nickname him, "Rome has spoken; no more arguments."

Edidiong Ekefre encapsulated the qualities of Ekandem in this eulogy:

His goodness and virtues have been interred with his bones.

He was a *primus per excellence*

He was the first residential Bishop of Ikot Ekpene Diocese

He was the first Apostolic Administrator of Port-Harcourt

He was the first Cardinal in English-speaking West Africa

He was the first President of the Association of Episcopal Conference of Anglophone West Africa

He was the first Superior and Bishop of Abuja

He was the first President of Christian Association of Nigeria

He was the first Nigerian Cardinal to qualify as a candidate for the Papacy

He was an originator *par excellence*

He was the founder of the Catholic Women's Organization

He was the originator of the Catholic Teachers' Association

The originator of the Association of Catholic Graduates, *Lux Catholica*

The originator of the Missionary Society of St. Paul, Abuja

He was the originator of many schools, hospitals and hospice homes.

In life, Ekandem was what he wanted to be, as a priest in the sacred service of God, and in the spiritual and temporal service of humanity.[15]

Notes

1. Cosmas K. O. Nwosuh, *Cardinal Dominic Ekandem and the Growth of the Catholic Church in Nigeria*, (Iperu Remo: Ambassador Publishing of the Missionary Society of St. Paul, 2012), 16.
2. Conflation of an interview with Dr. Gabriel Ekandem, (of the University of Uyo) and Ekandem, D. Cardinal, *The Church in the Rise of Nigeria*, (Aba: Cynako Int. Press, 1974).
3. Conflation of an interview with Dr. Gabriel Ekandem,(of the University of Uyo) and Cosmas K. O. Nwosuh, *Cardinal Dominic Ekandem and the Growth of the Catholic Church in Nigeria*, (Iperu Remo: Ambassador Publishing of the Missionary Society of St. Paul, 2012).
4. Edidiong Ekefre, *A Testament of Light – The Life and Times of Dominic Cardinal Ekandem*, (Ikeja: May Five Media Ltd, 2013), and Cosmas K. O. Nwosuh, *Cardinal Dominic Ekandem and the Growth of the Catholic Church in Nigeria*, (Iperu Remo: Ambassador Publishing of the Missionary Society of St. Paul, 2012), 18.
5. Fr. U. E. Umoren, *His Eminence Dominic Cardinal Ekandem, 1917-1976: First Nigerian Cardinal*, (Aba: Cynako International Press, 1976), 23. See also Nwosu, V.A., “The Growth of the Catholic Church in Onitsha Ecclesiastical province” in Makozi A.O. and Afolabi Ojo G. J (eds.) *The History of the Catholic Church in Nigeria*.
6. See Ekandem, Dominic Cardinal, *True Spiritual Leadership, A Vital Contribution to Nation-Building*, (Ikot Ekene: De Paul Printing Press, 1976) and particularly, Fr. U. E. Umoren, *His Eminence Dominic Cardinal Ekandem, 1917-1976*, (Aba: Cynako International Press, 1976), 23.
7. See Akpan Godwin, *Memoirs of a Pioneer Missionary*, (Iperu Remo: Ambassador Publishing of the Missionary Society of St. Paul, 2001). See also, Fr. U. E. Umoren, *His Eminence Dominic Cardinal Ekandem*, 23.
8. Fr. U. E. Umoren, *His Eminence Dominic Cardinal Ekandem, 1917-1976*, 23. See also Conolly Dermt, “Making Nigeria Great: Dominic Cardinal Ekandem (1917- 1997)” in *Africa*. July-Aug 1996, 14-16.
9. Edidiong Ekefre, *A Testament of Light – The Life and Times of Dominic Cardinal Ekandem*, (Ikeja: May Five Media Ltd, 2013), and Umoren,34.
10. See Ekandem, Dominic Cardinal. *True Spiritual Leadership*. Also, Fr. U. E. Umoren,35.

11. Umoren, 41.
12. See Ekandem, *True Spiritual Leadership*, and Edidiong Ekefre, *A Testament of Light – The Life and Times of Dominic Cardinal Ekandem*.
13. Nwosuh, 365.
14. See Edidiong Ekefre, *A Testament of Light – The Life and Times of Dominic Cardinal Ekandem*, and Nwosuh, 367.
15. See Umoren, and Nwosuh, 367.

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- Interview conducted with Dr. Gabriel Ekandem, University of Uyo, March 2, 2015.

Recent Print and Digital Resources Related to Christianity in Africa

Aderibigbe, Gbola and Carolyn M. Jones Medine. *Contemporary Perspectives on Religions in Africa and the African Diaspora*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015. \$67.22 - \$100.00. ISBN-13: 978-1137500519

Contemporary Perspectives on Religions in Africa and the African Diaspora explores African derived religions in a globalized world. The volume focuses on the continent, on African identity in globalization, and on African religion in cultural change. (from the cover).

Essays include: Religious traditions in Africa: an overview of origins, basic beliefs and practices / Ibigbolade S. Aderibigbe. Modern trends in the teaching of African religion in the 21st century: conceptual decolonization / Rotimi Williams Omotoye. African religion in 21st century and the search for philosophical relevance / Francis Adewale Olajide. African religious movements and pentecostalism: the model of Ijo-Orunmila, Ato / Oguntola Oye-Laguda. African religion and health care delivery in Africa / Kelvin Onongha. Some ethical reflections on African indigenous religion and Christianity / Rotimi Williams Omotoye. Christianity in contemporary African religious space / Pius Oyeniran Abioje. Islam in contemporary African society / R. Ibrahim Adebayo. African derived religions in diaspora: an overview / M. I. Oguntoyinbo-Atere. Art and music in African derived diaspora religions / Adeoluwa Okunade. Sojourner Truth, hybrid identity, and multi-vocal text / Carolyn M. Jones Medine. Womanist spirituality: legacies of freedom / Melanie L. Harris. Initiation and possession in Santería, Candomblé, and Voodoo / Umesh Patel. Mythology of rituals and sacrifices in African-derived diaspora religions / Osei A. Mensah. Socio-religious agencies of Santería religions in the United States of America / Robert Y. Owusu. Modern legal issues in the practice of African diaspora religions / Danielle Boaz. African religious systems in the context of world religions: challenges for the American scholars / Maha Marouan. African initiated churches and African immigrants in the United States: a model in the Redeemed Christian Church of God, North America (RCCGNA) / Ibigbolade Aderibigbe. Islamic communities in the United States: issues of religion and political identity / Yushau Sodiq.

Bongmba, Elias Kifon (editor). *Routledge Companion to Christianity in Africa*. New York : Routledge-Taylor & Francis, 2016. Hardcover \$205.00. ISBN-13: 978-0415705028

The Routledge Companion to Christianity in Africa offers a multi-disciplinary analysis of the Christian tradition across the African continent and throughout a long historical span. The volume offers historical and thematic essays tracing the introduction of Christianity in Africa, as well as its growth, developments, and effects, including the lived experience of African Christians. Individual chapters address the themes of Christianity and gender, the development of African-initiated churches, the growth of Pentecostalism, and the influence of Christianity on issues of sexuality, music, and public health. This comprehensive volume will serve as a valuable overview and reference work for students and researchers worldwide. (from the cover)

Heaney, Christopher. *From Historical to Critical Post-Colonial Theology: The Contribution of John S. Mbiti and Jesse N.K. Mugambi*. African Christian Studies Series; 9. Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2016. Paperback \$29.76 ISBN-13: 978-162564781

What is post-colonial theology? How does it relate to theology that emerged in historically colonial situations? These are two questions that get to the heart of Robert S. Heaney's work as he considers the extent to which theologians predating the emergence of post-colonial theology might be considered as precursors to this theological movement. Heaney argues that the work of innovative theologians John S. Mbiti and Jesse N. K. Mugambi, important in their own right, must now also be considered in relation to the continued emergence of post-colonial theology. When this is done, fresh perspectives on both the nature of post-colonial theology and contextual theology emerge. Through a sympathetic and critical reading of Mbiti and Mugambi, Heaney offers a series of constructive moves that counter the ongoing temptation toward acontextualism that continues to haunt theology both in the North and in the South. (from the cover)

West, Gerald O. *The Stolen Bible: From Tool of Imperialism to African Icon*. Biblical interpretation series. Boston: Brill, 2016. Hardback \$184.00. ISBN 9004322752

The Stolen Bible tells the story of how Southern Africans have interacted with the Bible from its arrival in Dutch imperial ships in the mid-1600s through to contemporary post-apartheid South Africa. *The Stolen*

Bible emphasizes African agency and distinguishes between African receptions of the Bible and African receptions of missionary-colonial Christianity. Through a series of detailed historical, geographical, and hermeneutical case-studies the book analyses Southern African receptions of the Bible, including the earliest African encounters with the Bible, the translation of the Bible into an African language, the appropriation of the Bible by African Independent Churches, the use of the Bible in the Black liberation struggle, and the ways in which the Bible is embodied in the lives of ordinary Africans. (from the cover)

Recent Dissertations:

“Empowered belonging through identity transformation: Assemblies of God church planting narratives from West Africa since 1990.”

By *Jester, Jerry Stephen*, Ph.D., **Assemblies of God Theological Seminary**, 2014, 344; 3683273

Abstract

From 1914 to 1990, Assemblies of God (AG) church planting efforts in Africa produced approximately ten thousand local churches and two million adherents. Since 1990, African Assemblies of God (AAG) churches emphasized ambitious church planting initiatives resulting in the addition of approximately fifty-four thousand local churches and fourteen million believers. This study examines the narratives of AAG church planters in West Africa to ascertain those factors influencing their church planting perceptions and activities in relation to Pentecostal missiology, the sociocultural context, leadership, and organizational development.

In order to discover those factors influencing church multiplication and growth, interview narratives of twelve leaders and fifty-one AAG church planters in West Africa were examined, delimited to the Anglophone context of Nigeria and the Francophone context of Togo. Using a qualitative data collection and analysis process known as grounded theory methodology, I discovered those factors that influence the perceptions and activities of church planters in the contexts of the study.

The findings show that church planters experience transformation in Christ and seek the transformation of their past, represented in the village, by planting new churches of transformed converts. This is a process of “backwarding” the Gospel to the village. These efforts lead to a renewal of the African self in a search for true belonging, enabling redemption of the African past and reclamation of the African future through Christ in Spirit

empowerment. Church planting results in the local AAG church being a place of belonging and belonging to a place. This is described as ecclesiastical belonging, dimensionalized accordingly as proximal church planting, accessible church planting, and assimilation church planting. Belonging in these contexts is experiential through Gospel proclamation in Spirit empowerment to meet African aspirations to experience the divine. Additionally, belonging is relational, for the local AAG belongs to a global Pentecostal faith community.

Available full-text:

<http://pqdtopen.proquest.com/pubnum/3683273.html>

“The lived experience of exile and Christianity for the Lost Boys from Sudan: A transcendental-phenomenological study.”

By *Petronis, Lisa Anne*, Ph.D., **Pacifica Graduate Institute**, 2009, 794; 3486446

Abstract (Summary)

This study illuminates the essence of exile and shared Christianity for the Lost Boys from Sudan. Interviews and a phenomenological research method were used to deepen the lived experience of 8 Lost Boys from Sudan. The study vividly describes the literal and symbolic journey taken by the Lost Boys over a 15- to 23-year period. The study captures the essence of their exile and provides rich descriptions of the many dimensions of their amazing ordeal, including physical and emotional suffering, tragedy, trauma, spirituality, faith, redemption, and resiliency. This study expands knowledge in the field of clinical psychology related to the topics of coping with violence and aggression, genocide, the migrant experience, and the psychology of religion, as it investigates traits contributing to adaptation and personal growth in the face of trauma, including changes in the subjective structures of time, space, causality, relationship to self, relationship to others, relationship to God, materiality, and bodily concerns.

As young children, the Lost Boys walked hundreds of miles and endured unimaginable suffering. This study gives an in-depth description of their profound journey that informs the reader of the lived experience of their exile. As the first and only depth-psychological study of this group from Southern Sudan, it produces informative results regarding the presence of spirituality alongside suffering, and the power of such a combination. The study shows that, in the face of profound trauma, one is capable of evolving emotionally and spiritually. The Boys’ narratives paint a heartbreaking and heartwarming tale about the power of the human spirit.

Available full-text:

<http://pqdtopen.proquest.com/pubnum/3486446.html>

Frances (Beth) Restrick, Book Notes Editor
Head, African Studies Library, Boston University

WILLIAM WADÉ HARRIS

PROPHET-ÉVANGELIST OF WEST AFRICA

An Original Biography from the *Dictionary of African
Christian Biography* by Gabriel Leonard Allen,
DACB Advisory Council Member, with preface by the
author

Journal of African Christian Biography
Volume 1, Number 5 (Oct. 2016)

The *Journal of African Christian Biography* was launched in 2016 to complement and make stories from the on-line *Dictionary of African Christian Biography* (www.DACB.org) more readily accessible and immediately useful in African congregations and classrooms.

Published in monthly installments with an annual cumulative volume available on line, the *JACB* is intended to promote the research, publication, and use of African Christian biography within Africa by serving as an academically credible but publically accessible source of information on Christianity across the continent.

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**William Wadé Harris, Prophet-Evangelist of West Africa:
His Life, Message, Praxis, Heritage, and Legacy**

***Dictionary of African Christian Biography* (www.DACB.org)
Journal of African Christian Biography
Volume 1, Number 5 (Oct. 2016)**

This issue of the *Journal of African Christian Biography* focuses on William Wadé Harris (c. 1860 to 1929), a tireless evangelist who walked barefoot and preached Jesus Christ in the streets, churches, and sacred groves of numerous littoral settlements in Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, the Gold Coast (now Ghana), and Sierra Leone.

Accompanied by female choral singers—Helen Valentine and Mary Pioka, initially, and later Grace Tani (Thannie) and others—Harris declared the *kerygma* or the proclamation of the message of Jesus Christ to nonbelievers throughout West Africa, reaching perhaps as many as 200,000 people. The extraordinary success of his successive evangelization journeys can at least partially be explained by his locally-contextualized methods (using song, rhythm, and dance, healing, exorcism, and demonstrations of power) and his message, which boiled down the gospel to a few simple elements that were easy to remember, to teach, and to practice. He sealed and marked thousands with Trinitarian baptism. Harris considered the voice of the Angel Gabriel his constant companion for guidance and a personification of the Holy Spirit.

On Sunday, July 27, 1913, Harris embarked on an inaugural evangelical missionary journey that took him from Liberia to Ghana. If we were to trace his route on a modern map of Africa, his journey would have led him, on foot, through the present southern coastlands of the administrative regions of Côte d'Ivoire: Bas Sassandra, Sud Bandama, Lagunes, Agneby and Sud Comoe, and the western region of Ghana. Three more evangelical missionary journeys followed (1917-1918, 1919, and 1921) taking him from Liberia to Sierra Leone and back. Within Harris' operational zone, defined as the 1,000-km littoral corridor of the four nations mentioned above, he planted Christian communities everywhere—more densely located in Côte d'Ivoire and the Gold Coast, and

sparsely distributed within Sierra Leone and his home country of Liberia.

Harris preached his message and non-conventional praxis in a pluralistic religious context composed of dominant manifestations of African Traditional Religions (ATR), peaceful folk Islam occasionally displaced by sometimes violent reformist Islam, and a sparse but significant mix of competitive denominational Christianity.

By the start of World War I (1914 to 1918), Harris had made his reputation and was pulling in huge crowds day and night. ATR priests and priestesses were being defeated in spiritual contests held within their home shrines. Roman Catholic priests and Wesleyan Methodist ministers were expressing foreboding. More ominously, the French colonial authorities were plotting and nervously following his every move. Lieutenant Governor Gabriel Angoulvant of the colony of Côte d'Ivoire, under the direct authority of the overall administrator of French West Africa, William Ponty of Sénégal, agreed to stop Harris. Between December 1914 and July 1915, the authorities pounced: Harris and his women singers were arrested in Côte d'Ivoire, imprisoned, and severely beaten before being expelled to Liberia.

In 1926, a decade after Harris' expulsion, in an International Missionary Council that met in Le Zoute, Belgium, Edwin Smith recognized Harris as "Africa's most successful evangelist." This acknowledgment heightened global interest in the importance and impact of this new movement. It was soon discovered that there was none other like it. In the absence of external monetary assistance, evangelism had flourished in West Africa. In their report titled *Religion and Civilization in West Africa: A Missionary Survey of French, Spanish and Portuguese West Africa and Liberia (1931)*, authors J. J. Cooksey and Alexander McLeish, two of the earliest foreign researchers on the scene, affirmed that Harris' mission was indeed "different from the conventional work of Christian missions," and that the man Harris "stood before the people, not as one sent by any society or backed by European prestige, but as 'a man sent from God' with a message for his people; and his people listened and obeyed" (p.65). It also became evident to many that Harris had broadcast a universal and ecumenical brand of Christianity which encouraged his converts to join any nearby Traditional Western

Mission Church (TWMC). His generosity resulted in a huge windfall of catechumens in Roman Catholic churches, Methodist churches, Anglican churches, and many other Protestant churches. Those who were unwilling to join these TWMCs, or who were perhaps refused access to them, flocked to Harrist churches, Twelve Apostles Churches, and their several self-propagated daughter churches. The edifices of the Harris movement were do-it-yourself mud-blocks with thatched-roofed *abatons* (local huts). Gradually, these were continually upgraded into modern structures through member-led community projects. Invariably, the edifices were located within domestic compounds and built purposely for community worship and catechesis. A vast number of churches resulted. Church leadership was ensured by a locally-appointed body of twelve apostles and one preacher for the Sunday service.

The success of the Harris movement to operate and self-propagate, independently and with amazing efficacy, attracted envy in some quarters. Soon, an unholy alliance developed between the French authorities and TWMCs, all bent on frustrating the progress of the Harris movement. Many *abaton* communities were subjected to persecution, dismemberment, and TWMC “grabbing” activities. Some *abatons* were indeed pulled down completely while others were burned to the ground. In his book, *Harris et la Chrétienté en Côte d’Ivoire* (1989), E. Amos Djoro, has provided sample data about the situation among the Ebrie ethnic group around Abidjan in 1925. Out of 19 Harrist congregations, eleven (55%) became Methodist, seven (35%) turned Roman Catholic, and only two (10%) remained Harrist (p.55). Cooksey and McLeish reported that by 1931, at least 160 Harrist churches in Côte d’Ivoire and the Gold Coast alone had opted to or were forced to join the Wesleyan Mission (p. 66). Nevertheless, it is impossible to comprehend the full scale of the Harris movement in those early years, we can only speculate.

The following biography is based on a 2007-2008 research project that sought to retrace the footsteps of Harris and his ministry team, taking note of what he said and did (Life, Message and Praxis). The work has attempted to identify relics of his mission (Heritage and Legacy) in the form of liturgy, preaching, symbols, sacraments, and testimonies of deliverance and healing. The study

also proposes to construct a systematic Harrist theology from its findings.

Some Harrist communities mark July 27 as an annual Feast Day – *la Fête du Déluge* (Feast of the Flood). It was just over a century ago, on Sunday July 27, 1913, that Harris set out on that epic inaugural evangelical missionary journey (1913-1915). It was a definitive response to the three-year-old “trance-visitation experience” of May-June 1910 in a cell at Grafton Prison, Liberia. In that jail, Harris experienced a call, a conversion, an anointing, a commissioning, and a personalized imperative *lek-leka* (“you go”) to preach Jesus Christ and to baptize anywhere the Angel Gabriel led him. God gave Harris a rich harvest of abundant lives in Jesus Christ. It is this celebration of new life in Jesus Christ, and not the death of Harris, which is celebrated on July 27 each year. Someday, perhaps, July 27 will be included in the festivals of the *depositum fidei* in the calendar of world Christianity. This would be an appropriate global Christian response in recognition of the works of this enigmatic man of God who has been called the Black Elijah, Prophet Harris, Apostle Harris, and even Saint Harris!

Gabriel Leonard Allen
Banjul, the Gambia

William Wadé Harris

c. 1860 to 1929

**Harrist Churches / Twelve Apostle Churches / African
Independent Churches
Côte d'Ivoire / Ghana / Liberia / Sierra Leone**

William Wadé Harris [1], also known as the Black Elijah, Prophet Harris, or simply the Prophet, was a trailblazer and a new kind of religious personage on the African scene, the first independent African Christian prophet.

Harris was born around 1860 in the village of Half-Graway or Glogbale, in the Glebo Territory of Maryland County of the then-Commonwealth of Liberia. He was born into an interfaith family. His mother, Youde Sie, was a Methodist and his father, Poede Wadé, a follower of the African Traditional Religion (ATR) of the Glebo ethnic group. As a child, Harris was introduced early into his father's religion and culture. When civil war threatened between the G'debo United Kingdom and the colonist settlers, in Maryland County in 1873, Harris' maternal uncle and Methodist minister, the Reverend John C. Lowrie, took Harris and his elder brother away to Nimo Country of the Sinoe District where they were rigorously groomed and transformed at home, school, and church. They were taught to read and write in both English and G'debo, taught Christian faith doctrines, and grounded in the catechetical formations of Methodist life and practice. Harris also trained to become a stone mason.

Upon returning to the Cape Palmas area, however, Poede Wadé withdrew Harris from this Christian setting and re-introduced him into Glebo ATR practice and culture, including the tradition of going to sea. Harris reported that he went to sea as a common laborer on four occasions. Upon his final return in 1882, Harris received a call to preach on the occasion of a sermon by the Reverend E. W. Thompson of the Methodist Episcopal Church (MEC) at Cape Palmas. Harris admitted that it was the first time he converted. Shortly thereafter, he was lured by brighter financial prospects at a neighboring Protestant Episcopal Church (PEC) under settler Bishop Samuel Ferguson (1885-1912). There Harris received the sacrament of confirmation and became a full member.

Three years later (c.1885 to 1886) he married Rose Bedo Wlede Farr in a church solemnized matrimony.

As a young man, Harris sought new religious identities. First, he studied Russelite or Jehovah's Witness tracts which emphasized millennialism and Christian eschatology. Second, Harris was attracted to the anti-colonialist position of his Glebo family member, the Reverend S. W. Seton. He was a Russelite ordained minister of the PEC, who became a politician, an education commissioner, and a judge. Seton founded an Independent African Church called The African Evangelical Church of Christ (AECC) which allowed polygamy. Third, Harris was interested in a West-Indian born Presbyterian minister, writer, and academic by the name of Rev. Dr. Edward Blyden. Blyden became a politician and a diplomat who advocated that African Christianity show respect for the polygamous family and felt that faith ought to be preached based on the model of Islam with African culture serving as a background.

Trained by the PEC to be a schoolmaster, a catechist, an evangelist, and an ecclesiastical "knight in armor," Harris fought several battles for both tribe and church, including that of the decisive Battle of Cavalla (1893 to 1896). By the end of 1907, Harris was at the zenith of a golden period. He was, simultaneously, the master of the boarding school, a PEC appointed lay reader, a Glebo court interpreter, and the secretary of the Glebo peoples. He earned at least \$400 per year. However, he was implicated in the 1908 national unrest, and by June 1908, he had lost his two lucrative jobs as schoolmaster and court interpreter. Immediately afterwards, his license as a lay reader was also revoked.

Fuming, Harris replaced a Liberian flag with a Union Jack flag on a flagpole at Pудuke Beach on February 13, 1909, causing him to be accused of taking part in an abortive *coup d'état*. Harris was then arrested and tried for treason. Being found guilty, he received a two-year suspended sentence with fines. When civil war broke out again in the Cape Palmas area in January 1910 between the Nymowe–Glebo and the American-Liberian settlers, Harris was re-arrested and imprisoned at Graton Prison. Here, in May and June of 1910, he had a supernatural spiritual experience in the form of an almost indescribable "trance-visitation." It had a powerful effect on Harris. He broke-free, irrevocably, from Glebo ATR demon worship. A Christian interpretation of this "trance-visitation" is that Harris

received the spiritual light of prevenient grace; he was divinely operated upon and this gave him the experience of feeling right with God by receiving justifying grace. He was anointed, commissioned, and tasked with the cooperative sanctifying grace to spread the message of salvation in Jesus Christ through the preventive act of baptism.

On a Sunday July 27, 1913, three years after the “trance-visitation” experience, Harris embarked on his first evangelical missionary journey (1913-1915). Leaving Cape Palmas on foot, accompanied by two women chorus singers, Helen Valentine and Mary Pioka, he walked eastwards to the littoral lands of the Lagoons, through the Zana Kingdom up to the Ankobra River in Appolonia. At Assinie in the Zana Kingdom, former Tano priestess and converted Grace Tanie or Thannie joined the choral group. This mission had a powerful impact on the lives of some 200,000 people who converted. A new vibrant faith sprang up that created bonds of unity among people of different tribes and across colonial borders.

By August 1914, Harris and his expanded team retraced their steps to Côte d’Ivoire. At some point between January and April 1915, French colonial authorities resolved that as a precautionary measure they would arrest and deport Harris. They quietly escorted him back to his native Liberia, nearly three hundred miles (approximately five hundred kilometers) away, traveling over land and on river. He was forbidden to return to French soil. Within seventeen months, from 1913 to 1915, hundreds of Christian communities sprang up. Groups of men and women seeking God earnestly asked for Christian instruction. His principal effect was among the Kwa group of peoples in West Africa. [2] This inaugurated Harris’ public international ministry (c. 1913 to 1921). Three other international missionary journeys followed (1916, 1917, and 1921). However, the first of these journeys will suffice to give insight into Harris’ unique message, praxis, heritage, and legacy.

Harris’ Message: Torahic, Analogical and Christo-Eschatological

Torahic

A torahic message refers to matters pertaining to the Hebrew *Torah* either directly to the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-17) or indirectly to the six-hundred-plus Jewish Laws found within the *Torah*, or loosely to the whole Jewish Scriptures, a near-equivalent of the Christian Old Testament (OT). One Roman Catholic priest, the Reverend Fr. Joseph Gorju of Bingerville and missionary reporters Cooksey and McLeish have reported that Harris called for the abandonment of fetishes and idols (Exodus 20:3) and for belief in one unique God (Exodus 20:4).

Within Harris' operational zone, recent research has unearthed some additional teachings. Mathieu Sedji, a 20th to 21st century history teacher and choirmaster from Breffedon, relayed by memory an oral pronouncement which Harris first proclaimed at Louzoua around August-October of 1913:

*Brûlez les fétiches;
Chassez les démoniennes, les sorceries et les génies;
Allez à l'église les dimanches et ne partir pas aux champs!*

(Burn the fetishes;
Drive out from your midst demons, sorceries and genies;
Go to church on Sundays and do not go to (your) farms!)

In this torahic oral declaration, Harris urges the spiritual purification of the community and obedience to Sunday Sabbath-keeping for worship, learning Scriptures, hymns, songs, and prayers. Converts were to emulate and honor the Creator God who "blessed the Seventh Day (Sabbath) and made it holy" (Genesis 2:3).

Analogical

Harris' message was also said to be analogous (*ἀναλογος*) or "analogical in faith" (*analogia fidei*) to that of 9th c. B.C. prophet Elijah. These claims were tested in two real-life encounters. Marc Nga was an eyewitness of the Harris campaign through the Yaou-Bonoua Forest of the Aboures in December 1913. Harris challenged the priests and priestesses of the twin shrines, of the *Gbamanin du Yaou* (The Dwarf of Yaou Forest) and *Le Serpent à Bonoua qui vomit l'argent* (The Serpent in Bonoua which vomits money). Nga reported that Harris defeated the priests and priestesses on their own home-

turfs, convincing many that Harris' God was greater. Another eyewitness to these events was Jean Ekra de Bonoua, who with Marc Nga, were both baptized by Harris and became his disciples. Harris' preaching in the forests was analogous (*ἀναλογος*) to the Prophet Elijah's challenge posed to the 450 priests of Baal, the 400 priestesses of Asherah and the crowds: "How long will you waver between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him" (1 Kings 18:21). Harris also invited decision-making at the shrines. Just as God gave victory to Elijah, so he did to Harris over the priests and priestesses of the twin shrines (1 Kings 18:46).

Abaka Ernest Foli narrated a modern variant of an established Harris tradition concerning the burning of a ship at the port of Grand Bassam on a Sunday when people ignored his warnings. According to Abaka:

*Le deuxième miracle de Grand Bassam:
Un dimanche, les blancs travaillaient les noirs au bateau à (Grand)
Bassam.
Il n'était pas d'accord.
Il a prié sur le bateau,
Le bateau a brûlé.*

(The second miracle in Grand Bassam:
One Sunday, the whites recruited blacks to work a ship in
(Grand) Bassam.
He (Harris) did not agree.
He prayed on the ship,
The ship caught fire).

Disobedience led Harris to rain fire on the ship. In a case which was "analogical in faith" (*analogia fidei*). Prophet Elijah had ordered that fire to rain, twice, on the King Ahaziah's attacking troops (1 Kings 1:9-12) following a reprimand from Elijah.

Christo-eschatological

This is some evidence that, from time to time, Harris did broadcast a Christo-eschatological message. In October and November of 1914, after Harris' return from the Gold Coast, he settled at Kraffy, making it his headquarters. Thousands flocked to Kraffy from all directions, quietly, for fear of the colonial authorities. The traditional

elders of Kraffy were stunned by Harris' charisma and therefore enquired: "Are you the great spirit of whom they speak?" To which Harris pointedly responded in the negative, and then responded with clarity, "I am the man coming in the name of God, and I am going to baptize you in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and you will be a people of God." Harris repeated the universal baptismal formula (Matthew 28:18-20), where the "Son" refers to Christ himself.

A distinguished African Christian scholar, J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, has recently submitted that wherever Pentecostalism emerges the message of the *parousia* is preached. Asamoah-Gyadu further substantiated that Harris "promised deliverance, from a future judgment of fire and a time of peace, concord, brotherhood and well-being which was to come with the impending return of Jesus Christ to establish his kingdom." Several other Christo-eschatological messages have been reported during Harris' travels which affirmed the supremacy of Christ and conveyed apocalyptic warnings against disobedience.

Harris' Praxis: Evangelical, Situational-Dispensational, and Ecumenical-Participatory

Harris' first evangelical missionary journey (1913-1915) enabled three distinct and contingent components of his praxis to be systematized: the evangelical, the situational-dispensational, and the ecumenical-participatory. Shank's brilliant scenic narrative is an eye-opener to these habits:

They would enter a village playing their calabash rattles and singing, dressed in white, and would go to the chief of the village to explain their intent. Harris would then preach to the whole village, usually through an interpreter. He would invite them to abandon their "idols" and "fetishes", and worship the one true God who had brought salvation through his Son Jesus Christ. To those who destroyed their "fetishes" and were baptized, he promised deliverance from future judgment of fire and a time of peace, concord, brotherhood and well-being which has to come with the impending return of Jesus Christ to establish his kingdom. He taught the Ten Commandments of the Old Testament and the "Our Father" which Christ taught his disciples. He instructed them about keeping the Sabbath for worship, not

work, and encouraged them to pray in their own tongues, to praise God with their own music, changing the words. He often chose leaders, sometimes naming “twelve apostles”, who were to supervise the building of “chapels” from local materials. Sometimes they were told to await white men who would come with the Bible to teach them more. If there were missions in the area the people were told to go to those churches, whether Catholic or Protestant.

Evangelical Praxis

Upon entering a village, the chief was greeted first. The team’s mode of greeting was evangelical (gospel-related) in that Jesus Christ enjoins us to this habit as clearly spelled out in the Matthean text: “Whatever town or village you enter, search for some worthy person there and stay at his house until you leave. As you enter the home, give it your greeting” (Matthew 10:11-12; NIV).

Harris’ team expressed Christo-African greetings which endeared them to their hosts. Together with female choristers and the locally recruited male interpreter(s), they accompanied his preaching with singing, dancing, and the playing of calabashes. Harris declared the *kerygma* (κηρυγμα) in the mother-tongue of their hosts and never accepted any form of payment except for their hospitality. Harris always preceded his evangelism with moments of deliverance and healing. Local healers who became converted through Harris were taught to acknowledge Christ as the true source and giver of their medicinal, psychological, and pneumatological *charismata* (cf. 1 Corinthians 12:8). His evangelical style included *en masse* village repentance and baptisms, and evangelical conversions of priests and priestesses at their respective shrines. Harris’ evangelical praxis encouraged self-propagation. Many converts were allowed freedom to found new congregations or independent churches, as did Grace Tani of Assinie of Twelve Apostles Churches; and John Swatson of Aboisso of Christ Church Beyin churches.

Situational-Dispensational Praxis

Attire and marriage were situational-dispensational praxis items to Harris. The Harris team was always clad in white. White was, and is,

the color of the cassock of Christian priests. White was, and is, the color of the Mahomedan or Islamic sheikh. White was, and is, also the color of the African Traditional *Deyabo* priest in Greboland. And white was, and is, the color of the *Adjokuru* priests and priestesses of the Tano shrine of the Lagoons.

Marriage is the second component of interest. Harris entered into a monogamous solemnized matrimony with Rose Bodede Farr at the Protestant Episcopal Church (1885) in Liberia. This union produced six children and was only separated by death in May-June of 1910.

During his first evangelical missionary journey, he was accompanied by female choristers. Rumor had it that Harris had several wives. In an interview in 1926, Harris admitted that at Axim, he had six wives. Harris supported his polygamous situation with Scripture (Isaiah 4:1). His polygamy began with Helen Valentine and Mary Pioka; next there was Madame Harris Grace Thannie; third, there were three more unidentified wives at Apollonia; and finally, there was Letitia Williams of Freetown whom he married in about 1921. Harris viewed polygamy as an imperfect marriage dispensation which attracts neither a binding legalism nor an illegalism in Christianity (cf. Romans 2:1). On his return journey to Grand Lahou Kpanda, Abaka Ernest Foli reported that Harris released a marriage maxim there: "*Soyez juste, soyez equitable*" ("Be just. Be fair"). That is to say, with respect to either a monogamous or polygamous marriage, one should be guided by ethical righteousness.

Ecumenical-Participatory Praxis

One Sunday morning at Jacquville in about December 1913, Harris attended Mass at a Roman Catholic Church. It was the Reverend Father Moly, the celebrant, who told his story: "I saw him at Jacquville where he attended the parish mass with all his wives, accompanied by almost all the population. It is useless to say that the church was too small. Also at the end of the mass, he came to see me accompanied by the elders of the village, in order to decide to construct a more spacious church."

Harris had acquired proven skills as a master-builder. He built his own single-story family house at Spring Hill Station in

Liberia in c. 1890 and the Wolfe Memorial Chapel at Half-Graway in 1897. At Jacquerville, Harris invited an ecumenical family of worshippers to build a center of worship. Members of the Harrist movement volunteered to help construct or to enlarge church buildings.

Citing a spiritual habit, Adolphe Yotio Ndrin reported that at Kraffy, Harris ordered the implementation of mother-tongue liturgy and hermeneutics. Harris exhorted the crowds: “*Priez dans votre langue et chantez dans votre langue. Dieu va comprendre*” (“Pray in your language and sing in your language. God will understand.”). Harris reduced the Ten Commandments, the Lord’s Prayer, and some basic liturgy into the local dialect. The liturgy utilized indigenous tunes arranged to “castagnette” rhythm accompaniment and were made simple but “rich in prayer and interspersed with impromptu lyrics in their native tongue or in pidgin English (Creole/Krio/Aku) – the language in which they heard Harris preach and sing” according to Cooksey and McLeish.

Educational practices were reported by Cooksey and McLeish. As the little bamboo “do-it-yourself” churches (*abatons*) sprang up in the villages, Harris taught the new converts to choose twelve “apostles” to serve as leaders and manage the church affairs and a thirteen preacher who would lead worship services. Having choristers and a formidable network of selected translator-interpretors / clerks, they spread Harris’ message each in their own way. Since most were illiterate anyway, Harris advised that, wherever possible, they should be enrolled in the few schools around being set up by the Traditional Western Mission Churches (TWMCs) and the colonial authorities. At Jacquerville in Alladian territory, around December 1913, Harris released a popular educational maxim which Abaka Ernest Foli recollected by heart:

Mettez vos enfants à l'école! Ils viendront. Ils vous diront la vérité.
(...)
Je vous dirai la vérité qui est dans la Bible pour que
l'homme blanc et l'homme noir mangent à une même assiette, égal à
égal

(Send your children to school! They will come. They will tell you the truth. (...)
I tell you the truth which is contained in the Bible so that

the black man and the white man will eat in the same plate, as equals...)

Harris prepared the minds of his followers to welcome Christian missionaries, whatever their denominations, as teachers in their midst. Followers must learn to self-discover, and test the veracity of his claims in the Bible. Harris firmly believed that education would bring about equality between the white and black races.

Harris' Heritage

Liturgy

At the Temple de Gethsemane de la Mission Biblique Harriste No.1 Côte d'Ivoire de Grand Lahou Kpanda (hereafter referred to as the Temple de Gethsemane), the service liturgy represented an ecumenical composite of a rich ecclesiastical traditions compiled by Harris. The liturgist demonstrated Episcopalian precision in catechetical rubrics and order while the preaching had a Wesleyan vibrancy. There was a single lesson and a biblical exposition followed immediately thereafter. The choir emphasized the lessons learned through informal punctuations during the preaching. Hymns and the anthem were sung from memory in the home dialect of Avikam and under disciplined choirmaster control. The Psalm (Canticle) was sung in French. During the offertory, the elders, the choir and the congregation, in that order, recessed and processed with Avikam songs of thanksgiving, accompanied with choreographed dances. At the Temple de Gethsemane, one observed that the Harris' legacies of catechism, charismatic prayer, and singing habits have been retained.

At l'Eglise du Christ-Mission Harriste du Yaou (hereafter referred to as l'Eglise du Christ-Yaou), close to worship time, metal gongs were struck to call the faithful to worship. The choir, the congregation, and the "apostles" were all clad in white. The ladies wore white head gear as well. The *prédicateur-chef* (senior-preacher) and *prédicateur-auxiliaire* (assistant preacher) were each robed in a white kaftan-cassock with a low cross chain. Both were adorned with: "*carlotte blanche, britelle noire et voile noire*" (white turban, black stole and black cross bands). Their attire replicated that for which

Harris was renowned. The service liturgy was rich in prayer, catechetical affirmations, and hymn-singing, with menu change, punctuated by the ringing of the hand bell. Traditional songs were rendered by the choir and congregation throughout the service. Song and dance was accompanied by the infectious rhythm of the *castagnette*. Here, the charismatic chorale tradition of Helen Valentine, Mary Pioka and Grace Tani is alive and flourishing!

Worship at both the Temple de Gethsemane and at l'Eglise du Christ-Yaou were relatively brief, ranging from thirty minutes to about an hour. Both services were orderly, but not identical in form. Worship at the Temple de Gethsemane was found to be evangelical in emphasis while that of l'Eglise du Christ-Yaou could be described as neo-Pentecostal / charismatic. Despite their contrasting worship expressions, both had an almost identical order of service. The order of service of l'Eglise du Christ- Yaou is available. [3] In this typical order of service, four prayer registrations were noted: benediction (1), intercessory (4), the Lord's Prayer (5) and a closing prayer (11), in that order. There were also four types of songs: an opening (adoration) hymn (2), a sermon hymn (6), an anthem (9) and a recessional hymn (12). The reading of Scripture by the *prédicateur* (preacher) always preceded the sermon.

Unlike the regular liturgy of the two Harris churches mentioned above, the order of service within the three sister Twelve Apostles churches in Western Ghana varied significantly. Worship patterns differed from one church to the other. Generally, however, worship services were longer in the latter with between three to four hours being typical. The liturgy of Twelve Apostles Church-Upper Axim is available. [4] Notwithstanding the expressed variances, it is called a typical *Inkabomsom* (get-together) Service. This service has retained the habits of worship of its founder, Grace Tani, a Harris disciple. A number of points deserve attention. First, although three prayer registrations have been listed (1), (2) and (3), yet they tended to merge into each other. The opening prayer (3) never actually ends until the conclusion of the service. Second, the opening song (4) also continues up to the end of the service. Third, the healing session (5) occurs concurrently with the opening prayer (3) and opening song (4). An *Inkabomsom* is a spiritual journey which could last up to three hours or more.

Preaching

Preaching was always reduced to the language of the hearers, into Avikam in Grand Lahou Kpanda and into Aboure in Yaou. Preaching at these Harris churches was found to be Scripture-centered. The choir led the congregation in acknowledged parts of the message with groans and voiced responses.

In the Twelve Apostles churches, worship was shared between preachers and healers. The highpoint of Twelve Apostles liturgy is the healing session which is normally officiated by healers. Preaching, healing, and divination seem to happen simultaneously. The service stops only when the participants are exhausted. For both Harrist churches and Twelve Apostles churches, the common response to preaching is normally dramatized in acts of singing and dancing, recessing from and processing towards the sanctuary, and always in their home dialect. Each worshipper responds to preaching as he or she presents his or her physical gift offering at the sanctuary. The song or dance rises to a crescendo at presentation.

Deliverance and Healing

In his interaction with the men of Trefedji, one crucial point made about his exorcism is that Harris always led and directed the deliverance and healing process.

In most Twelve Apostles churches (“gardens”), deliverance and healing were the dominant activities of worship. However, as far as countering fetishism was concerned, the calabash was required at both spiritual and water healing. At the Twelve Apostles Church-Iyisakrom “garden,” the leading healer and prophetess Hagar Yarley was questioned about the source of her medicinal power. She declared that with “the help of Jesus Christ and by prayer, I am a healer of barren women, of impotent men, of the paralyzed and of psychiatric patients.” Prophetess Hagar Yarley was trained by her grandmother, Prophetess Hagar Efuah Ntsimah (Antwi) of Upper Axim. The latter was ordained by Grace Tani in Ankobra on March 6, 1949. As she conducted healing, Hagar Yarley said that she received “visions which reveal, through the Spirit, the herbs which are to be selected in the treatment of my patients.” It will be recalled

that Harris gave a similar response to the healers at Louzoua in October–November 1913.

At the Twelve Apostles Church–Half-Assini, the leader and healer in charge, Apostle Abraham Kaku, declared that he specialized in “psychiatric and mental cases, including the curing of drug addiction.” Apostle Kaku, like Harris, attributes his healing power to Christ Jesus.

At the Harriste Biblique No.1 Côte d’Ivoire (HBCI) of Grand Lahou Kpanda, Adolphe Yotio Ndrin declared that the use of the big calabash at routine church services was forbidden. Adolphe Yotio explained that the uses of “both the ‘big calabash’ and the ‘*castagnette*’ (small calabash gourd with net of beads) have no place at Temple de Gethsemane.” Exorcism, according to Adolphe Yotio, was a holy rite that should not be routinely abused. For him, in particular, the *castagnette*, invokes sad memories of a once demon-filled community which have since been cleansed by Harris and his assistants.

Symbolism

Four dominant liturgical symbols are associated with the Harris ministry: the Cup, the Bible, the Calabash and the Cane Cross. These symbols have assumed varying significance within the Harris churches studied.

At Twelve Apostles Church–Half-Assini, all four sacred symbols have pride of place. With regards to the Cup, Apostle Kaku asserted that as their prophet, he would gaze on the water. In so doing, he meditated and invoked mediation for the person or the assembly, as the case may be. The water in the Cup assumed a state of sanctification. The sanctified water was normally sprinkled on worshippers or consumed by select persons.

The second symbol of worship, the Bible, was normally held open throughout worship and healing ministry. It is either read to the audience or tapped on the head of baptismal candidates. It is a revered source of power. The very utterance of the words of the Bible provided healing to the sick and to hearers.

The third liturgical symbol is the Calabash. Apostle Kaku says that he still uses the Calabash in the Harris tradition, which is mainly to exorcise evil spirits.

Fourthly, there is the imposing Cane Cross. This symbol has dual functions at Twelve Apostles Church–Half-Assini. While it may be gazed upon by believers for inspiration and strength, it could also be thrust upon agents of the devil or Satan in order to rebuke evil spirits.

Sacraments

Mission Biblique Harriste No.1 Côte d'Ivoire de Grand Lahou Kpanda recognizes three ordinances, not sacraments, in its published constitution. These are the sacred rites of baptism, Eucharist, and marriage whose rubrics are, respectively, quite similar to that of the Methodist Service Book of the Methodist Church Great Britain.

Relatively new and unique sacred rites of the Harrist Movement have been described elsewhere.

- Sacrament of Baptism: [5]
This is a dominical sacred rite. There were deficiencies with respect to the original Harris tradition where cleansing, penance and washing (by water and spirit) were emphasized. In the current rites, neither is exorcisms practiced, nor is repentance insisted upon.
- Sacrament of Agape Meal at Incarnation:
The Incarnation or Christmas is recalled on the nominal birthday of Jesus Christ on December 25 at 2 pm. A grand meal is consumed using the Eucharistic rubrics (Matthew 26:26-28).
- Sacrament of Agape Meal on July 27th - *la Fête du Déluge*:
The start of Harris' first evangelical missionary journey (1913-1915) is commemorated at 2 pm. A grand meal is consumed using the Eucharistic rubrics (Matthew 26:26-28).
- Sacrament of Sacrifice:
This service is held on Good-Friday only. This sacrament is meant to symbolize the significance of the passion, death, and living sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

The Sacrament of Baptism, the Sacrament of Agape Meal at Incarnation, and the Sacrament of Sacrifice are viewed as dominical

sacred rites by the Harris movement. That of the Sacrament of Agape Meal at the *Fête du Déluge* is an ecclesiastical feast dedicated to the works of the founder.

Harris' Legacy

In the Methodist Church

Just over a century ago, hundreds of Harris communities were founded within Harris' operational zone. It has been documented that some of the Harris communities in the Yaou-Bonoua forests became part of the Wesleyan Methodist Church. One of these is the distinguished Temple de St. Esprit de Bonoua of l'Eglise Méthodiste Unie Côte d'Ivoire (EMUCI) (Methodist Church of Côte d'Ivoire) which was rebuilt into a huge cathedral, almost of basilica proportions, and consecrated in 2005. Written high on the front wall of the sanctuary, embossed in bold red letters, is an apocalyptic message: "Je Regardai, et Voici, Une Porte Etait Ouverte Dans le Ciel' (Apoc. 4:1) ("I looked, and lo, in heaven an open door" — Revelation 4:1, RSV). This text-sign falls within the typical Christo-eschatological genre of Harris' message. The text sign represents the echo of a dominant Harris preaching.

In Catholic Churches and other Protestant Churches

Harris' legacy was measured through his impact on numerical membership of Christians and the influence of his mother-tongue initiatives. From 1893 on, the residing French Protestant Governor Louis Gustav Binger of the colony of Côte d'Ivoire sent special invitations to many Christian missions, with assurances of financial support and collaboration to establish schools, clinics and churches within at least six identified growth centers: (Grand) Bassam, Moossou, Dabou, Memni, Bonoua, and Assinie and later extended to Jacquerville (1898), Bingerville (1904), Abidjan (1905), and Abiosso (1905). E. Amos Djoro observes that just before the start of World War I (1914 to 1918) the Roman Catholic Mission then had 23 missionaries, and had registered barely 1,100 full members and 400 catechumens in the whole of Côte d'Ivoire. However, the writer

noted that by 1917, the population of Roman Catholic catechumens had increased to 800; and five years later in 1922, catechumens had risen, exponentially, to almost 20,000. In Apollonia, in the Western Gold Coast, it was equally dramatic: “There were only already in 1920, 3,240 members and 15,400 catechumens where there had been no baptized Catholics in 1914.” It will be recalled that Harris launched his first evangelical missionary journey in 1913–1915 through the same areas where the centers of evangelization had been established in Côte d’Ivoire and in Apollonia. Only one rational reason could explain these spiked numerical increases in membership over the 1914 to 1922 period – a definite attribute of Harris’ legacy.

Since the end of Harris’ first evangelical missionary journey (1913–15), the smaller TWMCs at the time have now become the greater and the Harris communities that were greater are now the smaller. In Côte d’Ivoire alone, 11.6% (0.2 million) of the population was registered within the Harris movement out of a total population estimate of 1.6 million in 1926. By the year 2001, however, there were major reversals. The Harris movement accounted for barely 1.6% (0.2 million) of the 11.4 million classified Ivoirians. [6] Besides bearing the brunt of injustice, the internecine and extended litigations since the 1930s, between the leaderships of Mission Biblique Harriste No.1 Côte d’Ivoire headquartered at Grand Lahou Kpanda and those of l’Eglise du Christ- Mission Harriste whose seat is at Bingerville, have further complicated the situation and undermined growth of the Harris Movement. It would seem that the leaders of Harris churches need to regain the ecumenical and reconciling spirit of their founder.

In a second thesis legacy, one asks: How did Harris’ initiatives in mother-tongue liturgy and hermeneutics penetrate Roman Catholic and other TWMCs? It was standard practice that up to the early 1960s, worship services in Roman Catholic churches, globally, were held strictly according to the rites and rubrics of the Latin Gregorian Mass. This was also the case of the Catholic churches of the Lagoons, the Zana Kingdom and Apollonia. When the Catholic Church convened in Rome the Second Vatican Council (1962–65), this was its 21st International Ecumenical Council which belatedly addressed relationships between the Roman Catholic Church and the modern world. Among its several reconciliation resolutions was a crucial decision to encourage the “widespread use

of the vernacular in the Mass instead of Latin.” It will be recalled that Harris, at his evangelical capital of Kraffy, had exhorted his audiences to pray in their own languages. Kraffy is located in the Lagoons. The Harris mother-tongue liturgy and hermeneutics influence had already penetrated the Roman Catholic Churches and other TWMCs well before the Second Vatican Council (1962-65) publicly and officially acknowledged it as most appropriate mode of propagating the Gospel.

Conclusion

Harris’ message and praxis have been implanted, incubated, fertilized, and cross-fertilized through the hundreds of house churches or *abatons*, which were founded and which eventually metamorphosed into Harrist churches, Twelve Apostles Churches, Christ Church Beyin, and many others. In addition, the catechumens sent to the Traditional Western Mission Churches (TWMCs) introduced African songs, shouts, dances, and pneumatological experientialism into an otherwise rigid TWMC life and liturgy. The Harris heritage remains strong within the ambit of the Kwa group of peoples distributed in Côte d’Ivoire, the Gold Coast (Ghana), Liberia, Sierra Leone, and beyond. Indirectly, Harris’ legacy in its fluid African worship patterns is global. The worship expressions of several charismatic and Pentecostal churches betray traces of the Harris style. Harris’ message and praxis have permeated large swaths of Christianity.

Some Harris churches of Côte d’Ivoire recognize July 27 as the Feast of the Flood (*Fête du Déluge*) to mark the beginning of that epic first evangelical missionary journey (1913-15). Besides the few women chorus singers and the interpreters/ translators who actively participated in his ministry, William Wadé Harris received little or nothing from churches, governments, societies or bankers. Harris pursued a *missio dei* which bore abundant fruit of eternal life in Christ Jesus. He planted Christian communities where previous governments, armies and churches had failed. Perhaps someday, the Christian calendar will reflect this amazing grace of God wrought through a man of God called the Black Elijah, Prophet Harris, Apostle Harris, and Saint Harris!

Gabriel Leonard Allen

Endnotes:

1. This biography is an abridged and adapted version of the author's B.D. Honors dissertation: Allen, Gabriel Leonard. "William Wade Harris (c. 1860-1929): A Life, Message, Praxis and Heritage." B.D. diss., Trinity Theological Seminary, 2008.
2. The *Kwa* comprises the Kru dialects of Sierra Leone, Liberia & La Cote d'Ivoire; the Lagoon Languages of La Cote d'Ivoire; and the Akan languages of the Western Gold Coast. Cooksey and McLeish, 244.
3. The order of service of l'Eglise du Christ-Mission Harrist of Yaou:
 - 1) BENEDICTION (The Most Senior Preacher rings the Bell to commence the service)
 - 2) OPENING PRAYER
An Invocation:
 - i. Eternal,
 - ii. We give you grace and say thank you for this moment that you allow.
 - iii. You have said in your word that where two or three meet in your name,
 - iv. You are in their midst.
 - v. Come and guide this moment in the name of Jesus Christ.
 - 3) OPENING HYMN
 - 4) PRAYER OF INTERCESSION (All on their knees. Ends with an Amen Song)
 - 5) THE LORD'S PRAYER
 - 6) SERMON HYMN
 - 7) THE GOSPEL
 - 8) THE SERMON (Preaching interspersed with shouts)
 - 9) AN ANTHEM - by the Choir
 - 10) ANNOUNCEMENTS BY AN ELDER (Collection on Sundays only)
 - 11) CLOSING PRAYER
 - 12) RECESSIONAL HYMN

Source: Liturgy: Ordinary Service at *L'Eglise du Christ – Mission Harriste du Yaou*, District of Grand Bassam, cited in Allen, 52 & Appendix iii.

4. The liturgy of Twelve Apostles Church-Upper Axim:

1.0 CALL TO WORSHIP

An Invocation:

We begin this service in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit .

2.0 THE LORD'S PRAYER

3.0 OPENING PRAYER – by a Prophet or Prophetess

4.0 OPENING SONG –singing, praying and dancing

Kru Songs/ Hausa Songs/ Akan songs with Calabash accompaniment

5.0 HEALING SESSION –held in a special Room for Counselling

(Clients bring : packet of candles; 1 yard calico; 1 gallon water; Incense)

Water Divination - viewing 15-20 gallon water drums

Spirit Descends

Invitation for Consultation

Each worshipper arrives with containers of water

Raise the water up and told the future

Drink some of the water

Spiritual Messages received

Sick persons healed

Options: A Goat or Sheep is sacrificed

Source: Liturgy: Ordinary Service at *Twelve Apostles Church – Upper Axim*, Western Ghana, cited in Allen, 53-54.

5. Sacrament of Baptism:

a. An Elder of the church must be told about the intention.

b. The Elder shall inform either the *Prédicateur Suprême* (Supreme Head of the Harrist Church), the *Prédicateur Supérieur* (Superintendent Preacher of District equivalent) , the *Prédicateur Chef* (Senior Preacher of the Church equivalent), a *Prédicateur* (Preacher of the Church equivalent) or a *Prédicateur Auxiliaire* (Assistant Preacher of the Church equivalent).

- c. The Baptismal ceremony could take place before, or after, any worship service.
- d. The parent or guardian bearing the child to be baptized in his/her arms, or the individual to be baptized, approaches the Preacher and kneels down.
- e. If the preacher is either the *Prédicateur Suprême* or the *Prédicateur Supérieur*, the individual concerned holds his cross of cane.
- f. If the preacher is either the *Prédicateur Chef* or the *Prédicateur* or the *Prédicateur Auxiliaire*, the individual concerned holds his kaftan.
- g. The Preacher, with the Bible in the one hand and the cup of water in the other, responds with a Baptismal Prayer

*Dieu, Nous te demandons de laver ton serviteur
comme ton fils Jésus a été baptisé par Jean Baptiste dans
le Jourdain.
Que ton esprit saint demeure en lui et chasse tout ce qui ne
l'honore pas en lui
afin qu'il soit véritablement ton fils/ fille.*

(Gracious God. We are asking you to wash your
servant
as your Son Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist
in the Jordan.
May your Holy Spirit dwell in him /her and drive
away all which does not honor you
Until he truly becomes your son/ daughter) (*My
Translation*)

- h. The Preacher pours water on the head of the baptized, three times.
 - i. The Preacher traces the sign of the cross with his finger on the forehead of the baptized.
 - j. The Preacher taps the Bible, three times, on the head of the Baptized
 - k. The Choir rounds up with a hymn.
 - l. The Preacher empties the rest of the water in the cup on the ground, reverently, during one continuous pour.
- Source: *Liturgie du Baptême (Liturgy of Baptism)*, cited in Allen, Appendix iv, 1 of 1

6. In data released in 2001 on all who were resident in Côte d'Ivoire, the religious demography was:
- Catholic (20.7%);
 - Protestant (8.2%);
 - Harriste (1.6%)
 - Other Christian (3.4%)
 - Total Christian (33.9%);
 - Muslim (27.4%);
 - Animist (15.3%);
 - Other Religions (2.0%);
 - Atheists (20.7%) and
 - (*Not Declared*) (0.7%).

Source: Esso Badou, "RGPH 98, Tome 1: Etat et Structure de la population, INS. 2001: Table 3.5: Répartition (en pourcentage) de la population résidente par région administrative selon la nationalité," in Joachim Kigbaforé-Silue, *Côte d'Ivoire, Nation Chrysalide* (Abidjan: PUCI, 2005), 157.

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Recent Print and Digital Resources Related to Christianity in Africa

Catron, John W., *Embracing Protestantism: Black Identities in the Atlantic World*. University Press of Florida, 2016. \$74.95. ISBN-13: 978-0813061634

“In *Embracing Protestantism*, John Catron argues that people of African descent in America who adopted Protestant Christianity during the eighteenth century did not become African Americans but instead assumed more fluid Atlantic-African identities. America was then the land of slavery and white supremacy, where citizenship and economic mobility were off-limits to most people of color. In contrast, the Atlantic World offered access to the growing abolitionist movement in Europe.

Catron examines how the wider Atlantic World allowed membership in transatlantic evangelical churches that gave people of color unprecedented power in their local congregations and contact with black Christians in West and Central Africa. It also channeled inspiration from the large black churches then developing in the Caribbean and from black missionaries. Unlike deracinated creoles who attempted to merge with white culture, people of color who became Protestants were “Atlantic Africans,” who used multiple religious traditions to restore cultural and ethnic connections. And this religious heterogeneity was a critically important way black Anglophone Christians resisted slavery.” (Amazon)

Decret, François. *Early Christianity in North Africa*. Cambridge James Clarke & Co., 2014. \$7.36. ISBN-13: 978-0227173565

“Martyrs, exegetes, catechumens, and councils enlarge this study of North African Christianity, a region often reduced to its dominant patristic personalities. Smither provides English readers a quality translation of an important book that captures the unique spirit of an invaluable chapter of church history. Along with the churches located in large Greek cities of the East, the church of Carthage was particularly significant in the early centuries of Christian history. Initially, the Carthaginian church became known for its martyrs. Later, the North African church became further

established and unified through the regular councils of its bishops. Finally, the church gained a reputation for its outstanding leaders, Tertullian of Carthage (c. 140-220), Cyprian of Carthage (195-258), and Augustine of Hippo (354-430), African leaders who continue to be celebrated and remembered today.” (Amazon)

Levine, Roger S. *A Living Man from Africa: Jan Tzatzoe, Xhosa Chief and Missionary, and the Making of Nineteenth-century South Africa*. [Series: New Directions in Narrative History]. New Haven [Conn.]: Yale University Press, 2011. \$30.00 ISBN-13: 978-0300198294

“Born into a Xhosa royal family around 1792 in South Africa, Jan Tzatzoe was destined to live in an era of profound change - one that witnessed the arrival and entrenchment of European colonialism. This title reclaims Tzatzoe's lost story and analyzes his contributions to, and experiences with, the turbulent colonial world.” (Amazon)

Mwenda, Ntarangwi. *The Street Is My Pulpit Hip Hop and Christianity in Kenya*. Urbana; Chicago; Springfield: University of Illinois Press, 2016. \$25.00. ISBN-13: 978-0252081552

“To some, Christianity and hip hop seem antithetical. Not so in Kenya. There, the music of Julius Owino, aka Juliani, blends faith and beats into a potent hip hop gospel aimed at a youth culture hungry for answers spiritual, material, and otherwise. Mwenda Ntarangwi explores the Kenyan hip hop scene through the lens of Juliani's life and career. A born-again Christian, Juliani produces work highlighting the tensions between hip hop's forceful self-expression and a pious approach to public life, even while contesting the basic presumptions of both. In *The Street Is My Pulpit*, Ntarangwi forges an uncommon collaboration with his subject that offers insights into Juliani's art and goals even as Ntarangwi explores his own religious experience and subjective identity as an ethnographer. What emerges is an original contribution to the scholarship on hip hop's global impact and a passionate study of the music's role in shaping new ways of being Christian in Africa.” (Amazon)

Ngong, David (editor). *A New History of African Christian Thought: From Cape to Cairo*. New York, NY: Routledge. (Forthcoming 2017) ISBN-13: 9780415857567

"David Ngong offers a comprehensive view of African Christian thought that includes North Africa in antiquity as well as Sub-Saharan Africa from the period of colonial missionary activity to the present. Challenging conventional, colonial divisions of Africa, *A New History of African Christian Thought* demonstrates that important continuities exist across the continent. Chapters written by specialists in African Christian thought reflect the issues—both ancient and modern—in which Christian Africa has impacted the shape of Christian belief from the beginning of the movement up to the present day." (Barnes & Noble)

Noll, Mark A. and Carolyn Nystrom. *Clouds of witnesses: Christian voices from Africa and Asia*. Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Books, 2011. \$18.75 ISBN-13: 978-0830838349

"In seventeen narratives Mark Noll and Carolyn Nystrom introduce Christian leaders in Africa and Asia who had tenacious faith in the midst of deprivation, suffering and conflict. Spanning a century, from the 1880s to the 1980s, their stories demonstrate the vitality of the Christian faith in a diversity of contexts..." (Amazon)

Doctoral Theses

Francophone Churches in the Cities of Johannesburg and Pretoria (Tshwane) : A Missiological Perspective. By Athas Cibangu Mpinga. University of South Africa (UNISA), 2014.

Abstract: This thesis is a missiological study of the francophone churches in the cities of Johannesburg and Pretoria. Francophone churches may be classified as African Initiated Churches (AIC) that have been planted by migrants from the French speaking countries of central Africa. They are characterized by the use of French and English as languages of worship and communication. The planting and the presence of these churches have become a more visible and remarkable mission phenomenon drawing scientific attention and is worthy of studying.

The main issue of this study is the missionalty of the

Francophone churches. The investigation concerns the ways in which Francophone churches understand the mission of God, known as *missio Dei*, and the ways in which they express it in the community. In practice, the exploration of the missionality of the Francophone churches discloses their nature, *raison d'être*, and their purpose, as well as their ministries, and allows us to determine the relevancy of these churches in the community.

Available full-text: <http://hdl.handle.net/10500/18901>

The Contribution and Influence of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church in the Development of Post-secondary Education in South Nyanza, 1971-2000. by Eric Nyankanga Maangi. University of South Africa (UNISA), 2014.

Abstract: This study discusses the contribution and influence of the Seventh-Day Adventist (SDA) Church to the development of post-secondary education in South Nyanza, Kenya. This has been done by focusing on the establishment and development of Kamagambo and Nyanchwa Adventist colleges whose history from 1971 to 2000 has been documented. This is a historical study which has utilized both the primary and secondary source of data.

For better and clear insights into this topic, the study starts by discussing the coming of Christian missionaries to Africa. The missionaries who came to Africa introduced western education. The origin of the SDA church to Africa has also been documented. The SDA church was formed as a result of the Christian evangelical revivals in Europe. This called for the Christians to base their faith on the Bible. As people read various prophecies in the Bible, they thought that what they read was to be fulfilled in their lifetime. From the 1830s to the 1840s preachers and lay people from widely different denominations United States of America around William Miller (1782-1849). This led to the establishment of the SDA Church in 1844.

The study focuses on the coming of the SDA Missionaries to South-Nyanza. The efforts of the SDA missionaries to introduce Western education in the said area, an endeavor which started at Gendia in 1906 has been discussed. From Gendia they established Wire mission and Kenyadoto mission in 1909. In 1912 Kamagambo and Nyanchwa, the subject of this study became mission and

educational centers. As was the case with other missionaries who evangelized South Nyanza, the SDA mission took the education of Africans as one of the most important goals for the process of African evangelization. The Adventist message penetrated the people of South Nyanza through their educational work. The first conversions can be ascribed to the desire for the education which accompanied the new religion.

Kamagambo Adventist College became the first college in South Nyanza. Equally, Nyanchwa became the first college in the Gusii part of South Nyanza. The two colleges exercised a great influence on the local community especially in the socio-economic and educational fields. At the same time the colleges have also contributed enormously to the community's development through the roles played by its alumni in society. Besides this, the study has also recommended some other pertinent areas for further study and research.

Full-text available: <http://hdl.handle.net/10500/20035>

MICHAEL TIMNENG AND JEREMIAH CHI KANGSEN:
CHRISTIANITY BEYOND THE MISSIONARY PRESENCE
IN CAMEROON

Original Biographies from the *Dictionary of
African Christian Biography*, with preface
by Paul Nchoji Nkwi, *DACB* Advisory Council Member

Journal of African Christian Biography
Volume 1, Number 6 (Nov. 2016)

The *Journal of African Christian Biography* was launched in 2016 to complement and make stories from the on-line *Dictionary of African Christian Biography* (www.DACB.org) more readily accessible and immediately useful in African congregations and classrooms.

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**Michael Timneng and Jeremiah Chi Kangsen:
Christianity Beyond the Missionary Presence in Cameroon**

Dictionary of African Christian Biography (www.DACB.org)
Journal of African Christian Biography
Volume 1, Number 6 (Nov. 2016)

This issue of the *Journal of African Christian Biography* explores the life and work of two men—Michael Timneng and Jeremiah Chi Kangsen. In their youth, they were both captivated by the Christian missionary message in Cameroon. As earnest and diligent converts, both of them carried the gospel beyond the reach of Western missionaries and they played a key role in establishing Christianity in Cameroon. Timneng was a Roman Catholic who courageously nurtured a young community of believers in the face of opposition from an unfriendly ruler. He worked as a pioneer in the absence of white missionaries, and he challenged positions of power from below. Kangsen, on the other hand, transformed power structures from the inside. First, as a member of the House of Assembly and then as a chief of the Kesu people, he worked to govern according to his Christian convictions. He went beyond the reach of foreign Christian missionaries, leading the well-established Basel Mission to independence as the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon. Their stories demonstrate the role that indigenous Africans played in rooting Christianity in the African soil.

Missionary Background in Cameroon

In 1472, the Portuguese reached Douala and sailed up the Wouri River. They found it teeming with shrimp, and aptly named it the Rio dos Camarões—or Shrimp River. Since that time, the surrounding country has been known as Cameroon. Originally, Europeans were only interested in the economic capacities of the area. They exploited the rich volcanic soil by establishing plantations, which inevitably increased the slave trade that spanned the Atlantic world. Missionary activity in the region was slow to start. It was only in the 1830s and 40s that Jamaican and Creole

Baptists in cooperation with the Baptist Missionary Society of London began work. Their efforts, however, were limited to the coast and outlying islands. Malaria and other tropical diseases left the interior cut off from the growing population and trading centers on the coast. [1]

The real Christian impact was felt after the arrival of Alfred Saker in 1844. He built schools and churches in Douala. While he is remembered as the “father of Christianity in Cameroon,” he only lived there four years before his death, and his influence remained limited to the coast. Missionaries began to imagine ways of expanding into the interior. Saker’s successor, T. H. Johnson, envisioned reaching the interior through a chain of mission stations. But even before he could embark on this scheme, African Christians themselves began to spread the gospel to the interior. Recaptive slaves who were brought to Douala converted to Christianity and then returned to the interior with the Christian message. [2] This was a model that would be repeated throughout the history of Christianity in Cameroon and Africa more broadly. Africans themselves came in contact with the Christian gospel, and then they began the work of mission and evangelism in the absence of foreign missionaries. It was not uncommon for western missionaries to arrive and already find small communities of Christians.

The Heyday of Imperialism

European leaders at the Berlin Conference in 1884 divided the African continent among themselves. Their objective was to spread commerce and civilization to the “dark continent,” an end that seemed to justify any number of brutal means. Cameroon was granted German Protection (Schutzgebiet) in 1884, which had the benefit of military protection against the whims of other European trading powers, but it also gave Germany far reaching authority. With the consolidation of the German presence on the coast, the hinterlands were gradually explored not only in search of ivory, rubber, palm oil, and cocoa, but also to spread the Word.

The advent of German rule also meant a change in missionaries. The British Baptist Missionary Society stations were turned over to German and Swiss missionaries. In protest, some African church leaders hived off to form the Native Baptist Church.

The Basel Mission was established in Cameroon in 1886 under the name German Missionary Society—and later the Basel Evangelical Missionary Society. Besides preaching the gospel, one of its major concerns was the improvement of the quality of life of the people in the areas where their mission stations were located. To attain this objective, they provided practical skills in a number of areas. They built a number of smaller mission stations over a widely diffused area. Likewise, they were noted for further reaching white missionary control. By contrast, American Presbyterians in Cameroon built fewer mission stations that were larger and emphasized local leadership. [3]

Germans placed missionary activity under strict control. They were not eager to allow non-German missionaries to operate in the territory. French Catholic Missionaries were refused permission to establish stations in Cameroon. When the Pallottine Fathers from Germany and Switzerland asked for permission to work in Cameroon, the colonial government instructed them not to compete directly with the Basel Mission and to receive no orders from non-German authorities. When they arrived in 1890, they were required to establish their mission stations far removed from areas already occupied by earlier arrivals. The Pallottine Fathers set up their stations in Marienburg near Edea and moved later to other areas as they began to open schools and mission stations. The priests of the Sacred Heart, arrived in Cameroon in November 1912 and were assigned to part of the Western Grassfields. Working under the same policy of avoiding missionary competition, they were posted to the Grassfields especially to Nso and Kom countries, far away from the well-established Protestant societies. They set up mission stations at Shisong in 1912 and in Fujua in the Kom country in 1913, the place of origin of Michael Timneng.

Roman Catholics

Historian of Christian mission Stephen Neill observed, “Perhaps the most successful of all the Roman Catholic missions in West Africa was that of the Cameroons.” He noted that missionary efforts were slow to pick up until the turn of the 20th century, at which point “progress was rapid.” Neill continued, “With a missionary force

outnumbering that of all the Protestants put together by four to one, Roman Catholics were able to establish themselves throughout the territory, in which certain areas gave the impression of being an entirely Christian country.” [4]

Neill’s use of the term “missionary force” is unfortunately vague. It carries the connotations of white foreign missionaries, when in fact it was local young men and women who did most of the grunt work in establishing Catholicism in Cameroon. Beginning in 1896, German colonial administrators sent the sons of chiefs to the Catholic school at Kribi, where they learned Catholic doctrine in addition to the “three ‘Rs.’” When they returned to their home villages, they were eager to share their faith with their friends and families. In Cameroon, the young Christians had the urgent zeal of youthful converts. They were often uncompromising with the “pagan” past, seeking to make a break with practices of polygamy, secret societies, and witchcraft.

Michael Timneng was one such convert. With little assistance from foreign missionaries, Timneng stood bravely by his convictions in the face of a hostile ruler and nurtured the young Catholic Church among the Kom. But the direct challenge to Foyin Ngam did not come from foreign missionaries, but rather one of his own difficult subjects. Timneng’s story sheds light on the relationship between foreign missionaries and indigenous initiatives in African Christianity. It also provides an example of the tensions that can develop between traditional religion and Christianity in Africa. Ultimately, however, Timneng’s story is one of the key players in what made Catholicism such a vital force in Cameroon today.

Independence and Christianity Today

When the Allied forces defeated the Germans in Cameroon in 1916, the German missionaries (Pallottine, Sacred Heart, etc.) fled south to Equatorial Guinea with the German forces. At the end of First World War, Cameroon was divided between British and French administration. Not surprisingly, new missionaries, usually from

France and Britain, replaced the missionaries from Germany. Apart from yet another change in missionary nationalities, the war also led to an increased awareness of African national consciousness. In the early part of the 20th century, African nationalism was not directly antagonistic to colonial rule. Many early nationalists demanded more say in the colonial government and access to land. They were perfectly willing to accept a qualified franchise. But as the century wore on, it became increasingly clear that African nationalism was turning in the direction of full independence. The former colonial powers were badly battered during the Second World War and their colonial subjects, who had now fought in two major world wars, were eager to determine their own destinies. Independence was the watchword of the day, and it extended into the churches.

As the sun set on European empire in Africa in the middle of the 20th century, Christian missionaries were also ceding control over their missionary outfits. Formerly white dominated missions began to turn more control over to local church leaders. The Basel Mission turned control of the church over to the hands of Kangsen. He made the ideal leader. He was highly educated, an experienced teacher and preacher, and he had the political experience necessary to govern a large church body. He was also humble, meaning that he would not be corrupted by a position of power in the church hierarchy.

Today, the population of Cameroon is estimated at over 23 million. For over 100 years, Christianity has succeeded in transforming not only the lives and souls of the different ethnic groups, but it has also delivered a better quality of life by establishing schools, hospitals, clinics and other social services that have made meaning in people's lives. Today, there are three major religions in Cameroon, namely Christianity, Islam and indigenous African religions. At least 70% of the Cameroonians are Christians while 30% are either Muslims or those who still hold the religious beliefs and practices of their ancestors. The two dominant Christian groups are Catholics (32.4%) and Protestants (30.3%). Kangsen's Presbyterian Church in Cameroon is the largest English-speaking Protestant Church in Cameroon. It has between 1 and 1.5 million members who worship in 1,475 congregations, divided into 29 presbyteries. There are roughly 1,400 pastors. Behind these facts

and figures are the lives of those people who worked tirelessly to champion the cause of the gospel.

Contrary to the popular image of mission work in Christianity, the conversion of Cameroon and the African continent was not a “foreign affair.” Africans like Timneng and Kangsen were directly responsible for making Christianity in Africa the vital force it is today.

Paul Nchoji Nkwi

Deputy Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs
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Michael Timneng

1898 to 1968

**Roman Catholic
Cameroon**

His Birth

Michael Timneng was born in 1898 at Wombong in what used to be Western Grassfields of Cameroon. At age ten, the Kom Royal Palace conscripted him to serve in the royal court at Laikom as a retainer (*chindo*). Retainers were members of the ruling elite known as *Kwifoim*—the legislative arm of the traditional Kom administration—and they managed the royal household and acted as administrators and diplomats.

Timneng found the job to be a difficult fit. He was accused of hurling a stone and wounding another retainer, after which he fled to his birthplace in fear of reprisal. This incident occurred at the outbreak of the First World War. Since Cameroon was under German protection, the German government asked Foyin Ngam to conscript young men for colonial military service in Cameroon. Foyin Ngam recommended Timneng for conscription. Timneng was an insubordinate retainer and sending him off to join the German army was one way of getting rid of a thorn in flesh of courtly life.

As he was being taken from his mother’s hut, Timneng thought he was going to be returned to the palace to complete his

service. When he was informed that the *foyn* was sending him to the army, he said, "It is better to serve the white man than to be a slave under Foyng Ngam." Foyng Ngam is described in Kom history as a brutal leader who even had his own brothers and cross cousins killed by the Germans. It is also noted that his wives exercised undue influence on him. Together with six other stubborn retainers, Timneng became a soldier. With the defeat of the Germans in Cameroon by the Allied forces in 1916, Timneng and the six were interned at Fernando Po in Equatorial Guinea.

While in prison, they met the German Pallottine Fathers, who taught them Catholic doctrine. For three years, Father Baumeistter, who was one of the missionaries that started the mission station at Fujua in 1913, drilled the young men in the catechism, eventually baptizing them. At baptism, Timneng took the name Michael. He was also equipped to be a catechist. He was designated as the converts' leader, and given the catechism of the Roman Catholic Church in German. While Father Baumeistter trained the young men in the Catholic faith, it was up to them to return to their own people with the new religion.

In July 1919, Timneng and his fellow converts arrived back in Kom dressed in German military uniforms. As custom demanded, they visited the palace and met Foyng Ngam. There, the *foyn* asked the returned soldiers to present the spoils of war. Timneng replied, "It was good you sent me to be killed by the white man. Instead of killing me, he has given me this small book to bring back and preach the Christian doctrine and restart the church you authorize them to build." The *foyn* showed no interest in his reply as he insisted on the presentation of war booty. If they had nothing to offer, they would be stripped of their uniforms and kept in the palace. To the astonishment of both the *foyn* and his advisers, Timneng replied bluntly, "This can never happen." Their military uniforms emboldened them and protected them from being arrested by the local palace retainers. His hands tied, the *foyn* simply allowed them to return to their village, hoping they would live normal lives. But the *foyn* was mistaken. Once back in their village and without delay, Michael Timneng started a prayer group in his uncle's compound at Wombong. This group soon attracted the interest of many, some of whom would become Catholics. As the membership of the prayer

group grew, they moved from the compound of Timneng's uncle into a church building. Interest grew and two communities were formed at Wombong and Njinikom respectively.

First arrest: Bi Wa'ah, the runaway royal wife

The Christian faith had already emboldened Timneng in his stand against the *foyn's* authority. Perhaps the *foyn* would have continued to tolerate this marginal insolence, but soon Timneng's faith posed a challenge to the *foyn's* own household. As Timneng preached against polygamy and witchcraft, many royal wives began to flee the palace and take refuge in this new community of Christians. The first royal wife to join the Christian prayer group was a young woman named Bi Wa'ah. She first encountered Timneng's community while on a visit to her mother. She found freedom amidst the gathered believers and she refused to return to the palace. Timneng was soon accused of "taking the *foyn's* wife." He was asked to return Bi Wa'ah to the palace. He refused because she had joined of her own volition. His response to the *foyn's* request was further interpreted as contempt. Timneng made it abundantly clear that he could not send her away. Palace retainers were sent to arrest Timneng for failing to obey royal orders and he was locked up in the palace. Bi Wa'ah was also forcefully taken back to the palace. They were both subjected to severe beatings. Timneng was released after several weeks and Bi Wa'ah rejoined the royal household. As tempers calmed, Bi Wa'ah escaped again to rejoin the Christian community, and this time she was followed by other royal wives. By 1923, twenty-five royal wives had fled the palace, taking refuge in the new Christian villages at Wombong and Njinikom. This situation was shocking and completely unacceptable to the traditional authorities. The emerging Christian group consistently disobeyed the royal orders of a ruthless *foyn*. Wanting to regain his traditional position of authority and his wives, the *foyn* hatched a plan to re-arrest Timneng.

Second arrest: The horror of torture

Two palace retainers were sent to start a fight on the church premises in order to justify Timneng's re-arrest. They arrived and

forcefully seized corn from a young boy who had come to sell it and attend catechetical instructions at Timneng's church. When the boy yelled and requested payment for the corn, they told him to go and ask Timneng to come and pay. When Timneng overheard the row outside the church, he rushed out and found the retainers and ordered them to pay. As he insisted, the retainers yelled back at him saying: "Go tell your God to come pay!" Furious at their insolence, Timneng gave them a good beating. Unable to contain Timneng, they ran back to the palace. A few days later, the *foyn* sent a contingent of forty retainers to arrest Timneng for attacking palace retainers.

After his arrest, Timneng was detained for two months. In his absence, his followers continued to gather and pray for his release. During his detention Timneng was beaten, tortured and forced to carry feces every day. He continued to preach his faith, saying that if his listeners did not convert to Christianity, they would go to hell—a message he brazenly delivered to the *foyn*. Foyin Ngam was so furious that he ordered Timneng to be beaten. Timneng challenged Ngam's authority to such an extent that the *foyn* asked if he wanted to take the throne. Timneng retorted "I am not a member of the royal lineage and therefore have no ambition to be a ruler. I am a commoner preaching God's gospel and nothing more." [5]

After undergoing this inhumane treatment, Timneng was taken to the magistrate court in Bamenda on two charges; viz., taking the *foyn's* wives and beating palace retainers. On the first count, he was accused of encouraging the *foyn's* wives to become Christians. In response to this accusation, Timneng said *everyone was free to attend his church*, and he could not force anybody to attend his church services. On the second count, he denied having beaten palace retainers, and no one provided evidence to the contrary. Since the court did not have enough evidence for either charge, Timneng was acquitted. Jubilant crowds welcomed him back to Njinikom, and even more people became Christians. Timneng also embarked on the monumental task of translating the German catechism and prayers into itangiKom, the mother tongue of the Kom people.

Third arrest: The closure of the church

Angered by the outcome of the trial in Bamenda, the *foyn* decided to close down the church. He dispatched a contingent of retainers under the leadership of a senior palace retainer, Ngong Fundoh to close the church. When they arrived, Timneng was away in Shisong to meet the resident parish priest whose jurisdiction included the whole of Kom. The royal party met only seventeen Christians. With his band of retainers, Ngong Fundoh arrested the seventeen Christians, sealed the church, and ferried prisoners to the palace where they were detained.

When Timneng returned from Shisong and found his church sealed, he went to the palace. Arriving there, guards stopped him to ascertain his identity. He told him that he was the person the palace retainers came looking for in Njinikom. He had come to have his people released from the palace prison. The guards immediately arrested him and put him with the seventeen others. They were jailed for several weeks and the church remained closed.

This continuous molestation of Christians was reported to the British administrators of the colony. The growing tension and animosity between Christians and traditional authority could not be ignored. Mgr. Plissoneau of the Apostolic Prefecture of the Adamawa travelled to Njinikom in 1921 to visit the persecuted Christian community and he said a mass attended by over 300 Christians. After Timneng's third arrest, British administrators D. O. Duncan of Bamenda and S. D. O. Roxton of Buea travelled to Njinikom to assess the situation for themselves. On their arrival they found the church sealed. Duncan and Roxton sent soldiers with a message asking the *foyn* to report to Njinikom. Terrified, the *foyn* arrived Njinikom and refused to go near the church. He instead sent his trusted servant, Ngong Fundoh, who had sealed the church in the first place, to go and unseal it. Furious that he had been humiliated by the British administrator, the *foyn* returned to Laikom vowing never to set foot in Njinikom. He declared that he had abandoned that part of his kingdom to Timneng and the white man.

When Foyng Ngam died in 1926, Njinikom and its Christians gained more breathing room. The new ruler, Foyng Ndi, adopted a conciliatory approach, reconciling his Christian subjects with the rest of his people.

The Christian faith continued to flourish as the Christians received protection from the British administration and the new ruler. It is interesting to note that between 1919 and 1926, Timneng kept the faith alive by resisting all kinds of persecutions. It was not until March 1927 that a resident priest, Father Leonard Jacobs, was appointed to take over the good work of Michael Timneng who was appointed as the catechist. In 1931, Michael Timneng was made head catechist.

By 1931, Michael Timneng, without any formal education, finished translating the German Catechism into itangiKom. Apparently the little German he had learned while he was interned in Fernando Po was sufficient enough to perform this monumental translation work.

When Michael Timneng died in 1968 in his native village Wombong, the small Christian community he had established in 1919 had become a full parish with resident priests. Today, the territory that used to be controlled by that parish has become an archdiocese with over forty-one parishes.

The seed that was sown by the Pallottines and the Sacred Heart Fathers was nurtured and kept alive by Timneng and his companions. The area that once had only seventeen Christians in 1923 now has over two hundred thousand Christians. His legacy lies in his audacity and courage, his translation of the German Catholic catechism, the training of other catechists and the compositions of religious hymns that captured the spirit of joy in his Christian community. He championed monogamy and became a model himself when he married Martha Chituh. The couple had twelve children, all brought up in the Catholic faith. When the Archdiocese of Bamenda celebrated 100 years of Christianity (1913-2013), they remembered the early years (1913-1927) as a difficult time, but one presided over by the strong and audacious person of Michael Timneng.

Paul Nchoji Nkwi / Julius Tohmentain

* * *

Jeremiah Chi Kangsen
1917 to 1988
Presbyterian
Cameroon

Early Life and Education

Kangsen was born in 1917 as a prince in the Aghem community in the Menchum Division of the North West Region of Cameroon. As a prince, he had countless siblings from his step-mothers from among whom a new chief could be chosen. Becoming a preacher as prince had deep implications. He was from a typical polygynous home, and one day he could be chosen chief, which eventually happened in the midst of his ministry. When he became a Christian he took the name of Jeremiah, a biblical prophet, and became known as Jeremiah Chi Kangsen.

Kangsen started school at the age of ten. It was expected at the time that within six years of formal school, a brilliant child would be ready for the job market. Kangsen's education did not start with regular primary school but with what was known as the vernacular school, which prepared pupils for primary school. After three years in his home village, he went to Bali Primary School and finally completed his primary education in Mbengwi. There, he met the future politician and his bosom friend Solomon Tandem Muna. Kangsen finished his primary school at the age of sixteen in 1934 and became at the time one of the few qualified people on the job market. Many employers wanted him, including the colonial government, but his dream was to become a missionary. His qualifications made him a suitable candidate to enter the Catechist Training Institute in Nyasoso, which trained teachers and preachers. At the end of his studies, the brilliant candidates were engaged as teachers in existing mission schools while the less brilliant ones were sent to preach the gospel. Kangsen graduated among the top students, and his vocation of becoming a preacher was virtually put on hold while he was sent to teach in a primary school in Mbengwi.

This policy had a tremendous impact on the early ministry of local pastors. Pastors with low academic qualifications earned low salaries while those with better academic credentials were engaged

as teachers and had better salaries. As the years went by, the need to adjust to the realities of the time led the church to change its policy. Preaching the gospel could not be left in the hands of the academically mediocre. The reversal of the policy would later lead some of the most brilliant minds like Dr. Bame Bame, Dr. Osih, and Dr. Toko to the pulpit. The church quickly transformed the ministry of the Word into a vocation in which vows had to be taken to lead an appropriate lifestyle.

From Teaching to Politics

Having been a brilliant student, Kangsen was offered a teaching position for a couple of years. His performance and academic standing impressed his superiors, and they sent him for further studies. In 1945, he was withdrawn from the classroom and sent to Kumasi in Ghana to pursue theological studies. When he finished his training in Kumasi, he was ordained as a full pastor in 1948. After briefly teaching and working as youth pastor at the Training Institute in Nyasoso, his superiors sent him for more advanced studies in theology in Edinburg, Scotland. His solid training convinced the Basel Mission to rely on him. In interviews, some members of his family spoke of him as a committed and dedicated servant of the church.

Muna was another teacher at the Basel Mission but he left teaching to join politics. Muna convinced Kangsen that, as a youth pastor, he had developed the necessary skills for politics. Kangsen developed interest in politics and when it was time to campaign for seats in the Eastern House of Assembly in Nigeria in 1951, Muna encouraged Kangsen to contest the seat in his constituency. The two of them stood in their respective constituencies and won. It was an event to celebrate, especially for Muna.

The church, however, had mixed feelings about Kangsen's entry into politics. An extract of a letter from the congregation to wish both of them well read like this:

It gives us gladness and satisfaction to see two members of our church in the magistracy. However, we regret your resignation, yet we believe that God himself may be your gift to work and act within the new circle as Christian

members of the evangelical church and that in Christian responsibility you may be effective help in this country. [6]

The church expressed mixed feelings concerning his resignation and it reminded him that his resignation was not a departure from the church. On the contrary, they expected him to be of great assistance to the church and to the school system. They wished him God's wisdom and wanted his personal presence in church to continue to inspire many. The Synod Council added, "There are men in responsible positions who know about God's will and are familiar with His Commandments; it is our desire to see you further in our midst as members of our church and the Basel Mission."

Kangsen became a member of the Southern Cameroons House of Assembly and also served in several capacities, including minister of education, minister of health and social welfare, a member of the Board of Southern Cameroons Development Agency, and a member of the Inland Revenue Board of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. He was a pioneer member of the New House of Assembly of Southern Cameroons when it became a region. He also served as a member of the executive council in Buea. Kangsen served a full term with the government: four years renewable once in both the governments of Nigeria and Southern Cameroons.

Minister and Moderator

The system was designed so that when a person had served two terms, he or she was free to retire to his or her previous occupation. When Kangsen knew that he had exhausted his two terms, he returned to his original job, teaching and preaching for the Basel Mission. According to Jonas N. Dah, the church was reluctant to accept him back, because they were deeply afraid that he could pollute the church with a new style of leadership. In order to reform the once eloquent pastor-politician, the church sent him back to Edinburgh with the aim of reeducating him and dismantling the politics in his mind. The next stage was to have him teach as a lecturer at theological seminary, formerly the catechetical training institute, while he was being monitored. According to Dah, Kangsen was asked to write a short essay on the church and politics so that the church could assess his fidelity to the faith in an indirect way.

[7]

In his answer, Kangsen wrote that politics could be a clever way of telling lies and consequently the attitude of the church towards politics was obviously confrontational. At the same time, he believed that the church had to be present in political circles. Politicians are members of the church and politics should not divide them but build a sense of brotherhood in the congregations. On the whole he believed that we cannot avoid politics but that partisan politics were out of place in official church circles. For him, the pastor had to play the role of a village chief where all are under his counsel but are diverse in opinions. All the Christians have one pastor and the pastor should never be partisan towards any of them.

This answer satisfied any lingering questions church authorities held about Kangsen's fidelity. After briefly serving as vice-principal at the seminary, he took up the position of synod clerk of the church and began to introduce some remarkable changes. With his experience as a onetime lawmaker in the government, he limited the duration of service in church offices. Pastors elected into office could only serve for four years renewable only once. Furthermore he became the moderator of the church and had the task of implementing his proposed changes. The Basel Mission, which was not actually a church per se, was also thinking of granting independence to its outfit in Cameroon. The Basel Mission wanted to concentrate its missionary efforts on bringing the gospel to other parts of Africa. It selected Kangsen as a reliable and committed man of God to become the moderator of the new church, the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon, on November 13, 1957.

Kangsen downplayed his position as moderator. He did not attach so much importance to the title nor to the personality. The moderator for him was, as the definition stands, to moderate what the rest are doing like a chairman or a supervisor. A clerk to him was just a subordinate who went about collecting data to present to the main body on how the church was running. He humbly referred to himself as a piece of meat. Mrs. Nku, one of his daughters quotes him as telling his children "My children, when I die, just throw the meat into the grave and cover it up." From the frown on the faces of the children, he modified it, saying, "Just put on my pastoral gown on me and give my clothes to those who don't have." [8] As a modest person, he drew neither pride nor honor from his title of "Moderator

of the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon.” Being the highest person in the church hierarchy, he played his role as moderator of the activities of the church and he wanted his subordinates to regard him as such. He never called himself a moderator but others saw him as one. He referred to his previous office as that of a mere clerk and his collaborators as secretaries who should assist him with information gathered from the field.

A Christian Kesu Chief

On his retirement, Kangsen did not forget his roots; he was a village boy transformed. He believed his wide experience in the Lord’s vineyard and in government could be of use to his people. He was convinced that God had a plan for his people and they were only in need of someone to show them the path to follow. Kangsen submitted himself to destiny and occupied the empty throne of the Kesu people, a position he had never aspired to. It seemed that destiny had chosen him from among the princes. Having risen to the highest ranks in the Presbyterian Church, he was being called to the highest position among his people. Were the two incompatible? How could he navigate around longstanding customs and traditions of his people? With his great exposure and learning, he was the workable link between traditions and Christian culture. Having accepted being their traditional ruler, he cautioned and warned them that, as he began to re-educate himself with rules and norms of tradition, he would reject and discard whatever was contradictory to the Christian faith. Once he was at the center of the traditional hierarchy he began to define how the two could co-exist. Christianity became the center of the social and political life of the people, rituals that contradicted the faith were abandoned, kinship relations were maintained and polygyny associated with the ruler was also eliminated as a practice. The people could honor their ancestors but not adore them for Christ was the greatest.

Paul Jenkins’s intimate conversation with Kangsen seven years after he became traditional ruler while remaining a pastor revealed how skillfully he handled issues among his local people both as a pastor and as a traditional ruler. [9] As a traditional ruler he did not take the front seat as long as he had been the moderator of the PCC. He only had accepted the role of traditional ruler after his

people persuaded him three times pleading with him that he become their chief. He rejected the request twice but finally succumbed reluctantly to their plea in 1977, but on two conditions. First, he would not marry any of the widows of the late ruler. The women would be given the freedom to marry someone else. Second, he would not perform sacrifices to the ancestral spirits. For him, the ancestors were dead. He would concentrate his efforts on the living. In his leadership, his focus was on how to rejuvenate the living and encourage sharing among them without much attention to the dead. Any customs and traditions that were not progressive or compatible with Christianity were eliminated. To him, Africans do not need to deny their culture but instead they should modify aspects of it so as to improve their lives and create a more acceptable context. His Swiss partners and friends, Jacque Russell and Eberard Renze, seemed to agree with his approach to culture. His impact on culture as a missionary transformed the customs and traditions of his people as long he was their chief. His successor, it seems, would restore some of these customs and traditions such as polygyny, which is still part of the legacy of the Kesu royal lineage. [10]

Kangsen was the village boy who became a missionary. He presided over the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon during an important period of transition. His educational, religious, and political background qualified him to act as moderator of a fully independent church. In this capacity, his humility was only exceeded by his effectiveness. He modeled a new form of Christian Kesu leadership. Kangsen was a sincere Christian and his work led to an enduring political and ecclesial legacy for his people.

Conclusion

The lives of Timneng and Kangsen shed light on Christianity in Cameroon during two very important transitional phases. They certainly had their differences. At the most basic level, one was Catholic and the other Protestant. Timneng was bold and even impertinent. He challenged structures of power from below. Kangsen on the other hand was notably humble, moderating arguments, ensuring that all sides had a fair hearing. Kangsen challenged power

structures from the inside, Christianizing forms of traditional leadership. While they were different, they both shared a zeal for their faith. They worked hard to ensure that the gospel was heard, and that structures would be in place to ensure that the gospel went to future generations.

Paul Nchoji Nkwi / Mih Clement

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1. Bengt Sundkler and Christopher Steed, *A History of Christianity in Africa* (Cambridge University Press, 1992), 59-62
2. *Ibid.*, 62
3. *Ibid.*, 62-63
4. Stephen Neill, *A History of Christian Missions* (London: Penguin Books, 1990), 367.
5. Timneng's personal notebook, 1950.
6. J. N. Dah, ed., *Kangsen as They Saw Him* (Buea: Unpublished, 1989) 18f.
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Ibid.*, 9.
9. Paul Jenkins, "Kangsen on Mission and Culture," in *Kangsen as They Saw Him*.
10. Jacque Russell and Eberard Renze, in *Kangsen as They Saw Him*, 97 and 89.

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Recent Print and Digital Resources Related to Christianity in Africa

Drønen, Tomas Sundnes. *Communication and Conversion in Northern Cameroon: The Dii People and Norwegian Missionaries, 1934–1960* (Studies in Christian Mission). Leiden; Boston : Brill, 2009. \$88.00 - \$95.00. ISBN-13: 978-9004177543

Was modern Christian mission to Africa primarily a colonial project and a civilizing mission or was it a spiritual revival spreading to new areas? This book tells the tale of the Dii people in northern Cameroon and describes their encounter with Norwegian missionaries. Through archival studies and through fieldwork among the Dii, an intriguing scenario is presented. Whereas the missionaries describe their mission as one of spiritual liberation, and the Dii highlight the social liberation they received through literacy and political independence, the author shows how both spiritual and social changes were results of captivation, miscommunication and constant negotiations between the two parties. ([Amazon](#))

Drønen, Tomas Sundnes. *Pentecostalism, globalisation, and Islam in northern Cameroon: megachurches in the making?* Leiden: Brill, 2013. \$149.00. ISBN-13: 978-9004244894

Pentecostalism is among the fastest growing social movements in the 21st century. This volume discusses global aspects of Pentecostal churches in northern Cameroon, by describing how the local congregations interact with civil society, traditional religion, and Islam. Extensive fieldwork and descriptions of the complex historical context within which the churches emerge, makes the author draw attention to Pentecostal leaders as social entrepreneurs inspired both by local traditions and by a global flow of images and ideas. This indicates that Pentecostalism can be interpreted both as a social and as a religious movement which manages to encounter mainline churches and Islam with flexibility and spiritual authority. ([Amazon](#))

Lado, Ludovic. *Catholic Pentecostalism and the Paradoxes of Africanization: Processes of Localization in a Catholic Charismatic Movement in Cameroon* (Studies of Religion in

Africa). Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2009. \$124.00. ISBN13: 9789004168985

The anthropological literature on religious innovation and resistance in African Christianity tended to focus almost exclusively on what have come to be known as African Independent Churches. Very few anthropological studies have looked at similar processes within mission churches. Through an ethnographic study of localizing processes in a Charismatic movement in Cameroon and Paris, the book critically explores the dialectics between “Pentecostalization” and “Africanization” within contemporary African Catholicism. It appears that both processes pursue, although for different purposes, the missionary policy of dismantling local cultures and religions: practices and discourses of Africanization dissect them in search of “authentic” African values; Charismatic ritual on the other hand features the dramatization of the defeat of local deities and spirits by Christianity. ([Brill](#))

Nkwain, Augustine N. *Cultural Diversity and its Challenges to Evangelization in Cameroon: A Multidisciplinary Approach with Pastoral Focus of a Church in a Multicultural African Society (Pastoralpsychologie und Spiritualität)*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang Edition, [2013]. \$64.95. ISBN-13: 978-3631643747

Living in a multicultural society offers many advantages but also poses many challenges not only in the political but also in the religious, social domains. With Cameroon as a point of departure, the author examines the advantages and challenges that accrue from living in a multicultural African society, both for the society and for the Catholic Church, and offers refreshing reflections, suggestions and methods for facilitating interaction and functioning in a multicultural society. Drawing inspiration from theological and human sciences the author delves into ways of working and evangelizing in a multicultural African context. ([Amazon](#))

Theses & Dissertations (Open Access)

Frouisou, Samuel. *Women in the Church in Africa, Continuity in Change: the Case of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of*

Cameroon from Its Inception to Present Day, (1923-1999). PH.D. Thesis. University of Natal, 2002. <http://hdl.handle.net/10413/3271>

The thesis aims at bringing to light the immense, yet ignored, contribution of women to the establishment of Christianity in Northern Cameroon. Northern Cameroon has a quite different historical development from the south of the country, with a significant difference being the presence of Islam in the north, which dates back to the beginning of the eleventh century. However, the situation of women in the church and society in Northern Cameroon today is no different from that experienced by women throughout centuries of male domination and, indeed, still experience in most of the traditions and cultures of the African continent ... this oral history study has made it possible to bring to light the role of not only the women missionaries, but also the African women in a major area of public life, the church, when their contribution to it has been denied for years. Therefore, the thesis is based mostly on oral interviews since nothing is written about the work of women in the church in Northern Cameroon, apart from the reports by missionaries for their mission societies. Hence, the aim of this study has been to explore both the past and the present of Christianity in Northern Cameroon in order to make known to a wider public the extent of women's contribution to social, cultural, and religious change. [Excerpts from the Abstract]

Fochang, Babila George. An Exploration of the Conception of God Among the Bali Nyonga and Its Impact Upon Their Contemporary Christian Practice with Particular Reference to Hymnody and Prayer. M.Th. Thesis. University of KwaZulu-Natal. 2004. <http://hdl.handle.net/10413/2002>

Through the invitation of the then traditional ruler of Bali Nyonga, the missionaries of the Basel Mission arrived there in 1903. They embarked on evangelisation especially through the opening of schools. They studied the mungaka language, translated the Bible into it and made several other publications. However in the process of translation they concluded in strong terms that the Bali had no notion of a Supreme Being who created heaven and earth. Professors Bolaji Idowu, Kwame Bediako, and others argue, contrary to such

missionary assertion above, that continuity from the old religion is what gives meaning to the understanding of the new. It is in this light that in this work we seek to explore the Bali Nyonga conception of the Supreme Being. We will also investigate Christian understanding of the God of Israel; whether he is understood only in the light of previous understanding or they consider him to be somebody whom they had never known in their worldview.

[Excerpt from the Abstract]

RAINISOALAMBO, RAVELONJANAHARY,
AND VOLAHAVANA GERMAINE (NENILAVA):

REVIVAL LEADERS OF MADAGASCAR

Original Biographies by Berthe Raminosoa
Rasoanalimanga from the *Dictionary of African
Christian Biography*, with preface by Michèle Miller
Sigg, DACB Project Manager

Journal of African Christian Biography
Volume 1, Number 7 (Dec. 2016)

The *Journal of African Christian Biography* was launched in 2016 to complement and make stories from the on-line *Dictionary of African Christian Biography* (www.DACB.org) more readily accessible and immediately useful in African congregations and classrooms.

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**Rainisoalambo, Ravelonjanahary, and Volahavana Germaine
(Nenilava): Revival Leaders of Madagascar**

Dictionary of African Christian Biography (www.DACB.org)
Journal of African Christian Biography
Volume 1, Number 7 (Dec. 2016)

The *Fifohazana* Revival on the great island of Madagascar is the focus of this month's journal. One of the earliest indigenous Christian movements in Africa, the *Fifohazana*—or “Awakening” in Malagasy—is an independent, self-governing and self-sustaining renewal movement with a two-fold mission of outreach to traditional religionists and of revival within the established churches. Women play an extraordinary role as they make up eight out of ten of the movement's evangelists or “shepherds.” The *Fifohazana* originated in 1894 and has continued to this day, under the leadership of four nationally recognized leaders. This issue features the stories of three of the revival leaders, the founder, Rainisoalambo*, and two women, Ravelonjanahary, and Volahavana Germaine (Nenilava)* (*pictured on the cover).

Christianity came to Madagascar in 1818 with the arrival of the first Protestant missionaries, David Jones and David Griffiths, from the London Missionary Society. An earlier attempt by the Portuguese to establish a Catholic missionary outpost on the island failed. Jones and Griffiths first started a school then a church and, by 1835, they had translated the entire Bible into Malagasy. That same year, antagonized by the outspoken new converts, Queen Ranavalona I expelled the missionaries and outlawed Christianity during her thirty-year reign. Despite persecution, the number of converts continued to increase. The growth continued throughout the rest of the 19th century thanks to the solid foundation laid down by the missionaries, the availability of the Bible in the vernacular, strong Malagasy lay leadership, and the inspiring witness of the suffering Christians. By 1900, Christians numbered one million, which represented 39% of the population. The 20th century saw a more gradual increase in both Protestants and Catholics. Today, Madagascar's population is composed of 58% of

Christians, 2.1% of Muslims, and 39.4% of Ethnoreligionists (figures from the World Christian Database).

The *Fifohazana* began in last decade of the 19th century in the Betsileo region, south of the capital city of Antananarivo, during a time of terrible turmoil and conflict. The people were suffering from famine, disease and heavy taxation. At this time, an indigenous movement called the *Menalamba* uprising (Red Shawls) was spreading all over the country. Several missionaries were killed, among them Catholic father Jacques Berthieu and Protestants Benjamin Escande and Paul Minault. However, unlike the *Menalamba*, the *Fifohazana* was not a political movement with the potential for subversion that invited repression by French colonial authorities. Nor was the *Fifohazana* the result of a polarization between missionaries and indigenous church leaders, as in the *Tranozozoro* movement in 1893, which led to the formation of an independent church.

Initially, the revival movement encountered Protestant missionary resistance. But soon Lutheran and Reformed (LMS) churches began to multiply, thanks to the efforts of the first evangelists who called themselves the “Disciples of the Lord,” following the example of their leader Rainisoalambo. Missionary Élisée Escande, who came to Betsimisaraka, along the east coast in 1907, reported that in the southern part of the area there were fourteen churches in 1915. The Disciples of the Lord arrived sometime before 1922 and by that year there were 64 churches. In 1924 there were 113, and by the next year, 124.⁸ After Rainisoalambo (ministry 1894-1904), three other leaders continued the work of the revival throughout the 20th century: Ravelonjanahary (ministry 1900-1970), Daniel Rakotozandry (ministry 1946-1947), and Volahavana Germaine (Nenilava) (ministry 1941-

⁸ Charles Forman, “A Study in the Self Propagating Church: Madagascar,” *Frontiers of the Christian World Mission since 1938; Essays in Honor of Kenneth Scott Latourette*, ed. by Wilber C. Harr (New York: Harper & Bros., 1962), 156; Laurent W. Ramambason, *Missionology: Its Subject-Matter and Method: A Study of Mission-Doers in Madagascar* (Series: Studies in Intercultural History of Christianity; Vol 116. New York: Peter Lang, 1999), 66, 67, 184.

1998).

How does one explain the extraordinary longevity of this movement? Some Malagasy Christians believe the *Fifohazana* is a response to the desperate hardships the country has suffered since the 1890s as a result of colonialism, endemic poverty, failed leadership, and the shameless exploitation of the country's natural resources by corrupt local and foreign powers. The *Fifohazana* has created a space to address the concerns of the local people—questions that traditional churches have mostly failed to address such as witchcraft, exorcism, the supernatural, burial rituals, and other indigenous practices. In addition, the *Fifohazana* has given women a place to exercise spiritual leadership.

The movement also seeks to provide places of healing in response to what some see as a rise in demon possession and illnesses of all kinds in recent years. The evangelists/shepherds of the revival understand the message of the gospel holistically: for them, physical healing and the restoration of good relationships in community are integral to the work of salvation. Therefore, the shepherds are called to be healers as much as teachers. They consider that any illness, whether physical or mental, always has a spiritual component and is the result of some form of sin.

There are many communities of healing on the island associated with the *Fifohazana*, mostly concentrated in the southern region. The sick, who are often banned from their villages, are welcomed into these *toby* (healing villages) where they are required to attend the daily healing and exorcism services. They live with the shepherds who take them into their families and care for them, sometimes at the risk of their lives. The willingness to use Western medicine in addition to exorcism is a unique feature of the *Fifohazana* movement that sets it apart from many independent churches elsewhere.

The author of these three biographies, Berthe Raminosoa Rasoanalimanga, the former director of the National Archives of the Church of Jesus Christ (FJKM), is herself a shepherd and therefore writes as an insider. She, like many others, wonders who God might raise up as the next national leader of the *Fifohazana*. There is a new prophet named Mama Christine, from among the Bara people in southern Madagascar who received her call to ministry in 1998, the year of

Nenilava's death. Could she be the one? Only God knows.

Michèle Miller Sigg

DACB Project Manager and *JACB* Managing Editor

Rainisoalambo
c. 1830 to 1904
Lutheran
Madagascar

In the 19th century, the revival movements spreading across Europe also found their way to Madagascar, where they came to a man named Rainisoalambo. He lived alongside the Betsileo princes in a rural village called Ambalavato in what is now the Haute Matsiatra region. He was descended from a line of diviners who were responsible for educating the princes, and he was raised in their midst. Rainisoalambo was chief of the royal guard, and he served as the public voice of the sovereign because of his great gift for witty banter and public speaking. His skill in persuasive argument led many to demand his services as a kind of lawyer. He almost always won the case he argued, and people who needed someone to speak for them frequently hired him. Rainisoalambo was also renowned as a traditional healer and diviner. Around 1892, when he was about sixty, he left his work at the court and devoted himself to agriculture (rice, in particular), hoping to earn more money that way.

The London Missionary Society (LMS) [1] had already started a church in the village of Ambatoreny. When not in use for services, the pastor used the building as a school and served as the teacher. Pastor-evangelists like him were trained in the theological institutions of the LMS. They were very disciplined, wore European-style clothing, were paid, and were not subject to forced manual labor. In fact, to the local residents, they represented a new way of living.

Rainisoalambo coveted their way of life and thought that he could become like them if he too became a pastor. He was an ambitious and intelligent man, and with the encouragement of his friends, he learned to write and to read the Bible. He was baptized in 1884 and hoped that he would become wealthy when he was ordained as a pastor. In the meantime, he did not abandon his pagan practices. After a six-month course of Biblical instruction, he was appointed as a non-salaried catechist to the parish. Disappointed, he went back to his former work as a farmer and healer/diviner.

In those days, the standard of living was very low for people in remote villages like the one in which Rainisoalambo lived. To make matters even worse, there was a famine at that time, and an epidemic of smallpox and malaria also swept through the region, killing many people. In addition to those tragedies, the Bara and the Sakalava [2] -- two tribes living in the vicinity of the Betsileo tribe -- took turns attacking and plundering the surrounding villages. People were also burdened by taxation. The king

required that all adult males pay taxes to help pay the fines imposed by the French colonizers. Charms and pharmacopoeia provided no relief from poverty, malnutrition and sickness.

Most of Rainisoalambo's family perished, and soon he had only seven head of cattle left. His rice paddies lay fallow and uncultivated. He grew very sick and lived on next to nothing; his body was covered with painful sores that made it impossible for him to work. All his friends left him.

From the depths of his misery and despair, Rainisoalambo called on the God that he already knew about. That very night, October 14, 1894, according to his testimony, he had a dream. In the dream, he saw someone dressed in a white garment that was indescribably white standing next to him, telling him to throw out his amulets and abandon the things he used for divination—objects that had served both to protect him and to give him his identity as a diviner.

The next day, at dawn, Rainisoalambo carried out the order and threw away his baskets full of pieces of wood, of grain and of pearls. Right away, he felt delivered of his pain, and his strength came back. He felt like a new man. All of this happened on October 15, 1894. In his words, Jesus delivered him from the depths of the pit and freed him of his pagan chains. He repented, and immediately felt like he had been freed. Rainisoalambo washed his body then cleaned his house and his courtyard.

Since he already knew how to read, he began to carefully read the Bible, especially the New Testament. He already knew certain things about prayer and the rites of the Christian church and community, but it was after he had spent many weeks studying and meditating on the Bible that he began to spread his message.

Rainisoalambo first spoke to his family, as several of them were ill and were practicing the ancestral religion. The central theme of his preaching was that one needed to move away from idolatry and cling to Jesus Christ, the One who had appeared to him and spoken to him. He told them that if they wanted to be healed, they should throw out their fetishes. Many of them followed his advice and were healed. Rainisoalambo then went to the neighboring villages, visiting and praying for those who were so sick that they could not even pray. He laid hands on the sick, proclaiming that Jesus was the source of all healing, and they were healed. All of this took place between the end of 1894 and the first half of 1895.

On June 9, 1895, Rainisoalambo gathered the twelve people [3] who had first been healed after throwing away their idols and laying aside their pagan life. They prayed together, and they made a number of solemn commitments. They promised to learn to read and to count so that they could read the Bible by chapter and verse. They would clean their houses

and courtyards, and they would also have separate cooking areas so that homes would be clean enough to meet in, honoring God. [4] The members of the group would also have their own vegetable gardens and sources of food, and they promised to start everything with prayer in the name of Jesus. Traditional burials were not only often an excuse for pagan drunkenness and debauchery, but they could also spell financial ruin for a family. They decided that funerals should take place in nice clothes and would be times for songs, prayers and exhortations. There would be no slaughtered cattle, protecting the grieving family against impoverishing themselves on such occasions. Rainisoalambo ended the meeting with Bible reading and prayer. That small but extraordinary meeting gave birth to the *Mpianatry ny Tompo* (Disciples of the Lord).

Rainisoalambo started to teach the members of the group. As they learned, the members continued to work as farmers. Rainisoalambo taught with the help of tracts, including the Martin Luther's *Small Catechism* translated by M. Burgen, which he obtained from Théodor Olsen, a missionary from the Soatanàna ("beautiful village") Mission Station [5]. He also requested the teaching help of the pastor in Ambatoreny, who accepted and came to teach them every Monday and Thursday.

They organized themselves so that they could lead a life in community. They cultivated the fields and built houses to receive the sick. They preached the Gospel, healed the sick, and delivered the demoniacs who came to see them. In order to always have the Bible with them, they created white cotton bags that they carried slung over their shoulders.

They agreed together to live by the following principles: repentance, humility, patience, love of one another, prayer, communion, and mutual aid. In the early days, Rainisoalambo sent them out on short trips to evangelize nearby, but little by little, they traveled farther away on longer trips. His wish to have a missionary life was granted, but not as he had expected.

Near the end of October of 1895, having become acquainted with the community and their work of evangelization, missionary Théodor Olsen wrote: "Something that was cause for rejoicing happened in the village to the west of the station, because about twenty honorable pagans asked if they could be baptized. They had been coming to the Sunday worship service in the parish, and we could also see them studying the Bible and helping each other with readings and Bible studies during the week. One Monday when I went to visit them and to teach, there were about thirty or forty of them, all paying close attention to the sermon I was preaching about the love of God that He extends to sinners." [translation by the author].

Rainisoalambo's village, Ambatoreny, quickly became a magnet for

many sick people. New converts exhorted them, prayed for them in loud voices and laid hands on them. Also, many of the "disciples" quickly went to their neighbors and families, telling them what had happened and encouraging them to do the same.

In 1902, due to the politics of the colonial situation, the "revival center" was moved to Soatanàna, where it still is today, so that it could be under the aegis of the Norwegian mission there and be integrated into the local Lutheran parish. Today at the revival center in Soatanàna, certain Biblical rituals are practiced, such as footwashing. All those who live there dress in white - the symbol of purity - and all the Soatanàna *zanaky ny Fihohazana* (children of revival) rigorously follow the same life principles. Men wear straw hats with a white ribbon. It is the custom that guests have their feet washed by a resident when they arrive at the center.

Organized along patriarchal lines and submitted to rigorous discipline, the disciples of the movement profess the gift of healing by the laying on of hands. Starting from Soatanàna, the movement spread through its *iraka*, ("apostles" or "sent ones") who went from village to village and from town to town on foot, preaching the Good News to all. In 1904, they numbered about fifty, and the number of converts kept on growing.

From the very beginning, Rainisoalambo was at the head of the revival movement. Often worried about the future of the movement because of the ever-present winds of discord, he would frequently go to pray alone near the mountain that is to the west of Soatanàna. He decided to organize a general assembly of the movement's delegations, which were spread throughout the island, and set the date of August 10, 1904. It would be a great prayer meeting, and would also serve to set up the organization of the movement. Intensive preparations began in Soatanàna for the construction of a large structure that would serve to welcome all the guests. The residents organized the rice planting as well, so that there would be enough food for everyone.

Rainisoalambo managed to direct the preparations for some time, but was eventually tired by the work, given his age. His lungs became afflicted with an illness that got increasingly worse. On the eve of his death, he asked once more to be brought to the construction site. He had to be held up on both sides, as he could no longer walk alone. The following day, some of his friends and his family came to be with him, and stayed around him singing and praying for him. On June 30, 1904, he breathed his last, praying for the movement in Soatanàna.

He was buried in Soatanàna even though his native village was not far away, so as to keep the rule of the movement, according to which one should be buried where one died. [6] The great assembly of August 10 took place without him. Soatanàna would become the first revival center in

the land, and it is now a great center of yearly pilgrimage where people go for healing and prayer.

The revival movement shook up the social and economic life of the village and of the region. The number of illiterate people declined and increased respect for personal hygiene improved the general health conditions of all. The change in customs and behavior at burial ceremonies was an improvement for families. Soatanàna became a model village for the surrounding region.

Rainsoalambo is a remarkable figure. He spent most of his life as a diviner, and at first only became a Christian because he thought it might get him rich. When, however, he was at a point of desperation in his life, he found a source of power and inspiration in the Christian faith, leading him to spearhead the first major revival movement in Madagascar.

Ravelonjanahary

c. 1850 to 1970

Protestant (Reformed)

Madagascar

Ravelonjanahary was at the head of the second revival movement in Madagascar. She lived in a time that was difficult for the people of Madagascar. The island had been under French colonial power since 1896, and all anti-colonial insurrections were firmly crushed by the military government of General Galliéni, leading to a considerable number of deaths. The colonizers subjected the conquered Malagasy to severe rules of obeisance. As of 1900, men above the age of sixteen were forced to pay taxes. On July 7, 1901, *The Natives Law* was put into effect [7] in order to restrict the freedom of the Malagasy people. General Victor Augagneur, who succeeded general Galliéni, introduced atheism to the land through several newspapers [8] in order to draw people away from Christianity, which was already having a very significant impact in the country. Forced labor as well as epidemics of smallpox and plague were taking a heavy toll on people both physically and morally. There was also a religious war going on between the Catholics and the Protestants [9] and it had reached all the way to Fianarantsoa.

Ravelonjanahary's real name was Renilahy. She lived in Malonotrony, in the Iarindrano-Fianarantsoa region. She was the oldest child in a pagan family, and was called "Mama" (mother) [10] until she was married. Her father was an *ombiasa*, (wise man, healer and seer) and was very well-known in the region. People consulted him, among other things, to keep hail from falling on their rice fields or to make the crocodiles flee

when they crossed rivers. Renilahy was raised and educated in a completely pagan milieu and inherited the gift of healer and seeing from her father and paternal grandfather.

She married Rainiboto, who was also called Rainidalo. They had a daughter who died at a very young age after having a little girl of her own. They took their granddaughter in, but she also died very soon. They adopted Renilahy's nephew, Ranisana. They were a couple who lived simply, and they were well-loved by those in their community.

The spirit of an ancestor possessed Renilahy, making her life difficult and forcing her to practice certain prohibitions. For example, her plate and spoon were not to be confused with those of anyone else. She wore an amulet collar around her neck and a silver coin attached to the back of her braid.

Her conversion started in 1900. It happened gradually as a result of visions that came to her. Later, she heard a voice tell her that God had chosen her to work for Him. The job He had for her was to deliver people from whatever was holding them captive and, if they had faith in the power of God, to heal them from any sickness. If Renilahy had refused, she would have died. She asked for her husband's advice, and he advised her to accept. Another time, a voice told her to look at her hands. She looked and writing appeared. According to the voice, these were the Ten Commandments - five on each hand. The voice also told her that anyone who came to belief in God through her teaching would be healed after she laid hands on them. One Sunday, the Holy Spirit showed her all her sin, even the very least of them. She could see God's wrathful face and wanted to flee but did not know where to go. She repented, and God accepted her repentance. The amulet collar and the silver coin disappeared.

In 1910, she was about sixty years old, but still in very good health. The Holy Spirit told her that she was going to be dead for six days and that on the seventh day, she would come back to life. She told her family this news and advised them not to bury her, not to put her in an unclean house (where there were still amulets) and not to cry for her.

When the day came - a Thursday, around noon - a force carried her up to the ceiling and let her fall. She died from the fall. Her body was carried to the village where she had been born, in Lohafy, and was put in the Protestant church at Ifanda, where there was a wake with singing and praying. On the sixth day, a terrible odor came from her body, and her flesh fell off little by little, but her muscles and bones were not affected. On the seventh day, a bell rang around midnight and a pleasant odor filled the church, replacing the smell of decay. The parish pastor arrived early the next morning and found that Renilahy had come back to life and was standing next to the pulpit. She was wearing a strikingly white garment,

and her flesh had been renewed, being now like the skin of a baby. She said that during her death she had been carried to heaven, where she had sat down with angels and saints.

It is also said that two years later, God took her soul up to heaven to teach her for three days. This time, her body did not die, but God put another soul in it to keep it alive. It was in heaven that God baptized her and gave her the name Ravelonjanahary ("brought back to life by God"). God taught her the Holy Scriptures and melodious songs, which are still sung today. When she came back to earth, her marriage to Rainiboto was held as a religious ceremony.

Later, the voice of the Lord told her that she was going to die another time, but that this time it would be like the death of Jesus Christ, crucified on a cross. A force took her and held her to the wall, arms outstretched, but no one could see what was holding her there. People came to hold a wake for her and sang continuously. She died on a Friday and came back to life on Sunday. That is how God prepared her for her being sent to preach the Gospel, to deliver the demon-possessed, and to heal the sick throughout the island. She started the revival center in the protestant church of Andravoahangy Fivavahana in 1928.

Nearly the whole southern part of the region of Fianarantsoa was shaken by this revival movement. A French Protestant missionary named Siegrist attended one of the revival movement meetings held by Ravelonjanahary and reported that approximately one hundred *mpisikidy* and *mpimasy* ("traditional healers and seers") had converted and were stamping on their idols, proclaiming out loud that from then on they would only believe in Jesus Christ.

She encountered difficulties in her ministry, but never renounced the Lord. Some people who had known her before she was converted believed that what she was doing was just fakery and that she was still using her fetishes. She was taken to court for having meetings in her home without a permit and for using powerful remedies to heal people. On November 11, 1928, she was summoned to the court in Ambalavao-Tsienimparihy, which was thirty-five kilometers from Manolotrony; she made the trip on foot. A missionary came from Fianarantsoa to help her. She answered her accuser by saying that it was God who gave her the power to heal, and that she received no money from those she healed. She was acquitted for lack of proof.

The journal called *Gazety Ranovelona*, ("Living Water") [11] which was a journal for former students of the Protestant Mission, tried to clear up the events surrounding the resurrection of Ravelonjanahary in an article which was published on January 31, 1928, in Antananarivo. The

article quoted the commentary of various newspapers that had been published previously, as follows [translation by the author]:

The Malagasy newspaper *La Grande Ile* was the first to publish a report on the resurrection of Ravelonjanahary on November 17, 1927. On Friday November 25, 1927, the other papers also covered the story and people rushed to buy the papers, so much so that the police had to intervene. The next day, the rush to Malonotrony was on: wealthy people went by car, while others took the bush-taxi with their sick, hoping to get them healed. Still others were just curious.

The newspaper *La Grande Ile* published this report:

Putrefaction can only come from the dead. Was there really an occurrence of this nauseating odor that is putrefaction? If the answer is yes, then it is true that Ravelonjanahary really did rise from the dead. According to what people are saying, the blind are recovering their sight, the deaf their hearing, the mute are speaking, paralytics are standing on their feet and other ills are being healed as well. The Gospel that she is preaching to sinners is not a shame, but rather an honor for the Protestant Church... But the most remarkable thing is that Ravelonjanahary is not asking for money from anyone... The number of people who have come to see her over the last five weeks or so is up to 871, and that number includes six *vazaha* ("Europeans"). There were also Indians and Chinese, as well as childless people who came asking to have children.

The newspaper *Gazetintsika* ("Our Paper") said:

"Amazing Healing, they said!" Here in Ambalavao, there is a woman of a certain age, already known by many, who dares to say publicly that she has been sent from God. She says that about twenty years ago, she died and her body putrefied, but that she came back to life in order to heal the sick. She is a Protestant, and it is reasonable that her co-religionists believe in her... Dear Catholic friends, why do you allow yourselves to be influenced by such things, especially you who have spent a lot of money and have come from afar to Ambalavao? Many of you have already come here - ask them if they have been healed or not. As for those of you who are sick and want to be healed, and for those of you who have

sick family members and want the best for them, why are you all driving like mad to the Betsileo? The road to Tsienimparihy is worn down from so much travel... Instead of spending your money for gas, spend it on medications and spare your sick all the troubles of traveling, which will only make their sickness worse! I'm not telling you lies or falsehoods, but if you don't believe me, ask the other families who have already come, and they will tell you the truth.

According to the newspaper *Diavolana* ("Moonlight"):

If Ravelonjanahary is not telling the truth about her resurrection, then has Jesus Christ entered into a woman who is a liar? She is only doing good works in order to save souls, and she preaches only Jesus Christ... We have right here before us people who have been healed or who are being healed according to the strength of their faith, and who have received the grace of the Lord Jesus. These are people who are trusted by the state and the church, people who don't spend their time trying to think up ways to cheat and tell lies... According to one journalist, no one who was sick has really been healed. Perhaps he didn't want to hear the truth or didn't want to find out everything he could about the topic. As for me, I'd say that many of the sick have really been healed and that others are on the path to healing. I have already met and spoken with many of them.

The newspaper *Fahasambarana* ("Happiness") said:

God has chosen Ravelonjanahary to do miracles for Him. If you don't agree, all of you doctors, theologians, philosophers, etc., that's your business. As for us, there's no disputing it - someone who is dead is dead. We don't know whether it's a scientific death, or a philosophical or a theological one... If you say that you can make mistakes, we're here to confirm that, yes, you can make mistakes. She (Ravelonjanahary) told a man who had been paralyzed on one side for five years: "Go and plunge your right hand into the first river you come to, then run it over the inert side of your body, and you will be healed." He did as she said, and he was healed. He was an Indian, and he is presently in Ambalavao. To another person who has had asthma for twenty-four years, she said, "Believe in Jesus" and the person was healed... The important thing for her is that people believe in Jesus - healing can come

later. The wisdom that God has given her is quite useful and she deserves to be respected.

Finally, the newspaper *Gazety Ranovelona* ("Fresh Water") had this to say, by way of conclusion:

Based on what we have read, people have different opinions about Ravelonjanahary. But there is a great lesson to be learned from this woman: respect for everyone's conscience. She is a Protestant, but she exerts no influence on people to follow her in that. She asks that people who are already in a denomination not change their faith. She invites those who are still outside the church to enter it as they wish.

Neny Ravelonjanahary ("Mother" Ravelonjanahary - among the Malagasy people this epithet is a sign of respect for her age and her mission) always told people who came to her that she was not the one doing the healing, but that it was Jesus, if they would trust in Him and in His power. When her mission started, Ravelonjanahary received people at home. Later, as there were so many people, the evangelization meetings would take place in the church, and she would see people in her home in turn. Given how many people there were, some waited weeks for her, but they did not lose their patience. They stayed in the few small hamlets that were there, or set up tents, or waited in their cars.

Ravelonjanahary lived simply. God transformed her so that she would live in humility, in faith, and in love for other people. She was called *Ravelonjanahary, mpanetry tena, mpivavaka ho an'ny firenena* (Ravelonjanahary, woman of humility, who prays for her country).

Ravelonjanahary died on November 8, 1970, in Manoloatry, about 120 years old. Manoloatry has become a place of pilgrimage and now welcomes people who come for a retreat, to pray or to be healed. Other revival centers linked to the revival movement of Manoloatry have sprung up almost everywhere in Madagascar.

Nenilava (Volahavana), Germaine
1920 to 1998
Lutheran
Madagascar

In the course of the last hundred-plus years, there have been four revival movements [12] of national significance in Madagascar, all of which have their roots in the established churches. The first revival movement sprang

out of the Lutheran Protestant Church. This movement was followed by revivals in the Protestant Reformed Church, the Anglican Church and the Catholic Church. These movements have become pillars of strength in the churches of Madagascar and have been legitimized by church authorities. Germaine Volahavana, now known as Nenilava, gave birth to the fourth Revival Movement, centered in Ankaramalaza.

Volahavana is the name she was given at birth. Her father, Malady, was from the Antaimoro tribe and was of royal birth. Both king (*ampanjaka*) and healer/seer (*ombiasa*), he was well-known and well-respected in the region. Her mother's name was Vao. The family lived in Mandronda, in the canton of Lokomby, in the district of Manakara. Volahavana had several brothers and sisters and was the third of the four girls.

Volahavana's entire childhood was spent in a pagan context, and she did not like what her father did as a healer. Sometimes she even denigrated him in the presence of his clients and told him that she did not like these gods that always needed someone to interpret them to others. This made her father quite angry.

Volahavana also used to ask, "Can God be seen?" She wanted to come to know almighty God, if he existed. She did not feel like playing with the other children but preferred being alone so that she could nurture this constant feeling. When she was about ten years old, God began to reveal himself to Volahavana before she was even a Christian. It began with dreams: every night a tall man robed in white would take her to a large stone building. He would wash her feet and dry them with a towel, and then lay her on a bed and rock her to sleep. Then, at dawn, he would take her back home. In another dream, she would see herself being caught in a net and lifted up to heaven. These two dreams came to her regularly until she was twelve years old.

After that, the dreams stopped and Volahavana constantly heard a voice calling her name towards the middle of the day. She would run home to see if her parents were calling her, but it just made them laugh; they thought she was crazy. She would then go outside and find refuge under a tree. She cleaned up the area around the tree and spent her time there crying or thinking about this God that she did not yet know. She often went there when her soul was troubled or hurt.

When she was fifteen years old [13] she received several marriage proposals, but since she had never thought about marriage, she turned them down. Her parents were confused by these refusals, and sent her to live with her sister in Manakara. She only spent one year there, preferring to return to the village in order to not be tempted by city life.

Malady could tell that his daughter's behavior was different from that of the other children, so he consulted his *sikidy* (oracle) and was

overwhelmed by the answer. He discovered, in fact, that there was a greater spirit, a supreme God, living in his child. Volahavana was the queen, and he, her father, was the slave -- which seemed completely illogical to him. He became convinced that the God of Volahavana was the supreme and just God, the God above all the other gods. From then on, Malady put his idols aside and told his family that they needed to obey the God of Volahavana. He also prophesied that he would die two years after the start of Volahavana's ministry -- and that prophecy came true a few years later.

Her parents finally tired of her constantly turning down marriage proposals and pressured her into marrying Mosesy Tsirefo, a sixty-one year old catechist who was a widower and father of several children from his first wife. Volahavana had to take catechism classes in order to be baptized, which was a requirement for her Christian marriage. She learned the catechism lessons sufficiently well in two weeks, and was baptized in 1935 in Lokombo by Pastor Ramasivelo, taking Germaine as her baptismal name. After her marriage to Mosesy Tsirefo had been blessed by the church, they went to live in Ankaramalaza, [14] where her husband continued to teach her about the Christian religion. He was also helped in this by Pastor Rakotovoao and Pastor Bernard Radafy.

God called Volahavana to serve him when she was twenty-one years old. One of Mosesy Tsirefo's daughters was sick, and possessed by an evil spirit. The catechist Petera de Vohidrafy was present and was trying to exorcise her. Volahavana was busy lighting the fire for cooking, when a voice suddenly ordered her to get up and to do something for the child. When she hesitated, an invisible force shoved her and placed her in front of the girl. She put her arms around her and struggled with her for a long time in this manner. At length, the evil spirit that was in the girl said, "We are going to leave, because the One who is stronger than we are is coming." Then a miracle happened: the young girl was healed and came back to her senses.

That miracle happened on Wednesday, August 1, 1941. On that night leading to the next morning, [15] Jesus told the three people who were present at the healing, Volahavana, Mosesy Tsirefo, and Petera de Vohidrafy to "Get up, preach the Good News to the whole world. Chase the demons out. Commit yourselves...and do not delay. The time has come for the Son of man to be glorified in the Matitanana and Ambohibe tribes. I have chosen you for this mission. I command you to carry it out."

The two catechists accepted readily, but Volahavana refused, saying that she was still young, that she did not know the Holy Scriptures and that she would not know how to preach. Nonetheless, Jesus persisted, telling her, "Get up and spread the Good News all around." She submitted, but made a deal with Jesus by asking Him to tell her ahead of time what she

would have to say, and Jesus consented.

Catechist Petera de Vohidravay had already begun his mission as an evangelist when Volahavana joined his work. Some from Petera's group were jealous and mockingly gave her the nickname *Neuilava*, which literally means "big mother." They did this to make fun of her height, because she was relatively tall for a Malagasy woman. Volahavana stood her ground and made no reply, but prayed, "Jesus, I'm ready to accept this 'Neuilava' nickname, but may your power be proclaimed throughout the world through it." Her prayer was answered; she came to be known by that name through her mission and miracles happened through it. In fact, many people only knew her by that name.

As for her training, Jesus did not forget his promise, and granted her the gift of tongues, also teaching her the Holy Scriptures. Neuilava spent three months learning to speak the languages that she would eventually use to learn the Holy Scriptures. She was taught by Jesus himself. First, he taught her the twelve principal languages of the world, then he used them to converse with her. From that time forward, she spoke all twelve of those languages fluently.

Neuilava only used the gift of tongues to speak with Jesus, and not as the basis for her teaching. In the beginning of her ministry, she often spoke with Jesus in tongues, but later, she asked him to not use that gift when she was with other people, so that people with ill intentions would not be able to imitate her or use her to their own ends.

To teach her, Jesus used a white writing board and wrote on it in white as well. He wrote from top to bottom, as with Chinese writing. The lessons were held in a calm place either at home or in the forest, and the writing board was hung on the wall or from branches. Sometimes Jesus used a large book with very fine pages on which he wrote in white writing. In order to read it, Neuilava knelt all the way down to the ground. During the lessons, Jesus whispered words in her ear. When Mosesy Tsirefo saw her kneeling like that at home, he thought she was in prayer.

In order to teach her the Holy Scriptures, Jesus took her up to heaven seven times in three days. First, Jesus told her that she was going to die on Friday at 11:00 AM. Right away, the faithful from all over the district were told about it, and all those who could come did so - even distant parishes sent representatives. Pastor Rajaona Salema was present as well. There was a constant succession of Bible readings and prayers.

Neuilava lay down on a bed draped in white to wait for the appointed time. Her body was covered with a white sheet except for her face, which was left uncovered. The ascension of her soul took place slowly. All those present were around her bed praying and singing continually for three days, awaiting her return. Her parents became discouraged and

thought that she would not be returning, as it seemed to be taking a long time, but the Christians who were there fasted until she came back.

After three days, Nenilava came back on Sunday at 8:00 AM. Coming down from the bed, she preached the word of God from I Corinthians 15:55, "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" Jesus had taught her the four gospels.

Jesus then told Nenilava that she would have to fight with the dragon in order to harden her, because her mission would be one in which there would be no rest. This fight to the death lasted for three days. Jesus was always at her side. On the third day of fighting she defeated the beast in the name of Jesus. Following that victory, she fasted for two and a half months, during which time she ate only small white balls that looked like the host from the Lord's Supper.

When her mission began, there were twenty-eight young people working with her in Ankaramalaza. She began her evangelization campaign in her own region, near Manakara and Vohipeno. Her husband worked with her until his death in 1949. After that, Nenilava was invited to come to various churches and began to leave her region, starting in Antsirabe - which is where the central headquarters of the Norwegian Lutheran Mission was located -- and continuing in that vicinity. She then went up to Imerina, the capital city Antananarivo, and the surrounding area. From there, she responded to many invitations to visit other regions - Tamatave, Majunga, and even out to the Comoros Islands. In 1973, she also went abroad to follow up on invitations from several churches. She was accompanied by Mrs. Razanamiadana, a shepherdess-evangelist. During these visits, she was able to give her witness to the word of God to various audiences.

Accompanied by her collaborators and friends, Nenilava was accustomed to working with pastors and churches. Wherever she was, people came from all around to pray, to receive care or to be exorcised, and still others brought their sick. There were miracles: blind people recovered their sight, sick people were healed, and even personal or family problems were resolved. She kept the same practices wherever she went: prayer, preaching of the good news, exorcism (*asa*) and the laying on of hands accompanied by encouraging and comforting words (*fampaherezana*) drawn from Bible verses.

In 1973, when the King of Norway asked her to describe her work, she answered: "I preach the gospel, I heal the mentally ill, I educate young delinquents, raise up infants and the elderly."

Through her ongoing ministry, the *Toby Ankaramalaza* (Revival center of Ankaramalaza) gradually became a place where people could come. Once they had been healed either physically or morally, most people

settled there, because they did not want to go back home. Little by little, the center built a school for children and a dispensary. Potable water in the form of drinking fountains along the road and electricity came later. Nenilava also built the cathedral she dreamed of building, based on a cathedral she had seen in Norway.

Gradually, annexes of the Toby Ankaramalaza were built here and there throughout Madagascar, such as the one in the Ambohibao area of the capital, built in the 1980s; and another in the French village of Pours St. Rémy, located near Charleville-Mezières, which was built in the 1990s.

After 1975, her travels gradually wound down, and she lived most of the year in her home, which was built in the Revival Center of Ambohibao.

Thanks to Nenilava's ministry, many Malagasy, Europeans and Africans received Jesus, were delivered from the grasp of sin and enslavement to the Devil, and came to the knowledge of new life and the peace and light of the Holy Spirit. Nenilava never claimed to be a prophetess, but her deeds and her words of truth bore witness to her gift.

Nenilava adopted children. These came to her from the children's biological parents out of thanksgiving for God's answers to their prayers. She not only took care of their spiritual education, but like all parents, she took care of their general education as well, so that they would be well-rounded in every aspect of their lives. Also, throughout the island, as well as elsewhere, she had spiritual children who were attached to her, and she loved them and prayed for them.

Nenilava's childhood wishes were granted: she was able to meet this Almighty God that she wanted to know, and to know his power through her mission. Her wish to go up to heaven was also realized.

Nenilava died in 1998 in her home in the Revival Center in Ambohibao-Antananarivo and her body was carried to the village where she was born. Mourners buried her within the walls of the Toby Ankaramalaza. Like a good, loving mother, she had set a good example and had left it to her children and to her co-workers to continue the work of evangelization and the works of good will that she had begun, in faith and in love for one another. [16]

Notes:

1. The LMS (London Missionary Society) arrived in the Betsileo region in 1870 through the person of Rev. Richardson, who lived in Fianarantsoa.

2. There are eighteen different tribes in Madagascar, each with their own customs and language, but they can understand and talk to each other in the official languages of Madagascar, Malagasy and French.
3. The first twelve disciples (apostles)—all men—of this revival movement were Rajeremia, Raintiaray, Razanabelo, Rasoarimanga, Ratahina, Reniestera, Ralohotsy, Rasamy, Ramanjatoela, Razanamanga, Rasoambola.
4. In Soatanàna, up until the time of the revival, and especially in the villages, houses were built with rooms open to the kitchen, so as to conserve warmth in the winter. Since people cooked on a wood fire, the ceilings were often black with soot. Chickens had also been kept inside, but were now put outside so that houses could be kept clean.
5. Soatanàna is a Norwegian mission station that was established by a missionary named Lindo in 1877. Missionary Théodor Olsen took his place in 1891, and was a witness to the birth of the revival movement (1895).
6. According to Malagasy custom, the dead were supposed to be buried in the family tomb. If someone died far from their natal village, one year after the burial, if possible, the family brought the body home to be buried there.
7. *The Natives Law* was adopted June 28, 1881. In 1887 the French government put it into effect in all of its colonies. In general terms, the law subjected natives and immigrant workers to forced labor, forbade them to travel at night, made them subject to searches and to a tax on their reserves, and subjected them to a whole range of similarly degrading measures. It was a booklet of discretionary measures that intended to make sure that “good colonial order,” the order that was based on the institutionalization of the inequality of justice, was always in effect. This code was constantly “improved” so as to adapt the interests of the colonizers to the “realities of the land.” *The Natives Law* differentiated between two categories of citizens: French citizens (of metropolitan origin) and French subjects, that is, black Africans, Malagasy, Algerians, Antilleans, Melanesians, etc., as well as immigrant workers. French subjects who were in subjection to the Natives Law were deprived of the greater part of their freedom and political rights; on the civilian level, they retained only their personal status, whether that was of customary or of religious origin. *The Natives Law* was replete with all manner of prohibitions, and infringement was punishable by imprisonment or deportation. This

- system of social and legal inequality lasted until 1946, which is several years after the Geneva Accords (April 23, 1938) had forbidden all forms of forced labor. (Quotation from the Web site http://www.tlfg.ulaval.ca/axl/afrique/indigenat_code.html, consulted in March 2009, ["L'aménagement linguistique dans le monde," authored by Jacques Leclerc, associate member of the TLFQ]).
8. The newspaper *Mifoha I Madagasikara* ("Madagascar Wakes Up") strove to destroy superstition as well as belief in God; the paper *Masoandro* ("The Sun") also aimed to destroy the Christian faith by presenting the scientific side of things and the "scientific" truth.
 9. On the war of religion between Catholics and Protestants: When Madagascar was colonized by France (1896), the Jesuits took advantage of the situation and declared that the Malagasy people should also be Catholic. They took over the Protestant churches by force, and those who continued to frequent them were required to become Catholics.
 10. Concerning "Mama" or mother: in a Malagasy family, it is customary for children to have nicknames. The oldest girl is either called *ramatoa* (eldest girl), or "mama" or mother, as she is the one who takes care of her brothers and sisters, and who is responsible for all the household work.
 11. *Ranovelona* is the journal of the former protestant students of the School of the Protestant Mission (Foreign Friends Mission Association, or FFMA) in North Ambohitato, later called Paul Minault School.
 12. The four great revival movements that occurred in Madagascar are the following: the revival movement in Soatanàna with Rainisoalambo (1894), the revival movement in Manolotrony with Ravelonjanahary (1927), the revival movement in Farihimena with Daniel Rakotozandriny (1939), and the revival center in Ankaramalaza with Nenilava (1941).
 13. In former times, young Malagasy girls generally got married around age fifteen. Only boys were allowed to go to school. Girls helped their mothers at home while they waited to be married. A family was dishonored if a young girl of marriageable age stayed at home and continued living with her parents.
 14. Ankaramalaza is a small town located about twenty kilometers north of Vohipeno. Before that, it was a pasture and a cultivated field that Mosesy Tsirefo had asked of Malady, Nenilava's father, so that he

- could grow coffee, bananas, oranges and rice there. Mosesy had then built a house there for himself and his family, and another one for his workers. After the death of his wife, he married Germaine Volahavana (Nenilava), who came and lived with him there. It was only after 1953 that the place began to be called a "revival center" because a lot of sick people had already been coming there.
15. August 1 and August 2 are remembered every year at the Toby Ankaramalaza, and the 2nd of August is reserved for the consecration of future shepherds. Every year there is a significant pilgrimage there. The Ankaramalaza annex centers (toby) are represented there every year, as well as the other centers of the revival movement.
 16. I [the author] am also grateful to God because although I had heard of Nenilava in my youth, it wasn't until many years later that I decided to meet her at the Toby Ambohibao in 1997. I was consecrated there as a "shepherdess: of the "Santatra" level, ("Santatra" means "first fruits"). Santatra is the name she had given to the first group, or level, of shepherds, right at the beginning of her ministry. While she was still living, she herself gave the names. After she died, starting in 1998, the office of the revival center in Ankaramalaza decided to give the subsequent groups the same names that she had given to the very first groups.

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Recent Print and Digital Resources Related to Christianity in Africa

Holder Rich, Cynthia. *The Fifohazana: Madagascar's indigenous Christian Movement*, 2008. Amherst, New York: Cambria Press. \$49.99 - \$109.91. ISBN-13: 978-1604975819

“ . . . This volume provides the reader with a very clear understanding of what the Fifohazana movement is all about historically, theologically, in terms of the main characters involved, its tremendous contributions to what a Christian healing ministry might ideally be, and as it relates to the larger world of church and society. The book is strengthened by the contributions of a diverse international group of scholars and participants in the movement. This has fostered the creation of an authentic piece of research, which combines the actual voices of participants within the movement itself along with the perspectives of scholars, who analyze the movement from the external periphery. This is the first book-length treatment of the Fifohazana in English. Editor Cynthia Holder Rich has gathered contributions from authors from five countries, including several members of the movement, to offer several perspectives onto the history and current life of the movement. Articles include analysis of major movement leaders, the place of healing in the movement, history of the conflict between the missions and the movement, the significance of oral expression in proclamation and as a means of revival, the role of women as leaders in the movement, and theological issues. The Fifohazana is one of the most intriguing current instances of indigenous Christianity in the world. While the movement has greatly evolved and changed in over a century, Jesus continues to appear and raise up new leaders. Various branches of the movement have developed a variety of institutions, but the movement has not lost its power of transformation and change.” (Excerpt from description, [Amazon](#))

Holder Rich, Cynthia. *Indigenous Christianity in Madagascar: the power to heal in community*, 2011.

\$41.31 - \$78.95. New York: Peter Lang, Inc. ISBN-13: 978-1433114168

“ . . . In this volume, the movement’s strategies for caring in community are explored, particularly focusing on understandings and uses of power among the powerless. The book includes discussion of power use and abuse by colonial, missionary, ecclesial, national, and international forces, analyzes relationships between the powerful and powerless, asks theological

questions about power and the Jesus movement worldwide, and invites conversation on the potential power of the building of communities of care for people with mental illness in other contexts globally, to work toward healing, justice, and health.” (Excerpt from description, [Amazon](#))

Rasolondraibe, Seth. Le ministère de ‘berger’ dans les Églises protestantes de Madagascar, Fifohazana et Reforme dans le protestantisme. 2013. \$39.99. Cumbria, UK: Langham Monographs. ISBN-13: 978-1783689996

Les mouvements de Réveil ou le « ministère des mpiandry » (le premier initié par Rainisoalambo en 1894) existent aujourd’hui dans la plupart des Églises protestantes historiques de Madagascar, inspirant et influençant profondément leurs vies et leurs ministères. Ces mouvements ont toujours engendré des tensions et des conflits entre eux et les institutions protestantes. Cet ouvrage examine les différents aspects de ces conflits et s’intéresse également à l’apparition du « ministère de berger » que les mouvements de Réveil ont engendré. / The Revival Movements or the "Mpiandry Ministry" (the first of what was initiated by Rainisoalambo in 1894) exist today in most of the historical Protestant churches of Madagascar, inspiring and profoundly influencing their lives and their ministries. These movements have always led to tensions and conflicts between them and Protestant institutions. This book examines the different aspects of these conflicts and is also interested in the emergence of the “shepherd ministry” that the Revival movements have engendered. (Excerpt from description, [Amazon](#))

Skjortnes, Marianne. Restoring Dignity in Rural and Urban Madagascar: On How Religion Creates New Life-stories. 2014. \$81.95. New York: Peter Lang, Inc. ISBN: 9781454197669

Christian churches across the world such as the Lutheran church in Madagascar have long been engaged in what we would today term “development.” The church has been deeply involved in humanitarian assistance and development work, especially in the areas of education and health. *Restoring Dignity in Rural and Urban Madagascar* analyzes this phenomenon and presents stories of human dignity in the lives of the people in this society, a society that survives in a context of vulnerability, both social and economic. The stories show how everyday life is lived despite unfulfilled needs and when decent living conditions are but a dream. The book is primarily concerned with a commitment to Christianity in a

changing society and focuses on church members' experiences of the development work of the Lutheran church in their everyday lives. Christian faith and Christian values such as human dignity, ethics, and belonging represent added values to these people and express value systems that are tied to ethical reflection and moral action. For those who choose to participate in the church's development work and spiritual activity, therefore, new ethical standards and norms are created. This approach challenges the traditional emphasis on cultural continuity to explain the sudden change in values that people say that they have experienced. (Excerpt from description, [Peter Lang](#))

Open Access: Theses & Dissertations

Ogilvie, Kevin Ahnfeldt. Breaking words: towards a Malagasy oral theology of homiletics. PhD Thesis, 2010.

<http://hdl.handle.net/10413/3463>

This study uncovers the underpinnings of a Malagasy Lutheran oral theology of homiletics. Using original sermons collected in the field from a cross section of Lutheran preachers and places in Madagascar this study is anchored in contextual materials. To the close readings of these materials the author brings anthropological, textual and Biblical exegetical methodologies for their analysis. Making the distinction between oral and literate composition and cultures, using the theories of Werner Kelber, Walter Ong, Eric Havelock, et al., the author demonstrates the oral structure of the socio-intellectual milieu of Malagasy society. In order to display this mindset in Malagasy theological thinking, this study sets the Malagasy exegesis of the Longer Ending of Mark's Gospel against the horizon of Kebler's theory regarding the written gospel as a "parable of absence" in the main body of the Gospel of Mark. This study makes manifest the Malagasy theology of presence, an oral theology. Framing his research with the Fifohazana (Revival) movement, the author briefly surveys the history of Christian missions in Madagascar. This history serves to demonstrate Western missionary literate culture and theology entering into dialogue with the oral culture of Madagascar and the subsequent indigenization of Christianity in the Fifohazana movement. This Fifohazana serves as a paradigm of the Malagasy homiletic and oral theology. Key leading figures of this movement, Rainisoalambo and Volahavana Germaine (Nenilava) are discussed. Extensive appendices of original Malgasy material, while not forming part of the body of the thesis, are provided for reference. [Excerpts from the Abstract]

Rafanomezantsoa, Roger. The contribution of Rainisoalambo (1844-1904), the father of revivals, to the indigenization of the Protestant churches in Madagascar: a historical perspective. Masters Thesis. University of Kwazulu-Natal, 2011. <http://hdl.handle.net/10413/2599>

“This research aims to carry out a historical analysis of ‘the contribution of Rainisoalambo, the father of revivals, to the indigenization of the Protestant churches in Madagascar’ and also to enrich the field of historical research for the Church in Madagascar. The revival movement is rooted in the Protestant Church history, so this research is intended to study the concept of indigenization through the preaching, sermons and teachings of Rainisoalambo. There are two main Protestant churches in Madagascar: the Reformed Church (FJKM) and the Lutheran (FLM). The revival found within these churches inspired me to think about the power behind the Church growth in my country. Rainisoalambo contextualized the Gospel. He used indigenization as a strategy and its principles as a source of vitality for the Malagasy Protestant churches. He did not teach a new doctrine either. He helped the people of God to express their faith in Malagasy culture. In the 20th century, the revival movement shifted from the perception of mass conversion and dramatic social changes to the revitalization of God’s people. Therefore, the fundamental question is: ‘What is the major contribution of Rainisoalambo as the father of revivals, to the indigenization of the Protestant churches in Madagascar?’ My hypothesis is that the revival of Rainisoalambo made a major contribution to the indigenization of churches in Madagascar. Since “indigenization” is mainly the key word to be understood for this research, this study adopts a theoretical framework, which is informed by concept of cultural translation and phenomenological approach. Since this research uses a historical perspective, it is important to practice the historical methodology: data collection for primary and secondary sources, potential oral interviews, criticism of data through assessing the genuineness of information sources and the presentation of information in accurate and readable form. The analytical approach is adopted in this theoretical framework. In spite of times, the majority of data collected will be enough to accomplish this work.” [Excerpts from the Abstract]

Razafimahatratra, Raymond. The sustaining power of the Bible to the martyrs during the persecution in Madagascar from 1828-1861: historical and hermeneutical analysis. Masters Thesis. University of KwaZulu-Natal, 2011. <http://hdl.handle.net/10413/3824>

“This thesis comprises six chapters. Chapter one consists of the statement of the research problem...and motivation for the research...The aim of chapter two is to give the background information of the people of

Madagascar in general, and the Merina in particular. It gives a general understanding of their world. It includes a brief description of the island and its population, the location of the Merina and their origin, also their traditional beliefs and religion, the attempts of the early Catholic missionaries to evangelize the island and Radama's contract with Great Britain. Chapter three deals with the first encounters between the Bible and Merina Christians around the capital of Antananarivo. It highlights the arrival of the first LMS missionaries and their mission in and around the city of Antananarivo, the presence of the Bible in the highlands and the use of it as a text book in schools. From that moment the Merina population sensed that the Bible had power; as a result their interest to get copies of it grew throughout the capital and the surrounding villages. Chapter four provides information about the uncertainty of Christianity in Madagascar. It was uncertain because of the death of Radama, friend of the missionaries, and the accession of Ranavalona I, an anti-Christian queen, to the throne as his successor. It continues with the dusk: a period of confirming the church, then the queen's edicts against the converts. It ends up with the edition of the Bible, translated into the Malagasy language. The focus of chapter five is the sustaining power of the Bible during persecutions. First of all it considers the causes of the persecutions, then the role of the Bible in the Malagasy language in the hands of Christians. After that it speaks of the use of the Bible by the indigenous Christians and the power they gained from it during times of persecution. It also speaks about the edict of the queen to collect all the Bibles and burn them, and how the Christians managed to save some and hide them. Then it concentrates on the three waves of martyrdom, in 1837-1842, 1849 and 1857. Lastly it highlights the courage of these martyrs until death with the Bible in their hands and the contribution of the Bible to the growth of Christianity in Imerina during the persecution. Chapter six will be the conclusion of the thesis. It underlines three aspects of the Bible and its encounters with the martyr church. It considers, in the first aspect, the effects of the translation of the Bible into the Malagasy language. The second aspect deals with the interaction of the Bible with the Malagasy culture and context; and the last is about the power of the Bible itself. The very last paragraph will try to prompt a further research on the Bible and its impact in Madagascar after Ranavalona's death." [Excerpts from the Abstract]

Open Access: Historical Works

Ellis, William. The martyr church; a narrative of the introduction, progress and triumph of Christianity in Madagascar, with notices of

personal intercourse and travel in the island. 1869. [Boston, MA]: Boston Congregational Sabbath School and Publishing Society.

<https://archive.org/details/martyrchurchnarr1869elli>

Excerpt from the Preface, (p. a-iv) “The present volume is offered to the Christian public . . . for a more complete account than has been hitherto given of the Martyr Church of Madagascar, including the progress of Christianity in that country, from its introduction to its recent and marvellous extension among the people. . . . The present work is confined chiefly to an account of the growth of Christianity among the inhabitants of the capital and the central provinces, its reception by the sovereign, many of the government officers, civilians, and general population. . . .”

Freeman, Joseph J. and David Johns. A narrative of the persecution of the Christians in Madagascar; with details of the escape of six Christian refugees now in England. 1840. London: J.

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Excerpt from the Preface, (p. a2) “. . . The following narrative has been drawn up in compliance with the suggestions of many valued friends, who have wished to be in possession of a succinct and authentic account of the circumstances connected with the Christian church in Madagascar and especially with the escape of the six refugees who have been now nearly a year in England. . . .”