

**STORIES OF FAITH AND
LEADERSHIP FROM AFRICA**

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**Select Biographies of Leaders from the
Continent's Rich Christian History**

Kyama Mugambi, Ed.

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Dedicated to our Fathers and Mothers in the Faith.

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Introduction

Kyama M. Mugambi

The story of Christianity on the continent is a story of how God's Truth in the Person of Jesus Christ crosses geographic, social, cultural, and even gender barriers. Here we see struggle and triumph, victory and persecution. The story of Christianity is also about Africans engaging their minds, theologically, as they sought to understand and present the Messiah as best as they could. African scholars contributed to orthodoxy, the quest to find and communicate the correct, accepted Christian doctrine. In the story you meet different kinds of leaders who showed courage, and fortitude as they engaged in mission, presenting the Gospel to their generation, in their context. This story is both about historic mission churches and indigenous new expressions. It is as much about women as it is about men. It is as much about the youth as it is about older people. This short book tries to capture all these elements through just a few representative stories.

In this book you will find narratives about African leaders whose lives left a mark not just on the continent, but in the history of the entire Christian community. Their lives are by no means the most important. In fact these stories represent a great many leaders whose contributions have not been preserved in writing. Their names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life, and in hearts of those they served during their lives.

Christianity on the continent begins in the Bible, where Africa and Africans are mentioned often as a part of the redemption narrative spanning both the New and Old Testament. During the short period of infanticide instigated by Herod, Jesus and his earthly family sought refuge in Egypt. We also know that Simon of Cyrene [Libya] was present during the Passion of Christ. We cannot be certain of his faith thereafter, but we know that Simon's fellow countrymen and women were present at Pentecost praising God along with other Africans in Acts 2. The book of Acts records the stories of different Africans' interaction with Christianity in such passages as Acts 8 and 13. The book of Acts shows us how Christianity begins as a story of triumph in the presence of much struggle.

We begin this collection of stories with two young African women from Ancient North Africa who, like their counterparts in Africa today,

embody those two strands of the Christian narrative – triumph and struggle. Felicitas and Perpetua from Tunisia were martyred (203) like thousands of other Christians. They model for us the high cost paid by vulnerable people for the sake of the Cross. They stood firm until their last moments refusing to deny their heavenly Savior, Jesus Christ. Like Perpetua and Felicitas many pay a high price for being Christians in Africa and beyond. In a world that is, in many places, becoming increasingly intolerant of the Gospel, these women remind us what it takes to be a people of faith.

The story of Christianity in Africa is not just a story of persecution, but also a story of “faith seeking understanding.” Tertullian (160-240) from Tunisia sought to find and celebrate the truth of Christ. He drew from his experience as a lawyer to explain what he understood about the Gospel. In the process he identified categories that were useful in explaining such concepts as the Trinity. Origen (185-255) from Egypt is perhaps the most underrated theologian from Ancient Africa. He was a prolific writer who made important contributions to Christian theology. He is credited for the beginnings of what we today call Systematic Theology. Anthony (250-356) of Egypt was a man full of the Holy Spirit, and who sought to live an exemplary life of worship to God. His life became an inspiration for monastic life which 500 years later became an anchor for Christian mission and scholarship in the Western world.

Athanasius (298-273), another Egyptian, rose to be a preacher and leader of the church in Egypt. His contributions to understanding, explaining and establishing a clear understanding of the Trinity are a part of his great legacy to the church worldwide. A short while later, Augustine from Tunisia became one of the most important theologians who shaped theological reflection in Europe and beyond. Like Timothy in the Bible, Augustine’s faith benefited from the prayers and support of a believing mother, Monica (331-387). Augustine’s mother gives us a story of faith illustrating the important role of women of faith in preparing the next generation of leaders. For 100 years, Augustine’s (354-430) writings were essential core texts for theological reflection for medieval, Reformation and Evangelical thought. Though not much of it is available in English today, the story of African Christianity in the middle ages is rich with examples of selfless Christian leaders who did as much as they could to promote the Gospel.

After the early years, we pick up this narrative with the biography of Zara Yakub (1399-1468), one of the greatest emperors in ancient Ethiopia. Not only did he try to forcefully advance the cause of the Gospel through his political power, he was also a theologian in his own right. His use of what he had, his theology as well as his leadership role, is a demonstration of his commitment to his faith. Mvemba Nzinga (1461-1543) represents a different kind of leader who wasn't necessarily a theologian. Nzinga was the monarch of the famed Kingdom of Congo. With his limited understanding of his new faith in Christ, he did all he could to establish Christianity in his Kingdom. His own son, Henrique was consecrated as the first known African Bishop in Central Africa long before Protestantism arrived on the continent. The growth of Christianity benefited over the years from leaders who preached and interpreted the faith in local languages to make it relevant for their context. Kimpa Vita (1685-1706), also from Congo, stands as an early example of a growing community of leaders whose service helped the faith take root among Africans. Her illustrious short life is one more example of many women leaders on the continent who exemplified the kind of courage and commitment required of Christians by the gospel.

Mission is another important strand which continues to shape Christianity on the continent. The story of Samuel Ajayi Crowther (1810-1891) is the story of mission and leadership. Crowther, a freed Nigerian slave, lived a life of service helping evangelize, translate the Bible and lead Anglican churches. He is an early example of indigenous leadership of historic mission churches that became responsible for the exponential growth of Christianity on the continent. William Wadé Harris (1860-1929) also represents mission and leadership, but like Kimpa Vita, he is a pioneer of a more indigenous expression of Christianity. Harris preaching in Liberia, Ghana, and Cote d'Ivoire launched churches whose worship, practice, and theology resonated with Africans much more than historic mission churches. Like Harris, Simon Kimbangu (1890-1951) from Congo also exemplifies the important role of indigenous missionaries.

Much of the 20th century growth of Christianity in Africa occurred in expressions of Christianity that prioritized the person and work of the Holy Spirit in the Christian. One of the most powerful of these expressions was the East African Revival, also known as the Balokole Movement. This was a wave of repentance, and fervent commitment to Christ that swept through

East African historic mission churches from the 1930s to the 1980s. William Nagenda (1912-1973) was an important leader in the movement whose sermons and testimonies emphasized Christian accountability, which Revivalists often referred to as “walking in the light of God.” Another enduring expression of African Christianity came in the form of Pentecostal/Charismatic churches. Though very diverse in theology and worship, the churches collectively celebrate the work of the Holy Spirit while maintaining a fervent commitment to evangelism. Nicholas Bhengu (1909-1985) from South Africa is an example of early Pentecostal preachers whose evangelistic work is celebrated all over Africa and beyond. Benson Idahosa from Nigeria represents a generation of visionary African Pentecostals who founded strong movements whose impact still reverberates across the continent today. His church and mission school became the inspiration for numerous movements scattered all over the continent.

While celebrating the phenomenal expansion Pentecostal/Charismatic churches it is easy to miss the slower, but steady growth of historic mission churches all over Africa. These denominations nurtured hard working, devoted indigenous leaders. We narrow our focus on Kenya, where we examine a select group of these leaders. Ezekiel Birech (1910-2000) served as a respected bishop within the Africa Inland Church (a product of the American African Inland Mission). Festo Olang’ (1914-2004) became the first African bishop of the Anglican Church in Kenya, (ACK). He was a devout member of the East African Revival. Some of the leaders of historic mission churches had an impact across several movements. Peter Macharia Kinyanjui’s (1921-2003) story reveals a unique engagement by one leader with the Catholic, Anglican and Indigenous movements.

It must not be forgotten that Christianity is a movement for all generations. The growth of the church in Africa always included the young people. David Gitari (1937-2013) was a pioneer leader who began his leadership journey as a Christian student leader and continued to make his mark as an Anglican Bishop. His courageous sermons condemning injustices perpetrated by the Kenyan government in the 1990s are an often quoted example of the prophetic role of the church in society. The story of the church in Africa would not be complete without a mention of the founders of modern Pentecostal/Charismatic movements that continue to

shape the story of Christianity on the continent. Joe Kayo (1936) who was once a youth leader, became the founder of the Deliverance Church. The Deliverance Church is an indigenous Pentecostal movement that is representative of thousands of Pentecostal churches which preach Christ, evangelize and continually find ways of experiencing the move of God by His Spirit on the continent.

The stories in this book are reproduced with permission from the Dictionary of African Christian Biographies (www.dacb.org). This is an online repository of biographies collected from all over the continent to preserve the memory of Christian leaders. We appreciate the editor, Michele Sigg, the contributors, the board and the leadership at DACB whose generosity made this publication possible. It is my hope that the readers of this book will find encouragement for their own faith. I also hope that they will be inspired to write about African leaders, well known or not, to preserve their memory. In so doing, we will together proclaim God's work to generations yet to come.

Felicitas and Perpetua

Frederick Quinn

203

Ancient Christian Church

Tunisia

Felicitas and Perpetua, two young North African Christian women, and three companions were thrown to wild animals and killed for their faith in Carthage on March 7, 203. A gripping account of their last days remains, written by Perpetua a twenty-two-year-old woman of noble birth and the mother of a small child.

A local Christian in Carthage collected the narratives and added a commentary, making this vivid account one of the earliest and most dramatic documents of martyrdom. *The Passion of St. Perpetua, St. Felicitas, and their Companions* was widely read in the early church as an instructional document on how Christians should face persecution.

Felicitas, Perpetua and their companions lived during a time of persecution of Christians under the Roman Emperor Septimus Severus (193-211). Perpetua's father was an elderly pagan, her mother a Christian. Felicitas, her household slave, was pregnant at the time of their arrest. The women were baptized and then led off to prison.

The young woman recalled the harshness of their life behind bars, and Perpetua was anxious for her small child as well. Eventually Perpetua's mother was allowed to visit her with Perpetua's young son, whom she was allowed to nurse and keep with her in prison. Meanwhile, Perpetua's father tried to persuade her to abandon her Christian faith. At their trial the Christians refused to offer sacrifices to the Roman gods for the emperor's safety. After being scourged, they were thrown to the wild beasts, the men to a boar, bear, and leopard; the women to a wild heifer. Once the animals wounded them, the Christians were killed by swords. Perpetua wrote the following live-witness account:

A few days later we were lodged in the prison, and I was much frightened, because I had never known such darkness. What a day of horror! Terrible heat, owing to the crowds! Rough treatment by the

soldiers! To crown it all I was tormented with anxiety for my baby. But Tertius and Pomponius, those blessed deacons who ministered to us, paid for us to be moved for a few hours to a better part of the prison and we obtained some relief. All went out of the prison and we were left to ourselves. My baby was brought and I nursed him, for already he was faint for want of food. I spoke anxiously to my mother on his behalf and encouraged my brother and commended my son to their care. For I was concerned when I saw their concern for me. For many days I suffered such anxieties, but I obtained leave for my child to remain in prison with me, and when relieved of my trouble and distress for him, I quickly recovered my health. My prison suddenly became a palace to me and I would rather have been there than anywhere else.

Then my brother said to me: "Dear sister, you are greatly privileged; surely you might ask for a vision to discover whether you are to be condemned or freed." Faithfully I promised that I would, for I knew that I could speak with the Lord, whose great blessings I had come to experience. And so I said: "I shall tell you tomorrow." Then I made my request and this was the vision I had:

I saw a ladder of tremendous height made of bronze, reaching all the way to the heavens, but it was so narrow that only one person could climb up at a time. To the sides of the ladder were attached all sorts of metal weapons: there were swords, spears, hooks, daggers, and spikes; so that if anyone tried to climb up carelessly or without paying attention, he would be mangled and his flesh would adhere to the weapons.

At the foot of the ladder lay a dragon of enormous size, and it would attack those who tried to climb up and try to terrify them from doing so. And Saturus was the first to go up, he who was later to give himself up of his own accord. He had been the builder of our strength, although he was not present when we were arrested. And he arrived at the top of the staircase and he looked back and said to me. "Perpetua, I am waiting for you. But take care; do not let the dragon bite you." "He will not harm me," I said, "in the name of Christ Jesus." Slowly, as though he were afraid of me, the dragon stuck his head out from underneath the ladder. Then, using it as my first step, I trod on his head and went up.

Then I saw an immense garden, and in it a gray-haired man sat in shepherd's garb; tall he was, and milking sheep. And standing around him were many thousands of people clad in white garments. He raised his head, looked at me, and said: "I am glad you have come, my child." He called me over to him and gave me, as it were, a mouthful of the milk he was drawing; and I took it into my cupped hands and consumed it. And all those who stood around said: "Amen!" At the sound of this word I came to, with the taste of something sweet still in my mouth. I at once told this to my brother, and we realized that we would have to suffer, and that from now on we would no longer have any hope in this life.[1]

Holy God, as you gave great courage to Perpetua and Felicitas and their companions, so grant that we may be worthy to climb the ladder of sacrifice and be received into the garden of peace, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.—*Celebrating Common Prayer*, 437

Notes and References

"Church History Documents: The Martyrdom of Perpetua and Felicitas," www.churchhistory.net/documents/perpetua.html.

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Generosa, Donata, and Januaria

Clyde Curry Smith

Donata

100s

Ancient Christian Church

Tunisia

One of the eleven youthful companions (“pupils”) of Speratus in the “Acts of the Scillitan Martyrs” (the earliest dated document from the Latin Church) brought before Vigellius Saturninus, the proconsul of the Roman province of Africa, who is recorded, in bearing witness (“martus”), to have said: “Pay honour to Caesar as Caesar, but it is God we fear.” She was beheaded on 17 July 180 A.D., and is collectively commemorated among “the Scillitan martyrs” [cf. Musurillo 1972:89; PDS 303]. For what few other details can be indicated on the basis of the minimal sources, see the entry “Speratus.”

Generosa

100s

Ancient Christian Church

Tunisia

One of the eleven youthful companions (“pupils”) of Speratus in the “Acts of the Scillitan Martyrs” (the earliest dated document from the Latin Church) brought before Vigellius Saturninus, the proconsul of the Roman province of Africa, who is not recorded to have spoken during the interrogations. She was beheaded on 17 July 180 A.D., and is collectively commemorated among “the Scillitan martyrs” [cf. Musurillo 1972:89; PDS 303]. For what few other details can be indicated on the basis of the minimal sources, see the entry “Speratus.”

Januaria

100s

Ancient Christian Church

Tunisia

One of the eleven youthful companions (“pupils”) of Speratus in the “Acts of the Scillitan Martyrs” (the earliest dated document from the Latin Church) brought before Vigellius Saturninus, the proconsul of the Roman province of Africa, who is not recorded to have spoken during the interrogations. She was beheaded on 17 July 180 A.D., and is collectively commemorated among “the Scillitan martyrs” [cf. Musurillo 1972:89; PDS 303]. For what few other details can be indicated on the basis of the minimal sources, see the entry “Speratus.”

Tertullianus

G.A. Oshitelu

160-240

Ancient Christian Church

Tunisia

Tertullian (Quintus Septimius Florens Tertullianus) was born about 160 A.D. in Carthage, in what is modern Tunisia and Algeria. He was the son of a highly placed pagan centurion. Some scholars think that he was the son of a commander of the proconsul's guard. This may account for his use of military metaphors such as, for example, his remarks that "the Lord, in disarming Peter, unbelted every soldier." Tertullian considered that it was almost impossible for any Christian to hold public office or accept military service. This may be because he was a military man. One was expected not only to swear an oath of allegiance to the emperor but also to the gods.

Tertullian's early years were surrounded by the household gods or deities of Rome. Later he contended vehemently against paganism. Tertullian had a good education and was a brilliant student. He studied rhetoric, the poets, and philosophy in Carthage and then went to Rome where he read law. He had much learning in Stoicism which remained with him throughout his life even when he became a Christian. He had a negative attitude toward philosophy which he considered profane.

We do not know for certain, what led him to Christianity. It was unlikely that he was impressed by the example of the Christian martyrs and the impact of the Christian community, but by a careful comparison of philosophical systems. There was also the spiritual impact of Christians.

Jerome tells us that soon after his conversion about 195 A.D., Tertullian was ordained a presbyter. However, he never referred to his clerical status. Most scholars believe he remained a layman throughout his life.

Tertullian's Writings

When Tertullian was converted he turned his genius for debate and argument to the service of the church. He was a prolific writer, a man of

immense learning, and an extremely witty man of biting irony and sarcasm. On the persecution of Christians, Tertullian wrote:

But carry on, good officials. You will become much better in the eyes of the people if you will sacrifice the Christians for them. Torture us! Your iniquity is the proof of our innocence. For this reason God permits us to suffer these things... Yet your tortures accomplish nothing, though each is more refined than the last; rather they are an enticement to our religion. We became more every time we are hewn down by you: the blood of Christians is seed (Apology, 50, 12ff).

Tertullian sometimes wrote in Latin and is regarded as the first of the Latin fathers. He was a brilliant and outstanding rhetorician, full of enthusiasm and rugged eloquence. He was a born debater with a supreme command of language: "When we are condemned by you, we are acquitted by God (...) I hear that there has been an edict set forth, and a peremptory one too. The Sovereign Pontiff! - the Bishop of Bishops..."

His writings may be categorized as:

- Apologetic
- Doctrinal and Polemical
- Moral and Practical.

1. His Apologetic Writings

Tertullian was perhaps a representative of the Latin Fathers. He may have practiced as a lawyer before his conversion. He wrote Apology about 197 A.D. As a former advocate, Tertullian presented his arguments in legal form, striving to present them convincingly and rhetorically.

His Apology was addressed to the magistrates of the Roman Empire, particularly the proconsul of Carthage. On subject of the persecution of the Christians, he argued that a Christian was not a criminal and that, apart from being a Christian, he had committed no criminal offence. Tertullian skillfully ridiculed the way magistrates tried to persecute Christians. He argued that a magistrate would judge a common criminal and a Christian differently when both denied the charges brought against them, keeping an open mind for the former but allowing his bias to convince him of the latter's guilt. Tertullian showed the inconsistency of the magistrates and argued against their injustice against natural law, pointing out their

discrimination against Christians. As a citizen a Christian had the right to know what the law required of him. Tertullian contended that generally the law required adequate proof of guilt, yet Christians were being persecuted without any concrete proof.

Tertullian also argued that only a bad emperor persecuted innocent Christians. From his study of history he concluded that previous emperors such as Adrian had said that Christians should not be sought out for persecution,— the implicit message being that there was something good about Christianity. The dictum that only bad emperors made bad laws or undertook persecution campaigns was to have serious implications later.

Tertullian was not merely concerned with the refutation of charges against the Christians. Having shown the absurdities of the charges brought against them, he argued that in fact the pagans were guilty of sacrilege and moral laxity: they indeed were the criminals and not the Christians. He then went on to explain the main tenets of Christianity. In response to the accusation that the Christians' refusal to worship the emperor and to sacrifice to idols was sacrilege, he showed that Christians were law-abiding citizens and that in fact the Christian Bible enjoined Christians to pray for the emperor (as in the Epistle to the Romans and I Timothy). Christians also cared for each other's well being by looking after orphans, widows and the poor; and collected money for charity.

Tertullian was anxious to demonstrate that Christians were in a class set apart. Christianity was the religion of Christ crucified as set out in the Bible which was inspired by the Holy Spirit. Apology was the greatest of his works. He was acquainted with the stream of Christian tradition and he read and used the work of Justin Martyr, Irenaeus and others. Thus he wrote: "We have not out of our own mind fashioned our own materials since these have been produced by holy excellent men." He admitted his indebtedness to these men.

In the Apology, Tertullian sought to set forth the reason for the persecution of the Christians. He showed that Christians suffered from the ignorant prejudice of their neighbours: "Because they were already disliked, they want to know no more." He wrote further: "The truth ought to be sorted out. If the rulers were not afraid, they ought not to forbid the truth to reaching their ears by the secret pathways of a noiseless book."

Tertullian sought to counter the strong feeling against Christianity which led to the Edict of the Emperor in 202 A.D. He then answered the five main charges often levelled against the Christians.

On atrocities based on rumours, he wrote, "If you cannot do it you ought not to believe it of others; for a Christian is a man as well as yourself."

Concerning the charge that they worshipped novel (new) and strange gods, he traced the origins of such beliefs and maintained that pagans themselves ridiculed and despised their gods or deities.

On the charge of treason, Tertullian argued that Christians prayed for the safety of the emperor:

But look at the Christian! (...) Not a man is ashamed of it; not a man regrets - unless, indeed, that he was not a Christian earlier. If he is denounced as a Christian, he glories in it. If he is accused he does not defend himself. When he is questioned he confesses without any pressure. When he is condemned, he renders thanks.

Tertullian attacked the belief that the widespread multitude of believers might be a danger to the empire. How could a group of people considered to be insignificant be a threat to the empire? He argued that, far from Christians constituting a threat, they were, in fact, the most loyal members of society.

On calamities attributed to the Christians (it was being claimed that the existence of the Christians brought the anger of the gods on the world) he wrote:

If the Tiber reaches the walls, if the Nile does not rise to the fields, if the sky does not move or the earth does, if there is famine, if there is plague, they cry at once, "The Christians to the lions!" (See Apology 40. 2)

Tertullian claimed that the calamities attributed to Christians had appeared before. He showed that great disasters had been experienced even before Christians were ever heard of.

On the charges that Christians were useless in the affairs of the state, Tertullian queried,

How can this be? We live among you, eat among you, eat the same food, wear the same clothes, etc. Our compassion spreads more in the street than yours does in the temples. He pleaded with eloquence for the superior moral life of the Christians. "We alone are without

crime.” He dismissed the charge of immorality laid at the door of the Christians and pointed out that all the crimes attributed falsely to Christians had long been committed and tolerated by pagans. He claimed that Christians were good citizens, paying their taxes, obeying all just orders and laws. They joined no subversive activities. Tertullian laid bare the emptiness of polytheism. He had a deep conviction of God as judge and of men standing before the finality of Divine Law.

2. Against the Marcionites and the Gnostics

Between 130 and 180 A.D., a succession of teachers working mainly in Alexandria dominated Christian intellectual life and spread their influence to Italy and Rome, Asia Minor, and even among the Christians in the Rhone valley.

The gnosis or knowledge that the Gnostic leaders claimed to possess was theirs through some instantaneous illuminating process giving them understanding of the Word of God. The Gnostics claimed to protect their believers not only from fate and the astral powers but also from error. The Gnostics proclaimed themselves Christians. They cared little for the beliefs of the orthodox communities. Knowledge, to them, was superior to faith. Theirs was the secret teaching of Jesus, passed on through His disciples, males and females, to the Gnostic teachers. They had little to say about the second coming and the last judgment. Considering themselves perfect they ridiculed the food regulations observed by orthodox Jews and orthodox Christians. They were skeptical about the value of imitating Christ through martyrdom.

One of the factors that favoured the development of Gnosticism was the prevalence of dualistic and pessimistic beliefs underlying much of popular religion of that period, whether pagan or Jewish: “If God was goodness, how could one explain the existence of evil except that the matter whence the world was created was evil?” The Greek distinction between flesh and spirit, and the destinies awaiting each, was paralleled in Judaism by speculation concerning the two ways of life and death set before Israel (in Deut. 30:15 ff). To these tensions on the metaphysical level were added conflicts over moral obligations of the individual under the law resulting from Gnostic-type speculation.

This was the formidable polemical situation with which Tertullian had to contend. From 207 A.D. onwards, Tertullian's main opponents were the Marcionites and the Orthodox Christians in Carthage. He regarded Marcion as the most dangerous enemy of the church and wrote his longest single work against him. A more general attack on heresy is found in his *Prescription against Heresies*.

In combating the heresies Tertullian dwelt upon the argument that the "Catholic" church had received its Scripture and its teaching directly from the Apostles. The heretics, he maintained, had no right to the Scripture. The true faith is that which is preached everywhere as opposed to the Gnostics' claim to esoteric knowledge.

Thus he wrote, "What in so many congregations is always recognizable as the very same cannot be erroneous: it must be tradition."

The heretics will not listen and understand that a search is sensible when one does not yet know the truth, and that with Christ and His gospel, we have reached the end and goal of our seeking. True faith is always simple (*Against Marcion* 5,20)

Tertullian's attack on Monarchianism and his contribution to the vocabulary of Western Trinitarian thought is also to be noted. Monarchianism was an unsatisfactory early answer to the problem that was to bring bitter division to the church in the fourth century, the problem of how to reconcile the divinity of Christ with the unity of God.

Tertullian made an important contribution to the debate in his *Treatise against Praxeas*. He described God as "one substance consisting in three persons." He dealt exhaustively with the unity in the Trinity and did not proceed to the further problem that arose, namely, that of the equality of rank between the divine personae. Furthermore, he was not a philosopher and it is not easy to determine the precise meaning of the Latin words; *substantia* and *persona* which he used. Nevertheless his teaching represented an achievement for future orthodoxy.

3. Moral and Practical Writings

Perhaps the Romans' attempt to tame and standardize the traditional oath had something to do with the persecution which resulted in martyrdom. Tertullian wrote a tract to encourage those about to suffer

martyrdom. Martyrdom became the aim of Christianity, a society fed with a profound belief in the necessity for a pure membership, in the reality of God's judgment and in the ever-present guidance of the Holy Spirit. He rejected any compromise with the world and the affairs of the world. "He (the Christian) finds God, makes him known, and then puts a practical seal on all theoretical questions about God with his action." Apology, 46, 9.

The persecution edict of Septimus Severus against converts to Judaism and Christianity in 202 - 203 A.D. brought out the determination of the Christians. Tertullian taught that the last days were at hand: "What we await is the trumpet of the Angel." A Christian's destiny was to be a martyr. By this he would win forgiveness of his sins and spread the kingdom of Christ. His opposition to the orthodox clergy in Rome and Carthage was characteristic. He joined the Montanists. By this the new prophecy gained its greatest success.

However, his conversion to Montanism did not mean the abandonment of previously held convictions. The Holy Spirit was perpetually active and His manifestation through the Phrygian prophetess was a further evidence that the end was imminent.

Tertullian accepted this advocacy for even sterner morality for the priesthood. He had allowed flight in time of persecution but in *De Fuga* he did not. He had conceded to a widow the right to remarry but in *De Monogamin* he refused it. It was the Holy Spirit who inspired the church and its members. Baptism, he contended, would not be administered by one who was in a state of sin. Martyrdom, for Tertullian, was a second baptism which would wash away sins committed after the first baptism. On confession, martyrdom became the aim of a Christian life.

Tertullian wrote treatises on many aspects of chastity. His view may best be described in contrast with those of Callistus, Bishop of Rome, who was probably the object of his scorn in *On Chastity*. Callistus proclaimed the right of the bishop to grant forgiveness after suitable penance to those who had committed grave sins. Callistus was faced with the question of whether he should bring sinners back by exercising clemency or whether by severity he should drive them back into paganism.

He chose clemency. By this way alone, he believed could the church be led out of separation from the world. For Tertullian, this was an

abomination and he greeted Callistus' policy of clemency with indignation. He was prepared to consign the world to perdition and save only the elect. The church must be "without spot or wrinkle" and separated from the world. Thus were the lines of the classic argument on the doctrine of the church laid down.

Tertullian was in many ways the embodiment of the Western spirit. This appears in the practical and non-speculative orientation of his thinking, in his emphasis upon the will and upon discipline, in his tendency towards social issues, and in the legalistic frameset of his thought. In such an age, that a figure so turbulent and rebellious – he was a man in revolt against the Modalities or Monarchianism, against Gnosticism and the Marcionites, he wrote *Against Praxeas* – should have lived long and died a natural death at the ripe age of eighty is indeed curious.

Tertullian's Christology

Christology is the doctrine of the person of Christ. Tertullian had to define the church's tradition of the incarnation of Christ on two different fronts:

- (a) Against pagan polytheism
- (b) Against Monarchianism in the Christian church.

In addition to this he was to fight against the disruptive and divisive tendencies of Marcion and Valentinus, two of the leaders of Gnosticism. Tertullian formed his Christological terminology to combat these forces. The sources of his theological formulae were the Bible, Judaism, Gnosticism, popular and legal language. Stoicism was particularly helpful to him for theological reflection.

In his endeavours against pagan polytheism, he first clarified the Christian concept of God, particularly the notion familiar among the Hellenistic Jews of Alexandria: the historical revelation of God which the Jews had received; the advent of the Son of God which had been prophesied and which, for the Christians, had taken place in Christ. Tertullian, however, had to explain two things if he was not to give assistance to heathen polytheism: how this Son of God does not, as the Son, destroy the singleness of God and how it happened that he could become man in a way different from the heathen mythologies.

Tertullian saw the framework in terms of an economic Trinity: God the Father remains the ruler and retains the sovereignty. But the administration of the rule is handed over to the Son. The monarchy, Tertullian explained, is further guaranteed by the inner unity in the substance of Father, Son and Spirit. When Tertullian used the concept of “spirit,” it meant first and foremost the character of the reality of both the Father and the Son.

He therefore began his thinking from the unity of God. The Father is the guarantee of this unity of the monarchy. The Son (Christ) is assigned the second position and the Holy Spirit the third. Tertullian was not thinking of a purely static situation within God, the metaphysical Trinity, but of an economic, organic and dynamic threeness. His idea of unity is not mathematical but philosophical, an organic unity, not an abstract bare point, Father, Son and Spirit are in the one reality of God, For Tertullian, the second and third persons proceed from the *unitas substantia* because they had a task to fulfill. Only the Father remains completely transcendent.

Because Tertullian thus had the unfolding of the divine threeness already happening with a view to creation and redemption, the step to the doctrine of the Trinity was easily taken. The controversy with Monarchianism and Patripassianism carried on in the Praxeas gives us Tertullian’s characteristic christological ideas and terminology. The tri-personality of one God is an unconditional presupposition for his understanding of the mystery of the incarnation. As regards Tertullian’s contribution, it is really only certain elements in his vocabulary along with his clear perception of what main errors had to be avoided that became crucial and of final importance for christology - in vocabulary particularly, his use of *substantia* and *persona*.

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Origen

G. A. Oshitelu

185-255

Ancient Christian Church

Egypt

Origen (Origen Adamantius) was born in Alexandria in 185 A.D. A brilliant student, he was given the best education and the best Christian upbringing available then and was a student of Clement of Alexandria. From his earliest years he was very conversant with the Bible. His father, Leonides, was martyred as a Christian during the persecution of Emperor Septimius Severus. Only the intervention of his mother prevented Origen from presenting himself to share his father's fate. His family property was confiscated by the authorities. During the persecution, the catechetical school in Alexandria was disbanded.

In 202 A.D., although Origen was only eighteen years old, he was appointed by Demetrius, bishop of Alexandria, not only to reopen the disbanded school but to head it. The school had been left vacant by the withdrawal of Clement. It is interesting to note that Origen likened himself to Pantaenus. In addition to teaching subjects relating to Christian studies, Origen taught secular subjects and acknowledged pagan philosophy. Among his students was Heraclaus, later the successor to Demetrius as bishop of Alexandria. Origen eventually handed over the teaching of the catechumens to him.

Meanwhile Origen focused his energies on the more advanced students and sought to equip himself for his future work by attending the lectures of Ammonius Saccas, a distinguished exponent of neo-Platonist philosophy as Plotinus would become a few years later. His success as a teacher was remarkable and attracted heretics and pagans as well as catechumens. Origen was incomparably the greatest scholar and theologian of the Eastern church in the early centuries and his fame as a teacher spread far and wide.

In 214 A.D. he made a journey to Rome where he met Hippolitus. Soon afterwards, he continued his tour and visited the pagan governor of Arabia at the governor's request. He returned to Alexandria only to be expelled a few months later when Caracalla (Elagabalus) allowed his troops to sack the city in 218 A.D. Origen took refuge in Caesarea where, at the request of Theoktistos, the local bishop, he taught catechumens and also gave Biblical lectures. Jealous of the growing reputation of his protege, Demetrius, his bishop, recalled him to Alexandria; very angry because Origen, a layman, had expounded theology to bishops in Caesarea.

In 229 A.D. Origen was invited to Athens to help the church there to deal with a Valentinian Gnostic heretic and went without Demetrius's permission. In 230 A.D. some Palestinian bishops, his Episcopal friends, ordained Origen to the presbyterate. Demetrius was incensed, maintaining that this was flouting his authority. At a synod of Egyptian bishops he secured Origen's condemnation and banishment on the grounds that he had been ordained without reference to the proper authority – in other words, Demetrius himself.

Demetrius was prepared to allow Heraclaus rather than Origen teach a number of people at Alexandria. He may also have felt it was out of order for the bishops of Palestine to ordain Origen. Demetrius might have deliberately sought to prevent Origen's teaching in the church. Origen's views – the fruit of advanced thinking for the time – could be potentially explosive as seen in the ensuing controversy and for this, Demetrius felt him to be unsuitable.

In Origen's case, a specific objection was made manifest in later years during the Arian controversy, at the Council of Nicea in 325 A.D. Applying Matthew 19:12 literally ("For there are eunuchs who have been so right from their birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made so by men and there are eunuchs who made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. He who is able to receive this, let him receive it"), Origen had allegedly castrated himself in his youthful zeal. Consequently, Demetrius considered Origen's ordination illegal and improper on technical grounds. Was Demetrius motivated by jealousy? Although Demetrius might have been envious—and there is no doubt that he was – he nevertheless had a case against Origen mainly on two grounds.

(1) That a man should not be ordained outside his own diocese.

(2) According to Canon Law, Origen had excluded himself by self-mutilation in order to become a eunuch.

When Origen returned to Alexandria he was opposed by Demetrius who convened two local councils which condemned Origen and commanded him to leave. This decision, nevertheless, was rejected in Palestine. So, in 230 A.D., Origen established himself in Caesarea. On the death of Demetrius, Heraclaus, a former pupil of Origen, became Bishop of Alexandria but continued to persecute Origen, as Demetrius had done.

Origen never returned to Alexandria but made his home in Caesarea, teaching and writing. Among his pupils were Firmilian, Bishop of Cappadocian Caesarea and Gregory Thaumaturgus. Origen travelled extensively and on two occasions was invited to Arabia as a theological arbitrator. In spite of his widespread fame, he was imprisoned during the persecution of Emperor Decius and cruelly tortured. Although Origen was released, he was physically broken and died in 254 A.D.

Origen's Teachings

Origen was incomparably the greatest scholar and theologian of the Eastern Church in the early centuries as well as a prolific writer. His learning and his works were encyclopaedic. He is reputed to have written about 6,000 books. The first scientific theologian, Origen was a man ahead of his age, particularly in terms of Biblical scholarship and criticism.

In 218 A.D., Origen began his written works for Ambrosius, a wealthy friend who provided him with a staff of seven stenographers, seven copywriters and girls to make fair copies. From 223 A.D., there followed an amazing succession of works. It has been remarked that he "wrote more books than others had time to read" on textual criticism, exegesis, and doctrines. He also undertook the Hexapla, a gigantic work on the Old Testament which has been lost apart from the Septuagint (LXX) part of the text. He also wrote the Scholia and other homilies and commentaries.

His great doctrinal work is *De Principiis* ("Concerning First Principles"), a masterpiece of which only an inaccurate Latin translation survives. His rule of faith was largely that of the Apostle's Creed to which all the Christian churches would subscribe. Anything contradictory to such a

statement of faith was heresy and he mentioned that Gnostic groups belonged to this category.

There were, on the other hand, open questions on which Origen gave his own opinion. For example,

- (i) Is the Holy Spirit begotten?
- (ii) Are the sun, moon, and stars animate?
- (iii) What is the origin of the soul?
- (iv) What is the existence of a succession of the world's past and present?

His Writings

For our purposes, the principal writings of Origen's prodigious literary output may be divided into four groups:

1. Biblical

Origen's biblical scholarship was outstanding. In an age in which versions and translations were multiplying he saw the pressing need for an accurate text of the Bible. In order to provide this he constructed the massive Hexapla, a critical edition of the Old Testament, which occupies a place apart in his body of work.

The Hexapla was arranged in six columns in which were placed side by side the Hebrew text, a transliteration into Greek characters, and the four Greek versions of Aquila, Symmachus, the Septuagint and the Theodotion. For some parts of the Bible other versions were added. The texts were compared with each other and the Septuagint was marked with symbols drawing attention to points at which it appeared to deviate from the original Hebrew. Important variations were found, for example, in the translation of Aquilla, all written in the margins. It is probable that many copies of the Hexapla were made, but the original remained in the library at Caesarea where Jerome had access to it over a century later. The Hexapla could be found in some libraries in Caesarea many centuries after it was written but only a small portion of it has been preserved up to the present day. This monumental work provided the manuscript foundation for Origen's exegetical work which constituted the greater part of his writings.

Origen's teaching generated controversy even during his own life and led to his banishment by Demetrius, Bishop of Alexandria. After his death the battle over his ideas (known as the Origenist controversy) ensued and led to the Christological controversies of the fourth and fifth centuries. False teaching was ascribed to him, especially on his views on the Godhead which tended toward sub-ordinationism. Origen's teaching on the Godhead, or rather on the relationship within the Godhead, was in fact taken to its logical conclusion by Arius in the Arian controversy which led to the decision of the council of Nicaea of 325 A.D. We shall now consider, however briefly, the Origenist controversy as it affected Jerome.

2. Theological

Only one work need be considered under this heading, his *De Principiis* (or "First Principles") in which Origen sought to expound a coherent system of Christian teaching about God and the Universe. *De Principiis* only exists in a Latin version of the original Greek which was made by Rufirius in 398 A.D.

Origen began with the Platonic tenet that God was the Absolute Being though in place of the passive qualities of beauty and goodness, he asserted the active quality of love. He tried to work out the correlation between God's threefold nature in Christian and Biblical revelation, and Platonist philosophy. He spoke of the divine realm in three ranks:

In Origen's system, however, there is no adequate or satisfactory place for the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, he recognized that the Holy Spirit has a very important place in baptismal confession and in church worship. The doctrine of the Trinity becomes fully evident. Thus to Origen, it is a trinity of a hierarchy of divine persons. He spoke of three hypostases or three entities – Father, Son, Holy Spirit. The first two, Father and Son, do not pose much problem in contrast to the Holy Spirit. And of the three, there is a Platonic hierarchy: God the Father is very much like the Supreme Being, the one who is at the top, then comes the Son followed by the Holy Spirit. Origen used Scripture, particularly John 3, to support this view. The characteristic relation of the Trinity is that the Father acts indirectly upon all things, the Son or Word acts in all beings and the Spirit is in all things reasonable and sanctified.

3. Apologetic

Origen's one major work in defence of Christianity against pagan criticism was the *Contra Celsum* (or "Against Celsus"), which was written between 245 and 250 A.D. to satisfy his wealthy patron Ambrosius. Celsus had written in the second century a devastating criticism of Christianity. Although contemporary Christian apologists did much to defend Christianity against Celsus, it was not until Origen that there was a reasoned or sustained reply to his attack.

Celsus was the first known pagan philosopher to realize the potential threat of Christianity to the empire. He indicted Christians for being haters of the human race, a charge based on alleged Christian aloofness and unsociability. Celsus saw Christianity as an offshoot of an already corrupt system, Judaism. He believed that because of its link with Judaism, Christianity, as Judaism before it, perverted the old concept of the Logos of Greek philosophy. Origen's *Contra Celsum* contains lengthy quotations from Celsus's work and detailed answers to his arguments.

4. Exegesis

Biblical studies took the paramount place in the scheme of Origen's work. It has been said that he lived in the Bible to the extent that no one else before Luther rivalled him. The great mass of his literary work was concerned largely with Biblical criticism and exposition, the Hexapla occupying a central place.

The Hexapla was not the only work of criticism which Origen undertook. He examined particular problems such as the authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews. This letter was unlike those of St. Paul. "But who wrote the epistle," Origen declared, "in truth God knows." He did mention nevertheless, that Clement of Rome and Luke had both been named as possible authors.

A Summary of Origen's Contribution to Greek Theology

The great mass of Origen's works was exegetical. He had a critical faculty far ahead of his time. Origen argued that the Letter to the Hebrews was not written by St. Paul, a position embraced by modern scholarship. He

saw the Bible as a whole, the inspired Word of God. He contended that human nature consists of a trinity of body (somatic), social (psychic) and spirit (pneumatic).

Origen argued for the interpretation of Scripture under three headings - literal, moral, and spiritual. All things in the Bible reflected that real and spiritual order beyond the visible world – which is a strong element of Platonism. The exegete's job was to find the clue to the spiritual truth in a given text and work out the message by analogy with other texts.

Origen made an attempt to establish a doctrine of the Trinity in the course of his argument against the Gnostics and the Monarchians on the one hand, and the Adoptionists on the other. Origen's God was the Absolute Being of Plato, but Origen insisted on the divine quality of love in place of beauty and goodness. Love was active and had to be manifested through an object, i.e., God's Word or Son, ever begotten, and was with him through the ages. The Son was an exact image of the Father yet he was different from God, for God alone was immutable. But the Son was being eternally generated and linking God with creation. The Spirit was the first being created by the Word. Thus for Origen, the Spirit was a creature, not God. This was the stumbling block of the Greek Logos theologians. There was a distinctive place for the Spirit. Thus his Trinity was three graded beings united in a single substance, but possessing individualism. However only two, God and his Word, were relevant to mankind.

The teaching of Origen on the Trinity continued to influence theological reflection in the East long after his death in 254 A.D. Origen had thought of the Father and the Son as two distinct realities and had only been able to preserve a monotheistic standpoint by admitting that the Son was in some sense subordinate to the Father. The Son was preexistent and related to the Father as ever-begotten and co-eternal, yet he occupied a level of being within the Godhead lower than the Father.

Shortly after Origen's death there was a reaction against his teaching in Cyrenaica where his opponents embraced the opposite error. Where Origen had posited a sharp distinction between the Father and the Son, they failed to maintain any real distinction at all between the persons. Sabellius affirmed that the names of Father, Son, and Spirit were simply descriptions of the different modes or aspects of God's activity and did not correspond

to any personal distinctions in the Godhead. This Monarchian point of view is known to us as Sabellianism or Modalism.

Origen believed that the soul of man pre-existed its union with the body and will be enhanced when the body decays. The resurrection of the body, a fundamental tenet of Christian doctrine, had no place in his system. This denial of the unity of man's body and soul was typical of the Platonizing and the Gnosticizing tendency of Origen's thought.

In view of his obvious debt to Platonism, it seems rather strange that Origen should have spoken coldly of the contribution of Greek philosophy to the development of Christian philosophy and doctrines. It has to be admitted that he was deeply influenced by the intellectual currents he loved to disdain, but he himself was most aware of his points of departure from Platonism.

In any estimate of Origen's philosophical and theological thought, the fundamental Christian themes in his writings must be regarded – his Bible-centered teaching, his concept of divine love in creation and redemption, and his emphasis on the exercise of God's freedom in the intervention of Christ. Origen was a Christian before he was a Platonist.

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Anthony of Egypt

Frederick Quinn

250-356

Ancient Christian Church

Egypt

Anthony (also Antonius), the spiritual father of some of the greatest figures of early Christian North Africa, was the barely literate son of a prosperous Egyptian village merchant. The religious tutor of such leading personalities as Athanasius, Jerome, Basil, and Augustine of Hippo; as an orphan of twenty, he was struck by the biblical admonition, "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell all that thou hast." This is what Anthony did, living from simple gardening and the charity of others for the rest of his life.

Anthony began his new life by moving to an ancient Egyptian tomb not far from his village, where he lived for several years, prayed intensely, and fasted. In addition to welcoming visions of angels, he wrestled with powerful demons that, following an attack, left him for dead. Athanasius, responsible for the Creed that bears his name and Anthony's first biographer, wrote:

All at once the place was filled with the phantoms of lions, bears, leopards, bulls, serpents, asps, scorpions, and wolves. And each moved according to the shape it had assumed And the noises emitted simultaneously by all the apparitions were frightful and the fury shown was fierce ... Anthony, pummeled and goaded by them, made bold to say, "Do not delay! Up and at me! If you cannot attack, why excite yourself to no purpose?" So, after trying many ruses, they gnashed their teeth, because they were only fooling themselves and not him.[1]

In about 294 A.D. Anthony, after having made sure things were running well in the monastery he had established, headed east toward the Red Sea to a desolate place near a spring of fresh water, where he established a new hermitage. Passing caravans and shepherds left him gifts of dates, bread, and - delicacy of delicacies - packets of onions. There may have been as many as ten thousand monks and twice that number of nuns living in the desert in Anthony's time. The desert, it must be emphasized, was not

the empty place of a Clint Eastwood film. Its trade routes were numerous, and its oases were well known.

Soon fame of Anthony's teachings spread; the distant Emperor Constantine asked for his prayers, and there are early records of people renting camels to make the long trip to his hermitage. Wild animals were his constant companions. A charming story recounts Anthony's relationship with the animals in an era when bearbaiting and torturing of animals was a widespread form of entertainment:

At first wild animals in the desert coming for water often would damage the beds in his garden. But he caught one of the animals, held it gently, and said to them all: "Why do you harm me when I harm none of you? Go away, and in the Lord's name do not come near these things again." And ever afterwards, as though awed by his orders, they did not come near the place.[2]

Such tales of monks' encounters with animals were numerous: an aging monk fed a starving lion with dates, another shared his evening meal regularly with a she-wolf, still another taught an ibex, a desert antelope, which plants to eat and which to avoid.

Before he died, at the venerable age of 105, Anthony gave away his few earthly possessions: his hair shirt, which he wore as a means of constant mortification of the flesh, an old cloak, and the two sheepskins on which he slept or which he used for covering at night. He wrote, "So farewell, ye that are my heartstrings, for Anthony is going and will not be with you in this world any more" and asked his two closest followers to "shelter in the ground, hide in the earth the body of your father. And please do your old friend's bidding in this also: that none but you only shall know the place of his grave."

Anthony of the desert, the desolate places sprang to life, and beauty appeared in the barren landscape; wild creatures sought your presence, and you welcomed them. So might we follow you and Christ to the desert places and find them a source of life. Amen.

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1. James Wellard, *Desert Pilgrimage* (London: Hutchinson of London, 1970), 77. See also Douglas Burton-Christie, *The Word in the Desert* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).
2. *Ibid.*, 81.

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Athanasius

G. A. Oshitelu

298-373

Ancient Christian Church

Egypt

Athanasius was born in Alexandria in the last years of the third century (296 or 298 A.D.) and received a liberal education in secular learning, being thoroughly instructed in the Scriptures. Some of his teachers were martyred in the persecution of 311 A.D. In 312 A.D., Bishop Alexander of Alexandria took him into his household as a companion, a secretary and later a deacon and there he lived, as a son, under the roof of this kindly and beloved bishop. At age twenty-one, Athanasius published two apologetic works in support of Christianity against paganism.

Bishop Alexander died in 328 A.D. and Athanasius, barely thirty years old, was unanimously chosen to succeed this great leader. Indeed the story is told that on his deathbed the bishop called for his beloved deacon, who happened to be absent. However, another man with the same name stepped forward, but the bishop ignored him and kept repeating the call. It was then that the dying bishop uttered the prophetic words: "Athanasius, you think you have escaped, but you will not escape." Seven weeks later Athanasius succeeded Alexander as bishop of Alexandria.

Athanasius's Career

Athanasius had first made a public appearance at the Council of Nicaea in 325 A.D. when he was just a little under thirty years old. He may have been attracted by the monastic life of Anthony, the hermit, and may have authored the book *The Life of Anthony*. It is unlikely that Athanasius played a significant role at the Council of Nicaea apart from prompting and supporting Alexander, his bishop, as his deacon. He had a share in the decisions of Nicaea. There is no doubt, however, that Athanasius played a significant role in the dispute against the Arians, particularly in the period after the decision of Nicaea in 325 A.D.

The life work of Athanasius was to preserve the truth of the incarnation. He understood this truth that it was no semi-god who had appeared upon the earth but the very essence of the Godhead. Athanasius believed the Nicene formula, which stated that the Son (Jesus) was *homo-ousios* – of the same essence– with the Father. Any attempt to construct a statement less precise than this was a compromise with Arianism and a denial of the very basis of Christianity. Such was Athanasius’ position and he was prepared to stand by it even if the entire world should be against him. Hence the popular saying, *Athanasius contra mundum*, meaning “Athanasius against the world.”

While Emperor Constantine lived, the Nicene formula could not be openly attacked. Nevertheless its opponents, the Arians, were able to make considerable progress. Among the foremost was Eusebius, bishop of Nicomedia, who had been exiled in 325 A.D. He was soon restored to favour, and his party quickly found ways of attacking and securing the deposition of two of the most prominent champions of the term *homo-ousios*, Eustatius, bishop of Antioch, and Marcellus, bishop of Ancyra. Athanasius, too, proved to be vulnerable. The Eusebians, as the opponents of the term *homo-ousios* came to be known, could not of course, attack his teaching since, broadly speaking, it conformed to that of the Nicene Creed. However, he was falsely accused of a variety of offences and eventually Constantine was persuaded to banish him. Indeed, in the course of his dispute with the Arians, Athanasius suffered five banishments. (See table of events below).

In Egypt, turbulent events were taking place. The Council of Nicaea had attempted to resolve the Meletian schism by conciliation. Alexander had been prepared to accept this policy but Athanasius was sharply opposed to any compromise. He dealt impetuously and tyrannically with the *Letetians* who appealed to the emperor with a long list of charges against Athanasius, the new bishop of Alexandria (328-373 A.D.). Athanasius was summoned to appear before the emperor but succeeded in answering the charges laid against him.

He gained but a brief respite as renewed charges resulted in further summons. A full ecclesiastical council was called at Tyre in 335 A.D. and Athanasius was deposed. Arius, who had been exiled, was recalled owing to

the powerful influence of Constantina, the emperor's sister who was a strong supporter of Arius. Thus, after a vague confession, Arius was recalled in 335 A.D.

Athanasius refused to reinstate Arius and, as a result, was excommunicated and exiled to Treves in 336 A.D. by Emperor Constantine on a trumped-up charge that he had delayed the sailing of the corn fleet, in addition to disturbing the peace. There may have been truth in the charge that Athanasius intended to block food supply to the emperor. However, Constantine took the threat seriously and Athanasius was exiled.

When Emperor Constantine died in 337 A.D., the empire was divided between his three surviving sons, Constantine II taking the west, Constans controlling Italy and North Africa, Constantius, the east. Relations between the three brothers were not too cordial and in 340 A.D. Constans defeated his elder brother in the west and became ruler of two-thirds of the empire. But Constantius proved the strongest of the three and became sole ruler in 353 A.D., after crushing Magnantius, a usurper who had supplanted Constans.

Athanasius was allowed to return to Alexandria after the death of Emperor Constantine in 337 A.D., but his enemies declared that his return was uncanonical. They thereby appointed a Cappadocian named Gregory who was only able to enter Alexandria under military protection and Athanasius withdrew to Rome where Julius, bishop of Rome, was sympathetic. He sent a letter to the east in which he declared innocent not only Athanasius but also Marcellus who had been convicted of Sabellianism. In 338 A.D., Emperor Constantine II recalled Athanasius who received a popular ovation. In the east, Arianism prevailed and its supporters were promoted presbyters and bishops. Eusebius of Nicomedia became bishop of Constantinople in 339 A.D., and once again Athanasius was expelled from Egypt and exiled.

In 341 A.D., the Council of Antioch deplored the part played by Julius, bishop of Rome, and declared that it was a new thing that a western synod should sit in judgment upon eastern decisions. The council adopted a formula, which became known as the second creed of Antioch. It described Christ as being *homo-ousios* with the Father and, in order to combat Sabellianism, it emphasized that the Trinity exists "in three hypostases."

One year later Constans persuaded Constantius to accept a new council. In 342 A.D., the emperor summoned a General Council at Serdina (now modern-day Sofia, Bulgaria). It was attended by eastern and western bishops and was presided over by Bishop Hosius, former adviser on ecclesiastical matters to Emperor Constantine. But then the eastern bishops withdrew and held a rival council just across the border of the eastern territory. There, once more, they excommunicated Athanasius, Marcellus and Julius, bishop of Rome. The western delegates replied by excommunicating the leading eastern bishops and re-affirming the Nicene Creed. They went even further, stating that the bishop of Rome, not the emperor, was to be regarded as the court of appeal in ecclesiastical matters. This development led to the widening of the gulf between east and west.

By 355 A.D., there was a not bishop who had not subscribed to the deposition of Athanasius and the virtual repudiation of the Nicene creed. Truly the situation was *Athanasius contra mundum* – “Athanasius against the world,” but the very victory of these Arians led to their break-up for it had no real unity. They eventually subscribed to a belief that the “Son was of a different substance than the Father and unlike him.” The majority were actually semi-Arians who held that the Son was similar in substance to the Father.

The Climax of Athanasius’ Influence, 346–356 A.D.

After the deadlock at the General Council of Serdina, a kind of compromise was reached. The west quickly dropped the cause of Marcellus of Ancyra whose overt Sabellianism was indeed an embarrassment. The east in turn was compelled to accept the return of Athanasius to Alexandria where he was received with tumultuous rapture. A consummate politician, he was now at the peak of his influence. During his exile he had taken every opportunity to strengthen the traditional links between the sees of Alexandria and Rome and to generally win support in the west. In Egypt he had succeeded in winning the devotion of the ordinary people. He had even gone so far as to preach in Coptic.

Athanasius denied the doctrine of the createdness of the Son. For him, this teaching was not simply a theological deviation or error, it was the end of Christianity. There could be no compromise, no rapprochement with his adversaries in the east, whom one and all he branded as Arians. In 353 A.D.

Constantius became sole ruler-emperor. His policy had always been to support the eastern bishops who by and large favoured the term *homo-ousios* in the Trinitarian debate.

For the majority of his reign Emperor Constantius was embroiled in the war against the Persians and needed the support of the bishops in the east. Now that he was sole ruler he was able to turn his attention to the west. He sought religious unity as his father had done. In pursuit of this policy he set out to break down western support for the Nicene Creed as personified in the already legendary figure of Athanasius.

At the Council of Arles in 353 A.D. and Milan in 355 A.D., the emperor coerced the western bishops, most of whom had but a slight understanding of what the issue was all about, into condemning Athanasius. Those who resisted were exiled. Among them were Hosius, bishop of Cordova, Liberius, bishop of Rome (352-356 A.D.) and the bishop of Poitiers. The emperor now felt able to dispose of Athanasius and troops were sent to arrest him in his church but Athanasius evaded them and escaped into the desert.

Writings Against the Gentiles and The Incarnation of the Word

It is generally recognized that *Athanasius against the Gentiles* and *The Incarnation of the Word* are two parts of one book and not two books as had earlier been supposed. It is important to inquire into the date of publication as it would help us to determine the purpose and the context in which the apology was written.

The early view is that it was written when Athanasius was still a young man before the Arian controversy. In *The Incarnation of the Word* there are references to current conditions. Consequently it is suggested that an early date of 316 A.D. is the likely date of the authorship. The Arian controversy is usually taken to begin in earnest in 318 A.D. It is suggested that the book was written after the Diocletian persecution had ended but was still vividly remembered. It is argued that the Arian heresy had not yet arisen to trouble the church although there is a hint at the schism that was an aftermath of the great persecution. Most significant perhaps, are the passages where, as in a continuous song of triumph, Athanasius proclaimed the victory of the

cross which is now bringing not only holiness to individuals and destruction of idols but peace to the world. Athanasius wrote “We may see the power of the Redeemer as from the harmony of the universe we see the wisdom of the Creator.” From this, it is suggested that such assurance could only have been in the few years of confidence that followed the victory of Constantine. And so a date between 316 and 318 A.D. is suggested as the likely date. This is the view of Edward Hardy in his work on Athanasius (Library of Christian Classics).

However, using the same argument based on internal evidence, that the book contained no specific mention of the Arian heresy which features so prominently in Athanasius’ dogmatic works, it is inconceivable that this book would have been written during the Arian controversy and yet would contain no direct reference to it considering how deeply Athanasius was involved in the controversy. It is most probable that the book was written before 324 A.D., that is, before Constantius became the sole ruler and emperor. As for the argument that there are no specific references to the Arian heresy, it could be argued that the reason for this is because the book is essentially an apologetic one. As such Athanasius was not likely to make specific and direct references to a division within the church when he was aiming to commend the Christian faith. There are in fact references to the Incarnation *Logos* as nothing less than a divine being. The references to the divine being of Christ is certainly an anti-Arian position on the person of Christ. The book *The Incarnation of the Word* does seem to affirm the position he would have been likely to hold or did in fact hold in the Arian controversy.

As attractive and perhaps convincing as the argument for an early date may seem, there are several objections, such as Athanasius’ reference to “those who wish to divide the church.” This expression could possibly refer to the Meletian schism as indeed the proponents of an early date have taken it to mean. But it is possible this expression referred to the Arians as it always did in Athanasius’ other writings.

Furthermore, a remark regarding Christ’s undivided body in his book *The Incarnation* is perhaps an allusion to the Arian controversy; as is Athanasius’ statement that he did not have to hand over the books of the theologians from whom he had learned a lot. Thomson thought this was a

surprising statement if the book was written during the period when Athanasius was Bishop Alexander's secretary and had access to all the books in Alexandria. It is therefore suggested that he could not have been writing the book before 342 A.D. On the other hand, the statement that Athanasius does not have to mention the writers or theologians who had influenced him could literally be a way of saying that he was not going to quote everything verbatim. It could mean that he was saying that he was not going to mention writers to support himself perhaps since he was not really following the writers or theologians to the letter as he was covering new ground. Or else he was simply saying he was not going to cite chapter and verse every time he made allusions to these writers and theologians. In other words, he was just going to quote freely.

A most convincing argument against an early date is the alleged dependence of Athanasius' apology on the *Theophany of Eusebius*, bishop of Caesarea, which was written after Constantius had become the sole emperor in 324 A.D. but before 335 A.D.. Was the *Theophany of Eusebius* of Caesarea dependent on Athanasius or were they both drawing on a common source which is no longer extant? Most scholars hold the view that it is more likely that Athanasius was dependent on Eusebius. If this were so, Athanasius wrote after the composition of Eusebius' *Theophany* which was written in 324 A.D. just before the General Council of Nicaea (325 A.D.). The problem with this view is that if Athanasius wrote between 324 and the 330s A.D. can we really suppose him to be dependent on Eusebius, an Arianizing bishop for that matter, for his apologetic purposes, at a time when Athanasius was most deeply involved in the Arian controversy? For this reason in part, Nordberg has proposed a much later date.

Nordberg held the view that a much later date must be contemplated, that is, much later than 338 A.D. and most probably in the reign of Emperor Julian in the 360s. He argued that by this time it would be possible for Athanasius to borrow from Eusebius without much inhibition owing to the time lapse. The attraction of this suggestion is that a period during the reign of Julian the Apostate would fit in well with the context of Athanasius' apology. Nordberg argued that a careful reading of the work showed that it was the essay of a man who was to be a great champion of orthodoxy.

Nordberg further argued that Athanasius was writing at a time when Emperor Julian (361-363 A.D.) was attempting to bring back paganism and so Athanasius' work would serve well as an apology. If there is a difficulty in accepting an early date because Athanasius allegedly borrowed from Eusebius, with a much later date the time lapse made it possible to do this as by now the common enemy for the Arians and the orthodox was Emperor Julian, nicknamed the Apostate.

Table of Events

325 A.D. Athanasius attended the first General Ecclesiastical Council at Nicaea.

328 A.D. Athanasius was consecrated bishop of Alexandria following the death of Alexander.

330 A.D. Athanasius wrote *The Incarnation of the Word* against the new theology of Arianism.

335 A.D. Athanasius was deposed by the Council of Tyre (1st exile).

339 A.D. Athanasius was expelled from Egypt for seven years (2nd exile).

346 A.D. Julius, bishop of Rome, ruled Italian bishops in support of Athanasius by the Council of Serdina (modern Sofia in Bulgaria). Athanasius returned from exile to start his golden decade of peace.

357 A.D. Athanasius was banished from his diocese. He wrote *De Fuga* (3rd exile).

362 A.D. Athanasius was again banished in the reign of Emperor Julian the Apostate (4th exile).

364 A.D. Athanasius returned to Alexandria from exile.

365 A.D. Athanasius suffered his fifth and last exile in the reign of Emperor Valen, an Arian who was determined to restore Arianism.

373 A.D. Athanasius died on May 2.

G. A. Oshitelu

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Monica

Clyde Curry Smith

331-2-387

Ancient Christian Church

Algeria

The mother of Augustine (November 13, 354 - August 28, 430) (q.v.; cf. Q 4.342-462), bishop of Hippo, remains one of the few non-imperial women of the fourth century about whom there is nearly sufficient material upon which to compile a full biographical perspective. Moreover, she is revealed to portray a dominant, almost domineering, personality, quite at odds with her assumed status within either the Christian church or the Roman society of her time. She may be compared and contrasted with the equally well-known mother, Nonna, and sister, Gorgonia, of the greater Greek theologian Gregory of Nazianzen; or with the grandmother, Macrina, mother, Emmelia, and sister, Macrina the Younger, of the comparable Greek theologians Basil of Caesarea and his brother Gregory of Nyssa; or with those feminine correspondents, Paula and one of her five children, Eutochium, of Augustine's contemporary, Jerome (cf. Alexandre 1994:409-444; van der Meer 1961:217-225).

Monica was born of Berber stock in Thagaste within the Roman province of (North) Africa subsequent to the Christianization of the imperial government, during the later administration of Constantine the Great [17 February 17, 274 - May 22, 337, reigned as co-Augustus from spring 307 and alone from 324]. Every indication is that she was a Christian from her youth. Of her ancestry there is no record. As noted by Aline Rousselle, "Roman law fixed the age at which a daughter given to a spouse by her father officially became a matron, a recognized spouse with all the privileges set forth in marriage law. That age was twelve years" (1994:302) – at which age Macrina the Younger was betrothed to a fiancée, who died before the marriage was consummated such that she remained a virgin. A comparable age for Monica may be calculated, since Augustine specifies that she died at the age of fifty-six when he was thirty-three years old (Confessions IX.11).

Again, as was common under Roman law, marriage entailed that “the bride left her father’s household to take up residence with her husband” whereat she was also “welcomed by his mother and father” (Zaidman 1994:360, 364), which is precisely the account given by Augustine, with the accompanying affirmation that Monica had fit in well such that in spite of how “hot-tempered a husband my mother had to cope with” nothing indicated “there had been any domestic disagreement between them, even for one day”; and moreover while “her mother-in-law was at first prejudiced against her by the tale-bearing of malicious servants,” Monica “won the older woman over by her dutiful attentions and her constant patience and gentleness” (Confessions IX.9). As defined within Graeco-Roman custom was the difference in age between men and women at marriage – him being some fifteen to twenty years older (Zaidman:365); and the respective years of death for Monica and her husband would bear this commonplace out.

We do not learn the names of any of Augustine’s grandparents, nor of both his two sisters, nor of his mistresses, but only that he had at least one brother, Navigius (q.v.), and but one son, Adeodatus (q.v.); Monica’s husband, his father, was named Patricius (q.v.), but he died two years before Augustine was nineteen (371; Confessions III.4), and Monica did not remarry (Frend 1988:135-151; van der Meer 1961: *passim*). Within that early household Augustine tells us he learned Latin “without being forced by threats of punishment . . ., not from schoolmasters, but from people who spoke to me and listened when I delivered to their ears whatever thoughts I had conceived,” which was in marked contrast to the way he “was forced to study Homer” and thereby learn with great distaste the Greek language and its literature (Confessions I.14).

By the age of sixteen (370), Augustine also studied at nearby Madaura (Confessions II.3) under the tutelage of the “pagan” Maximus, with whom, in correspondence exchanged at a much later date (390), reference was made to their both being Africans with a common heritage and education in the Punic language of ancestral Northwest Africa [Letters ##16-17 = NPNF ser.1 1.233-235]. But as William Hugh Clifford Frend has observed, “Augustine was first and foremost an African, and was influenced throughout his life by the Berber (as distinct from the Punic) background of his upbringing,” though of his later sermons it could be said they were “in a faultless Latin without trace of barbarism” (1952:230, 57-58, 327). Clearly,

the home situation under Monica's guidance was multi-lingual. Moreover, as observed by Rousselle, "the division of responsibility between husband and wife would continue throughout the child's upbringing, which was left in the charge of women until the child reached the age when its sex and social needs determined what course further education would take" (1994:368).

Monica was instrumental in the conversion of her husband to Christianity not long before his death (Confessions IX.9), and in the instilling within her son the seeds of such a possibility, in spite of the postponement of his baptism, long before these took root and grew into his statures role (Confessions I.11). Augustine's own career took him to higher education in Carthage, as determined by his father, whereat he studied philosophy and rhetoric (Confessions III), from whence he became a teacher of rhetoric first at Thagaste (375; Confessions IV) and then at Carthage (376-383), before voyaging via Rome to take up a comparable position at Milan (384) where he not only encountered Ambrose (Q 4.144-180) but was joined by Monica (385) for the remainder of her days. Of Monica's own intellectual capacities beyond its focus upon Bible and the cult of martyrs, Frend has noted that "while lacking any formal literary education, (she) was able to hold her own in a philosophical discussion" (1988:143).

She died at the Roman port of Ostia as they were returning to Africa, but not before witnessing the baptism into the "Catholic" church (Confessions IX.6) of Augustine and his son Adeodatus, along with Augustine's friend and colleague Alypius (q.v.; Confessions VI.7-12) on Holy Saturday, April 24, 387. Her ultimate influence upon her incomparable son is the other side of his own "confessional" autobiography. Her own cult developed in the later Middle Ages; her supposed remains were transferred from Ostia to Rome in 1430 by Martin V (pope November 11, 1417 - February 20, 1431; ODP 239-240).

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This article, received in 2004, was researched and written by Dr. Clyde Curry Smith, Professor Emeritus of Ancient History and Religion, University of Wisconsin, River Falls.

Augustinus, Aurelius - Augustine

Frederick W. Norris

354-430

Ancient Christian Church

Tunisia

Augustine was a latin patristic theologian and scriptural exegete; saint. Born in North Africa and educated there and at Rome, Augustine (also Aurelius Augustinus Hipponensis) was bishop of Hippo from about 390 until his death. The theology he shaped dominated the West until the thirteenth century and greatly influenced the Reformation. His predestination views formed the foundation for various mission theologies and practices during those periods.

Augustine's debate about free will with Pelagius empowered some missionaries with the conviction that without God's gift of Jesus Christ and faith itself all non-believers were lost. Others took Augustine's emphasis on God's ordaining of some for salvation and others for damnation as devastating for missions because destiny was already decided. The important monastery of Lerins in southern France, beginning with John Cassian, represented an Eastern tradition in the West which rejected Pelagian extremes but saw Augustine's predestinarian views as a dangerous innovation.

Augustine's controversy with the Donatists was also thorny. He rejected their insistence on full purity for any sacramental act to be valid. He abhorred their violence but did not mind the thought of suppressing them through the use of Roman troops. At the very moment when a Punic-Berber contextualization of the gospel needed strong pastoral guidance, Augustine's own Latin culture left him unable to see the possibilities.

Frederick W. Norris

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Zara Yakub

Tsehai Berhane Selassie

1399-1468

Orthodox Church

Ethiopia

Zare'a Ya'eqob (circa 1399 to 1468) emperor of Ethiopia from 1434-68, was the greatest of the emperors in medieval Ethiopian history. He was noted for his reorganization of the government, literary achievements, piety, and social reform. His period was also noted for the beginning of the first contacts with Christian Europe.

The fourth son of Emperor Dawit (q.v.) [reigned 1380-1412] and of Queen Egzi Kabra, he was born at Telq, Fatajar, in what is now Shawa. On his accession to the throne, he found a nation torn by internal strife and the struggle with Islam. He realized the political significance of forming an alliance with Christian Europe in order to counteract subversive Islamic influences. Around 1439-1441, therefore, he sent ecclesiastical delegates to the Council of Florence (1431-45). Fortunately for him, Ethiopia had by then come to the attention of Europe, and as a result of the arrival of the delegates, Fra Mauro, the Venetian cartographer, made a hypothetical map of Ethiopia in 1457. But Zare'a Ya'eqob still had to face an uprising of Muslims at home. When Badlay ibn Sadad Din, better known as Arwe Badlay, the sultan of Adal, invaded the province of Dwaro (now Arusi province) in 1445, he had to crush him.

Zare'a Ya'eqob's political ability was made more manifest in internal affairs. He firmly established direct control of the government by reorganizing the offices of the Tsahafe Lam (a title given the governors of Amhara, Damot, and Shawa), the Baher Nagash ("Ruler of the Sea," that is, governor of Eritrea and northern Tegré), and the Aqabe Saat ("Guardian of the Hour," the highest ecclesiastical post at court), through which he controlled the provinces. He also created the offices of the Ras Masere and the Adakshat (officers of the royal household). In addition, he took control of the army and of the finances, which his predecessor Yeshaq, had

organized with the help of a foreigner, but which had apparently fallen into chaos on his death. He showed no mercy to the disobedient and even had his own rebellious wife, Tseyon Mogassa, fatally flogged, because she wished to enthrone her son. He also defeated Mahiko, the Gerad (governor) of Hadeya, in what is now Kaffa province, who had rebelled. His stern handling of rebels contributed to the stability of his government.

His outstanding achievements appear to have been his religious reforms and policy. He reinforced the conversion of the pagan peoples of Damot and Agaw Meder, and tried to suppress idolaters, even to the extent of inflicting capital punishment on his own daughters and sons. He also established church rules and regulations, including holy fast days. But the great theological disputes in the Ethiopian Church began during his reign, apparently because of the interest in dogmas and creeds which he encouraged. He established many churches and monasteries, the most famous being that of Dabra Metmaq, at Tagulat in Shawa, built in 1441 to commemorate the Egyptian monastery of the same name which the Muslims had destroyed. The church and palace at his last capital, Dabra Berehan, were his most magnificent buildings.

His successful reign was marked by his own religious writings, which represented an exceptional feat for an Ethiopian emperor, and by his encouragement to those with literary interests. He himself wrote one hymn and six books, among which were the *Matshafa Meelad*, which dealt with Jews and Stephanite heretics, and the *Tsalota Haymanot*, or *Credo*, which explained the creed of the Ethiopian Church. He encouraged translations of religious works, and even of occult literature, which was introduced into Ethiopia during his reign.

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Krestos Samra

Wendy Laura Belcher

1400-

Orthodox Church

Ethiopia

Krəstos Šämra, as featured in her autobiography *Gädlä Krəstos Šämra*, was not a meek and virginal holy woman, but a woman fierce in all aspects of life. Born into a wealthy and pious family from a frontier province in the Christian Ethiopian empire, she was married to the son of the emperor's own priest (priests can be married in the Ethiopian Orthodox Täwaḥədo Church). The emperor looked upon Krəstos Šämra as a daughter and showered her with revenue and servants. A strong woman, she gave birth to nine sons and two daughters.

The changing point in her life arose from the temptations of class, probably when she was about forty years old. Having become enraged with a maidservant, probably a slave, she thrust a firebrand down her throat. When the maidservant died, a horrified Krəstos Šämra promised God that she would devote her life to him should he resurrect the maidservant. When he did, Krəstos Šämra promptly left for Däbrä Libanos, Ethiopia's most famous monastic community, to become a nun. She took her youngest child with her, but when she arrived she was told that no males were allowed into the nunnery. Committed to fulfilling her promise, she abandoned the child on the side of the road (fortunately, another nun saved him and, disobeying the same rule, raised him).

As is typical, Krəstos Šämra spent two years as a novice before becoming a nun, and the text provides important historical and religious information about Ethiopian monasticism during this period. She then left for Lake Ṭana, a place known for its many monasteries with devoted ascetic monks and nuns, to live the life of a hermit (Ethiopian monasticism has both cenobitic [communal] and eremitic [individual] forms). As her first remarkable act, she spent twelve years praying several hours a day in the waters of the lake, an act popular among devout Ethiopians. Living in solitude, she moved around the lake, staying at famous monasteries such as

Narga Šəllase and Tana Qirqos. During this period, she had many visions, in which she spoke with the angels and saints as well as Christ and his mother.

Then the biblical patriarchs came to her in a dream and told her to settle at G^wangut, also on Lake Tana, for they told her that the entire world would come there to prostrate themselves at her feet. So she gave up the life of a hermit and founded a monastery, even though living in community was something she, and many other Ethiopian saints, saw as more difficult than being a hermit. A monk named Yəshəaq helped her by building a church, training female novices, and celebrating the liturgy. Afterward she withdrew once again into solitude, standing in a pit for three years and in the lake for another three years. When death was near, she told a scribe named Filəppos her life story and thirty of her visions. Later at the monastery of Däbrä Libanos he wrote both down, recording her visions in a vivid and lively first-person account. She was buried at G^wangut, where her monastery is today.

Her visions are not presented in *Gädlä Krəstos Šämra* in abstract mystical language but are quite concrete, including clear stories about repentant magicians, fragments of consecrated bread that fly, abjecting the body by sucking Christ's wounds, and meeting Satan in his guise as head of the church. In one, she demands that Christ forgive all the damned and then travels to hell to plead with Satan to accept Christ's pardon so that human beings will no longer suffer due to their enmity (see Appendix 2 for an English translation of this section).

Krəstos Šämra was a nun dedicated to extreme asceticism who founded an important monastic community in the ancient Ethiopian Orthodox Təwahədo Church. Through her hagiography, readers gain a better understanding of how medieval Ethiopian texts represent gender roles and theology, thereby enabling complication of received understandings of Christian texts in general. Krəstos Šämra is not a sentimental figure, not someone who nurtures through affectionate kindness and sweet indulgence, but someone who puts God before family and who is willing to leave her own child to die in order to fulfill her obligations to the divine. She is sovereign over an everyday African world where a sneezing child is not adorable but a cold hand reaching from the grave, where eating only once a

day is the norm, not a diet, and where happening down the wrong road at the wrong time can lead to a life of slavery in a land far from anyone who speaks your language.

For her, God and Satan, Mary and the saints, angels and demons are not abstractions living on high, but neighbors to be importuned and chastised for their complacency regarding human suffering. Krəstos Śämra even debates with Christ, pressing him like a disobedient son to forgive humanity. In one of her miracles, a man was using a plant for magical protection. When Krəstos Śämra prayed to Christ that the man be forgiven for practicing magic, Christ responded that he would not forgive him because the man had used the plant demonically. In a typical moment, she responded by arguing with Christ, pointing out, “You created the plants!” Christ bowed to this argument and forgave the man. It is for tactics like this that the scholar Ephraim Isaac has reportedly called her “the mother of peace” and an Ethiopian female philosopher.

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Mvemba Nzinga, Afonso I

Tsimba Mabiala

1461-1543

Catholic Church

Congo , Angola , Democratic Republic of Congo

Mvemba Nzinga (circa 1461-1543), also known as Afonso I, ruled as Mani Kongo (king) of Kongo from 1506-43. He came to power soon after the arrival of the first Europeans in 1482. Having adopted Christianity, Afonso I tried to strengthen his dynasty and his country by modernizing and proselytizing the Kongo. Because Portugal was more interested in exploitation than in cooperation, his efforts failed.

Mvemba Nzinga was the son of Nzinga Nkuwu, the king of the Kongo, who received representatives of the Portuguese navigator Diogo Cão who landed at the mouth of the Zaire River in 1482. Cão was the first European to visit the Zaire area. Hoping to benefit from the power and wealth of the Portuguese, Nzinga Nkuwu converted to Christianity and was baptized with the name of the reigning Portuguese king, João. At the same time, in July 1491, Nzinga Nkuwu's son, Mvemba Nzinga was baptized as Afonso, the name of the Portuguese prince who was heir to the throne.

Mani Kongo Nzinga Nkuwu quickly returned to his traditional beliefs. One of the causes for this was his attachment to the institution of polygamy, which, as king, he needed to gain wealth, increase his prestige, and form alliances with other political leaders. Also, earlier when Nzinga had burned traditional religious symbols, he had incurred the anger of his people, who had begun looking to his unconverted son Mpanzu a Nzinga as a replacement.

Because he was governor of the province of Nsundi, lying across what is now the Zaire River, midway between modern Kinshasa and Matadi, Mvemba was the heir apparent to the office of Mani Kongo. In his capital, Mbanza-Nsundi, he welcomed those priests and Portuguese agents who had been obliged to leave the Mani Kongo's capital in about 1495 after the

monarch had renounced Christianity. He also had traditional objects of art, considered by the Portuguese to be diabolical, burned. Such destruction, however, greatly displeased many people in his realm. On Nzinga Nkuwu's death in 1506, Mvemba Nzinga fought with his brother, Mpanzu, the leader of the conservatives, who hoped to take power. Victorious in the struggle, the Christian Mvemba Nzinga and his partisans attributed their success to divine intervention. In truth, Mvemba won because of aid from Portuguese weapons. This battle was a landmark in the history of relations between the kingdom of the Kongo and Europe.

As king, Mvemba Nzinga worked zealously to convert his kingdom to Christianity. Portugal, which had supported his candidacy against Mpanzu, answered his requests for missionaries. Mvemba, or Afonso I, also sought to modernize his kingdom. Perhaps his most notable efforts were in education. By 1516 he had founded schools, for both boys and girls, at Mbanza Kongo, (renamed San Salvador). He also sent young boys of noble birth to Portugal to study. One of his sons Dom Henrique studied in Portugal, and was consecrated a bishop in 1518. Mvemba Nzinga also called on Portuguese masons, carpenters, and joiners to renovate royal architecture. He further solicited the skills of European chemists, doctors, schoolmasters, jurists, and specialists in court protocol.

But Mvemba Nzinga's efforts quickly ran into a series of unexpected difficulties. The Portuguese technicians, once in the Kongo, worked indifferently, and did not follow the instructions of the country's king. The efforts of Christian missionaries did not benefit the kingdom as much as Mvemba Nzinga had hoped. And, finally, European ships' captains traded along the Zaire River without regard to the Kongo's commercial laws.

Mvemba Nzinga asked the king of Portugal, Manuel I (reigned 1495-1521), to send an emissary with special jurisdiction over the Portuguese nationals in the Kongo. In consequence, in 1512, Manuel codified a program of Christianization and acculturation for the Kongo and sent out an ambassador with a "regimento" (a regulation or systematic statement).

The "regimento," however, failed in its purpose for several reasons. First the plans for cultural change could not be achieved because they were on such a large scale and because there were comparatively few artisans and missionaries to carry them out. Second, most Portuguese were interested

mainly in economic gain. Finally there was a fundamental ambiguity in Portuguese policy toward Africa. Portugal wished both to aid the Kongo but at the same time to exploit it economically. Although claiming to treat the Kongo as an equal, Portugal attempted to limit the Kongo's sovereignty on several levels. Commercially, it refused to restrict Portuguese traders who circumvented the Kongo's laws; in the judicial domain, it tolerated illegal activities of the Portuguese living in the Kongo; in the religious sphere, it sought to abolish traditional customs.

The Portuguese were not satisfied with gaining commercial and religious dominance in the Kongo. They also wished to exploit the precious minerals, which they erroneously believed to be abundant, as a result of impressions given by the unlucky envoys of Mvemba Nzinga. Both Manuel, in 1520, and his successor, Joao III (reigned 1521-57), in 1530, had received gifts of several silver manacles from Mvemba Nzinga. The Portuguese consequently believed the Kongo was filled with mines. (Even as much as a century later, the Portuguese were to wage a disastrous war against a king of the Kongo who refused to surrender his mines to them.)

During the reign of Mvemba Nzinga, the slave trade began-ruining the interior of the country, not so much in demographic terms as on an institutional level. The Portuguese sent to help educate and modernize the Kongo, chose instead to take part in this very profitable activity. The Portuguese of Sao Tome island, who received a trade monopoly for Central Africa from Portugal scorned any attempts on the part of the Mani Kongo to halt or even regulate the slave trade within his kingdom. Portuguese adventurers in the Kongo had close links to Sao Tome. On Easter Sunday 1539, these adventurers even tried to kill the Mani Kongo as he attended mass. The king barely escaped.

In about 1843, Mvemba Nzinga died, after a long reign of almost 40 years. He is remembered as an inspired builder, and a sincere ruler with a great vision. He was, nevertheless, naive, lacking the decisiveness and political cunning needed to outmaneuver the Portuguese. Some of his actions led to the eventual downfall and ruin of his land. By seizing office through the force of arms, he inaugurated the violent struggles for succession which were to divide the Kongo during the second half of the 17th century. By revealing the existence of mines in his lands, he aroused

Portuguese cupidity, with disastrous results. Finally, in his numerous campaigns to abolish traditional religion, he destroyed many examples of Kongolese art.

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Kimpa Vita

Tsimba Mabiala

1685-1706

The Antonian Movement

Congo , Democratic Republic of Congo , Angola

Kimpa Vita (circa 1685-July 2, 1706), whose baptized name was Dona Beatriz, founded a religious sect known as the Antonians. The goal of this movement was to restore the fortunes of the once glorious kingdom of Kongo and to Africanize Christianity.

After October 1665, when the Portuguese had defeated the Kongo army, the capital San Salvador was abandoned and the ruling dynasty was split by rivalry between the Ki-Mpanza and the Ki-Nlaza families. Members of these families ruled at three different locations, San Salvador, Bula, (100 km [60 mi] northwest of San Salvador), and Kibangu, south of San Salvador near Ambriz. Within the context of the political confusion and moral despair which gripped the kingdom in the late 1600s and early 1700s, several religious figures arose wishing to reunify the state and instill hope in the people.

The most important prophet was the young Kimpa Vita, or Dona Beatriz, who believed she had received a visitation from the popular Saint Anthony. According to Kimpa Vita, Saint Anthony became incarnate in her body so that she actually was the saint. Compelled by the Christian God to announce his word and to restore the former Kongo capital San Salvador, Kimpa Vita began preaching in the ruined city.

Rejecting missionary domination over Christianity, Kimpa Vita taught that Jesus Christ actually had been born in San Salvador which she called Bethlehem, that he had been baptized at Nzundi, about 150 km (100 mi) north of the capital, which she named Nazareth, and that Jesus Christ, the Holy Virgin Mary, and Saint Francis were black people of the Kongo. Furthermore, Kimpa Vita prophesied that God would punish the people if they did not immediately return to San Salvador. Initially most of the chiefs did not support her, but the common people, longing for unity and peace, joined the movement in great numbers. They believed that the Christian

God was, at long last, responding to the plight of the Kongo kingdom and that he would provide great wealth for the inhabitants.

About the same time, Mpanzu Mvemba, or Pedro IV, who was the Mani Kibangu (ruler of Kibangu), gained recognition as Mani Kongo (ruler of the entire Kongo) and attempted to reunify the once powerful Kongo state. Thus, he sent his general Pedro Constantino with an army towards San Salvador to build villages and plant gardens in preparation for people to resettle the old capital. Hoping himself to gain control of a reunified Kongo, however, Constantino joined with Kimpa Vita against Pedro IV. Pedro IV, who did not want to lose control of his kingdom, came north from Kibangu to defeat the rebels.

Arrested with a baby, whom she claimed had been conceived with her guardian angel, Kimpa Vita was tried for crimes against the crown and the Christian faith. At the instigation of Capuchin missionaries, both she and the child were burned at the stake on July 2, 1706. Kimpa Vita played a major role in the renewal and reunification of the previously divided Kongo kingdom. Together with Mpanzu Mvemba or Pedro IV, she was responsible for briefly restoring the Kongo in the early 1700s. Although she died shortly after she began preaching, her politico-religious ideas inspired messianic movements struggling against colonial oppression and exploitation two centuries later. The prophet Simon Kimbangu has frequently been regarded as the spiritual and political descendant of the martyred Kimpa Vita.

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Crowther, Samuel Ajayi

M. O. Owodayo

1810-1891

Anglican Communion

Nigeria , Sierra Leone

His Childhood and Slavery

Ajayi was born in a little town called Osogun in Yorubaland around the year 1810. Osogun was said to be four miles in circumference with about 3,000 inhabitants [1]. His parents gave him the name Ajayi as a symbol of importance. They also consulted the Ifa Oracle to find out which of the four hundred traditional Yoruba deities he would grow up to worship. The Ifa priest was said to have warned them against dedicating him to any idol having foreseen that he would worship the Almighty God [2].

Ajayi's father was a farmer and a weaver. From him, little Ajayi learned how to farm and shepherd domestic animals. He was noted for his courage and patience. He demonstrated this courage when he saved, at the risk of his life, his father's idols when their house was being destroyed in a conflagration.

On a day that looked quite bright, Osogun, his town, was to have her turn of the sorrowful fate of ruin, desolation and deprivation caused by the inhuman trade in slaves. At about breakfast time, the alarm was sounded when enemies were seen approaching. It was at first mistaken for the slave raiders who usually passed by Osogun. Within a short time, the town was surrounded by the Foulahs, the "Yoruba Mohammedans"[3] and the slaves who had run away from their masters. It was estimated that they numbered about 2,000 on strong swift horses. The enemies came at a time when most of the able men and women of the town had gone on their daily rounds of work and those left at home could not cope with the task of beating back the enemies. Houses were ruthlessly set on fire and the inhabitants fled for their lives. Ajayi's father seeing that it was a situation beyond his control, entered the house after ordering all his people to flee and he was never seen

again. The whole town was in flames. Ajayi, his mother and two sisters, ran into the hands of two of the raiders, who put nooses round their necks.[4] They were led away to join thousands of others under the same affliction. They were later marched to Iseyin where Ajayi was exchanged for a horse. This was how he became separated from his mother and was taken to the town of Ijaye where he was sold to a Mohammedan woman. This woman was planning to take him on a journey to Popo from whence Ajayi knew he would never return. The very thought made him sick.

He unsuccessfully attempted to commit suicide by strangling himself when he became fed up with the perpetual misery of slavery. In exchange for tobacco leaves and English wine, he was given to an Ijebu trader. He had suffered so much that in desperation he adjusted to slavery and was ready to accept any condition.

When Ajayi passed from the hand of the Ijebu man to the Lagos slave market and from there to the Portuguese traders, he thought his end had come. The Portuguese traders put him on a ship with other slaves and set out to sea. Fortunately the British anti-slavery warship, the *Myrmidon* attacked the Portuguese schooner and destroyed it at sea. Ajayi himself later reported that 102 out of the 189 slaves on board the Portuguese schooner perished in the resultant shipwreck.[5]

Thus rescued, he travelled in the *Myrmidon* with all perseverance. He did not understand the language of the crew, which was English. He later discovered that the English masters were friendly. When they landed in Sierra Leone, rather than being treated as a slave, Ajayi was shown tremendous freedom and kindness. He was placed in a C.M.S. school where he was taught to read and write the word of God in the New Testament. Ajayi was a keenly watchful young man, who was very willing to learn. Within six months of his arrival in Sierra Leone, he had sufficiently applied himself to his studies that not only could he read the New Testament, he was also appointed a pupil teacher in a local school earning seven and half pence a month.

He was first introduced to learning by Mr. Weeks – a trained carpenter and later Bishop of Sierra Leone – who endeavoured to train black children as carpenters. From him Ajayi learned the art of carpentry. Ajayi was gradually introduced to the knowledge of God who, he believed, had won

his freedom for him and he decided to devote his life to His service. In his own words, Ajayi noted that he was not saved from the slavery of man alone but also from that of sin. He decided he would now be a soldier for Christ, fighting against the world, the flesh, all spiritual enemies and the devil [6].

On the 11th of December 1825, he had a rebirth by baptism and he named himself after the vicar of Christ's Church, Newgate, London - Samuel Crowther, who was one of the pioneers of the C.M.S. Samuel Ajayi made his first visit to London in 1826 and this left a wonderful impression on him. On getting back to Sierra Leone, he was employed by the government as a teacher. Ajayi became engaged to a former slave girl named Asano on his return. She could read and write and was eventually baptized with the name Susan Thompson. They later married and lived happily together for about 50 years. Ajayi was among the first students admitted into Fourah Bay College when it was founded in 1828 under Charles Harsel. He later taught Greek and Latin in the same school.

Mr. Samuel Ajayi Crowther's baptism by the Rev. J. C. Raban in 1825, his journey to England with the Rev. and Mrs. Davey in 1826 and the few months' stay in the Parish School in Islington in 1827 prepared him for the life ahead. He assisted Rev. Raban in collecting the vocabularies of the Yoruba language in addition to his study of Temne, a local language. Ajayi quickly acquired a considerable measure of importance and prestige. He strongly advocated for the establishment of a model farm and agricultural society. He showed the required leadership in progressive matters and faced practical evangelism seriously. He lived a blameless life both at home and in public.

In 1841, the celebrated Niger Expedition was sent from Britain. The C.M.S. was authorized to send men to join the party. The Rev. J. F. Schon, a linguist, and Mr. S. A. Crowther were chosen. Unfortunately, the Niger Mission did not succeed and, of the 145 people in the expedition party, 40 out of the 45 Europeans died of malaria.

This experience prompted Rev. Schon, in his report to the C.M.S., to strongly recommend that Africans be used for evangelism amongst their people. Ajayi was consequently invited to London.

On Trinity Sunday in 1843, Ajayi was ordained into the Holy Orders. He was priested the following October, barely 21 years after his freedom

from slavery. A rousing welcome was organized for Crowther in Sierra Leone. The following Sunday, Rev. S. Ayayi Crowther delivered his first sermon in English and another in Yoruba. He soon travelled back to Abeokuta with Rev. Henry Townsend and immediately applied himself to the mission's task. He evolved the orthography of the Yoruba language and embarked on the translation of the Bible into Yoruba. Other missionaries joined Ajayi in his work on the Yoruba language. He was a man highly endowed with the gift of humility, who remained unruffled in the face of provocation by idol worshippers. He therefore won their moral consideration and some of them were converted. His people in Abeokuta saw him as the fulfilment of the hope they had nursed for many years.

Crowther was the main weapon used by Townsend for evangelization. His presence alone infused confidence in the listeners.

Within three weeks of his arrival in Abeokuta in 1845, Crowther learned that his mother, sisters and cousin were alive in a nearby village. He sent for them and could not believe his eyes when he saw them. He was embraced by his mother and both of them wept for joy, recollecting their sad parting some 25 years before. His mother was one of the early converts in Egbaland and at her baptism, she took the Biblical name "Hannah." She had earlier been set free from slavery following the ransom of four pounds and ten shillings paid by her daughter [7].

Crowther showed himself to be an enterprising and energetic man, he had intelligence and was full of plans. During another visit to Egbaland he received an invitation from Palmerston, the British Prime Minister who learned a lot from him about Africa and particularly West Africa. The Queen and her husband also invited Crowther to the Castle at Windsor where, by means of maps, he explained the layout of West Africa – especially Abeokuta and Sierra Leone - to the royal couple. He also recited the Lord's Prayer in Yoruba at the Queen's demand and pleasure. He was invited to address the students of Cambridge College and enjoined them to come and work in Africa [8]. He met, once again, Sir Henry Luke, the captain of the ship that had brought him to freedom in Freetown. The captain was happy to see him ordained. After a very successful visit, Crowther returned to Africa in June 1852.

In the same year, he published and revised his enlarged version of *Yoruba Grammar and Vocabulary* and the translation of four Books of the New Testament - Luke, the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistle of James and the Epistle of Peter. Crowther and Thomas King did an excellent and commendable translation of the Bible and the Prayer Book which are still regarded as works of high literary value today [9].

Slave Turned Bishop

The consecration of Rev. Samuel Ajayi Crowther as a bishop seemed to have been motivated by experimental tendencies. However, the experiment later turned out to be a big success to the disappointment of those who underrated the intelligence of the blacks and disparaged the “Negro” race. This success however was not easily achieved. We note the role of Africans like Rev. Crowther who gave the necessary leadership to the Niger Mission. Crowther proved that educated Africans were capable of carrying the Gospel successfully to the interior of the so-called “Dark Continent.”

In 1856 Henry Venn wrote expressing the hope that the Niger would again be visited under the auspices of Her Majesty’s government to open up communication with the interior of the continent for the purpose of spreading the Gospel. Crowther was especially invited to join the expedition which was led by Captain Beecroft up the River Niger and River Nun to explore the Lake Chad and to find the two explorers, Barth and Vogel. Crowther accepted and went to the Island of Fernando Po to take the Steamer *Pleiad*. But Captain Beecroft suddenly fell ill and died before they set out. Dr. William Baikie, a Scot, took over the command. One of the most outstanding features of this expedition was that no European died of fever during the voyage which lasted 118 days.[10] This was the result of the quinine used for the first time as a prophylactic. As a result of Crowther’s selfless service, radical changes were made possible within a short time. Everybody in the Niger Delta area and beyond was aware of the fact that the area had developed to such an extent that it called for the supervision of a full-time bishop. The efficient and tireless efforts of Crowther coupled with his faith and courage recommended him for the high office. Henry Venn, the Church Missionary Society’s secretary had seen the problems of the Niger Mission and saw Crowther as the solution. But the question on the lips of every white man was, “Is there anyone among

the African clergy to whom so great a responsibility can, safely, be entrusted?"[11]

It was now over twenty-one years since Crowther had been ordained. He was humble, dutiful and consistent in the ministry. He had laid the foundations of a diocese. He was unassuming, quiet, unostentatious and was known both in Africa and in England for being in possession of the necessary qualities that a would-be bishop needed.[12] Crowther had not only shown himself as having a thorough understanding of the Christian faith but also revealed a knowledge of the effective ways of communicating the same to his fellow countrymen. Neither the climate nor the language of Africa was an impediment to him. The University of Oxford had earlier on, in appreciation of his invaluable contributions to the development of Christianity in West Africa, conferred an honorary doctorate degree on him.

But with regard to episcopate, Henry Venn and Rev. Henry Townsend seemed to have worked in opposite directions. Right from 1851 Venn had started to advocate strongly the advancing of African clergy to the office. Rev. Townsend, however, embarked upon a counter policy of looking upon the indigenous clergy as potential rivals. Venn proposed that two more Africans, T. B. Macaulay (a graduate of Islington Theological Training, where Townsend himself had been trained) and Thomas King (a graduate of Fourah Bay College and a distinguished catechist who had assisted Crowther in translating the Bible), should be ordained any time the bishop of Sierra Leone came to Abeokuta. Townsend wrote to Venn on October 21, 1851 expressing his doubts about the abilities of black clergymen who, he said, would need more years of experience to stabilize their character. He would rather, he said, employ them as school masters and catechists.[13] When another proposal to erect an episcopal see at Abeokuta was made and Crowther was summoned to England, Townsend's doubts developed into panic. He quickly announced he was conducting a referendum among his African staff to test the popularity of the idea of a black bishop. He drafted a petition against the proposal and cleverly obtained the signatures of Hinderer and Gollmer who being Germans were opposed to the episcopal policy on doctrinal grounds. In the petition, he contended that no matter what the worth of an African bishop would be, he would lack the respect and influence necessary for such a high office. He further maintained that

the natives themselves accepted and treated their indigenous clergy (Mr. Crowther and others) as inferior to the whites. He claimed that as a result of the sectional jealousies and ethnic affiliation that had torn the country apart, not even the converts would accept the authority of an indigenous bishop. He positively held that God had given talent to the whites to be used for the good of the negroes who consequently had great respect for the whites. This trust, he warned, should not be shifted.[14]

No one would fail to understand from this that Townsend was on the verge of frustration. He was actually being lured away by the love of office. King and Macaulay were ordained, to his disappointment, in 1854. But Crowther, in his own case, cared less for the post, honour, responsibility and power that Venn had in mind for him. Venn knew that Crowther lacked a bickering spirit, did not engage in the struggle for power and did not have the desire for office but he saw in him a dependable counselor with remarkable tact and knowledge of human psychology. Crowther had the greatest possible regard for the European missionaries. He saw them as having sacrificed all things for the sake of the black man. He even wrote to Venn in 1860 in protest against what he termed a cheap publication ascribed to him in certain English newspapers in connection with the vacant bishopric of Sierra Leone. He declared that "as a man he knew something of the feelings of men." [15]

Although the actions of two African clergymen who refused to work on the Niger (their own country) might have given force to the claims of Rev. Townsend and prompted him to oppose native leadership, but it was the same Townsend who dissuaded two German catechists who had been staying in Abeokuta from accompanying Crowther to the Niger. Townsend wrote Venn warning against what he saw as the danger of sending white men in an inferior position because the white men, (he believed) should always be in an advantageous position, in religion and other human endeavors. He concluded that black men were not fit to be leaders. The European missionaries realized that their success depended on the prestige and influence they could wield. The emigrants however soon realized too that these foreign missionaries were constituting themselves into a force which sooner or later might be very difficult to resist let alone remove. Thus they mounted a strong campaign to resist Townsend. From Sierra Leone to Lagos and Onitsha in the Delta area, the people stood solidly behind

Crowther asserting that any bishop appointed other than the Rev. Ajayi Crowther would not be a popular choice.

In 1864, the C.M.S. (London) invited Crowther to an urgent meeting. He left in such hurry that he forgot a change of clothing. He was met by Henry Venn in London. When Crowther was asked about what difficulties he encountered in his area of ministry, he mentioned the need for more missionaries to work in outstations. He answered questions with such frankness that he left his listeners deeply impressed. Venn announced that he was recommending his consecration. Crowther declined with all humility, claiming he was not worthy. Venn was, however, persistent and advised Crowther to spend a quiet time with his old friend Schon at New Brompton. Schon too advised Crowther to accept the offer. When he later returned to Venn however he still did not look convinced. Venn finally assured him that his consecration would symbolize the full development of the native African church in their attempt to be self-supporting and self-propagating. He told him that his work had qualified him for the high office. Venn appealed passionately to Crowther, "My son Samuel Ajayi, will you deny me my last wish before I die?" [16] Ajayi shed tears, and solemnly accepted the bishopric of the Niger, – the first African to be so honored.

Before 8.00 a.m on the 29th June, the Canterbury Cathedral was filled beyond capacity. Admiral Luke of the *Myrmidon* anti-slave trade fame was present. The consecration of Crowther was solemn and the sermon was preached by the Rev. H. Longueville Mansel, Professor of Philosophy from Oxford, choosing his text from 1 Peter 5: 2-3, on being "example to the flock" [17]. This seemed to be the crowning glory in the life of Bishop Crowther who was then fifty-four years of age. The press saw it as a good and promising step in the right direction against the "taunts of certain professors who maintain that the cerebral development of the negro shows that he is disqualified from intellectual pursuits and that he cannot be lifted out of his congenital dullness." [18] This shows how severely a certain section of the white race underrated the intelligence and ability of the black man. Bishop Ajayi Crowther proved them wrong.

The bishop lost no time in returning to his field of labour in Africa. He left England on July 24 and arrived in Sierra Leone on the 10th of August where a mammoth crowd enthusiastically accorded him a rousing welcome.

After a day's rest, Bishop Crowther paid a courtesy call to the staff and students of his alma mater, Fourah Bay College. There, the Church Missionary agents and native pastors presented a welcome address and another address was also read by the authorities of the college. The speeches were full of praises for him and listed his achievements, both in the colony, Abeokuta and on the Niger.

In his response Bishop Crowther reminded them of the old times – specifically about how the European missionaries in obedience to the injunction of our Lord “Go, and teach all nations” had brought the Good News to that land. He therefore urged his listeners to take on the same spirit and propagate the Gospel beyond the colony. He later moved to Lagos where he held his first ordination service admitting Mr. Lambert Mackenzie to the order of deacons.

Labor and Difficulties

Following Crowther's consecration in 1864, Henry Venn wrote to Mann in April 1865 appealing to all missionaries to place themselves under the bishop's jurisdiction and enjoining them to cooperate and work with him like brothers. He assured them that the bishop had been destined for great works by God.[19]

The consecration of Crowther bothered Townsend and almost at the final moment in a letter to Venn, Townsend gave an opinion that bordered on religious secession. He claimed that he “could not see any necessary connection between the episcopal office in a foreign country and the Crown of England.” Venn was initially a strong admirer of Townsend's political judgment but seeing the problems that ensued between him and Governor Glover, Venn censured the language of his letters and became suspicious of his ambitions. Venn had known that Townsend did not approve of Crowther's consecration when he forged ahead to make him bishop. Townsend was even reported to have written to his Methodist colleague, Thomas Champness, describing the depressing situation in his area and reporting the appointment of “a bishop {Crowther} of the Niger to reside at Lagos and to have nothing to do with us.” He added: “I believe it will be done if the C.M.S.... can do it, but it would be a let down.”[20]

This was the remark of a personal friend and one time co-worker of Bishop Crowther. The obstacles that beset Bishop Crowther and his mission ranged from personal animosity, to dark and superstitious customs of the people.

It was also a tragic irony of history that at the time Crowther was performing his first ordination service at Onitsha, there was still human sacrifice going on. The Obi of Onitsha had lost his son and to mark the burial, some people were buried with the corpse, among whom was an eight year old girl, who carried a pair of shoes and foodstuff to serve as refreshment on the long journey to heaven and beyond. The Christians in a group, however, protested and warned the Obi of the dire consequences of human sacrifice and the displeasure of God to be incurred by this.

The Delta was a particularly difficult area to work in. Such practices as the destruction of twin children varied from one locality to another. While they were killed in certain places, their mothers were banished from the villages in other places. The bishop ruthlessly condemned the practice and the misery that the people inflicted on the victims. One Sunday he preached from Genesis 25:23, "And the Lord said unto her, 'Two nations are in thy womb'[21]. He further mounted a crusade against this evil during meetings, visitations, prayers, and social talks.

The width of the riverine areas was about 120 miles and the waterless area covered some 140 miles. Idolatry was the order of the day. The bishop himself was reported to have said on April 22, 1867 that he agreed with some of the Bonny natives that a stop must be put to worshipping alligators as deities. The reptiles had become a menace in the streets, in the nooks and corners of the town but killing them was, however, locally prohibited. Bishop Crowther ordered them to be killed and their blood was sprinkled in the people's drinking water to prove that they were no more than ordinary edible meat.

It is still a mystery how Bishop Crowther succeeded in bringing the light of the Gospel to supersede the darkness of idolatry in Bonny. It would never be forgotten how on Easter Day of 1867 the head chief renounced the worship of the giant reptiles and gradually, but painstakingly, put an end to the worship of the animal.

Crowther Kidnapped

Crowther was persecuted in his attempt to lay the foundation of the church or mission at Ghebe. He saw its position on the confluence to be of vital importance to the promotion of trade up the Niger. He noted in his journals that the people of Ghebe were willing to hear the Good News. He was very sad on one occasion therefore to learn from reports coming in from Lokoja that Ghebe had been plundered after being destroyed with fire. The report claimed that “Ghebe is now in a ruinous heap, and this important town has been swept away from the face of the earth.”[22]

This report took the bishop there for a assessment. He protested and warned the plunderers of the consequences of their atrocities with regard to the commercial advantages in industry and civilization. At about the same time, when Townsend was away in England on furlough for health reasons, there was trouble at Abeokuta. It must be remembered that the early establishment of Christianity in the area was not without trials. On Sunday, 13th October 1867, all the denominational churches in Abeokuta were not only attacked but the members, who were ready for services were stripped. [23] This was nothing short of a rampage carried out in a manner that was outrageously immodest. It was called the Ifole War. The missionaries fled the town and moved to Lagos.

This wave of persecution soon spread to Bonny. The protomartyr of Bonny was Joshua Hart whose only offence was that he had renounced his idols to worship the only true God. He was arrested on his way to church on Sunday, tormented, and was told to participate in idolatrous rites, to which he objected. Joshua’s hands and feet were tied and he was thrown into stream. He kept praying that God should forgive his persecutors. He was finally stabbed to death with a sharp pointed pole. There were other numerous cases of others who suffered privately.

While the flock suffered persecution, the shepherd did not go unscathed. Even Bishop Crowther once fell victim to the treachery of his one time friend Chief Abokko. He and his son Dandeson visited the Chief in his Oko-Okien village on one of his journeys up the Niger in 1867. Abokko ordered his men to clear Crowther’s boat of all cargo. His personal luggage and apparel were removed. Bishop Crowther and his men spent the night naked outside. Abokko claimed that he regarded it an offence for the

English merchants to refuse to recognize him as the superintendent of the board of trade in that part of the river. He complained that he had been slighted by their not giving him, as the owner of the river, any substantial gifts, whereas the Atta was given handsome presents. He thought that Bishop Crowther owned the ships and the establishments at Lokoja, Idah, Onitsha, Bonny.

Abokko was said to be an insatiable, covetous and greedy person. He was also vindictive, cruel and treacherous.[24] Bishop Crowther, Dandeson (his son, age twenty-four) and the other boatmen were thus detained for days. On September 23, 1867, four of his boatmen who were suspected of planning an escape were chained with irons. Abokko gave them rationed food at his pleasure. The following day at about a noon a messenger from the Atta of Idah came with a passionate plea for their release. This plea only earned Bishop Crowther the privilege of using a plate, a spoon and a fork – something he had not done for seven days. No sooner had the messenger of Atta left for Idah, than Abbega, a messenger from the consul in Lokoja, arrived with an encouraging letter to the bishop and another for Abokko. Chief Abokko would release the bishop only on the payment of a ransom of two hundred slaves. After serious negotiation with Abbega, Abokko asked for the payment of one thousand bags of cowries – the equivalent of one thousand pounds – for the release of Bishop Crowther. He was said to have even contemplated asking for an equal sum for Dandeson's release. When negotiations failed, Abbega left, only to meet Mr. Fell, the British consul, and W. V. Rolleston Esq. on the way. They were not prepared to pay any ransom as they considered the gesture would amount to reviving and encouraging slave trade. When all peaceful negotiations proved abortive, military force was used to effect the release of Bishop Crowther. In the attempt however, a poisonous arrow was shot at Mr. Fell and he died before they got back to Lokoja.[25]

The church at Lokoja wrote to commend the spirit of endurance that the bishop demonstrated and confessed that they had learned a great lesson from him.

Crowther was a prayerful and good shepherd who endeavored to know every member. He did not enter into any man's harvest but rather labored to prepare a rich harvest into which others entered. He allowed himself no

idle hours; he had the knack for knowing what to do in cases of emergency. Even when his health was in danger, he worked with a consecration and persistence. It was said that he showed his friendliness to the king of Bida by presenting him with plates and explaining their use to keep flies away from the food. He thought that by this kind gesture he could win over the king to Christianity. The latter however rebuffed the kindness.

Bishop Crowther faced other difficulties. He had to cover a large area on foot and the conditions of most of the roads were bad. Transport was irregular on the river and he faced hostility from both the local natives and from the commercial companies. There was no adequate supervision in the upper Niger. The bishop's last years in the episcopate witnessed serious commercial struggles between the European companies, the Africa coastal tribes and the Sierra Leonian merchants. The African ministers inevitably took sides with their Brass and Bonny neighbors while the European missionaries supported their English compatriots in business. In other parts of Yorubaland - Egba, Ibadan and Ijesha - certain returning emigrants were trained priests and they became assets to the missionaries in their respective area. This was however not the case in the Niger area. Bishop Crowther was also confronted with problems. Except for two or three Ibos and one Ibadan minister who had to study the language, he did the translation himself. It was not easy for him to move his ministers. Bishop Crowther was not perfectly free. He had to take directives from the C.M.S. since he was paid by them. He had no independent revenue of his own. This was another reason why commercial interests tended to weaken Bishop Crowther's support from London.

By 1890, work on the Upper Niger was feeble and at the pioneer stage. In the Delta, work was flourishing and there was a cathedral at Bonny. The immigrants formed the nucleus of the congregation at Onitsha, Lokoja and Egba. Between 1880 and 1890 antagonism grew between the European and African traders and the European and African clergy, especially as there were reports of low morale among the African clergy.

Workers connected with the beginning and progress of the church in Delta area were Bishop Crowther, Dandeson Coates Crowther (his son), James Boyle, John D. Garrick, and Walter E. Carew. They worked together to build the Delta Church on the pattern existing in Lagos. They promoted

native pastorate to minimize outside influence that tended to control the Delta Church affairs. Bishop Crowther regarded this as the “pulling down” necessary for “building.”[26] Bishop Crowther appeared to have lost confidence in further engagements with the C.M.S. missionaries. This prompted him to draw up on May 8, 1891, the Niger Delta pastorate scheme, which was inaugurated in January 1892. He informed the C.M.S. that Lagos and Sierra Leone were prepared to offer financial assistance to the Delta District to be self-supporting. He desired the Delta District to be made a native pastorate and to be financed through native agency. The Sierra Leone Committee and Lagos rose to the task and raised money to sustain the Delta pastorate.

His Education Strategies

The main weapon of Bishop Crowther’s evangelization was school. He regarded education as a means of enlightening the future generations especially where the texts used to educate were from the Holy Scriptures. All virtues could be inculcated and vices condemned. Through education, the superstition of idolatrous worship would be exposed.[27] He was sad to note that the persecution of 1872, in Brass, drastically reduced the number of school children from 31 to 16 and this he knew could undermine the potential support for the mission. He made Bonny school a model for neighboring states. Bishop Crowther pioneered the self-supporting local school system by introducing fees. He contributed to Macaulay’s effort to start the Lagos Grammar School. He was also very interested in the development of the Freetown Grammar School and the Fourah Bay College. When he realized that the local resources could not meet the needs for promoting education, he eagerly explored foreign aid where possible.

He combined literary education with industry and personally demonstrated this. He was a good carpenter and an educationalist. Thus, he sought to educate his people to be carpenters, mechanics, masons, artisans, etc. He encouraged local initiatives to recruit men as his staff members. He selected men of proven ability who had the respect of the local people. Bishop Crowther knew that salaries of thirty-six pounds and sixty-two pounds per annum for an evangelist and an ordained missionary respectively were inadequate to maintain families of five to seven members

and that usually Church workers took keen interest in educating their children.

The wives of the clergy in many cases, had to supplement their husband's income by trading. He considered liberal education for mission workers and their need to work under older and more experienced persons to acquire an understanding of the evil of the human heart and to learn how to deal with it when necessary.[28] Bishop Crowther demonstrated this by keeping his youngest child Dandeson with him for four or five years after the son's secondary education at the Lagos Grammar School. Dandeson served as private secretary and copyist to his father as well as an understudy to him. Bishop Crowther dedicated his son Dandeson to missionary work. He preached the sermon and personally ordained Dandeson in 1870 in St. Mary's Church, Islington, London. Dandeson was superintendent and later the archdeacon of the Delta and Lower Niger stations. He was himself a graduate of Fourah Bay College.

His Reforms

Bishop Crowther upheld the sanctity of Christianity and maintained that it had come to supersede and abolish all false religions and to direct mankind to the only way of obtaining peace and harmony with God. He did not want Christianity to destroy national assimilation but hoped it would correct any degrading and superstitious defects. Christians should approach political issues with caution, wisdom and meekness to generate mutual understanding between themselves and the powers that be. Christians should further fulfill their religious duty of rendering to God the things that are God's.

The bishop refused to baptize polygamists. His son Dandeson declared the practice to be "slavery for wives." [29] This opposition seemed not to have had any impact on the converts because Dandeson complained of prevailing sin of polygamy at Nembe (Brass) where the majority of the baptized chiefs had fallen into the sin. [30]

The bishop of Sierra Leone had to issue a license to Bishop Crowther when on an occasion, the Parent Committee enjoined him to visit Abeokuta. In January 1871, while Townsend was refused a visit to Abeokuta, because of the division caused by the struggle for chieftaincy title

between Ademola and Oyekan, Bishop Crowther was however warmly welcomed by the two parties. He held a communion service for one hundred and sixteen people and later visited places. This journey proved that Crowther's episcopate was accepted everywhere.

In the midst of his travels, Bishop Crowther did not allow his literary work to suffer. He once suffered a great loss when he returned to Lagos from the Niger to find his house had been destroyed by fire. He wrote to Venn to express his sorrow and regret at the loss of the manuscripts which contained nearly all the remaining books of the Pentateuch.[31] His collections of words and proverbs in Yoruba, the result of eleven years of constant observation were completely destroyed. This tragic loss consequently delayed the publication of his revised dictionary till 1870.

His Family

Crowther took care of his family by paying serious attention to their education. All of his six children were educated in England. Two of his daughters married clergymen and the third married a trader. His youngest son, Dandeson was later appointed the archdeacon of the Delta. The eldest son, Samuel was given scientific and medical training but he later took up trading. Josiah received industrial training in Manchester and later settled down as a business man.[32] These members of the bishop's family and the immigrants with missionary training in Sierra Leone rallied together to resist the campaign mounted by Townsend who claimed that Africans were incapable of running their own affairs.

The Bishop's Last Years

In a letter in 1867, the bishop claimed that he and his children contributed to the promotion of the interests of the West African Company Limited in their bid to develop trading on the Niger. He did not immediately realize what dire consequences such could have on missionary activities. Some unhealthy rivalry soon developed between traders and missionaries. Though Venn had earlier on expressed fear about losses incurred in 1867 leading to bankruptcy, things changed later and by 1870 profits were recorded to the extent that Bishop Crowther suggested constituting the Onitsha Industrial Institute into a mission establishment.

The closing years of the bishop's long career were beset by difficulties and suffering. He started growing weary towards the end though he was still full of selfless zeal. The mission under his episcopal care was very extensive with numerous stations all over the Niger area. He, like the great Apostle Paul, was saddled with the mission to the Gentiles and the fulfillment of this task exposed his life to innumerable risks. He suffered biting cold in stark nakedness and was constantly in peril among his country men.[32b]

One of the most painful events of his life was the death of Mrs. Crowther on October 19, 1880. The couple had suffered slavery together and shared the joy of freedom. They had just celebrated the golden jubilee of their wedding when she became ill, at a time the bishop was away on one of the long journeys to the Upper Niger. He returned to find his devoted wife seriously ill. She later died in his arms.[33]

The bishop soon suffered another blow in the death of his mother. She died in October 1883 at the age of ninety-seven years. He was traveling up the Niger when she passed away. On her death bed, she warned her granddaughter, Mrs. Macaulay not to write and bother the bishop. This was in keeping with what she had earlier told her son, "You are no longer my son, but the servant of God whose work you must attend unto, without any anxiety for me." [34]

Finally, the death of Rev. Schon in 1889 was a personal blow to Bishop Crowther. It was Schon who had recommended that he pursue missionary work and was instrumental to his accepting consecration.

Other problems that perplexed the mind of the bishop towards the end of his life include the trafficking in liquor and the inordinate love for trade that caused unhealthy rivalry between the native African traders and Europeans. At this time Europeans were making claims and securing territorial possessions in Africa. The Niger and Benue were coveted waterways. Between 1877 and 1891, Nigeria became three separate British protectorates - Lagos, Oil Rivers, and Territories of the Royal Niger Company. Inevitably, the change seriously affected the church and allowed Europeans to lord it over Africans. Different denominations began to grow. Missionaries who had been stationed on the coast moved into the interior. The Rev. James Johnson, a former lecturer at Fourah Bay College and who

had been appointed to Abeokuta as a probable bishop, was recalled when this rivalry became intense. The clouds started to gather.

The decade beginning with 1880, was transitional and full of conflict and bitter discrimination. The mission-educated Africans, particularly those working on the Niger were discredited by European missionaries. The rumors of wrongdoing within the mission went into circulation and soon reached the ears of the committee in Salisbury Square. The committee comprising the bishop, three European missionaries, two native archdeacons and others, agreed to meet in Lagos and discuss the situation. The Rev. J. B. Wood was, however, said to have unilaterally gone ahead to make an investigation. He claimed to have discovered that the level of Christianity of the agents was meager and that the wives of the clergy were mostly illiterate, and were more interested in trade than their husband's missionary work. Wood proffered charges of immorality against four ordained native missionaries; charged two with trading, and one with dishonesty. A lay agent was charged with brutally flogging a housemaid to death, others with immoral union with wives before actually contracting marriages; drunkenness or even general unfitness. Wood made his investigation and forwarded his recommendations to Hutchinson without making his findings known to the bishop, nor even calling on the accused to defend themselves. Hutchinson printed and circulated copies to members of the Parent Committee and Bishop Crowther.

Bishop Crowther, in his reply, accused Wood of attempting to break the mission on the Niger. As a matter of fact, Wood had mishandled the inquiry but the report had created some impression in the minds of the committee members. There were conflicting opinions about the mission of the Niger which was generally seen as a failure by some and a reflection of the inability of the natives to manage their own affairs. Others however sympathized with Bishop Crowther and his missionaries for not having been given a fair hearing. The Parent Committee appointed a deputation to ask Wood to substantiate his allegations. Wood was however unable to attend the conference that met in Madeira.

Bishop Crowther rejected the Wood's report, but confirmed the case of the brutal treatment meted out to the housemaid and proved that other cases were hearsay, and tendentious. He pointed out the cases of two

schoolmasters, Thomas and Joseph at Lokoja and Kippo Hill: he had compelled them to marry the girls they had put in the family way. The Madeira conference, however, emphasized the need for reforms on the Niger. Mr. and Mrs. John and Mr. Williams, who were found guilty of the death of the housemaid, were sentenced to twenty years' imprisonment each, by a secular court.

Bishop Crowther insisted on investigating the charges properly and proving them before disciplinary action could be taken. The committee, however, saw no need to prove the charges before declaring an accused unfit for the high and holy calling of a missionary. Many people, particularly the missionaries, saw the bishop as identifying himself with his agents even in their summary trial. One Rev. W. Romaine, in 1876, was reported to have recorded only one baptism throughout the year in Onitsha, and was consequently accused of drunkenness. A charge of adultery was difficult to establish against him and he was suspended for three months on the charge of drunkenness, which Crowther claimed was glaring as he had actually been seen in a scandalous state, under the influence of alcohol. He reinstated and transferred the accused to another station at the end of the three months. This, the bishop thought, was enough punishment to the wife and children of the accused who would suffer untold hardships if he were to face too long a suspension or total dismissal. He was said to have told the Parent Committee on his last visit to England in December 1889 that "a newly-made fire was bound to be smoky, the cook would do more good if he took a fan to blow it than to begin to search and pull out every stick that smoked. We are all weak and imperfect agents, faulty in one way or another, which need to be strengthened, supported, reproofed and corrected when not beyond amendment." [35]

Different remarks have been made on Bishop Crowther's role with reference to this episode. Ascroft saw him as being too soft a disciplinarian. But the Rev. J. A. Robinson, a Cambridge scholar appointed joint secretary of the Yoruba and Niger Missions in 1887, discovered a collective fault in the bishop. He saw him as the symbol of the Negro race who lacked every sign of ruling prowess. He impetuously and uncharitably darkened the last years of the bishop's ministry with damaging reports. Robinson came in company of others like Graham Wilmot Brooke, a twenty-five year old freelance lay missionary. They arrived at Lokoja in 1889 and saw the

building of the Preparandial Institution which was completed in 1887. They described it as the grandest building in West Africa and an obstacle to the progress of Christianity.[36] They thought the cost of the building would occupy the attention of the natives who regarded the white as wealthy, and able to expend money on trifles. They later sold the building to the Royal Niger Company. Robinson reported that if Bishop Crowther and Archdeacon Henry Johnson resigned, the Europeans would do the mission work better and more cheaply. Robinson further emphasized in his report to the committee that if Bishop Crowther, used to running the native mission, was offered the option of a good pension rather than losing his dignity and thereby avoiding his conflict with the authority of the committee, Bishop Crowther would agree.[37] Crowther was always prepared to labor as a pioneer, opening new ground for the mission and allowing his superiors and better managers to man the established stations, he noted.

For the last time, the bishop was invited to England little knowing what the outcome of the interview would be. The Rev. F. N. Eden was sent to succeed Robinson, who resigned in protest against the Parent Committee's [38] compromise with the bishop. Robinson left for Lokoja to join the Sudan Party in January 1890. Eden left in February and Brooke in May. They convened the finance committee which examined the African pastors against whom different charges had been proffered. Eden overruled the bishop as the chairman and pronounced the pastors suspended. These two white clergy men and one white layman suspended three African clergymen in the presence of the African bishop who had ordained them. It was enough defiance! Archdeacon Dandeson Crowther was found guilty by the finance committee of making inconsistent statements to defend the accused. He was declared unworthy of his holy office and summarily suspended. Bishop Crowther got up trembling to dissociate himself from the decision of the finance committee on the grounds that the secretary claimed that he had powers as the C.M.S. representative to suspend any resolution of the committee.[39]

Archdeacon Dandeson Crowther declared also that due to the mishandling of things by the Europeans, he could no longer cooperate with the C.M.S. and he demonstrated this by declaring his archdeaconry of the Niger Delta pastorate independent of the C.M.S. within the Anglican communion. However, in the midst of all the clamor and criticisms of

Crowther's episcopal administration, the committee tried to keep his name stainless and his personality blameless, but the bubble had already burst. Even if the committee had told his Lordship that he had been exonerated of all charges, the implication was indelible that the shepherd had faltered and the sheep wandered or erred. The bishop seemed to be assured by these circumstances that by the estimation and in the eyes of the colonial masters who made him what he was, he might soon be outliving his usefulness. The native converts too were fast nearing the conclusion expressed by the late Henry Venn "that in the course of time the churches in the Niger Mission shall become self-supporting, as those in the colonies are.[40]

These hardships seemed to have caused the bishop's indisposition from which he did not really recover thereafter. At last he broke down. He was said to have recorded his last attendance at the house of God on Christmas morning in 1891 when he went to Christ Church, Lagos. He suffered from a disease that affected his right hand and right foot. He however breathed his last on December 31, 1891 at a quarter to one in the morning, he was about 89 years of age.

His Characteristics Summed Up

Though the bishop died at a very ripe age, some memories of what happened in his later life cannot but linger with us. The storms and trials that cropped up in his ministry towards the end did not make him waver or forsake his ideal. He consistently and persistently upheld the value of native agency. They must have given him painful experiences. Robinson and Brook who caused the bishop so much embarrassment were members of the student volunteer movement. They had been saturated with the idea of evangelizing the world during their generation. They showed ability and devotion and out of emotion, they were prepared to die as martyrs. They condemned the rank and file of African Christians from Sierra Leone to Nigeria.

As Professor E. A. Ayandele puts it, to these young evangelists, the people of Sierra Leone were "swarms of ragamuffins" and their mission was a "charnel house" while they termed the "converts in Lokoja adulterers and harlots" who deserved nothing short of dismissal from the church membership.[41] Their purpose was to change every pattern of Christian life already laid down in Nigeria including the message preached. They had

no regard for natives' cultural background. They insultingly called the bishop a liar and termed his mission that of the devil because it was built from the money collected from merchants who dealt in liquor trade. The venerable Dandeson Crowther and Rev. Charles Paul who had put in thirty-five years service to the mission were suspended by F. N. Eden who actually had no ecclesiastical right to do so. Robinson himself saw the deliberate ordeal to which he subjected the bishop, (using the committee) as a "cruel though inevitable wrong." [42] To them the bishop was the dregs of his tribe, who though he had no stain on his character, had no ability to govern and lacked the qualifications of a bishop. They claimed that those who made him bishop (Henry Venn and others) allowed zeal to outrun discretion, and sentiment to have greater weight than sober facts and reflection. Although protests were soon forwarded by the African nationalists led by J. Johnson to Salisbury Square declaring that it was not only Bishop Crowther but the whole of Africa that was on trial and the Negro race was insulted, the repartee of Robinson and others had done too much to damage Brass, Bonny, Lagos and Sierra Leone.

In actual fact, Bishop Crowther did not condone the delinquent behavior of his agents. He saw that in the attempt to uproot the tares, care must be taken so as not to harm the wheat. He knew that "the life of a Christian in this world is a life of constant warfare and watchfulness lest Satan take an advantage over us." Townsend's charge of his being too "native" cannot be supported by his actions as a missionary. For instance, we have Professor Ayandele's observation that Crowther made a sentimental pronouncement on polygamy and thus misled the Lambeth conference of 1888 on the real position of polygamy in Africa. [43] Bishop Crowther saw polygamy as a form of slavery for women. In fact, he seemed to be too English on certain issues. He was always wearing English clothing and preferred teaching in English to using the local language. The reason for this might be his long stay in foreign land where he was schooled in foreign culture. He was an experimental bishop with a delicate role to play. Professor Ayandele has rightly explained that he would have shown the Negro race in bad light if he had used his position to encourage anti-white feelings, especially at a time when European help could not be discarded. If he had demonstrated earlier that he was not in harmony with Europeans

who made him bishop, he might have been regarded as a rebel and the hope of African emancipation might have been dashed.

Professor Ayandele, however, identified one of the bishop's major faults which was his non-residence in his diocese. He casually visited his diocese from Lagos and this was at the mercy of the traders who owned the steamers he used. In a way, it could be observed that his agents were mostly left to their own devices. His two lieutenants were Archdeacons Henry Johnson and Dandeson Crowther who ably shared the territory for administrative convenience in 1879.[44]

The bishop was a symbol of many responsibilities. The C.M.S. depended upon him for the evangelization of Africa. The natives relied on him for leadership and looked up to him for carrying civilization to the interior. The commercial companies relied on him for bringing Western goods to African households. Furthermore, Bishop Crowther was symbol of African scholarship and Christian faith. In the midst of all this, he battled resolutely with the internal traditional problems ranging from civil wars to idol worship and human sacrifices. If this man was seen as a failure, what hope of success was there then for the vast majority? S. Stock's comment on Bishop Crowther would be a most appropriate concluding summary here.

Bishop Ajayi Crowther's career was unique: kidnapped a slave in 1821, rescued a slave in 1822, a mission school boy in 1823, a baptized Christian in 1825, ordained in 1843, a first negro bishop in 1864, where is the parallel to such a life? He lived in an atmosphere of suspicion and scandal, yet no tongue, however malicious, ventured to whisper reproach against his personal character. Some might criticize his administration, no one ever questioned his sincerity and simplicity.[45]

Notes and References

1. Some people have suggested this could be about 12,000.
2. C.M.S. (Y) 4/3 10 Itan Samuel Ajayi Crowther (1925).
3. S. A. Crowther, Bulletin issue, manuscript letter in Cape Town Diocesan Archives.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.
7. C.M.S. (Y) 4/3, 10 Omode Erukunrin ti odi Bishop (1925), p. 27.
8. Ibid., p. 28.
9. J. F. A. Ajayi, *Christian Mission in Nigeria* (Longman), p. 128
10. Dike K. Onwuka, "Origins of the Niger Mission 1841-1891," (A paper read at the Centenary of Mission at Christ Church, Onitsha, November 13, 1957).
11. Jesse Page, *The Black Bishop (S. A. Crowther)*, p. 185.
12. Ibid., p. 186.
13. Ajayi, op. cit., p. 181.
14. Ibid.
15. Ajayi, op. cit., p. 187
16. J. R. Milstone, *Samuel Ajayi Crowther* (Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 43.
17. Page, op. cit. p. 187.
18. Ibid., p. 189.
19. Ajayi, op. cit. p. 195.
20. Ibid., p. 194.
21. Page, op. cit. p. 213.
22. Page, op. cit., p. 213.
23. Ibid., p. 215.
24. Page, op. cit., p. 221.
25. Ibid., p. 226.
26. James Bertin Webster, *The African Churches among the Yoruba (1888-1922)*, p. 21.
27. Ajayi, op. cit., p. 219.
28. Ibid., p. 233.
29. Ibid., p. 225.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid., p. 128.

32. Ibid., p. 128. 32b. I Cor. 9:1-23, II Cor. 11:22-28.
33. Page, op. cit., p. 349.
34. Ibid., p. 350.
35. Ajayi, op. cit., p. 250.
36. Ibid., p. 251.
37. Ibid., p. 252.
38. The Parent Committee had set up this committee comprising the bishop, Archdeacon Crowther; one other African pastor; and 3 Europeans, to rule the lower Niger under Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther.
39. Ajayi, op. cit., p. 253.
40. Page, op. cit., p. 371.
41. E. A. Ayandele, *Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria* (1966), p. 214.
42. Ibid., p. 216.
43. Ibid., p. 206.
44. Ibid., p. 207.
45. Ibid., p. 212.

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Harris, William Wadé

Gabriel Leonard Allen

1860-1929

Harrist Church

Liberia , Ghana , Côte d'Ivoire

William Wadé Harris, 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. [1] He is reputed to have been the first independent African Christian prophet. [2]

Harris was born c. 1860 in the village of Half-Graway or Glogbale, in the Glebo Territory of Maryland County of the then-Commonwealth of Liberia. [3] 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. [4]

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 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 Puduk 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. 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 Nyomowe-Glebo and the American-Liberian settlers, Harris was rearrested 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 [5]; he was divinely operated upon and this gave him the experience of feeling right with God by receiving justifying grace [6]. 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.[7]

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.[8] 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. [9] 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.[10]

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!) [My Translation] [11]

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 (ἀνάλογος) 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. [12] 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 (ἀνάλογος) 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). [My Translation] [13]

Disobedience led Harris to rain fire on the ship. In a case which was "analogical in faith" (analogia fidei). Prophet Elijah had ordered fire to rain,

twice, on the King Ahaziah's attacking troops (2 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.[14] 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. [15]

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) [16] in the mothertongue 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”). [17] 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. [18].

Harris had acquired proven skills as a master-builder. He built his own single storey family house at Spring Hill Station in Liberia in c. 1890 [20] and the Wolfe Memorial Chapel at Half-Graway in 1897. At Jacquville, 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 Kruffy, Harris ordered the implementation of mothertongue 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.”). [20] 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” [21] 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 thirteenth leader-preacher who would lead worship services. Having choristers and a formidable network of selected translator-interpreters / 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 Jacqueville 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...) [22]

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 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 was 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. [23] 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 continues today. [24] Notwithstanding the expressed variances, it is a typical *Inkabomsom* (get-together) service. This service 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), 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,” when 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.” [25] 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 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.” [26] 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 use 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 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 opened 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 those of the 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:

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 exorcism practiced, nor is repentance insisted upon. [27]

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). [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). [29]

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. The Sacrament of Agape Meal at the *Fête du Déluge* is an ecclesiastical feast dedicated to the works of the founder. [30]

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, of almost 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 Était Ouverte Dans le Ciel* (Apoc. 4:1) ("I looked, and lo, in heaven an open door" –Revelation 4:1, RSV) [123]. This text-sign falls within the typical Christo-eschatological genre of Harris' message and represents the echo of a dominant Harris preaching. [31]

In Catholic Churches and other Protestant Churches

Harris' legacy was measured through his impact on numerical membership of Christians and the influence of his mothertongue 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). [32] 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. [33] 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. [34] In Apollonia, in the Western Gold Coast, it was equally dramatic: "There were 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 to Harris' legacy.

Since the end of Harris' first evangelical missionary journey (1913-15), the smaller TWMCs at the time have now become greater and the Harris communities that were greater are now 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. [35] 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 Ivorians. [36] 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 that 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 mothertongue liturgy and hermeneutics penetrate the Roman Catholic and other TWMCs? It was standard practice 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 in the Catholic churches of the Lagoons, the Zana Kingdom and Apollonia. When the Catholic Church convened in Rome for the Second Vatican Council (1962-65), its 21st International Ecumenical Council it 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.” [38] 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 mothertongue 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!

Notes and References

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. Bediako, Kwame. *Christianity in Africa: The Renewal of Non-Western Religion*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995.
3. There is now scholarly consensus on Harris' date and place of birth. See Notes 5 and 6 in David A. Shank, abridged by Jocelyn Murray, *Prophet Harris, The 'Black Elijah' of West Africa*, (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 29.
4. Using David A. Shank's work, *Prophet Harris, The "Black Elijah" of West Africa* (1994) as a primary guide, J. J. Cooksey and Alexander McLeish report on *Religion and Civilization in West Africa: A Missionary Survey of French, Spanish and Portuguese West Africa and Liberia* (1931) as historical reference, and the author's field research in 2007-2008 which resulted in the work titled, *William Wade Harris (c. 1860-1929): A Life, Message, Praxis and Heritage* (2008); a tabulated chronological biography of Harris has been reconstructed.
 - His life can be divided into nine phases. These nine phases are:
 - Phase 1: Indoctrination in African Traditional Religion (c.1860-1873)
 - Phase 2: Methodist Catechetical Formation (1873-1879)
 - Phase 3: Personal Social Conflict (1879-1882)
 - Phase 4: Methodist Local Preacher (1882-1885)
 - Phase 5: Religious Search (ATR/ Islam/ Christianity) (1885-1892)
 - Phase 6: Episcopalian Formation and Conflict (1892-1898)
 - Phase 7: The Golden Period (1898-1908)
 - Phase 8: Indigenous Activism (1908-1910)
 - Phase 9: Public International Ministry (1913-1929)

5. "Salvation begins with what is usually termed (and very properly) Preventing Grace (Prevenient Grace); including the first wish to please God, the first dawn of light concerning his will, and the first slight transient conviction of having sinned against him... the beginning of deliverance from a blind unfeeling heart, quite insensible of God and the things of God. ... Afterwards we experience the proper Christian salvation; whereby, through grace , we are saved through faith." John Wesley, "Sermons" Vol. 5, 106-7, cited in "Wesley's Order of Salvation" by Barrie Tabraham,* Exploring Methodism: The Making of Methodism* (Peterborough: Epworth Press, 2000), 32.
6. "By Justification (i.e. Justifying Grace) we are saved from the guilt of sin, and restored to the favour of God;..." J. Wesley, "Sermons" Vol. 5, 106-7, cited in "Wesley's Order of Salvation" by Barrie Tabraham, Exploring Methodism: The Making of Methodism (Peterborough: Epworth Press, 2000), 32.
7. "By Sanctification (i. e. Sanctifying Grace) we are saved from the power and root of sin, and restored to the image of God..." J. Wesley, "Sermons" Vol. 5, 106-7, cited in "Wesley's Order of Salvation" by Barrie Tabraham, Exploring Methodism: The Making of Methodism (Peterborough: Epworth Press, 2000), 32.
8. Shank reported that Harris' deportation was decided by January 15, 1915, while Cooksey and McLeish believe that it was later, about April 1915.
9. 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.
10. Mathieu Sedji, interview with author, Temple de Gethsemane, Mission Biblique Harriste No. 1 Cote D'Ivoire, Grand Lahou Kpanda, June 17th, 2007, cited in Gabriel Leonard Allen, "William Wade Harris [c. 1860-1929]: A Life, Message, Praxis and Heritage" (B.D. diss., Trinity Theological Seminary, 2008), 35.

11. Abaka Ernest Foli, interview with author, Yaou Manse of Eglise du Christ Mission Harris (ECMH), Grand Bassam, June 11th - 13th, 2007, cited in Allen, 31, & Appendix ii, 5 of 6.
12. Abaka Ernest Foli, interview with author, Allen, June 11th to 13th, 2007, 32, & Appendix X, 7 of 21
13. Shank, 8.
14. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics: Current Developments within Independent Indigenous Pentecostalism in Ghana* (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill, 2005), 19.
15. Shank, 5-6.
16. Literally, the kerygma (κηρυγμα) is a Greek word which means “proclamation or announcement by a herald” Noting that a herald is a dependable and truthful person who normally reports with utmost fidelity what has been received from a higher authority. Biblically, the kerygma (κηρυγμα) is frequently associated with the spirit of the Pauline text conveyed in Romans of “I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes ... a righteousness that is by faith from first to last” (Romans 1:16-17 NIV); The kerygma (κηρυγμα) has also been interpreted theologically by many: A European Harris contemporary of the Neo-Orthodoxy era, restricted the kerygma (κηρυγμα) to “the public proclamation of Christianity to the non-Christian world” C. H. Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching and its Development* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1936), 7; One conservative Bible scholar, making particular reference to apostolic preaching in the NT era, described the kerygma (κηρυγμα) as “a proclamation of (Jesus’) death, resurrection and exaltation...” R. H. Mounce, *The Essential Nature of New Testament Preaching* (Rapids: Eerdmans, 1960), 84; While the modern 20th century Christian theologian calls it “...the essential message or proclamation of the New Testament concerning the significance of Jesus Christ” see Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology an Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), 572. Paul Johnson, *A History of Christianity* (New York: Atheneum, ...), 1.

17. Abaka Ernest Foli, cited in Allen, 43 & Appendix ii, 3 of 6.
18. Reverend Fr. Moly, cited by Shank, 8.
19. Shank, 62
20. Adolphe Yotio Ndrin , interview with author, Temple de Gethsemane, Mission Biblique Harriste No. 1 Cote D'Ivoire, Grand Lahou Kpanda, June 17th, 2007, cited in Gabriel Leonard Allen, "William Wade Harris [c. 1860-1929]: A Life, Message, Praxis and Heritage" (B.D. diss., Trinity Theological Seminary, 2008), 44.
21. Cooksey & McLeish, 61.
22. Abaka Ernest Foli, cited by Allen, 45.
23. The order of service of l'Eglise du Christ-Mission Harrist of Yaou:
 - BENEDICTION (The most senior preacher rings the bell to commence the service)
 - OPENING PRAYER
 - An Invocation:
Eternal, We give you grace and say thank you for this moment that you allow. You have said in your word that where two or three meet in your name, You are in their midst. Come and guide this moment in the name of Jesus Christ.
 - OPENING HYMN PRAYER OF INTERCESSION (All on their knees. Ends with an Amen Song)
 - THE LORD'S PRAYER
 - SERMON HYMN
 - THE GOSPEL
 - THE SERMON (Preaching interspersed with shouts) AN ANTHEM - by the Choir
 - ANNOUNCEMENTS BY AN ELDER (Collection on Sundays only)
 - CLOSING PRAYER 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.

24. 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

25. Prophetess Hagar Yarley, interview with author, Twelve Apostles Church - Ayisokrom, Western Region of Ghana, October 21st, 2007, cited in Allen, 54 & Appendix vii, 1 of 1.

26. Apostle Abraham Kaku, interview with author, Twelve Apostles Church – Half-Assini, Western Region of Ghana, October 23rd, 2007, cited in Allen, 52.
27. Sacrament of Baptism:
- An Elder of the church must be told about the intention.
 - 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).
 - The Baptismal ceremony could take place before, or after, any worship service.
 - 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.
 - If the preacher is either the *Prédicateur Suprême* or the *Prédicateur Supérieur*, the individual concerned holds his cross of cane.
 - If the preacher is either the *Prédicateur Chef* or the *Prédicateur* or the *Prédicateur Auxiliaire*, the individual concerned holds his kaftan.
 - 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 had been 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)
 - The preacher pours water on the head of the baptized, three times.

- The preacher traces the sign of the cross with his finger on the forehead of the one being baptized.
- The preacher taps the Bible, three times, on the head of the Baptized
- The choir rounds up with a hymn.
- 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

28. Sacrament of Agape Meal at the Incarnation, cited in Allen, 56.
29. Sacrament of Agape Meal at the Fete du Deluge, cited in Allen, 56.
30. Sacrament of Sacrifice, cited by Allen, 57-58.
31. Allen, 48-49.
32. E. Amos Djoro, *Harris et la Chrétienté en Côte D'Ivoire* (Abidjan: Société d'Imprimerie Ivoirienne pour le compte Les Nouvelles Editions Africaines, 1989), 27-30.
33. Djoro, 46.
34. Djoro, 46.
35. Cooksey & McLeish, 241.
36. 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 Kigbafory-Silue, Côte d’Ivoire, Nation Chrysalide (Abidjan: PUCI, 2005), 157.

37. Second Vatican Council, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/second_vatican_council.

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This article, received in 2016, was written by Gabriel Leonard Allen of the Gambia, a theologian, an ecumenist, and an interfaith activist working in the Methodist Church and a member of the DACB Advisory Council.

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Kanyua, Jerusha

Dickson Nkonge Kagema

1872-1974

Presbyterian

Kenya

Early Life, Family and Conversion to Christianity

Jerusha Kanyua was born in early 1872 at at Karaa village, in Mwimbi Division, in the current Maara Sub-County, Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya. She was brought up in the traditional family set-up, where she attained no formal education, but went through the Ameru rites of passage.[1]

In 1894, she married Paul Njiru, who was nicknamed Paulo. They relocated from Mwimbi and settled in Chuka, near Chuka General Hospital.[2] Even though their marriage was blessed with several children, unfortunately they all died during childhood from what was suspected to be pneumonia, measles, or malaria.[3] This prompted her husband to remarry so as to have children. The new wife gave birth to a number of children. For unknown reasons, Paulo started to mistreat Jerusha.[4] This made Jerusha relocate to Ndagani, on the outskirts of Chuka town, and settle there.[5] Since she had no children of her own, she adopted her younger sister's children, Alfred Mburia and Caroline, who are, to this day, regarded as her children.[6]

In 1921, the Church of Scotland Mission (SCM), a Presbyterian mission that had been operating in Kenya since 1891, made arrangements to post the first European missionary to evangelize the Chuka-Mwimbi area.[7] On 9th October 1922, Dr. A. C. Irvine arrived at Chogoria to build up the station and begin systematic medical work.[8] Earlier in 1915, the SCM had set up a mission station at Chuka on the recommendation of Rev. Dr. J. W. Arthur (nicknamed "Happy warrior") and the station was under two Africans, Daudi Makumi and Samsoni Maingi who were among the first Presbyterian African converts in Kikuyuland.[9]

The first Presbyterian convert from Chuka was Mr. Ayub Mugo Njuki who lived in Ndagani village. He is the one who persuaded Jerusha Kanyua,

her husband Paul Njiru, Justo Kanampiu, and Bertha Kangai (wife to Ayub) to accept the new Christian faith. Many people were cautious about this faith as they viewed it as a direct intrusion into their culture. Ayub had been converted to Christianity by Dr. Arthur.[10] Thus by the time Dr. Irvine arrived in 1922, Christianity had begun to gain roots in what is today known as Tharaka Nithi County. It needs to be noted that the Consolata Fathers (Catholic) had already come to Mwimbi and had established a mission station at Kariakomo, a few kilometers east of Chogoria in 1911. [11] Dr. Irvine settled in Chogoria in 1922 and started a SCM mission station there.[12] He then started a mission hospital at Chogoria which is, today, one of the oldest hospitals in Kenya.[13]

As Jerusha Kanyua was contemplating the miseries of life after having lost all her children and marriage, the word of God came to her through Dr. Irvine and Ayub Mugo.[14] She accepted Christianity, which was a great source of consolation to her at that time.[15] In 1923, she was baptized by Dr. Irvine, and was then offered a job at Chogoria hospital as a casual worker.[16] While working in the hospital, she began formal learning but due to her advanced age, she did not make much progress. However, she acquired many skills in caring for the sick and due to her interest in medical issues, she acquired basic skills in midwifery. Thus whenever she was at home in Ndagani, especially during weekends she would assist women when they gave birth and preach to the people, urging them to accept the Gospel of Christ.[17] She is regarded as one of the first missionaries in Ndagani village. Due to her effort a church and a school were started at Ndagani in 1937.[18]

Teacher, Doctor, and Prophetess

Jerusha remained a committed Christian and faithful follower of the Presbyterian Church in East Africa (PCEA). She tirelessly evangelized Ndagani village and its environs. For example, she would walk long distances to Kibugua, Weru, Kiereni, Kangutu, and other villages within Chuka spreading Christianity.[19] Being illiterate, at first her preaching and teaching ministry mainly relied on her memory for Biblical quotations, but with time, she learned the art of reading the Bible effectively, especially after her formal learning at Chogoria hospital.[20] Alongside her ministry, Jerusha devoted most of her time to teaching the children about the Bible.

She carried out this ministry both in church and in the children's homes. She did it with such great passion that many young people regarded her as "*Mwalimu*" (a teacher).[21] On top of this, she was also leader of the Woman's Guild, where she trained women in matters of midwifery, cookery, crafts, and farming, among other things. Those who listened to her, both men and women, acknowledge that Jerusha was a good teacher, leader, and counselor. She taught them much about family life, counseled both the married and unmarried, and prepared many women for marriage.[22] Tiras Nthiga (an elder who knew and interacted with her) says that Jerusha was a "fortress and beacon of hope" in matters of family life, Bible, and socio-economic life.[23]

Due to her commitment, the Church of Scotland Mission at Chogoria sent her to Tumutumu Mission Hospital College in Nyeri to be trained for midwifery in 1944. This training that make her very popular because it allowed her to offer assistance to women in rural areas especially in areas around Chuka, Embu, and Meru.[24] She had to walk a very long distance from Ndagani to Nyeri to acquire this training. Because of the way people loved her, some young men volunteered to escort her through the thick and fearsome Mount Kenya forest to Tumutumu Hospital.[25] She was awarded a certificate on midwifery in 1946.

Upon completion of her training, she returned home and moved from village to village helping expectant women to deliver safely, especially those who lived far from Chogoria Hospital. She did this alongside preaching the Gospel. She thus converted many people to Christianity.[26] Jerusha is an example of an African woman evangelist or missionary who dedicated her time and energy to converting her fellow Africans to Christianity. Due to her commitment and professional expertise, she became very famous. People travelled from far and wide to seek her selfless attention. She was also a great mobilizer. If a woman developed complications that she could not handle, she mobilized people to make a stretcher that she would use to ferry the patient to Chogoria Hospital. Since there was no means of transport, they would walk and she would accompany the patient to get specialized care from the missionary doctors. She did this job without pay.[27] She was renowned as a midwife and caregiver who served without reservation, a trait that made her a celebrity throughout the larger upper Eastern region (Embu, Mbeere, Chuka, Chogoria and Meru).[28] She earned a lot of

admiration even from the missionary doctors, especially Dr. Irvine who was her mentor. Due to her service, saving the lives of women, many people referred to her as a “*Dagitari*” (a Doctor).[29] In 1948, Dr. Irvine conferred on her a Diploma in Midwifery due to her exemplary performance.[30]

In 1950s, Jerusha started to prophesy. In 1951, she made several prophecies that were fulfilled in 1960’s.[31] Among her prophecies was the one she made on Sunday, 3rd June 1951 while at PCEA Ndagani Church which has had an enormous influence on the lives of the people to date. She prophesied, “A huge mountain will spring up in the village (Ndagani), big trees will sprout and grow very big; and form a wide shade. Then birds from all over the world will come and land on these trees. People from all parts of the world will also come and cool themselves under the shade of these trees.”[32]

In 1953, the colonial government built a concentration camp at Ndagani. People from all over Chuka and beyond were put in this camp. Many people thought that the prophecy of Jerusha had been fulfilled. She however denied this, and told them that time had not come for her prophecy to be fulfilled. She explained that her prophecy was about success, good life, and happiness and not a prophecy of doom and oppression like that of the colonial government extracting people from their homes and putting them in a concentration camp.[33] She told them to believe and be hopeful that one day her prophecy would be fulfilled.[34] What people did not understand was that Jerusha was prophesying about education which was something she cherished. Throughout her ministry, Jerusha encouraged young men and women, as well as children, to go to school. To her, education was the only key to success; that gave the power to alleviate the challenges that people faced - challenges such as illiteracy, poverty, disease, and ignorance.[35] In this regard, she composed a song which was commonly sung to emphasize the importance of education. The song went like this;

Karamu ni Itumo (a pen is a spear) *Na mbuku ni Rong’o* (and the book is a shield) *Ita ya riu iramukagwa Cukuru* (Today’s war is won by waking up and going to school) [36]

With this song she advised the young to take a pen like a spear and a book like a shield.[37] Through her efforts, several institutions began at

Ndagani including a secondary school, a primary school, a village polytechnic, a cattle dip, an air strip, and a sports field.[38] When these institutions were first built, the residents started saying that the mountains of Jerusha had started forming or rather her prophesy about the huge mountain and the birds had been fulfilled.[39] It is however the coming of Chuka University at Ndagani that people associate with the fulfillment of Jerusha's prophesy.[40] Ndagani, Chuka was the place people least expected a university to begin.[41] But in 2004, Egerton University Senate elected Professor Erastus Njoka (the current Vice Chancellor of Chuka University) to chair a technical committee that, among other things, was to explore the possibility of putting up a campus in the Eastern part of Kenya.

After several consultative meetings with education stakeholders in Eastern Province, the committee recommended to the University Senate to open a campus at Chuka due to its central location. This decision was ratified by the Egerton University Council on 17th September 2004. Egerton University Eastern Campus was established at Ndagani, Chuka on 27th September, 2004, and officially opened on 1st August, 2005. On 23rd August 2007, the campus was elevated to a Constituent College of Egerton University and renamed Chuka University College. On 8th January 2013, the college was elevated to a full-fledged university, becoming the ninth public university in Kenya.[42] It is one of the fastest growing public universities in Kenya with a population of more than 16,000 students.[43]

With the birth of Chuka University at Ndagani and its students and staff from all over the country and beyond, people believe that Jerusha Kanyua's prophecy of birds from all over the world coming to land on trees around Ndagani has been fulfilled. They regard Chuka University as a prophetic university.[44] At the university, Jerusha is highly respected and seen by the university's fraternity as their matriarch.[45]

Transforming Peoples' Lives

Jerusha transformed the lives of many people in the current Tharaka Nithi, Meru and Embu counties.[46] Although she assumed no leadership position in the PCEA Church, even though she was instrumental in its beginning at Ndagani, and was not well educated she put much emphasis on the holistic Gospel. This changed peoples' lives spiritually, socially, politically, and economically.[47] She thus urged all her new converts,

especially the youth and children to go to school.[48] In addition to preaching, she trained women in matters of midwifery, cookery, crafts and farming among others.[49] In many instances, she taught people practical skills. For example, she became the first native to own a “grade” cow (Guernsey), an exotic breed introduced by the missionaries. Traditionally, if a woman owned property like cows she would be regarded as a “*Kithetha*” meaning she was mocking men in her community. But Jerusha ignored all this and became a livestock farmer. She also reared pigs, goats, and chicken. She embraced the new farming methods introduced by the missionaries. As a result, she accumulated a lot of wealth, which is one of the reasons she was highly respected in the community. While many women depended on men for survival, Jerusha worked very hard to acquire wealth of her own, thus becoming economically independent. She introduced new fruits such as mangos that she planted in her farm and in the church compound. People would come from far to learn the new farming methods at her farm.[50]

Her love for people and her service to the community saved her from the wrath of the Mau Mau who eliminated anybody suspected to be a sympathizer with the colonial government. For example, in 1953, the Mau Mau made a decree that all schools would be burned down including anyone found in the houses. The team that was sent to burn Ndagani School and Church found Jerusha in the mud and reed hut where she resided with the missionaries. When they realized that it was Jerusha inside the hut, a debate arose among the team. Finally through the intervention of the Mau Mau leader, General Moge (also known as Wakemonto or Simba), it was decided that it would be unfair to kill her because of the good work she was doing in the community, especially her intercessory role and her midwifery duties. They feared that if they killed her there would be nobody to intercede for them and their wives would die in child birth because Jerusha was the chief midwife in the region.[51] Interestingly, Jerusha was the only African Christian allowed to openly move about preaching, attending to the sick, wounded, and expectant mothers without any confrontation from the Mau Mau fighters.[52]

Death

Jerusha became ill in late 1960s and passed on in 1974 at the age of about 102 years. The church building at Ndgani was dedicated to her and

named Jerusha Kanyua Memorial Church.[53] She died as a faithful servant of Christ who had left a remarkable mark on the life of the Church of Christ, especially in Embu, Meru, and Tharaka Nithi counties.

Notes and References

1. Interview with C. Riungu on 2/4/2019
2. Interview with Ezekiel Mbogo (Kanyua's grandson) on 5/5/2019
3. The death of children was usually interpreted as a curse from the ancestors or God. A family whose children died was viewed as lacking divine blessings. The solution was remarriage.
4. Interview with Catherine Ciambaka on 4/4/2019
5. At Ndagani there is a PCEA Church named after her. She was among its founders.
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This article, received in 2019, was written by Dr. Dickson Nkonge Kagega, a Senior Lecturer in Religious Studies and Philosophy at Chuka University in Kenya and a Research Associate in Practical Theology and Missiology at Stellenbosch University, South Africa. He is a Canon in the Anglican Church of Kenya. His email is dicknkonge@gmail.com.

Gadle, Shawaraggad

Tsehai Berhane Selassie

1885-86-1949

Orthodox Church

Ethiopia

Wayzaro Shawaraggad Gadle (1885/86-1949), a close friend of Empress Manan (reigned 1930-62), played an active role in social work, and became renowned for her patriotism during the Italian occupation of Ethiopia (1936-41).

She was the daughter of Wayzaro Tedanaqiyalash and of Dajzmach Gadle Walda Madehen. She entered court circles because her father was a courtier of both Emperor Menilek II (ruled 1889-1913) and of Empress Zawditu (ruled 1916-1930), and was an early friend of Ras Tafari, later to become Emperor Haile Selassie (ruled 1930-74). She herself became a close friend and chief lady-in-waiting of Empress Manan, consort of Haile Selassie. With Lady Barton, wife of the British minister to Ethiopia, she was the organizer of the Red Cross and the first women's associations in Ethiopia in the years before the Italian occupation.

During the occupation, she became famous for her heroic activities. She used her father's bequests to her to help patriots to defy Italians openly. When Addis fell on May 5, 1936, she was taken into an Italian court for having wept at the sight of the Italian flag replacing the Ethiopian flag. She was acquitted, but was later imprisoned as a suspect in the attempted assassination of General Rudolfo Graziani, Italian viceroy from 1936-37, on February 19, 1937. She was imprisoned at Asinara, an island off the coast of Sardinia, from 1937-39. She was released because of the milder policy of Graziani's successor as viceroy, Amedeo di Savoia, Duke of Aosta, but soon re-established her contacts with the patriots, writing them letters, and sending them money and arms. In November 1940 she negotiated with the prison guards at Addis Alam, and caused the patriots to open the Italian prison there. She herself escaped to a famous patriot, Garasu Duki, from whose camp she made encouraging speeches to other patriots. She was,

however, captured, and sentenced to life imprisonment at Addis Ababa. She was released after the Italian surrender, and helped to rehabilitate exiles.

Unlike most women of her time, she was well versed in Ge'ez and in religious teachings. Most of her life and money were devoted to educating the children of the poor and to maintaining homes for invalids. She was extremely interested in monasteries, visiting the Ethiopian monastery in Jerusalem as early as 1920. Her childless marriages, first to Fitawrari Geza and then to Fitawrari Daboch, were forced on her. She died suddenly while she was touring the monasteries in Lasta, and was fittingly buried at the monastery of Dabra Libanos.

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Kimbangu, Simon

Sabakinu Kivilu

1890-1951

*Church of Jesus Christ on Earth Through the Prophet Simon
Kimbangu*

Democratic Republic of Congo

Simon Kimbangu (circa 1890 October 12, 1951) was the leader of what is generally considered the most important independent Christian religious movement in central Africa. Although active only a few months before being arrested and imprisoned by the colonial government, Kimbangu developed a following which later developed into a large organized church named *l'Eglise de Jésus-Christ sur la terre par le prophète Simon Kimbangu* (The Church of Jesus Christ on Earth by the Prophet Simon Kimbangu).

Simon Kimbangu, who belonged to the Kikongo group, was born in Nkamba, a village about 50 km (30 mi) north of the present Mbanza-Ngungu. Both his mother and father died when he was very young so he was raised by his grandmother Kinzembo. Kimbangu attended primary school at the nearby Baptist Missionary Society (BMS) station of Ngombe-Lutete where he was baptized and where he learned about the Bible. For a time he worked as a Baptist evangelist, teaching and preaching in local villages. About this time, he married Marie Mwilu who bore him many children, including Joseph Diangienda, Charles Kisolokole, and Salmon Dialungana Kiangani.

During a flu epidemic in 1918, Kimbangu received what he interpreted as the call of God. In an attempt to evade the call, he fled to Léopoldville (now Kinshasa). Because the call continued even in the capital, however, and because life in the large city was difficult, Kimbangu returned to Nkamba where, on March 18, 1921, he received a vision asking him to proclaim the gospel. Other visions followed and Kimbangu finally accepted the call to preach and heal. People responded eagerly, bringing many sick to be healed. It was widely reported that Kimbangu performed miracles, cured

the infirm, and was even able to raise the dead. Kimbangu became known as a prophet with a special mission from God, and his village of Nkamba was called the New Jerusalem.

In the services he led, Kimbangu emphasized singing, praying, Bible reading, and a sermon. An important element of his ministry was healing and as he laid his hands on the sick, Kimbangu would be seized with trembling. Kimbangu's teachings, based on the Bible, centered on three themes: destruction of all fetishes, prohibition of polygamy, and worship of one true God. Identifying God with Nzambi, the African Supreme Being, Kimbangu portrayed God as being closely linked to Africans.

Immediately, Africans from as far away as Léopoldville, the French Congo, and Angola began flocking to Nkamba. Because Lower Congo (now Lower Zaire) had been deeply affected by colonialism, Kimbangu's message was eagerly received. Not only had people from the Lower Congo region been heavily recruited to work on the railroad and plantations, they had also been exposed to intense and often competitive mission activity. As Kimbangu's reputation grew, Africans abandoned their fields, deserted their jobs and journeyed to Nkamba where they listened to an African prophet describing a God who was concerned about the needs they felt as Africans.

Under pressure from the Catholic missions, especially the Redemption Fathers, who feared the excessive zeal of an untrained lay preacher, and from plantation owners, who were disturbed by absenteeism, the colonial administration was compelled to investigate the activities of Simon Kimbangu. On May 11, 1921, the administrator Morel came to Nkamba to assess the situation. Arriving at a time when Kimbangu was preoccupied by a religious experience, Morel was treated rudely and ignored by the prophet. For a time, the colonial government tried to halt the flow of people to Nkamba by prohibiting the transportation of the sick as a hazard to public hygiene. The pilgrimages continued and government agents were ordered to arrest Kimbangu. When the agents arrived at Nkamba, on June 21, 1921, Kimbangu escaped and went to live, clandestinely, in the village of Nsanda near Léopoldville. During the time Kimbangu stayed at Nsanda, the movement developed xenophobic tendencies and a hostility towards the state. This was in spite of Kimbangu's counsel to submit to the authorities and pay taxes to the government.

On September 14, 1921, Kimbangu was captured at Nkamba where he had returned voluntarily to await arrest. Before a court held in Thysville (now Mbanza-Ngungu), presided over by a single judge, Commander Rossi, Simon Kimbangu was condemned to death for “having disturbed the security of the State and the public peace.” Inflamed by a vindictive press campaign launched by *l’Avenir Colonial Belge* (The Future of Belgian Colonialism), the political atmosphere in the Congo became extremely tense; machine guns were mounted in Léopoldville to prevent a possible uprising on the part of the African population. In spite of pressure from whites in the colony, King Albert of Belgium (reigned 1909-34) commuted Kimbangu’s death sentence to life in prison. Kimbangu was transferred to jail in Elisabethville (now Lubumbashi) where he remained until his death on October 12, 1951.

In prison, Kimbangu was known as a kind, peaceful, and quiet man. While other prisoners expressed anger and resentment at their plight, Kimbangu showed patience and love towards the authorities. While other convicts fought among themselves for larger portions of food, he shared his rations. A fellow inmate, a murderer who later became a Protestant minister, described a dramatic moment when Kimbangu divided his piece of precious meat and distributed it to the other inmates. By this act Kimbangu demonstrated not only his unselfishness, but also his courage because sharing food was strictly forbidden in the prison. After this symbolic act, Kimbangu walked into the warden’s office a place which was absolutely off limits to prisoners, saluted the official, and returned to his cell.

Following Kimbangu’s arrest, members of the movement found it difficult to continue the teachings of the prophet. Not only were they harassed by government officials who placed Nkamba under martial law and forbade anyone to express allegiance to Kimbangu; they were also troubled by heterodox tendencies as various prophetic personalities arose to claim leadership in the sect. André Matwua began Amicalism in 1926, Simon Mpadi founded the Mission of Blacks in 1939, while Toko Simao Gonzalves started Nzambi Mapapu in 1947. Xenophobic in their preaching, these leaders encouraged Kimbanguists to resist taxes, expect firearms from God, and return to polygamy. In general, Kimbangu’s

emphasis on the Bible was ignored in favor of direct visions as the primary source of religious authority.

In spite of these difficulties, Kimbangu's son Joseph Diangienda was able to organize the diverse group of people loyal to the exiled prophet into a single Christian ecclesiastical organization. In 1948, Diangienda was allowed to visit his father, who apparently named Diangienda as his successor. From 1951, Diangienda systematically re-established contact with the followers of the prophet who were organized at Nkamba and Léopoldville under the name Kintwadi. In 1954, Diangienda became leader of Kintwadi. Because the colonial administration had officially ordered tolerance for sects that did not disturb public order or state security; in 1955 the Kintwadists under Diangienda organized public demonstrations in Léopoldville to gain government acceptance of Kimbanguism. From 1955 to 1957, they also tried to build support for their cause in Belgium and other western countries. Then, in September 1957, Joseph Diangienda published a restatement of Kimbanguism in which he affirmed the politically neutral and exclusively confessional nature of the movement. Finally, on December 24, 1959, Belgian authorities signed a decree lifting the prohibition against the Church of Jesus Christ on Earth by the Prophet Simon Kimbangu.

After the Congo won its independence in 1960, Kimbanguism became increasingly important in the life of the nation. Besides operating a seminary, primary, and secondary schools; the Kimbanguist Church developed an ambitious program of social services in Lower Zaire and Kinshasa. Together with Protestantism and Catholicism, Kimbanguism was recognized by the Zairian government as a major religious organization. Unlike Protestants and Catholics, however, Kimbanguists relied on their own constituency in Zaire for almost their entire leadership and financial support.

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Mariamamu

Raphael Mwita Akiri

1900s

Anglican Communion (Church Missionary Society)

Tanzania

At Itumba, indigenous women (especially those at Kishambo whom Wood described as “mothers of Israel”) [1], namely Mariamamu (probably the one who moved to Kongwa as a missionary and married teacher Zakaria Malogo of Chamuhawi, about 1906) [2], Lea, Damari, and Roda were already at work in 1903, and their influence was significant. Mariamamu was from Itumba, Ukaguru, where she served as a Bible woman at Kishambo about 1903, but moved to Ugogo as missionary in 1906, and settled at Chamuhawi.

Early in 1904, Mariamamu’s influence was already being “felt in all villages” where mission work was being undertaken within Itumba district – at Itumba station itself, at Kishambo (its major outstation at the time), and at Ikwamba.[3] Mariamamu was based at Kishambo where she taught the Bible, preached the Word of God and conducted visits to neighbouring villages (possibly including Kisitwi, Kilugu, Kipala, and Unyawo where church buildings had been erected by the end of 1903).[4]

Mariamamu’s ministry was focused upon women, but it was by no means confined to that group alone. On one occasion when she was speaking to women at Kishambo, men assembled too. Arthur Wood recalled how the men “seemed decidedly more interested in what she said than the gentler [female] sex. It was a startling thing to them to hear a female of their own tribe preaching.” [5] Mariamamu’s influence continued years after the CMS mission had become a diocese in 1927. In 1941, Bishop Chambers paid tribute to her as a missionary to Ugogo and one of the leading Bible women there. He wrote: “Mariamamu our faithful M.U. [Mothers’ Union] member and Bible-woman, is doing a wonderful work among women. Already some Moslems are worshipping with us because of her friendship and teaching.” [6]

During the Yearly Conference of Africans or African Native Conference, women teachers helped their fellow women, and likewise, men spoke to their fellow men. At the Mamboya conference in August 1903, Mariamu taught Christian life. There were three other indigenous Christian women who also took part in Bible teaching: Yulia wife of Yeremia Senyagwa of Mamboya, and Persisi. The other Bible woman present was only referred to by Maria Ackerman (a CMS woman missionary at Mamboya) as a “woman of Itumba.” [7]

Mariamu and Damari Sagatwa were members of the church council at Itumba in 1906, together with her husband Nuhu Sagatwa, and two other men, (both identified in the sources by the name Danieli).[8] In the same year, Nyangala too had female members at its church council, namely Mariamu and Helina, with Barnaba, Petro and Isaka as their male colleagues.[9] At Kongwa, in 1921, Esta Mabruki, Mary, and Yulia represented their church to the Kongwa district (parish) council, alongside male colleagues Musa Fungo, Madari Mulutu, Benyamini, Haruni and Atanasio. Female representatives from Chamuhawi were Marita, [10] Susana, Mariamu, [11] and Raheli, with their male colleagues Edward Madimilo, Timotheo Makanyaga and Reubeni.

It is unfortunate that apart from this information and these statements about the work of Mariamu, no data exist that would be sufficient to allow her life history to be fully reconstructed.

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Abiodun Emmanuel, Christiana

Ebeye Boniface

1907-1994

Cherubim and Seraphim Society (Aladura)

Nigeria

Christiana Abiodun Emmanuel (née Akinsowon) was born on December 25, 1907 in Abeokuta, Nigeria. Her father was a native of Abeokuta while her mother hailed from Port Novo in Cotonou (now the Benin Republic). Therefore, she was a Yoruba by birth.

Abiodun had only one daughter who is now in charge of the society's churches in the United States.

She was called "Her Eminence Captain Dr. Christiana Abiodun Emmanuel," the title "Captain" indicating her spiritual leadership. She was also awarded an honorary doctorate degree by an overseas university for her spiritual growth.

Abiodun was seventeen and a half years old when the Cherubim and Seraphim Society was founded. She was originally a practicing Methodist. Nevertheless, on June 18, 1925, she went to witness the annual Catholic celebration of Corpus Christi. At that time, she was living with her aunt, Mrs. Comfort Hunnu-Moiett, wife of late elder W. Hunnu.

At the Corpus Christi celebration, Abiodun went into a trance when she tried to catch a glimpse of the chalice carried by the Catholic archbishop. She was immediately rushed home and remained in a trance for twenty-one days. During this time she had her celestial training to prepare her for her sublime duties. The angel known as Holy Michael was Abiodun's friend and played a great role when she was in a trance by ensuring that she was divinely trained and tutored in church matters.

Her state for these twenty-one days was strange to her guardians who did not know how to help her. At last, in her trance, Abiodun was divinely directed to have her guardian send for Moses Orimolade Tunolase who was already in Lagos evangelizing and praying for people under affliction or in a predicament. Even though Orimolade immediately responded to the call, the circumstances under which he came were miraculous. It was raining

heavily. Abiodun sent word three times encouraging Orimolade to come in spite of the rain and telling him: “Saint Moses Orimolade Tunolase should not be mindful of the heavy downpour of rain that can only beat the flesh and not the soul.” As a result Orimolade came in the rain from home to Saba Court, miraculously without being drenched.

This singular event termed the “Celestial Vision” was pivotal in founding the Cherubim and Seraphim Society, an Independent African Church, and in establishing the association between Abiodun and Orimolade. After this experience of the trance which brought them together, they decided to work as a team in their ministry with Abiodun acting as visionary and Orimolade as leader while both played the role of healer, prayer warrior, and preacher. They performed their divine roles together to the best of their abilities through intense evangelization, and by giving spiritual joy and assistance to many afflicted homes. Abiodun also took the message of the gospel to areas outside Lagos.

They both got along well. The name of the organization was established over a period of time after two meaningful events. Abiodun called on the seraphim while saying grace on September 9, 1925. The following year, in March, a foundation member had a dream after which it was decided to add the name cherubim because cherubim and seraphim are twins in heaven. So the organization was named the Cherubim and Seraphim Society. Abiodun and Orimolade both worked enthusiastically and relentlessly together from 1925 to early 1929 when some unscrupulous members, for their own selfish ends, set the leaders against each other.

The conflict came to a head when Abiodun was forcibly pulled off the vehicle that normally carried both leaders during a celebration. In spite of counsel and entreaties from several well-meaning people in an attempt to repair the breach, the two leaders split in early 1929. When they parted, the courts ruled that Abiodun’s group would retain the name Cherubim and Seraphim Society while Orimolade’s followers searched for another name. They eventually became the Ita Balogun Praying Band of Cherubim and Seraphim.

Since 1929, the Cherubim and Seraphim Society has known no schisms. A very gifted minister of God with high principles and strong self discipline, Abiodun tried to make the Cherubim and Seraphim a strong and

worthy organization. God granted her a rare privilege by releasing the Holy Ark of Covenant to her through a divine revelation in 1929. The Holy Ark of Covenant is a key element in the Cherubim and Seraphim Society's worship service.

The society is headquartered in Lagos, in Holy Mary Cathedral Church, built in 1951. The society's motto is "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31) and the emblem is the Ark of Covenant with the Cross of Christ and the Holy Bible. The society has six districts with 136 branches all over Nigeria and has spread to other African countries as well, including Benin Republic, Senegal, Ghana, Niger Republic, Sierra Leone, and Cameroun, among others. It has branches as far away as the U.S.A. and Britain.

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This story, received in 2004, was researched and written by Ebeye Boniface, a student in the Department of Religious Studies, University of Port Harcourt, under the supervision of Dr. Protus O. Kemdirim, *DACB* liaison coordinator at the University of Port Harcourt and *DACB* regional coordinator for Nigeria.

Bhengu, Nicholas

J. A. Millard

1909-1985

Pentecostal

South Africa

Nicholas Bhengu was one of the most successful twentieth-century Pentecostal church leaders in South Africa. He was born on 5 September 1909 at Entumeni, KwaZulu-Natal, where his father was a pastor of the American Lutheran Mission. He received his early education at the mission school but later attended two Roman Catholic schools, at Inkumama and Mariannahill respectively (Dubb 1976, 9). When Bhengu completed his schooling he was employed in various capacities – as a clerk, a teacher, a health inspector and a court interpreter. For a while he involved himself in the struggle for African advancement when he became a member of the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union and worked in their Durban offices. He later moved to Kimberley where he joined the Communist Party.

Bhengu tried various denominations without feeling at home in any of them until, when he was about 21 years old, he was converted at a Full Gospel revival in Kimberley (Dubb 1976, 9). He was convinced that he had found his own salvation and felt called to reach his fellow Africans. Soon after his conversion Bhengu returned to Natal where from 1931 he worked under the auspices of the Full Gospel Church.

From 1934 to 1936 he attended the South African General Mission Bible School at Dumisa (today, the Union Bible Institute, Sweetwaters). During these years he became friendly with two other preachers, Albert Gumede and Gideon Buthelezi.

By 1936 a church called the Assemblies of God in South Africa had come into being. This was a predominantly black church with only a few white members (Watt 1991, 15). Bhengu became a leader in this denomination.

In 1937 Bhengu, who was at that time a court interpreter, answered an advertisement in a Zulu magazine *Ubaqa* for a teacher at Emmanuel Mission near Nelspruit. He was ordained into the ministry at the

Emmanuel Mission (Anderson 1992, 45). A number of people from the mission, among them Bhengu, later joined the Assemblies of God. Bhengu's two friends joined him at the mission and the men had a fruitful ministry at Nelspruit, not as helpers of the missionary H.C. Phillips, but as ministers in their own branch of the work. Their ministry was characterized by an 'independence of mind, a sense of dignity and self-confidence' (Watt 1991, 28).

Because of Bhengu's challenge the Assemblies of God did not become a segregated church like some of the other Pentecostal churches. In 1940 Bhengu became a member of the first multi-racial executive council. From 1945 he worked in the Eastern Cape, mainly in Port Elizabeth and East London. He opened the Pilgrim Bible School in Port Elizabeth in 1950 and held revival meetings in various Eastern Cape towns. However, it is for his 'Back to God Crusades' that he is best remembered.

In October 1950 Bhengu launched his first crusade in Duncan Village, East London. With its highly organized publicity, its equipment and highly trained personnel, the 'tent ministry' was a new experience for the African populace (Dubb 1976, 4). Thousands of people attended the services, some to hear the preacher, some in search of healing, and many out of curiosity. Bhengu was a successful evangelist and thousands of people were converted. Lives were changed and by May 1951 there was a clearly defined congregation. From 1952 Bhengu decided to concentrate on the congregation in East London. On Sunday 27 October 1957 a church, built with the sacrificial contributions of thousands of African people, was opened in East London.

By 1959 there were 50 assemblies that had been started through the ministry of Bhengu. He himself retained some control over the new churches and continued to work as an evangelist in the expanding work until his death in 1985. According to Anderson (1992, 87) these wholly black churches were 'autonomous, self-governing, self-supporting and especially self-propagating'. In 1990 the churches which had been under Bhengu's leadership were renamed the Assemblies of God Movement.

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Nagenda, William

H. H. Osborn

1912-1973

Anglican Communion , Balokole Movement

Uganda

William Nagenda was born into a large family and his father Festo Manyangenda was a respected Muganda chief who lived on Namirembe hill, Kampala, Uganda. After primary school in Kampala, he attended King's College, Budo, from whence he went on to gain a diploma at the University College of Makerere before it was granted university status. His excellent knowledge of English gained him a post in the government's office at Entebbe.

Brought up in a Christian home, William decided early to be a missionary to the Congo, but he knew that his faith was a sham. Although outwardly successful in his work, his personal life took a downward turn. He came into contact with Simeoni Nsibambi, and the Lord Jesus Christ - about whom he had learned a great deal - became, for him a reality. So much so that a brief story of his life was entitled: William Nagenda - A lover of Jesus.

William married Sala, daughter of Erasto Bakaluba, a member of staff of King's College, Budo. She was educated at Gayaza High School. Soon after his conversion, William approached the Bishop of Uganda and offered himself for full-time service in the church. As preparation for ordination training, William was offered a teaching post in a school at Gahini, Rwanda. There, he and Sala joined a team of workers including Yosiya and Dorokasi Kinuka, and Drs. Joe and Decie Church.

During the year that followed the Kabale Convention of September 1935, remarkable manifestations of revival were experienced in the Kigezi district of Uganda and in Rwanda, centred in Gahini. William experienced the reviving power of God. Because of his great energy, quiet sincerity, penetrating spiritual analysis of situations, and gentle preaching; he played a leading role in teams of witness and conventions organised throughout East Africa.

In 1940, William entered the Theological College at Mukono, Uganda, for ordination training. Due to a situation which all recognised later as being unfortunate, the zeal of some thirty students was mistaken for a revolt and they, including William, were expelled. From then onwards, William became an evangelist based at a Christian tea-plantation, Namutamba.

In 1946, William was invited to England to join Rev. Yosiya Kinuka and Dr. Joe Church in a tour of witness following their involvement in the East Africa Revival. For the next eighteen years, William, usually with Dr. Joe Church, visited many countries in Europe, the Americas and India. In the conventions and tours in which he took part, William was the leader. In his home, his life with Sala proved to be a powerful witness to the power of the Gospel.

In 1964, William began to show signs of the illness, at that time diagnosed as “premature senility” which progressively made public engagements impossible. In the later part of his life, he would begin a talk, but it was Sala who conveyed God’s message. William left an enduring legacy in the lives of numerous people of many different nationalities who had cause to thank God for “William - a lover of Jesus.”

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Idahosa, Benson Andrew

DACB

1938-1998

Church of God Mission

Nigeria

Early Christian Ministry Testimony

As a young Christian, I once heard my pastor say during a morning service that Christians could raise the dead in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. I believed it with all my heart. And flying around on my bicycle in those days, I went through the city of Benin in search of a dead person to raise to life. After about five hours of hard searching I found a compound where a little girl had died a few hours before. The corpse had been cleaned and prepared for burial. I walked boldly up to the father of the dead child. "The God whom I serve can bring your baby back to life," I told him. "Will you permit me to pray for the child and bring her back to life?" The man was startled, but he agreed. With great enthusiasm, I walked into the room and up to the bed. The child was cold and dead. With strong faith in the Lord, I called on the Lord to restore the child back to life. I turned to the corpse and called it by name, "Arise in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ." Oh Glory to God! The corpse sneezed, heavily, alas. The child had come back to life! (*Benson Idahosa*)

Childhood

Benson Andrew Idahosa was born in Benin City on September 11, 1938 of Apoor pagan parents. He was a sickly infant who was always fainting. As a result of his constant illness his father ordered the mother to throw him in the dustbin. When he was eighteen months old he was left on a rubbish heap to die. He was rejected by his father, sent to work on a farm as a servant, and was denied education until he was fourteen years old. His education was irregular due to the poor financial status of his parents. He later took correspondence courses from Britain and the United States while working in Bata Shoe Company.

Conversion and Call to the Ministry

His conversion was dramatic and his calling supernatural. He was converted by Pastor Okpo on a football field one Sunday afternoon while playing soccer with his teammates. Thus, young Benson became the first Bini member of Pastor Okpo's small congregation. As a young convert he became very zealous in winning souls and in conducting outreaches in villages around Benin City.

He was called to the ministry one night in a vision from the Lord. "I have called you that you might take the gospel around the world in my name; preach the gospel, and I will confirm my word with signs following," said the voice from heaven. The room was filled with the presence of God as Benson fell to his knees beside the bed: "Lord, wherever you want me to go, I will go." He prayed on through the night, renewing his vows to God and interceding for his people who were yet to hear the message of salvation.

After his call, Benson launched into ministry work, preaching from village to village the gospel of Jesus Christ with great power and anointing. Many people confessed Christ as their Saviour, and healings occurred as he prayed for the sick.

Expansion of Ministry and Credentials

Benson Idahosa, the archbishop and founder of Church of God Mission International Incorporated with its headquarters in Benin City, Nigeria established over 6,000 churches throughout Nigeria and Ghana before 1971. Many of the ministers he supervised pastored churches of 1,000 to 4,000 people. In addition to holding the position of archbishop of Church of God Mission, he was also president of All Nations for Christ Bible Institute, president of Idahosa World Outreach and president of Faith Medical Centre. He held positions in numerous organizations including the college of bishops of the international communion of Christian churches and the Oral Roberts University in Oklahoma.

Idahosa earned a diploma in divinity from Christ for the Nations Institute in Dallas, Texas, which he attended in 1971, a Doctorate of Divinity in 1981 from the Word of Faith College, New Orleans and a Doctor of Laws degree from Oral Roberts University in March 1984. He

also received other degrees from the International University in Brussels, Belgium.

Archbishop Benson Idahosa and his wife Margaret Idahosa were blessed with four children.

Soul winning was Idahosa's primary concern. With a motto "Evangelism our Supreme Task," he worked towards this goal of reaching the unreached in Nigeria, Africa, and the rest of the world with the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. As a black African, he found the doors of African countries were wide open and he ministered in over 123 countries all over the world.

Crusades played a major role in his ministry. He was involved in at least one crusade per month. A record crowd of nearly one million people a night attended his Lagos Crusade in April 1985. He established the Redemption Television Ministry with a potential viewing audience of 50 million people.

Testimonials

According to Mrs. Gordon Freda Lindsay, president of Christ for the Nations Inc., Dallas, Texas, U.S.A.:

I know of no young black in all of Africa who is reaching millions as Benson is – in crusades with hundreds of thousands in attendance, in his weekly nationwide telecast, in his Bible School, training eager students from several nations. He also conducts campaigns in Sweden, Singapore, Malaysia, Korea, Australia and the United States, where he often appeared on national religious telecasts. His burden for souls, his ministry of healing and miracles, even to the raising of several dead, demonstrates he is especially called of the Lord in these end times.

Dr. Ben Akosa remarked:

Benson Idahosa is sought after by everyone in his state, from government officials to beggars. When they posed questions and explained their problems to this man they received instantaneous miracle solutions, just as people did in Bible days with God's prophets. And the people get miraculous answers from this mighty leader of God's people.

Said Daniel Orris:

Benin City respects and salutes this great man of God, even at death. I have been with him on visits to many officials, to the governor, to the powerful Benin tribal kings. He moved with God and his people know it. His great miracle cathedral (his headquarters) seats over 10,000 (1981). His Bible School attracts upper class people from different African nations. And they also come from Maurice, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Singapore, Philippines, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, the Middle East, Europe and other nations of the world—a truly International Bible Training Centre of dynamic faith. People know that Bishop Idahosa preached what he practiced. Dr. Idahosa's evangelistic ministry has reached nations around the world. He was the first black African evangelist to shake Australia in a massive crusade that got national attention. His seminars have affected Christians and church leaders in many countries. I sincerely salute this man because he practiced among his own people what he preached to the world. Benson Idahosa was a man who believed God's promises and that God's miracle provision applies to Africans as well as to Americans. He believed that Africa has a part in God's work, and Africa will reap God's blessings.

Evangelist T. L. Osborn, from Tulsa, Oklahoma remarked:

Many who follow Idahosa's teaching have been saved from poverty and have learned to plant out of their desperate need and to look to God as their divine source thereby becoming prosperous Christians in their own land. Idahosa rose from the rank of an ordinary man to world leadership as a pastor, builder, counsellor, prophet, teacher, apostle, evangelist – a man of godly wisdom and of Christ-like compassion, whose ministry has blessed millions the world over. Idahosa was the greatest African ambassador of the apostolic Christian faith to the world.

Idahosa operated in faith and he had a robust faith. He believed and trusted God with a childlike faith. He once said that living a daily life of absolute faith in God is the only secret to great success. He believed God for everything. "All things are possible to him that believes." He spent quality time in prayer and in the study of God's Word. He said that if someone spends time studying the Bible and acting on it, people will come looking for that person for life's solutions. Idahosa also spent time studying the works and lives of other successful people both in the gospel ministry and other fields of human endeavors and he applied the principles he learned

about these successful people to his life and ministry. He was very energetic and hardworking. One of the ministers who served under him said that he had never seen a person who worked as hard as Archbishop Benson Idahosa. He was committed and consistent and he had confidence in himself. He was very humble and full of godly wisdom.

Archbishop Benson Idahosa was said to be the leader of over seven million Jesus people worldwide before he went to be with the Lord in February 1998.

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Birech, Ezekiel Kiprop

Allan Muchiri Njoroge

1910-2000

Africa Inland Church

Kenya

Ezekiel Kiprop Birech built a lasting legacy through his selfless service to the Africa Inland Church (AIC) and his Nandi people. His influence continues to be felt significantly all over Kenya. He served at different levels of leadership in the AIC, and most prominently as bishop from 1980 to 1996. His integrity, gentle spirit, and deep devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ enabled him to serve effectively as the leader of Kenya's largest Evangelical church for sixteen years.

Early Life, Conversion, and Education

Ezekiel Kiprop Birech was born in 1910 in Kaptel village in what was then Nandi District (now Nandi County) [1] to Tibing'ot Kibirech arap Chemai, a Nandi chief. He received the given name Kiprop, according to Nandi naming customs. However, his son Nahor K. Cheptileh claims that his late father's national identification card bore the year 1918 as the date of his birth. He believes this to be the correct date as it was probably given to the authorities by Birech himself and so would be more reliable. [2] Birech's father was a chief who sued the Africa Inland Mission (AIM) for keeping his daughter from being circumcised according to Nandi customs. This daughter's name was Leah and she eventually became the wife of Reuben Seroney [3].

On January 14, 1926, there was an eclipse of the sun that caused many people to believe that the end of the world had come - an event of which the Christians had spoken. [4] This eschatological interpretation of the eclipse led many to believe that the Gospel was true and so some gave up their indigenous religions to follow Christ. In the same year, Birech first heard the Gospel from a Luhya Christian, Wanyama, who was a cook on a European settler's farm in Eldoret where Birech worked herding oxen. [5] Under these circumstances, he was converted and decided to read the Bible

for himself so he could be well placed to share the message of the Gospel with his people, the Nandi [6].

That same year, Birech left his employment on the settler's farm to respond to the deep conviction he had in his heart. He began his journey of education at the Africa Inland Mission station at Kapsabet at the age of sixteen. After his elementary studies there, he joined the Government African School (GAS), now known as Kapsabet Secondary School. He left Kapsabet for a while to join the catechism class at Moiben in 1930. He was baptized in 1932 and then received the name Ezekiel. [7] He completed his primary school education at the GAS in 1938. During that year, he was circumcised as was the practice of his people. [8] It must be noted however that the Nandi circumcise their boys when they are between the ages of fifteen and eighteen. Birech was not circumcised at the proper time because he was pursuing his education at the AIM Kapsabet station. According to Mathew Kipchumba, a Nandi tribesman, this led to his receiving the derogatory nickname *ng'etet* (uncircumcised) among his age mates. He was eventually circumcised at the age of twenty-eight. [9]

Birech performed well at this primary level education and qualified to join Alliance High School in Kikuyu, then the most elite secondary school for Africans in Kenya. However, due to a lack of teachers, the missionaries at the AIM Kapsabet station requested that he stay on and serve as a teacher. He consented and began his career as a teacher in 1939. He was later promoted to the post of supervisor for AIC schools in the North Rift Valley area. [10] His success as a teacher led to many people calling him *mwalimu* (teacher) even into his later life and ministry. [11] He later enrolled for secondary education. He was then sponsored by the church to pursue theological education at Scott Theological College (now Scott Christian University) in Machakos. He was a student there from 1975 to 1976. [12]

Ministry

Birech served the Church in various capacities over a protracted length of time. He began his ministry as a teacher at the AIM Kapsabet School. In the 1950s, the need arose to produce a new translation of the Bible in Nandi, for wider use by the Kalenjin peoples. This project gave him the opportunity to work with Christians from other Kalenjin subgroups such as

the Kipsigis and Marakwet. He was appointed secretary to the translation committee that worked from 1954 to 1963, and released the final translation in 1969 after updates and revisions. [13] In addition to Bible translation, Birech was involved in the revision of the Kalenjin hymnal as well as a personal project to translate John Bunyan's classic *Pilgrim's Progress*. [14]

During this time he was also actively involved in pastoral ministry in AIC Kaptel, the local church of his home village. His steadfast dedication to service at the local church level led to his election as secretary of both the Nandi District Church Council and the Rift Valley Regional Church Council in 1960. [15] After his graduation from Scott Theological College, he was ordained as an AIC minister in 1977. He then returned to continue his pastoral ministry in Nandi. He rose from the post of secretary of the District Church Council to that of chairman after the death of Rev. Samuel Gimnyigei. [16] In February 1979, he was elected chairman of the North Rift Regional Church Council and the following month he was elected assistant bishop of the AIC. In November of that year, Bishop Wellington E. Mulwa went to be with the Lord. In the resultant elections in March 1980, Birech was elected bishop of the AIC and served for four terms. This long tenure was a productive one for the AIC as he led the church in the establishment of several institutions.

Birech secured his place in the history of the African Church during his sixteen years in office. His legacy is strongest in two main areas: missions and education. Birech contributed to the broad area of missions through his translation work. At the time of his birth, the Nandi were largely an unreached people group. For this reason, it was urgent to translate the Bible into Nandi. When this was done, the Nandi Bible needed to be revised in order to make the language more generic to ensure its usability among other Kalenjin groups. His translation of the Scriptures, hymns, and the *Pilgrim's Progress* were key contributions towards the evangelization and discipleship of the Nandi community. His revision of the Nandi hymnal was also significant as hymnody contributed to the translation of biblical and theological concepts and truths into local idioms and expressions that allowed the Nandi to interact more deeply with God's Word. This was also the goal of the translation of *Pilgrim's Progress*.

The second significant contribution Birech made in the field of missions was the establishment of the AIC Missionary College in 1985. This school, based in Eldoret, was set up to train cross cultural missionaries who would be used by God in the evangelization of unreached people groups. The establishment of this school was fueled by Birech's intense passion for evangelism that had driven him to go to school and to go into ministry. [18] The Bishop Birech Foundation was begun after his death to continue the work of evangelism, especially among the Nandi.

Birech also made significant contributions in the area of education. He believed each community should have a local church, a kindergarten, a primary school, and a secondary school. [19] His seminal contribution in this field was his own teaching career, but his most significant contributions came during his tenure as bishop. In 1989, he began Bishop Birech Girls' Secondary School in the Tilol area of Uasin Gishu district (now Uasin Gishu County). Previously, he had emigrated to the Tilol area from Kaptel in Nandi. [20] He also established the Nyayo Teachers' College in Konza, Machakos district (now Machakos County) to train teachers for effective service. Birech developed a close relationship with the second president of Kenya, Daniel Toroitich Arap Moi, who was a member of the AIC. This relationship proved beneficial to the church as Birech sought the former president's assistance in acquiring land for churches and schools. After Birech's retirement from office, his efforts in the encouragement of education were recognized and honored when a new AIC sponsored Bible college was named after him. This college, Bishop Birech Bible College, opened in 1998.

Despite his many successes in adding a missional and educational emphasis to the AIC, Birech faced several challenges in his ministry. The first was the challenge of dealing with church leaders who lacked personal integrity. He was a lifelong campaigner against corruption and laziness in the pastoral office. Another major challenge he faced as bishop was the lack of funds for ministry purposes. Many local churches were poor and their giving was often low. Sometimes moneys given at the local church level reached the bishop's office as only a fraction of the original amount because corruption and high administrative overheads consumed much of the giving. [21]

Personal life

Birech was a devoted family man even though he was continually engaged in ministry. During his teaching ministry at Kapsabet, he met Milcah Chepllel Birech whom he married in 1943. [22] Together they had eight children. One of his sons described his late father as a quiet and reflective man. He hardly spoke about church affairs in detail within the confines of his home. [23] He was a man devoted to prayer. He never missed a mid-week church prayer meeting, and was keen on personal prayers in the morning and family prayers in the evening. It is said he was so committed to prayer that whenever church leaders, relative or refugees approached him with a difficult matter or need, his first response was always, “Have you prayed about it?” [24] He was known to stop and even adjourn meetings so that prayers could be made.

He retired from the bishop’s office after four terms of service. He then lived a quiet life with his wife on their farm in Tilol, Kipkabus area of Uasin Gishu. Three years after his retirement he went to be with the Lord and was buried on November 30, 2000 at the AIC Missionary College in Eldoret. [25]

Conclusion

Birech achieved many positive changes during his long tenure of office thanks to his unquestionable character and pastoral approach to issues. Birech labored for the Lord with the hope that his own church would grow in spiritual depth and evangelistic reach. He had a heart for missions and education was a tool for achieving that goal. Without a doubt, Ezekiel Kiprop Birech made an indelible mark on the AIC in Kenya and in African Christian history.

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Kinyanjui Macharia, Peter

Dickson Nkonge Kagema

1921-2003

Catholic Church, Anglican Communion, The Resurrected Christ Ministries

Kenya

Life and Church Ministry

Peter Kinyanjui Macharia was born in 1921 in Limuru, Kenya. His parents were Anglicans, but he was a Catholic, attending Holy Family Thigio Church, Limuru near his home area. While young, he felt a call to the priesthood and joined St. Augustine's Minor Seminary in Nyeri. In 1939, he was sent to Rome to for his studies in theology and philosophy. He was ordained in Rome in March 1946 at St. Peters College. He also received his Doctorate in Divinity from Rome in 1948.

After his return to Kenya in 1949, he worked in the Diocese of Nyeri in various parishes. In 1956, he was appointed parish priest of Kiambu Catholic Mission and, in 1959, he became one of the counselors in Nyeri Diocese. On April 21, 1961, he was appointed auxiliary Bishop of Major Cavallera and, on May 21 of the same year, he was consecrated bishop in Rome by Pope John XXIII together with thirteen other bishops from mission countries.

On November 25, 1964, Pope Paul VI appointed him Bishop of Nyeri, when Bishop Cavellar was transferred to the Diocese of Marsabit. He is very popular as he was the first Kikuyu Catholic bishop in Kenya. He is responsible for developing the Catholic Church in central Kenya, where he started many schools and congregations. He is remembered for his pastoral dedication and the good relationships he had with people and authorities in the country, especially Mzee Jomo Kenyatta's government.

Interestingly, Kinyanjui had been born in a Protestant family but opted to become Catholic because he believed that the Catholic Church had more freedom. In early 1967, he started disagreeing with some of the Catholic beliefs and practices despite the fact that he was a Catholic bishop. He left

the Catholic church and joined his parents' church, that is, the Anglican Church, and got married. Sadly, he did not find any satisfaction in the Anglican Church either. He felt that the Anglican Church was very similar to the Catholic Church and, as such, could not quench the spiritual thirst of its people. He did not agree with many beliefs and practices of both the Anglicans, representing the Protestants, and the Catholics.

In May 1969, he quit the Anglican Church and started his own ministry known as The Resurrected Christ Ministries. He felt that people dissatisfied with the practices of the Anglican and Catholic Churches would find refuge in his Church. As expected, his ministry attracted many followers from the Catholic Church, the Anglican Church and other churches.

His Major Contributions

He contributed to the moral life of the church because he was against Christians who continued the practice of committing sins and then going to confess to the priest in the Catholic Church. For the Protestants, he felt that even though pastors and other church leaders are married, they continue to be involved in sexual immorality. He called all Christians to total repentance and a change of life.

He started many congregations in Kenya and beyond. The Resurrected Christ Ministries have gone global. Although he is dead, he is highly acknowledged by members of the Church and other Kenyans.

He started schools and hospitals, notably Bishop Kinyanjui Schools and Hospital that are located in Kiambu County. Kinyanjui School includes a pre-school, that is, a kindergarten, a Primary school (from class one to eight), and a secondary school (forms one to four). He also started a college by the name of Bishop Kinyanjui Nursing School. His aim was to promote religious life, empower people through educational and help the young people develop their careers.

He died on February 20, 2003 at the age of eighty-two. He was buried in Kiambu where he had built his first church. He left a good legacy and he became a role model to many. His love for religion and education fascinated many.

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This article, received in 2017, was written by Dickson Nkonge Kagama, PhD. Dr. Kagama is Senior Lecturer in Religious Studies & Philosophy at Chuka University in Kenya and Research Associate in Practical Theology & Missiology at Stellenbosch University, South Africa. He is a Canon in the Anglican Church of Kenya. His email is dicknkonge@gmail.com

Olang', Habakkuk Festo

Alfred Sheunda Keyas

1914-2004

Anglican Communion

Kenya

Festo Habakkuk Olang' was the first African archbishop of Kenya and bishop of Nairobi in the Anglican church of Kenya.

Festo Olang' was born about 1914, around the beginning of the first World War, at Ebusakami Esabalu village, Maseno, near the equator in south Bunyore, Kakamega district. His father, Etarwa, had four wives. His mother, Emisiko Sambaya, was Etarwa's senior wife and the only one to have two surviving sons.

Though born in Kakamega district, Olang' spent most of his childhood and the better part of his youth in Kano, Kisumu district, and thus learned to speak Luo and Luhya fluently. His parents moved to Kano, while Olang' was still young, where there was ample grazing land for his father's many cattle. His parents settled at Nyamasaria in Kano and never moved back to Maseno, Bunyore. Life at Nyamasaria continued in much the same way as at Maseno. Each day Olang' and the other boys took the animals out to graze.

In 1925 he began attending Kisumu Primary School, then called Komulo School. In 1927, he sat for the Common Entrance Examination at Maseno School and was admitted in 1928. He studied there for three years but found it quite a traumatic experience to be away from home, having to conform to the school regulations and dress code. He was, however, greatly influenced by the headmaster of Maseno School and famous mathematician, Mr. Edward Carey Francis. Olang's faith in Jesus Christ grew and was strengthened under his guidance and, like many of the 300 boys at the school, Olang' taught at Sunday schools in the area each Sunday, after learning how to give the lesson under Mr. Francis's tutelage each week. Olang' taught Luyia speaking groups and was also encouraged to plant trees around the village churches.

While at Maseno, Olang' was prepared for confirmation by Archdeacon Owen and confirmed by Bishop Heywood. This was a marvelous experience for him. He started learning English while in standard four and by the third year in Maseno, standard six, he was using English as the medium of instruction and for writing his examinations.

During this time he was still the only Christian in the family and his father was suspicious of the influence being exerted on him. Among Olang's colleagues was Mr. Apollo Ohanga, one-time minister in the colonial government. After Maseno School, Olang' began studies at Alliance High School in Kikuyu in 1931 through the influence of Carey Francis, who later became the headmaster at Alliance. Here he met former minister Mr. James Gichuru. Olang' was at Alliance from 1931 to 1935, the first three years for secondary level education and the last two for teacher training - for teaching was the career he thought he should follow. During his time at Alliance, he acquired leadership abilities, developed a great love for sports and for communicating with people about Christ.

After his teacher training, Olang' went back to teach at Maseno School for four years. In January 1940 he moved to Butere after the principal of the newly-founded Butere Girls' School, Miss Lee Appleby, invited him to teach there.

While teaching at Maseno, Olang' decided it was time to think about marriage. As was the Luhya custom in those days, he asked his relatives in Ebusakami to look around for a suitable wife. They found Eseri Twera, the daughter of Joshua Olume, who had been brought up a Christian and had learned to read and write at the Church of God Mission in Kima. This was all the education offered to girls in those days. After consulting with the family, he was allowed to meet Eseri to get acquainted and to decide whether their relatives' choice was a good one before the engagement was confirmed. Indeed it was, and on December 24, 1937, they were married at St. Paul's Church, Maseno. The Lord blessed Olang' and Eseri with twelve children.

In 1943, while teaching at Butere, Olang' received a letter from the Rev. Martyn Capon, principal of St. Paul's Divinity School, Limuru (now St. Paul's United Theological College), requesting him to consider training for the ministry. After praying and talking it over with his wife, Eseri, he

quit teaching to study for the ministry by enrolling at St. Paul's Divinity School in January 1944. At that time, there were only thirty-six African clergy and eighteen European clergy in the whole country. Among the tutors at Limuru was Rev. Obadiah Kariuki, later consecrated with Olang' as two of the first African bishops in Kenya.

On December 9, 1945, Olang' was ordained a deacon by Bishop Crabbe at St. Stephen's Church, Nairobi. After ordination, he was attached to the Ramula pastorate under the rural dean of the area, Rev. Alf Stanway. This rural deanery covered all of Seme, Karateng', and half of Gem. He served in the pastorate in 1946 and 1947, running the parish, doing evangelism, and building up the Christians there. As a deacon, Olang' had the tremendous joy and privilege of becoming a godparent to his own mother, giving her baptismal instructions that led to her baptism in 1946. His father, who had died earlier, had also been baptized through Olang's influence. After his consecration, he was also able to confirm his mother.

In 1948, Olang went back to Limuru to complete his theological training for ordination into the priesthood. At the end of the second term in 1948 he got a scholarship from the British Council that enabled him to travel and study at Wycliffe Hall, Oxford, in England, for one academic year. The main course of study was on the Holy Spirit and church administration. While in England, he was attached to the parish of Holy Trinity, Bristol, where the vicar was Rev. Fred Buff, his former teacher at Alliance High School.

In 1950, he returned to Kenya and was ordained into the priesthood at St. Paul's, Maseno, by Bishop Crabbe. Olang' also became the principal of Maseno Bible School which had been started only a short time earlier. In 1952, he became the first African rural dean for Central Nyanza and vicar of Bunyore parish through the end of 1954.

On May 15, 1955, Olang' and Obadiah Kariuki were consecrated at Namirembe Cathedral, Kampala in Uganda by Archbishop of Canterbury, Most Rev. Dr. Geoffrey Fisher, as the first African assistant bishops in Kenya. Olang' presided over all of western Kenya while Rev. Kariuki took central Kenya. Olang's duties included confirmations, visitations, counseling, and preaching, just to name a few.

In December 1960, he was appointed bishop of Maseno, which covered Nyanza province and Western province. He was enthroned in 1961 by Archbishop Beecher at St. Stephen's church, Kisumu, which later became his pro-cathedral. Tremendous church growth led to the subdivision of the diocese of Maseno into Maseno North and Maseno South. Olang' remained in charge of Maseno North while Bishop Evan Agola presided over Maseno South. Roughly, Maseno North served the Luyia population and Maseno South, the Luo.

During his time both as bishop of Maseno and of Maseno North, Olang' served as chairman of both the Luo and the Oluluyia Bible Translation Committees. He spoke both languages fluently and due to his efforts the Bible, the Prayer Book and Hymn books were translated into Luhya and Luo. In Festo Olang's autobiography, Deaconess Appleby, a member of the committee, commends Olang's work in translation saying: "His particular contribution to the work of the committee was his keen perception of all aspects of the meaning of a word; he was usually the one who spotted possible ambiguities in what seemed to the rest of us good renderings." (Olang', p. 47)

In 1970, soon after the diocese had been divided, Archbishop Beecher decided to retire a few months before reaching the age of sixty-five. Due to the rapid growth of the Anglican Church, the province of East Africa was divided into the provinces of Kenya and of Tanzania. Olang' was elected the first African archbishop of Kenya and bishop of Nairobi and was enthroned on August 3, 1970, in All Saints Cathedral, Nairobi, by the Most Rev. L. J. Beecher.

In 1978, Olang' was awarded an honorary doctor's degree by Sewanee, the University of the South, U.S.A. As archbishop of Kenya, Olang' pioneered several changes in the church. First, the church's provincial constitution was drawn up for Kenya alone. Secondly, as archbishop, he participated in all the ceremonial and administrative functions in the government, which included being present at the opening of parliament and leading prayers on state occasions. He also served as the bishop-ordinary to the armed forces.

Archbishop Olang' held an ecclesiastical court for discipline of the clergy. He also strengthened connections with the worldwide Anglican

Church everywhere by personal visits as well as administrative measures. On behalf of the Anglican Church, by then known as Church of the Province of Kenya (CPK), he had the opportunity to visit many countries including Great Britain, Germany, Canada, Switzerland, the U.S.A., Australia, and many more. Several times he took part in Billy Graham's Evangelistic Crusades. He hosted the Anglican Consultative Council, representing the worldwide Anglican Church at Limuru in 1971. In 1974 he organized the Pan-African Christian Assembly in Nairobi. In 1975 he hosted the conference of Anglican archbishops from all over the world at Trinity College, Nairobi. In 1975 he helped host the Partners in Mission Consultation, also in Nairobi. These gatherings were very important to the growth of the church as Olang' notes:

But these gatherings provided more than just spectacles for church members to admire the vestments and ceremonials of different Episcopal churches. They gave us the chance really to consult one another, draw on one another's wisdom and, more than that, marvel at the worldwide fellowship of which the church is part. It is a joy to me to have participated in all these events and facilitated some of them. (Olang', p. 56)

In 1977, Olang' hosted all the African archbishops in Nairobi and formed the "African Lambeth," inaugurated as the Conference of Anglican Provinces in Africa (CAPA) of which he was made chairman. He participated in interdenominational fellowships including the World Council of Churches (WCC), the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC), the National Council of Churches of Kenya, and generally encouraged ecumenism. He was also strongly and deeply involved in the East Africa Revival movement and the unity within it despite occasional differences of opinion. Through the revival movement, he learned that only "repentance was the way to Christ." (Olang' p. 35)

Olang' was archbishop from 1971 to 1980, the year he retired. He was respected for his humility and did not engage in fighting for positions in the church. He preached peace, love, unity, and humility and hence was a great force in keeping the Anglican Church united during his tenure. Olang' spearheaded many development projects in the Anglican Church such as schools and hospitals. Under his leadership, many parishes and churches were created and grew up rapidly. By the time he retired the church had

grown to 288 parishes, spread over seven dioceses and served by 374 ordained clergy. He encouraged transparency and accountability among both the clergy and Christians in general. He worked closely with government authorities as an advisor. Archbishop Olang' will be greatly remembered for his humility, uprightness, and respect for human dignity. He was a man of extraordinary ability.

His wife Eseri died in 1997 at age seventy-eight. His son William died in 1986 and his son David died in 2001.

Finally, at the age of ninety-five, Olang', first archbishop of the Anglican Church in Kenya, died on Tuesday, February 3, 2004. He left behind eight daughters and two sons, forty-five grandchildren, and twenty-four great-grandchildren.

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This story, submitted in 2005, was researched and written by Rev. Alfred Sheunda Keyas, a priest in the Anglican Church of Kenya (ACK),

diocese of Mumias, serving as a missionary in Mwingi, Eastern Kenya Province, and *DACB* Project Luke fellow (2004-2005).

Gitari, Mukuba David

Alfred Sheunda Keyas

1937-2013

Anglican Communion

Kenya

Gitari was the third African archbishop of Kenya and bishop of the diocese of Nairobi in the Anglican Church of Kenya.

David Mukuba Gitari was born on September 16, 1937. He attended the famous Kangaru High School in Embu before attending the University of Nairobi for a Bachelor of Arts degree. He married Grace Wanjiru on March 31, 1966 and God blessed them with three children.

He was ordained into the priesthood of the Anglican Church in 1972 by Bishop Obadiah Kariuki. On July 20, 1975, at the age of thirty-seven, Gitari was consecrated and enthroned as the first bishop of Mt. Kenya East diocese. In that position, Gitari founded St. Andrews College of Theology and Development at Kabare. He served there as bishop until 1990 when Mt. Kenya East diocese was split into Embu and Kirinyaga dioceses. He then moved to Kirinyaga, thereby becoming the first bishop of Kirinyaga.

During Gitari's tenure as bishop of Mount Kenya East (1975-90) and of Kirinyaga (1990-96) there was phenomenal church growth in these two dioceses. As evangelism was his first priority, he led many missions in African universities. These initiatives were creatively combined with development, theological education, liturgical renewal, and the encouragement of women's ordination. He served for many years as chairman of the provincial board of theological education in the Anglican Church of Kenya. He served four times as chair of the National Council of Churches of Kenya and acted as a mediator between the international evangelical and ecumenical movements. He also served as chairman of the board of St. Paul's United Theological College, Limuru. He was a member of the Anglican Roman Catholic International Commission (from 1983-1990).

Gitari's pastoral work, however, led him into political controversy. He preached and campaigned against land grabbing by powerful politicians, challenging economic injustice on a national as well as a local level. In particular, he preached against constitutional changes which introduced voting by queuing (in a specific place, publicly indicating your chosen candidate) instead of by secret ballot. In 1988, he took the lead in opposing the rigging of the general election during the infamous mlolongo (queuing) voting system. He publicly condemned political assassinations and any undemocratic political practices.

Gitari's deep concern for the Kenyan people was not without cost. On the night of April 21, 1989, at the height of his struggle for justice, a large and heavily armed gang of thugs numbering about 100 raided his house. They dug out the security bars and shouted that they had come to kill him. He and his family escaped to the roof and called for help from neighbors. Neighbors came to his rescue just in time and the thugs fled.

In 1997, Gitari was elected third archbishop of the Anglican Church of Kenya and enthroned on January 12. He remained in this position until his retirement in September 2002.

As archbishop, Gitari worked to restore peace and unity in the church and to resolve the many divisions and quarrels in various dioceses. Many dioceses had no bishops due to accusations of tribalism and nepotism during elections and appointments of bishops and clergy. Gitari also revived training institutions, especially the Anglican Theological Education by Extension (TEE) program, which was floundering in many dioceses. With the help of grants from Trinity Church, New York, he helped set up the Anglican website so that all dioceses could have access to Internet service, making communication and networking easier.

Gitari has written and edited many books and articles including, among others, *In Season and Out of Season: Sermons to a Nation* (1996) and *Let the Bishop Speak* (1988).

On July 14, 1998, Gitari received an honorary doctorate of divinity from the University of Kent. He retired on September 16, 2002 as archbishop of the Anglican Church of Kenya.

In his enthronement speech on September 22, 2002, Benjamin Nzimbi, fourth Kenyan African archbishop and bishop of All Saints

diocese, paid tribute to his predecessor, Dr. David Gitari, for his bold leadership, vowing to follow in his footsteps. Archbishop Nzimbi also quoted a Kiswahili poem praising Dr. Gitari: “Gitari ni hodari. Gitari ni daktari. Gitari ni jemedari. Gitari ni hatari.” (Gitari is bold. Gitari is a doctor. Gitari is an army commander. Gitari is dangerous.)

Gitari will be remembered for his bold messages from the pulpit. Along with other fellow clergymen such as Njoya, Okullu, and Muge, Gitari had the courage to criticize and hold the government accountable for its actions. Like Muge, Gitari believed in the power of the pulpit to transform and reform society. Through the power of the spoken word, Gitari scared politicians and quelled the storm of social lies proclaimed by those whose interest was to enrich themselves at the expense of the poor.

Although Gitari is retired from mainstream church administration work, his daily routine has not changed much. He believes that God’s work never ceases and is still very involved in upholding and defending human rights (2005). He is a member of the Constitution of Kenya Review Commission (CKRC) and fully participates in the constitution review process as one of the representatives of Kenyan faith-based organizations. He also travels, preaches, and gives presentations, calling upon Christians to embrace a culture of peacemaking and conflict resolution.

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Kayo, Joseph

Francis Manana

1936

Deliverance Church

Kenya

Dr. Joe Kayo is the founder of Deliverance Church, a charismatic and indigenous ministry that has spread into Uganda and Zambia. He has preached to large crowds in Kenya and influenced many prominent ministers.

He was born in 1936 in Kisii District, Nyanza Province in Kenya. He went to school in his village and later to the Pentecostal Bible College in Kisumu. He describes himself as a self-taught man in several fields, and has been awarded two honorary doctoral degrees: from the U.S. in 1987 and Nigeria in 1990. He was born again in February 1957 and later ordained by the Pentecostal Assemblies of God.

Joe met his wife Rose on a preaching tour in Uganda with his team of evangelists. After a terminally ill patient at Rose's home was miraculously healed as a result of his prayers, Rose's father begged Joe to take Rose for his wife as a gift of appreciation for his ministry. Joe temporarily turned down the offer to first seek the will of God. As it turned out, this was God's will for Joe and Rose. A wedding was planned within weeks. The couple has three children and two grandchildren.

Many consider him a dynamic preacher anointed by the Holy Spirit. Signs and wonders as well as documented cases of miraculous healing and the slaying in the Spirit are frequent manifestations of Joe's ministry. Thousands have been born again and delivered from demonic forces. He derived the name for his ministry from these recurring acts of deliverance. Joe believes that it is not enough to be saved from sin but that one needs to be delivered from the many demonic forces at work in Africa. He argues that in Luke 4:18-19 Jesus' ministry included bringing deliverance to the captives as a result of His anointing. He claims that the same anointing that Jesus had was promised not only to the Apostles of Biblical times but also to

those God calls today. Thus, Joe calls himself an Apostle because he claims to have the same anointing which characterized Jesus' ministry.

Joe speaks several languages including Ekigusi, Dholuo, Swahili, Luganda and English. He is a powerful and effective communicator, and an excellent Bible expositor,- an element that has made his ministry popular among the educated in East and Central Africa. University students have been the focus of his ministry. Consequently, Deliverance Church services were held in English and translated into other languages. The use of English made it possible to expand the ministry to Uganda and Zambia. Through his ministry Joe has led many church leaders to the Lord, disciplined and commissioned them for ministry.

At the height of Joe's ministry in the late nineteen seventies, some allegations were made against him which led to a sharp disagreement with his board members. As a result Joe resigned from Deliverance Church.

In 1978, he founded the Christian Family Church and Joe Kayo Ministries International, of which he is the executive Chairman. He has ministered in the United States, Zambia, Canada, South Africa, England, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Malawi, Japan, and Hong Kong. He publishes *Revival Digest*, a magazine in which he continues to share his vision. He has written the following books: *The Bible Way to Success*; *Standing Alone with God*; *Twenty/Twenty Vision*; *Prayer: Supernatural Force*, and *Why I speak in Tongues*.

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This story, submitted in 2000, was researched by Dr. Francis Manana, Professor of Evangelism and Missions and DACB Liaison Coordinator, Pan African Christian College, Nairobi, Kenya.