AFRICAN HISTORICAL STUDIES

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E. A. Ayandele

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Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria, 1842–1914: A Political and Social Analysis

Holy Johnson, 1836–1917: Pioneer of African Nationalism

The Educated Elite in the Nigerian Society

Nigerian Historical Studies

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AFRICAN HISTORICAL STUDIES

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FOR OYENIWE
A MOTHER OF MOTHERS

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Preface

The twelve essays here brought together in one book are being accorded accessibility and permanence of a kind they have lacked as monographs or articles in journals. Written mostly in the last eight years in different circumstances, they are unified more in intent, in argument, and in perspective than in theme. Moreover, illustrations are heavily weighed in favour of English-speaking West Africa, in particular the areas that came under British colonial rule.

Nevertheless, I have no apology to offer. One of the aims behind most of these writings was to reveal some of the too many aspects of the African past yet to be explored or sufficiently developed. Another was to attempt new perspectives and interpretations of the more familiar aspects. Naturally the themes are related to my particular areas of research interest on the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The themes—exploration, Western-style education, the reaction of Africans to the activities of Christian missions, and the thought-pattern and modernity aspirations of the educated elite—have the common denominator of Euro-African relations. Collectively the themes are related historiographic concerns and methods and, as products of a single mind, bear the stamp of one style of thought.

There is no need to reveal the background of this collection, except to express my gratitude to those who shall remain nameless, who have encouraged me to put together selected writings of mine concealed in journals and other specialized publications which, by their very nature, are not available to the wider world.

Finally, a word of appreciation. But for the skilful hands of Mrs Grace A. Bassey (my secretary), Miss Eme Bassey (her

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E. A. Ayandele

Calabar
July 1978

1

African Exploration and Human Understanding

In these days when man's technological triumphs over the physical world are taken for granted, when the spectacular probings into space and lunar exploration—mark you, adventures barely fifteen years old yet—are ceasing to excite awe, curiosity, and inspiration, the mapping of the world in general and of the African continent in particular, in the centuries before we were born, might seem a minor and transient event in a human drama unworthy of academic minds.

Such a view would be a retrospective misappraisal of African exploration, the essence or unwitting achievement of which, I intend to show, was an understanding of the African in relation to his environment with scientific objectivity to a degree never before, nor since, achieved by analysts of Afro-white relations. In this respect the relative irrelevance of space exploration to the African is clear but so also is its relative irrelevance to the rest of the human family in the sense that unlike geographical exploration, space exploration is not man-focused. Man does not live in outer space; there is no human society on the moon. In my considered judgment, space exploration is a prodigal diversion of world attention from human problems here on earth, particularly from man himself, the most unfathomable, the most complex, and the greatest problem of all. And are we not witnesses of the fearful spectacle of man projecting into space human tension, human avarice, and human unwisdom? Do we not see man aggravating human insecurity here on the

terrestrial globe by his senseless projection of his ideological warfare and weaponry into space?

In contrast is African exploration which focused on man in Africa, producing reflexes on man outside the continent. It is because human beings were in Africa that, throughout the epochal century of African exploration—that is from the founding of the African Association in 1788 to the eve of the 'Scramble'—the audience commanded by the geographical missionaries in Europe was great indeed.[1] The accounts of their encounters with Africans cast an unmistakable spell on, and sustained the interest of, their audience and curiosity about the African—his habits and habitudes, his moral and social laws, his virtues and vices, his mores and norms, his cosmology and spiritual thoughts, his understanding and mastery of his world and so on—was unending and undiminishing throughout the century. Casual patrons of the Africana section of any major library can easily sample and verify the quantity and quality of the materials with which explorers of Africa, and amateur students of their efforts, fed the voracious appetite of readers in the crucial century of African exploration. The respect enjoyed by John Leyden's *A Historical and Philosophical Sketch of the Discoveries and Settlements of the Europeans in Northern and Western Africa* (Edinburgh, 1799) emboldened him to do a bolder work, the posthumously published *Historical Account of Discoveries and in Africa from the Earlier Ages to the Present Time* (Edinburgh, 1818). Three editions were published within a year of Mungo Park's accounts of his first journey to West Africa. The amount of interest in African exploration by readers in Europe in the nineteenth century can be measured from the facts that in 1814, when African exploration was still in its infancy, the publishers of John Pinkerton's *A General Collection of the Best and Most Interesting Voyages and Travels in All Parts of the World* never regretted devoting two volumes to Africa in the seventeen-volume work; C. A. Walckenaer in France published in 1842 his twenty-one volume *Collection de voyages en Afrique*; just after 1885 Cassell and Company published in Britain for subscription the four volume Special Edition of Robert Brown, *The Story of Africa and its Explorers*; and in 1890 Paul Bory's *Les*

explorateurs de l'Afrique (Tours) had achieved second edition status.

It was because African exploration was man-centred that, much as their time has been devoted to other themes in the very short history of research into the African past, scholars have begun, just begun, to pay attention to the geographical missionaries in the context of the African milieu in which they operated.[2] Even the film industry has, through television, entertained millions of fans with the theme of African exploration.[3]

The human element of African exploration is the key to a proper evaluation of the geographical missionaries. Their importance and the popularity of their works were not owed primarily to the fact that they had much to reveal to Europe about the uniqueness of the continent's flora and fauna, or the myths and courses of its rivers, or its topographical shapes, or that the explorers had much to reveal of the potential wealth of Africa and the material benefits that could accrue to Europe from its exploitation, or that they had much to say about Africans as exotic, curious, and strange members of the human family. All these elements and more were certainly there, but as far as the geographical missionaries and their accounts were concerned the object of attention was man, both in the context of Africa and of the wider world. Did the explorer find the African in a state of moral filthiness and social anarchy? The reaction of the former was not just to condemn the latter but also to consider what measures he might persuade his countrymen or government in Europe to take to help elevate the allegedly benighted African to what were considered proper moral standards and show him the path to achievement of a stable society. Did he find the African in a state of moral superiority and orderly government? The explorer appreciated such virtues, merely expressing surprise that Africans could be capable of virtues which the white man in Europe or the New World should emulate. Did the explorer find in the African emotions, whims, and caprices, as are common to human societies in all climes and all ages? The explorer paused to philosophize about the oneness and sameness of humanity everywhere. Did the geographical missionary want

to emphasize the technological backwardness of the African and the latter's incapacity to extract the wealth out of the bowels of the soil? The explorer considered how the African would derive advantages from the white man teaching him the techniques of tapping the wealth of his continent for the benefit of mankind, that is in the Dual Mandate fashion.

It is in this crucial realm of human excellence, which in turn produced in him unstinted empathy for, and understanding of, Africans that Mungo Park, the illustrious Scot and hero deserves to be remembered on the world plane and for all time. The first major explorer of Africa in the golden century of the classical unfolding of the continent, with whom this chapter is concerned, deserves to be remembered for reasons other than have been advanced by groups of people in the last century and a half. For mankind, I contend, Mungo Park's importance does not lie in his geographical discovery for which contemporaries adored him; the speculation of the Niger flowing from the west to the east by Herodotus undermined the novelty of his discovery. Neither does his importance lie in the nature and extent of his discoveries; others, notably Heinrich Barth, John Hanning Speke, and David Livingstone who were more favourably circumstanced than he, trekked further and mapped more than Mungo Park did. Nor does Park's importance lie in scholarship; whatever his poetic ability, or the academic disposition which some contemporaries discerned in him, he was a puny figure compared to such explorers as Heinrich Barth, Joseph Thomson, Richard Francis Burton, and Samuel White Baker. In fact the journals for which he is known in libraries, do not owe their literary merits to him, but rather to the racist, Bryan Edwards, to whose spell Mungo Park seemed to succumb. Mungo Park's importance does not lie in the imperial implications of his discoveries—other veritable empire-makers such as Cecil Rhodes, Frederick D. Lugard, and George Taubman Goldie were to paint parts of Africa red. What is more, an empire-maker is bound to have restricted and ephemeral respect rather than universal and eternal respect. Park's importance does not lie in the fact that he has been adored by Scots on the platform of Scottish nationalism: others, among them explorers like

David Livingstone and literary giants like his friend, Sir Walter Scott, share Scottish adoration with him. Moreover this would be reducing Mungo Park to a mere Scottish national figure.

As a person Mungo Park would be a fitting subject for the psychoanalyst. Born into a society which emphasized Christianity, his father intended that this young man, who had the temper and disposition of the minister of the gospel, should choose his career in the Church. But not only did the young Mungo Park, consumed with intense faith in God, refuse to wag his head in a pulpit, he chose the medical profession for which he had no liking whatsoever. Whilst he registered for medicine in Edinburgh he spent most of his time botanizing, a circumstance that may explain the absence of his name from the roll of Edinburgh Doctors of Medicine. Legitimately ambitious and desirous of 'distinguishing myself' and requiring 'a greater name than any ever did,'[4] he was a very shy man who cherished loneliness, far from the madding crowd, and eschewed publicity. Nothing illustrates his self-effacing nature better than his journals in which he would neither exaggerate nor seek artificially to captivate his audience. An off-putting and reticent person, whom the contemporary public could not understand and whose intelligence and conversational ability were undervalued, he was assessed as gifted and very intelligent by Sir Walter Scott, the famous writer, and by Dr Adam Ferguson, a Professor of Moral Philosophy in Edinburgh University, both of whom knew him personally. Mauled by contemporaries who ascribed to him a pro-slave trade sympathy, he held abolitionist opinions but was inexplicably taciturn, refusing to make public his abolitionist views, a situation politically exploited by Bryan Edwards, a notorious supporter of the slave trade.[5]

Mungo Park was never single-minded as to what he wanted to do in life. Between 1799, when the materials on his first journey to West Africa had been sent to the press, and 1804, when the plan for the second journey was on hand, he considered turning a farmer; he hankered after a cushy political position with the British Government;[6] he toyed with the idea of exploring New Holland and China; he

thought of succeeding Rutherford as Professor of Botany in the University of Edinburgh;[7] he hoped to become a broker.[8] A word of two more on the strange character of Mungo Park. To what extent was he money-minded? The evidence is strong that he rejected offers to explore New Holland because the financial reward would be very little. He abandoned professional medical practice in Scotland because he was not making enough money, whilst the financial promise of the Niger exploration project gratified him. Again, although the hazards of the first journey to West Africa had undermined his health, inflicting dyspepsia on him to the extent that he became indifferent to food, yet he chose—a rather foolhardy decision—to return to the continent. Finally it is a mystery that Mungo Park went out on his second journey in the wet season, which he knew only too well to be the worst time of the year to embark on exploration.

Nevertheless, for mankind Mungo Park was a great man, a man of the universe with a universal message for all men, one of the earliest and, in my judgment, the greatest exponent and apostle of the concept of the unity of mankind. This concept is the element of greatness found in explorers from Mungo Park to Joseph Thomson, a special class of students of Africa and Africans on the spot, and the least influenced by anti-Negro prejudices with which innocent whites in contemporary Europe and the New World had been inoculated by doctrinaire negrophobist writers.[9] The African, Mungo Park and his fellow geographical missionaries discovered and recorded, was a member of the human species essentially no whit different from his white counterpart in human terms. Like the white man, the African could be kind or cruel; he had his feelings; he could fight wars in pursuit of ideals; he could be a fanatically religious animal; he could be a racist, believing that the most perfect human being was the African with his black skin and that the white man was a peeled man; like the white man he believed in magic, superstition, and charms. Mungo Park and his fellow geographical missionaries discovered, and recorded, that the African could appreciate and requite kindness by the outsider, that he had commercial skill, that he was not necessarily irration-

ally xenophobic, but was capable of forging harmonious relations with outsiders who were prepared to recognize him as a human equal.

The element of the oneness of humanity, which is the quintessence of the recordings of the explorers of Africa in the century between the inauguration of the African Association and the Berlin West African Conference, is the theme that has eluded students of African exploration. And it is a theme of crucial significance, for Africans and the white races, illustrating in bold relief that there was a time when members of the white race had human understanding of the African with unstinted empathy and scientific objectivity.

It should be repeated that the best tribute we can pay to Mungo Park as an explorer of Africa is in the realm of human understanding. This is not to say that in his career and travels in West Africa he was not a symbol of human excellence in other respects. Consider his himalayan optimism in face of problems that would have sapped the hopefulness and resourcefulness of lesser men. In spite of the inauspicious climatic circumstances of his second journey—which had been postponed for years—he could still record on 26 April 1805 from the River Gambia:

> I know that you [Dr Thomas Anderson] will rejoice to hear that . . . the kind hand of providence has thus far made our journey prosperous. We set off tomorrow morning for the interior, with the most flattering prospect of finishing our Expedition in the course of six months with honours to ourselves and benefit to mankind.[10]

Or consider his quixotic patriotism, though not jingoism, which impelled him to return to the African continent in the hope of giving glory to his country, his stoical fibre, the equanimity, Christian resignation, and philosophic calmness with which he bore his sufferings, and his philosophy of life, that a man's greatness lay in pursuit of sublime renown, even if this could be won only by dying in the flower of youth. Hence his return to Africa where he had suffered oppressive loneliness, where he had been reduced to the status of a slave, the nightmare of which perpetually haunted him, where the danger of his being eaten by lions was very great,

and where his hitherto splendid health had been put on sore trial by the rigours of the climate. This man, Mungo Park, preferred a short life with honour, triumph, and victory in death to a long life with shame and defeat, hence his abandonment of the affection of, and for, his wife and four children for martyrdom in his titanic effort to solve what was to his contemporaries the gargantuan Niger riddle.

Mungo Park was no more than one of a whole legion of explorers of Africa in the century under investigation. But whilst it is true that with variations here and there depending on their different personalities, temperament, and the parts of Africa and the times in which they operated, what has been said about our Scottish celebrity in terms of his sphinx-like resolve to win renown at personal expense as well as in terms of the human centredness of his efforts, would hold true for all of them, the point should be stressed again and again that Mungo Park demonstrated palpably greater charitableness and humaneness towards Africans, and that this fact should put him on a higher ethical plane than Richard Francis Burton, John Hanning Speke, Samuel White Baker, and Henry Morton Stanley. It is beyond dispute that he showed a more dispassionate and less jaundiced attitude towards Africa's cultural heritage than most of his colleagues, a factor which harnessed his understanding of the African and made him, in my opinion, greater than the almost legendary religion-encrusted David Livingstone.

The uniquely unstinted empathy of Mungo Park may be explained to a certain extent by the fact that he was born into an environment not dissimilar to that of the West Africa he knew—an agrarian society by no means sophisticated, distributed into small houses crowded with people, a society and natural ecology not yet dehumanized by technology. Himself a man of plebeian origin, he found relatively easy accord with fellow poor Africans, in marked contrast to James Bruce, a contemporary Scottish explorer who partly because of his aristocratic and affluent background looked upon Africans with contempt, contumacy, and much less sympathy. But it should be added that Mungo Park had in addition a humanitarian disposition as was evidenced by his philanthropic medical ministration in Peebles. Here, according to the

testimony of Sir Walter Scott, Mungo Park would ride five or six miles by night to give free treatment to poor and miserable people.[11]

Partly because they were less endowed with humanitarian instincts and ability to suppress racial prejudices and partly because they lived through the middle of the nineteenth century, when apostles of racism in Europe and the United States turned out a great deal of literature, many of the later nineteenth century explorers in Africa preached the doctrine of the inferiority of Africans and were brusque and swashbuckling whenever they had an opportunity to reveal the baser elements of their being.[12] Thus J. H. Speke dislodged the teeth of an African colleague, Bombay; R. F. Burton, an incorrigibly opinionated and fanatical hater of the Negro race, poured out bitter sarcasm upon Africans; J. M. Stanley lynched Africans with an easy conscience that confounded a negrophobist like R. F. Burton, making use of his large band of followers to bully his way through Africa, chaining, flogging, and hanging Africans.

Nevertheless, the prejudiced views of a few of the explorers who found it difficult to measure up to the standard of charity and humanity so clearly practised by the better ones like Mungo Park, Heinrich Barth, V. L. Cameron, and Joseph Thomson, cannot detract from the value of the accounts and journals they left behind, which accounts and journals reveal delightfully in bold relief the unique human understanding element of African exploration. But before we make observations about the salutary timing of African exploration and about the explorers in the crucial century of excellent and effective dialogue and human understanding in Afro-white relations, a word or two should be said about their unmatched heroism. For the hardships they underwent, the dangers faced, and the difficulties they overcame, for the virtues which must make a man great and which they exhibited—self-control, patient endurance, tolerance, and quest for true knowledge and understanding—the explorers remain unrivalled. As they disappeared into the unknown interior of Africa, shaking off their feet the dust of Europe, they integrated themselves into African society. There was no Jodrell Bank Observatory or tracking station, no Hous-

ton (Texas) control station to follow them in their exploits or rescue them from danger. Indeed news about many of them was not heard for years. James Bruce, the famous explorer of the Blue Nile, had been given up as dead when he re-emerged; Mungo Park was not finally given up as dead until twenty years after the last communication was received from him; anxieties filled the air in Britain about David Livingstone because for a long time no news was received from, or about, him until H. M. Stanley was sent out to locate him. And with the possible exception of H. M. Stanley, none of the explorers made money out of their exertions on behalf of mankind, in spite of personal sufferings and the tragic end of many of them. James Bruce died from a fall from a staircase, his breastbone broken; Mungo Park's body dissolved into the Niger bed somewhere in Nigeria, and in the process of looking for him one of his sons dropped dead from a forbidden tree on the Gold Coast; Frederick Hornemann, a German, disappeared completely in the direction of Nupeland; John Leyland, a Don Quixote American trans-continentalist dreamer expired in Egypt after taking a large dose of vitriolic acid; J. H. Speke had a beetle locked in his ears in East Africa and was killed in England by the discharge of his own gun; David Livingstone had to fight a duel with a lion in the process of which he sustained very serious injuries.

Why is African exploration, rather than the exploration of any other continent, singled out as significant in human annals? The uniqueness of African exploration, it seems to me, consists partly in its timing and partly in the relatively long time-lag between its beginning and its succession by colonial conquest and rule. African exploration began in an age when the humanitarian pulse was quickening in a number of influential people in Europe and when the spirit of enquiry and thirst after knowledge for its own sake became fashionable in European countries. By the last quarter of the eighteenth century sympathy for the downtrodden and oppressed enslaved Africans had gathered momentum, leading to the formation of the Abolition Movement. This corporate expression of Afrophilism was a culmination of the feeling and belief that had been growing in a number of individuals for a century that the African was a human being

who should be understood on the human plane, rather than through the mirror of his inhuman enslaver. Thus in 1673 Richard Baxter lectured his white audience that Africans 'are of as good a kind as you; that is, they are reasonable creatures as well as you; born to as much natural liberty. If their sins have enslaved them to you, yet Nature made them your equals.'[13]

If some people in Europe had doubted the humanity of the Negro and had found it difficult to accept Baxter's view that slave traders 'are fitter to be called incarnate devils than Christians', doubts about the intellectual capacity of Africans began to be removed when slaves of African origin in Europe and the New World began to reveal high-quality minds.[14] There was, for instance, Ayuba Suleiman Diallo, otherwise known as Job Ben Solomon, who was sold to the New World and was redeemed in England by the African Company. Proficient in Arabic, he was introduced to the Duke of Montague who was pleased with his 'genius and capacity'. Or consider Phyllis Wheatley, a self-taught student of Latin and English, in the New World who translated Ovid and had her thirty-nine poems published in 1773 in the collection, *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral*. The poems were rated an incredible achievement. Or take Ignatius Sancho, born in a slave ship bound for the West Indies. Ending up in England, he became a literary luminary and won a wide circle of illustrious literary figures. His *Letters of the Late Ignatius Sancho* ran into five editions. One more example: Wilhelm Amo who left Nzima (on the Gold Coast) about 1707, lived in Holland with the son of the Duke of Brunswick-Wolfenbuttel, later studied and lectured at the universities of Halle, Jena, and Wittenberg where he wrote a thesis and was awarded a citation describing him as '*vir nobilissime et clarissime*'.[15]

The humanitarian climate in which African exploration took place and which was responsible for the high and unexampled degree of human understanding in Afro-white relations has not been repeated since. It deserves more than casual mentioning. Apart from the abolitionist cause, there were great missionary movements which led to the formation of the great missionary societies whose crucial exertions

in Africa have been fairly examined; there was also the founding of Sierra Leone in 1787, to my mind a palpable illustration of genuine altruism and humanitarianism in the history of Afro-white relations.

The point to stress is that the leaders of the humanitarian movements were genuine lovers of mankind in general and of Africans in particular. Moved by the impulse that the African had been misused and misunderstood in the centuries of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, 'the friends of abolition' such as the Duke of Gloucester, William Wilberforce, Granville Sharp, Thomas Clarkson, and Thomas Babington Macaulay formed in 1807 the African Institution. The credo of these Afrophiles was simple: the upliftment of the African was a vicarious and mandatory obligation which the white man should seek to fulfil. This was because, they contended, the African had been misunderstood, misvalued, and treated as if he were not a human being. In their words, 'a heavy debt had been accumulating on all white men to that race whose interests had long been sacrificed to theirs.'[16] A new era of understanding should be ushered in by white peoples, but in particular by the British who in the period of the slave trade had allegedly brought darkness and misery to Africans and had thereby stood in the way of their advancement in the scale of civilization. Henceforth, they opined, Britain 'ought now to interfere, in order to accelerate its progress, and make up for the time formerly lost through her means.' British people should seek to understand the African—not through the pages of anti-Negro literature with which the market was hitherto flooded but through accounts of authentic and true knowledge garnered inside Africa by 'travellers and correspondents'. The altruism and idealism of the African Institution can hardly be surpassed and some of their declarations are worth hearing:

> To promote the instruction of the Africans in letters and in useful knowledge, and to cultivate a friendly connexion with the natives of that continent. To obtain a knowledge of the principal languages of Africa, and, as has already been found to be practicable, to reduce them to writing, with the view to facilitate the diffusion of information among the natives of that country.[18]

There was to be no imperial ambition, no economic gain of any kind for Britain. 'First of all', they proclaimed, 'the African Institution disclaims in the outset all projects of a colonial or commercial nature. It embarrasses itself with no concerns of government—no mercantile speculations—no factories or ports—not even with the possession of a single ship or an acre of land.'

The Association for Promoting the Discovery of the Interior Parts of Africa, otherwise known as the African Association, founded on 9 June 1788 was in a large measure a part of the humanitarian movement in Britain of the last quarter of the eighteenth century. The objectives of this Association, which sponsored exploration to Africa until 1831 when it was incorporated in the Royal Geographical Society, should be clearly grasped. Although the Association was primarily a group of men with scientific interests, it should be stressed that many of them, as many of their supporters, were abolitionists. Moreover, the humane quality of the foundation members and directors of the Association, it has been discovered, was very high indeed.[19] They were liberals and humanists who believed in doing good. In this respect the energetic President of the Association from the early days until his death in 1820, Sir Joseph Banks, was a munificent patron of science and explorers. Aptly described as 'the father of research, the laborious advocate of enquiry and the friend of the adventurous traveller', he was the patron of Mungo Park and he died childless deriving no benefit for himself. Of the members the historian of the Association says, they were of liberal opinion, 'opponents of the war with the American colonies, and supporters of the Abolitionist movement'.[20]

The African Association was impelled by the spirit of enquiry and its members were by and large seekers after knowledge for its own sake in the best tradition of scholarship. Little wonder that the terms of reference given to the explorers they sponsored enjoined the geographical missionaries to be fact-gatherers and keen students of African society, hence the rigorous interview of candidates for exploration, who were expected to widen human horizons and push the frontiers of knowledge ever forward, particularly in

respect of the new sciences of mineralogy, ethnology, and statistics—all of which came into existence in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. The Renaissance-type spirit of the age with which members of the African Association were richly imbued was exemplified in many enthusiasts of exploration. Take for instance John Leyden, an alumnus of Edinburgh university, whose pioneering work on African exploration was mentioned in the first pages of this chapter and who actually offered his services to the African Association in the wake of Mungo Park. A physician and a poet, he spoke Hebrew, Arabic, and Persian, apart from the Scandinavian languages. Transferring himself to Madras as an assistant surgeon, he studied Sanskrit and translated from Persian to Hindustani.[21] Or consider the intellectual effort of the self-made geographer, Hugh Murray. A keen follower of the course of African exploration for half a century, who had entered the Edinburgh excise office as a clerk, he became a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh in 1816. He enlarged and completed Leyden's *Historical Accounts of Discoveries and Travels in Africa*, produced his magnum opus, *Encyclopaedia of Geography* (London, 1834), and became a member of the Royal Geographical Society of London.[22] Little wonder that the spirit of enquiry at the scholarship and erudition level pervaded the works of such explorers as J. L. Burckhardt, Heinrich Barth, and Richard F. Burton.

One other element of the auspicious humanitarian climate of the last quarter of the eighteenth century in Europe, against which the explorers went into Africa, was 'the noble savage' doctrine according to which philosophers, thinkers, and moralists romanticized the being of the African in his primeval state. The African became the ideal human being of utopians who in the romantic view that was becoming dominant in the period were unable to find in their own European community the ideal human prototype. The romantics mythically depicted Africa as idyllically pastoral, a simulacrum of prelapsarian Eden. The simple and self-sufficient regimen of the Negroes approximated to the utopian ideal which was ardently, if vainly, sought after by jaded Western Europe.[23]

In the meantime in the last decade of the eighteenth century the continent to which men of scholarly disposition were prepared to apply their minds and resourcefulness and the subject of abstract idealization by men of letters in Europe, was the least known in the world, in spite of its geographical proximity to Europe; the early colonization of its northern periphery in the earlier centuries of the Christian era by Carthaginians, Romans, and Greeks; the speculations about the continent by Herodotus, Ptolemy, and Pliny; the early knowledge of the eastern coastal areas by the Greeks in the first century and by the Muslims from the seventh century; the circumnavigation of the continent by Vasco da Gama towards the end of the fifteenth century; and the existence for centuries of commercial relations between Europe and the heartland of the African continent.

This is not the forum to go into the reasons for the lateness of African exploration which induced writers to give the continent such epithets as 'The Last of the Continents', 'The Expiring Continent', 'The Hopeless Continent' and 'The Dark Continent'. Whether it was the preoccupation of the whites with the exploitation of the New World and Australia, rather than inability to conquer Africa (in spite of the hostilities of the natives of America and Australia who in a month's warfare in the former killed more white people than ever perished in the whole history of African exploration); whether it was the terrifying climate of the known parts of the continent; whether it was the ignorance of the enormous wealth of Africa;—what is clear is that the average man in Europe had a frightful mental picture of the continent, of its peoples, and of its beasts, a picture which in our day sensation-mongers who describe themselves as journalist-visitors to Africa still love to present to eager innocent readers in some parts of the western world. In popular belief the heart of the continent was considered a furnace, the sun burning there to the point that a white man could be roasted by it; the continent was full of deserts; strange beasts, including gorgons, found their solace there; Africans in the interior must have peculiar forms—perhaps they were wearing tails, perhaps they were living in trees; their society must be uncouth and peculiar. Despite the cart-

ographical achievement of De Lisle in the early parts of the eighteenth century (his main achievement was that he sited Ethiopia on the 10°N latitude, correcting its previous position on the 10°S latitude) the grandest features of Africa were either distorted, or vaguely traced, or left incomplete. So imperfect was the state of knowledge at the beginning of the nineteenth century that in the best charts fully two-thirds of Africa appeared a blank, or, what was worse, chains of mountains and trackless deserts, rivers, lakes, and seas, were laid down *ad libitum*, their course and direction being determined by no other scale or dimension than the mere whim of the map-maker, and many of them having no existence but on paper. Well could Jonathan Swift, the English novelist, be amused by the abysmal ignorance of the white man about Africa that he recorded:

> Geographers in Afric Maps
> With Savage Pictures fill their Gaps;
> And o'er unhabitable downs
> Place Elephants for want of Towns.[24]

The timing of African exploration was Africa's gain. For wellnigh a century, the African continent was explored by a special class of people whose relations with Africans were of the best in the history of Afro-white relations, and whose journals, letters, and recording emphasize in bold relief that they understood, or strove to understand, the African in relation to his milieu. As the explorers tramped the continent, the full force of the news media of the humanitarians was behind them, reporting their geographical achievements but emphasizing as well the responsibility of the white man to the African—how the white man should Christianize the African, induct him in literary education, develop the material resources of the continent for the benefit of the African as of the white man, and transform the African to a 'civilized' status. As will be shown presently, from Mungo Park to Heinrich Barth the relations of explorers with Africans were largely cordial, mutual, and patently of excellent kind. And it should be remarked that the atmosphere in which this cordial relation was taking place was that in which, up to the middle of the nineteenth century, the

humanitarians in Britain eschewed conquest and were primarily concerned with how best to improve the lot of the African.

The point to stress is the intention or motive of the humanitarian supporters of the geographical missionaries and of the latter themselves. Their motive was genuine: they wanted Africans to become like themselves and Africa to be as developed as Europe. That implementation of their excellent wishes would yield bad social and cultural results in some directions is a different matter. The excellence of the spirit and of the Afrophilism in which African exploration began was so palpable that an alumnus of Edinburgh university observed in 1799: 'The close of the eighteenth century ... forms an era in its history, when the researches and transactions of Europeans in that country [Africa] began to be directed by justice, benevolence and the desire of knowledge, instead of avarice and ambition.'[25]

The literature on African exploration in the period under consideration reveals in bold relief that from the last quarter of the eighteenth century to the middle of the nineteenth century there was a class of Europeans, particularly British, who had a much better and more authentic image of Africa and Africans than that depicted by Philip Curtin.[26] The African they encountered, averred the explorers, was a human being who possessed characteristics essentially similar to those of a white man. In the words of Mungo Park: 'whatever difference there is between the Negro and European in the conformation of the nose and the colour of the skin, there is none in the genuine sympathies and characteristic feelings of our common nature.'[27] The African had feelings, emotions, and prejudices; he could be vain or meek; he loved to be respected and honoured; he had in a great measure self-pride and self-dignity; he evolved his own moral laws, value-systems, and ideas which he believed were best for himself and which he would not change for alien ones, except at the point of the bayonet; he had his own views about human creation and about other peoples.

On the level of human understanding of the African, the explorers discovered that, like the white man, he could be hostile or hospitable, charitable or avaricious in his dealing

with strangers, but whichever the case not without what he considered sound reasons; he was contented with his milieu in which his ancestors had lived, had moved, and had had their being; he had his religion which he believed—and which he had the right to believe—was the best for himself; he could be fanatical about his religion, though he was hardly ever so fanatical to the scale of his European counterpart in the seventeenth century. Like the white man, the explorers discovered, the African could be culturally ethnocentric, believing that his customs and institutions were the best in the world. He could be a racist, believing that God created man black. Thus the wives of Ali, the sovereign of Ludamar who oppressed Mungo Park in a special way, counted the explorer's toes and fingers to ascertain that he was a human being;

> in Fattecunda the wives of the ruler were amazed at the whiteness of my skin and the prominency of my nose. They insisted that both were artificial. The first, they said, was produced when I was an infant, by dipping me in milk; and they insisted that my nose had been pinched every day, till it had acquired its present and unnatural conformation.[28]

Thus in Kukia, Bornu, the sight of Major Denham's skin created 'curiosity and alarm—one little girl was in such agonies of tears and fright at the sight of me, that nothing could console her.'[29]

The African, the explorers were able to understand, was neither a simpleton nor an easy bargainer: he was instinctively suspicious of the white man, insisting on probing the motives behind the white man's intrusion into Africa before giving him a whole-hearted welcome. He was industrious, a good businessman, and master of his rudimentary technology. Like white men, the explorers were able to understand, Africans were political animals, fiercely involved in power politics, forming states and forging states into kingdoms and empires; they nursed political ideas and concepts; they evolved administrative techniques and constitutions which did much credit to their inventive genius and which were undeniably suitable for the communities for which they were intended. They were astute diplomats in relations betwe

themselves as they were to be astute diplomats in their relations with white intruders. Africans fought among themselves, not because they were more brutal than other peoples, but because, like their European or American contemporaries, they cherished ideas and aspirations which have haunted man from time immemorial—patriotism, chauvinism, independence, rejection of alien domination, the desire to possess sources of wealth owned by other people, megalomania, the desire to rule other peoples or impose one's religion over another people. There were efficient intriguers; there were ambitious individuals who emerged as heroes; there were good and bad men.

These human characteristics which the geographical missionaries discovered that Africans shared with the rest of mankind and which seem self-evident to present-day professional scholars, were denied to Africans in the literature before and after this crucial century of African exploration. The prejudices of the pre-exploration literature on Negroes are sufficiently well known not to require any comments. It suffices to say that this body of literature was not based upon empirical data and that the status of slaves in which the white man knew the African for centuries only reinforced the prejudices. Nor do we need to pause long on the deliberate, but logical, refusal of the white man to seek to understand the African in the post-African exploration period. The scramblers for Africa were not fact-finders like the geographical missionaries; the colonial masters were not interested in understanding Africans, whom they assumed to be a lesser class of human being than the white. There was no question of the colonial rulers recognizing that Africans had legitimate feelings, emotions, and ideas that they cherished. The hands of the clock were put back. In place of the human understanding of Africans by the explorers was an enthronement of the principle of Might constituting Right.

The selfish and deliberate misunderstanding of the African began with the invasion and conquest of the continent in the last years of the nineteenth century. Thus the invaders misunderstood the African when the latter, like any other human being, decided to fight for the fatherland and his cultural heritage: the African came to be labelled as a grossly

superstitious bloodthirsty resister of the forces of 'Civilization' which the white man was determined to unleash in Africa. When the African refused to pay tax to a colonial government he had never prayed for, or when he burnt down the white man's courts where the African believed injustice was being dispensed, or when he reacted violently against what he considered oppressive laws which asked him to dig salgars or asked him to bury the dead in the bush, rather than in houses—the white colonial ruler labelled him as an incorrigibly ineducable ingrate who could not appreciate the elements of 'progress' and 'civilization'. When the African rejected the white-established Church in favour of another geared to the African milieu, he was labelled a renegade and a baser being for whom the credo of Christianity was too high. In the light of the inhuman misunderstanding of the African by colonial rulers, scholars of colonialism should take note that the writings of the apostles of the colonial system are among the greatest distortion of the African image in literature.

The human understanding of the African by explorers can be explained by the circumstances in which they collected their facts. Unlike present-day travellers, often journalists, who jet through Africa more in weeks than in months and yet claim expert knowledge of Africans, the explorers travelled on foot, moved very very slowly from one place to another, usually sojourning for days, weeks, or months in important places at the wish of African rulers. Shaking off the dust of Europe, the geographical missionaries became willy-nilly respecters of the laws and customs of Africa; they realized they were in an entirely new world in which were operating social, political, and moral dynamics different from those of contemporary European society. To move from one place to another the prior consent of the ruler was absolutely essential. The traveller's movements were regulated in detail. And usually, partly because some rulers wanted to use explorers for their own ends, partly because of political tension with neighbours and the length of time it might require to obtain the consent of the ruler in the next town or State, or partly because the explorers were running into exchange problems, or partly because climatic condi-

tions compelled sojourning in a place for months, the explorers were compelled to share the companionship of their African colleagues and put out detailed questionnaires to their hosts. To an extent no other set of white intruders was ever to do, the explorers were forced to use their faculties in detail as they moved from place to place.

This is not to say that the explorers had a total and comprehensive understanding of African society which, like all human communities, was very complex. They were not researchers, as such; they were not equipped for such an enterprise. The weeks or months they had to study a community could not be enough to penetrate a society deeply. And even if they were equipped researchers and were willing to study a community for years, they could not have understood much of society, for Africans did not accept these white intruders as members of society who should be allowed unrestricted access to the laws, norms, and the customs and institutions of society. Hence the limited nature of the revelations of the explorers which were neither as comprehensive nor as accurate as the physical geographical information they gave. And it should be repeated that the explorers did not go to Africa primarily to explore the African; their primary mission was to explore the continent. To explore the African would have involved longer and sustained investigation of the African's psychology, cosmology, thought-patterns, political ideas, religion and philosophy.

Nevertheless, in their casual and amateurish way, the intellectual response of the explorers to the African milieu and society was great and many-sided. Thus as they moved from place to place and from one people to another, their discerning intellect assessed the tale an old Roman inscription had to tell, judged the height and observed the physiognomy of peoples, compared the morphology of one language with that of another, watched closely the behaviour of the local chiefs, noted the misfortune befalling white ants, studied the planning of towns, appreciated the medicinal properties in plants, mapped trade routes, and collected economic data. As Mungo Park said, 'I had a passionate desire to examine into the productions of a country so little known, and to become experimentally acquainted with the

modes of life, and character of the natives.'[30]

In their human understanding of the African the first law the explorers learned in the interior was his determination to be the master of his own house. To this end he was determined that his laws should be obeyed and his culture respected. Therefore the explorers became conformists, ate the people's food, gratefully shared their shelter, learned to speak their language, and were solicitous about the well-being of the rulers, whose authority the explorers had to recognize and respect. Not only did the explorers learn that they must refrain from advocating ideas offensive to the communities into which they had intruded, they also learned that they must conform to the codes of behaviour of the society in which they found themselves. There was no question of the explorer being a bully, who could bludgeon a chief to submit to his wishes. In relation to the rulers the explorer was warned about his social inferiority and was made to appreciate that he was granted interviews as a matter of privilege. Quite often he was reminded that he was before his superiors. Mungo Park was warned in Medine that he should never attempt to shake hands with the king, and in Fattecunda that he should remove his sandals before appearing before the king.[31] In the state of Bagirmi, south-east of Bornu, Heinrich Barth was assailed for sitting on a carpet, thus arrogating to himself the status of a dignitary which he did not possess in that country.[32]

The explorers understood the human rights of Africans to assert their independence, preserve the integrity of their fatherland, and demand that aliens or intruders who desired to be welcome must recognize these facts. There was no condemnation of Africans, in the way the scramblers and conquerors were to do later, for behaving in a way in which in similar circumstances white people would behave. Every human community, the explorers realized, has its legitimate moral, social, and political susceptibilities which it behoves outsiders to recognize and respect in order to achieve harmonious relations with the community. The explorers demonstrated human excellence and human understanding when they recognized this fact. Thus, although he was a convinced Christian, Mungo Park consented to the perfor-

mance of *juju* rituals to ensure the success of his journey; he became a charm-maker as the only way in which to satisfy Muslim hosts who insisted on having *gri gri* and as the only way to earn his livelihood at some point during his first journey.[33] In order to make himself respectable in the Muslim society of Western and Central Sudan, Heinrich Barth adopted Muslim dress and took the name Abdel Karim (Servant of the Merciful). In Kukawa the German explorer participated in the Muslim Eid-el-Fitr festival, imitating the Kanuri by appearing in his best clothes. Richard Lander knew that an understanding of the Badagrians was an absolute necessity if he was to be allowed to proceed beyond Badagry to the Niger. And having understood their disposition and social laws, which were at variance with the English social system, Lander had to behave like a Badagrian. Coming from an English society where individualism was becoming a virtue and taciturnity a respectable habit, Richard Lander found himself among a gregarious people who held the view that a sane man should not be lonely or wish to be lonely; that he must be demonstrably mirthful and sociable; that he must accept with good grace all visitors, no matter what time of the day, and participate zestfully in discussion. Though by nature of a melancholy disposition, Richard Lander had to submerge himself into the happy and bustling Badagrian life, leaving the following vituperation for his English audience:

> Had Job, amongst his other trials, been exposed to the horrors of an interminable African palaver, his patience must have forsaken him. For my part, I am of the opinion that I shall never be a general favourite with this ever-grinning and loquacious people. If I laugh, and laugh I most certainly must, it is done against my inclination, and consequently with a very bad grace. For the first five years of my life, I have been told that I was never seen to smile, and since that period Heaven knows, my merriment has been confined to particular and extraordinary occasions only. How then is it possible that I can be grinning and playing the fool from morning to night positively and sweltering at the same time under a sun that causes my body to burn with intense heat, giving it the appearance of shrivelled parchment?[34]

The human understanding of the African by the explorers cannot be explained only in terms of the humanitarian climate in Europe and the circumstances in Africa to which we have so far addressed ourselves. There was as well the personal factor, namely that, by and large, they were very fine characters of noble minds disposed to perceive facts as they were, rather than as prejudiced anti-Negro literature would have predisposed them to believe the facts were. They were fine specimens of human beings resolved to purge themselves of whatever prejudices had been fostered by such literature about the African and his society. They therefore saw the African as human not only in respect of the vices, but also in respect of the virtues, in his community. To this end Africans were seen in some ways as architects of high moral systems, judicial organizations, constitutions, and governments, law and order, which these explorers did not hesitate to compare rationally with European customs and institutions. Indeed these explorers discovered and acknowledged that in certain respects the white man had things to learn from Africans, just as the latter had to learn from the former.

Hugh Clapperton who travelled through the western periphery of Yorubaland in the third decade of the nineteenth century, at a time when in industrial Britain the penal law was severe because theft had become endemic in his country, could not refrain from commenting on the absence of theft and avariciousness in this part of Africa. He was astounded by the fact that the porters, usually days ahead of the explorers and who could have escaped with the luggage, did not become avaricious, despite the tempting glittering European articles they were carrying. Moreoever the absence of the vice of covetousness among the simple ordinary plebeians, Clapperton was constrained to observe, must be taken as evidence that Yoruba society was orderly; that their government was efficient; that laws were not only made but obeyed in the Ciceronian fashion, and that the Yoruba were gifted with very high moral fibre. In Hugh Clapperton's words:

I cannot omit bearing testimony to the singular and perhaps

> unprecedented fact, that we have already travelled sixty miles in eight days with a numerous and heavy baggage, and about ten different relays of carriers without losing so much as the value of a shilling public or private; a circumstance evincing not only somewhat more than common honesty in the inhabitants, but a degree of subordination and regular government which could not have been supposed to exist amongst a people hitherto considered barbarians.[35]

Indeed Clapperton discovered more: women in contemporary Britain were garrulous; Yoruba women were equally endlessly loquacious. Listen to Hugh Clapperton again:

> Humanity, however, is the same in every land; government may restrain the vicious principles of our nature, but it is beyond the power even of African despotism to silence a woman's tongue: in sickness and in health, and at every stage, we have been obliged to endure their eternal loquacity and noise.[36]

The African whose virtues and common humanity with the rest of mankind were expostulated upon by the explorers was not a whit different from that person encountered by the white conquerors. But did the latter ever perceive and acknowledge that the African peoples, upon whose heads fire and sword were being brought in the era of conquest, had a civilized government or high moral laws or orderliness? Did the conquerors show the finer traits of man which the explorers had and applied in their relations with Africans? Were the white successors of the explorers ever to see in themselves arrogant and racially sentiment-laden provokers of Africans, whom they refused to understand before they condemned and conquered?

The capacity of the African to appreciate and reciprocate kindness towards fellow Africans as well as towards non-Africans, in the spirit of one kindness begetting another, is a very important facet of the human understanding of the African exemplified by the explorers. How many times was Mungo Park hungry and destitute, that he had to be taken care of, usually by women and the lowly in society, a phenomenon which this explorer used to put the lowly in Africa and Europe on the same human plane—'knowing that in Africa, as well as in Europe, hospitality does not

always prefer the higher dwellings'.[37] In 1791 Major Houghton, an earlier explorer of the Niger, had to pay tribute to the African family whose members nursed him out of fever.[38] And it should be remarked that Africans showed solicitude and humanitarianism to the explorers, a group of strangers, whose country they never knew; that they sheltered, fed, joked with and made happy this set of destitute strangers from whom they expected no reward. The eternal gratitude of the explorers to the African Good Samaritans is best presented in the words of the Scottish protagonist of human understanding himself. Said Mungo Park:

> It is impossible for me to forget the disinterested charity, and tender solicitude with which many of the poor heathens (from the Sovereign ... to the poor women who received me at different times into their cottages when I was perishing of hunger) sympathised with me in my sufferings; relieved my distresses; and contributed to my safety.[39]

Contrary to the false picture and distortion of the African which the white successors of the understanding explorers—the conquerors—were to use to justify their imperialism, that Africans were xenophobic, Africans were not only hospitable to outsiders but were kind towards one another as well. They were not perpetually at war with one another. And when they were at war, it was not a question of war for its own sake but for achievement of nobler ends. Why should the white man picture Africans as being at enmity with one another for its own sake, asked Mungo Park. Was it not logical that a people—Africans—who were kind to those they had never seen, should even be kinder to each other? He declared:

> It is surely reasonable to suppose that the soft and amiable sympathy of nature which was thus spontaneously manifested towards me, in my distress, is displayed by these poor people as occasion requires, much more strongly towards persons of their own nation and neighbourhood, and especially when the objects of their compassion are endeared to them by the ties of consanguinity.[40]

As Houghton reported, the inhabitants of Barracounda spontaneously threw open their houses to thousands of the

natives of Medine whose houses went into flames.[41] Or note the ethical principle which Mungo Park observed about the Feloops: 'they display the utmost gratitude and affection towards their benefactors; and the fidelity with which they preserve whatever is intrusted [sic] to them is remarkable.'[42]

The explorers revealed human understanding of the African in respect of other aspects of human life. Thus the existence of a judicial system, by no means inferior to what obtained in contemporary European society, was clearly acknowledged, even when the system was not a carbon-copy of the Western European type, or was the product of Islamic religion, or of African traditional religion. In this respect let us fall back on the first of the major explorers, Mungo Park, and his scholarly scientific understanding of the legal system among the Mandigoes. Notwithstanding his sufferings among Muslims and notwithstanding his preference for Christianity, he was able to describe the procedure for achievement of justice among his religious enemies. The functioning of the legal system and the skill of the lawyers, Park discloses, were not different from what one would see in Europe. In his words:

> This frequency of appeal to written laws, Koran and Sharia, with which the Pagan natives are necessarily unacquainted, has given rise in their palavers to (what I little expected to find in Africa) professional advocates, or exponents of the law, who are allowed to appear and plead for plaintiff or defendant, much in the same manner as Counsel in the law courts of Britain. They are Mohammedan Negroes, who have made, or affect to have made, the laws of the Prophet their peculiar study; and if I may judge from their harangues, which I frequently attended, I believe that in the forensic qualifications of procrastination and cavil and the arts of confounding and perplexing a cause, they are not always surpassed by the ablest pleaders in Europe.[43]

The explorers were at their best when they did not just identify the vices in African society—and vices were many—but when they also recognized that these vices were not peculiar to Africans. In a rather exceptionally scholarly fashion the explorers explained these vices to their European audience, to enable the latter to understand the African in relation to those vices. Hence the refusal of the explorers to describe the

religious disposition and contempt of Muslims for infidel intruders (the explorers themselves) as fanaticism or bigotry. Rather they appreciated the fact that they were very well received by Muslim rulers and were offered the hand of friendship. Thus when a Muslim escort around Kano compared the mentality of an infidel to that of an ass, Clapperton appreciated that from the Muslim's viewpoint his prejudice was fully justified;[44] when Sultan Bello of the Sokoto Caliphate was very suspicious of the motives behind the Clapperton, Oudney, and Denham Niger Expedition, and reminded one of the explorers about the religious wars between infidels and Muslims in Europe and the Mediterranean Basin, his point was well taken.[45] It was only in the era of conquest that the Muslim in the Western Sudan came to be misunderstood and labelled as an incorrigible bigot, an unreasonable being who allegedly had never been provoked by the white conqueror and yet became a fanatical hater of the infidel.

Consider the understanding of theft among the Mandigo demonstrated by Mungo Park with which he intended to educate his countrymen that, placed in circumstances similar to those in which the Mandigo began to steal, the Englishman would also steal. Unlike the Yoruba in whom, it will be remembered, Hugh Clapperton found no thieving propensities, there were elements among the Mandigo for whom the exciting manufactured and superior goods of the white intruders were irresistibly tempting. The appearance of such articles introduced a new element to Mande society. For the Mande community, as other pre-colonial African communities, was far more egalitarian than any communist society that has evolved in human history. It was a society in which no one had excessively too much or was abjectly poor. Diet, clothing, and shelter remained essentially the same with slaves as well as with masters. There was not the kind of money-economy that could create a class of very rich peoples, no influx of sophisticated European goods and styles as yet to widen the gap between the haves and have-nots. In such a society there was little room for avarice.

However the introduction of new kinds of goods was a

different thing, and as explorers took along with them clothes, guns and other materials that aroused the curiosity of Africans many of the latter were anxious to have such goods. It speaks well for the orderliness and honesty in the traditional setting that explorers were not very much plundered. But as in every human society there were some Africans who could not resist the impulse to steal such articles as were new to their experience. There was an additional factor in Mande society: as Muslims they felt that it was legitimate to plunder infidels, thereby using religion to give expression to a vicious instinct. The result was that Mungo Park was robbed several times by some of them. This explorer did not go out of his way to condemn the entire Negro race or Mande tribe as thieves. In fact he would not even condemn the individuals who had robbed him; he merely explained their action in relation to the circumstances, whilst educating his audience that the white man would steal in similiar circumstances. Said Park:

> Before we pronounce them a more depraved people than any other, it is well to consider, whether the lower order of people in any part of Europe, would have acted under similar circumstances with greater honesty towards me. It must not be forgotten, that everyone was at liberty to rob me with impunity; and finally, that some part of my effects were of as great value in the estimation of the Negroes, as pearls and diamonds would have been in the eyes of a European. Let us suppose, a black merchant of Hindostan to have found his way into the centre of England, with a box of jewels at his back; and that the laws of the kingdom afforded him no security; in such a case the wonder would be, not that the stranger was robbed of any part of his riches, but that any part was left for a second depredation. Such, on sober reflection, is the judgment I have formed concerning the pilfering disposition of the Mandigo Negroes towards myself. Notwithstanding I was so great a sufferer by it, I do not consider that their natural sense of justice was perverted or extinguished; it was overpowered only, for the moment, by the strength of a temptation which it requires no common virtue to resist.[46]

In the history of Afro-white relations what other class of white people sought to understand, and understood, the

African in relation to the rest of mankind in this way? In what other class of literature could one find a scientific view of the African in relation to his milieu in this way? What other kind of literature would emphasize that in the white man's country there was the beam in his countryman's eye where the latter would see only the mote in the eye of the African in Africa? One may press the point home further. How many scholars of Africa today can explain, or have sought to explain, the human nature of the African in the way Mungo Park did in relation to theft? How many social anthropologists have succeeded in getting to the depth of the human nature of the African, and have seen this nature as essentially the same with the human nature of other peoples or branches of the human race? How many people in Europe today would not steal if they were sure that no policemen were around or that they could not be eventually caught, if there were say half a million pounds to grasp?

The high quality of the human understanding of the African in relation to his milieu is further revealed in bold relief by their recordings on the institution of slavery. Whilst they were pro-abolition in their personal views, they were able to understand that the institution of slavery had its place in pre-colonial Africa, that its existence did not mean that Africans were more vicious or callous or less human than peoples whose social and economic systems had annihilated slavery, and that any human community in the context of the Africa they knew would have institutionalized slavery. In this respect the misrepresentation of Mungo Park by leaders of abolition as a lover of the slave trade, or as an opponent of the abolitionists in his days, should be removed once and for all.

There was hardly any visitor to the interior of the African continent who studied society and the position of slaves in relation to the economic life of Africa, who did not express the view that the African was practising slavery as an economic necessity, irrespective of the existence of the trans-Saharan or trans-Atlantic slave traffic. The economic factor was the *primum mobile* of this all-important institution, thriving in settled communities possessing the following economic characteristics—an agrarian economy, a limited

and unsophisticated material taste, a rudimentary, if any, mechanized transportation and communication system, a cumbersome currency, a sort of handicraft industry, and very low, if any, level of technology. Mungo Park's opinion, based on empirical data, was that an end to the trans-Atlantic slave trade would not put an end to human trafficking in Africa:

> If my sentiment should be required concerning the effect which a discontinuance of that commerce would produce on the manners of the natives I should have no hesitation in observing that, in the present unenlightened state of their minds, my opinion is, the effect would neither be so extensive or beneficial, as many wise and worthy persons fondly expect.[47]

Obviously the humanitarian zealots in nineteenth century Britain were not aware of the relative humaneness of slavery in Africa and of the much better behaviour of African masters to their slaves. They had before them perpetually the nightmarish horrors of the slave trade in which the white man took the leading part and of the inhuman treatment of slaves recapitulated in such literary works as *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. The picture in contemporary Africa was quite different. Speaking of the humaneness of slavery among the Mande, Mungo Park observed: 'In all the laborious occupations ... described, the master and his slaves work together, without any distinction of superiority'.[48] Masters were hardly ever harsh to their slaves and in many places masters did not consider it disgraceful to eat with their slaves. In 1823 Denham found the slaves in Bornu being treated 'always like the children of the house, and corporal punishment is a rare occurrence among them'.[49] In Kano, Clapperton noticed that slaves 'always appeared much happier than their masters; the women, especially, singing with the greatest glee all the time they are at work'.[50] Of slavery among the Hausa generally Heinrich Barth recorded: 'The slave is generally well treated, is not overworked, and is often considered as a member of the family'.[51]

So excellent and penetrating were the minds of the explorers that in some ways they anticipated scholars of Africa in their discernment and understanding of the social, political, moral, and religious systems and their functions

and purposefulness in African traditional society. And it should be remarked that the alleged absence of such systems worth speaking of was one of the excuses for the white man's conquest of Africa. Take, for instance, the matters of religion and constitution which the explorers strove to understand and whose knowledge of which was a marked contrast to the deliberate criminal ignorance of their successors, who denied that Africans had a religion or a constitution fit for human society. The worst epithets were coined for African traditional religion. The African was alleged to be absolutely void in religious ideas and spiritual concepts. But the explorers, who were invariably convinced Christians who wished to see Africans converted to Christianity, knew from casual acquaintance that the African was a religious animal and that his religious system was not as fragile, or invalid, or illegitimate, as it was generally believed, and that it deserved the attention of students who were not unlikely to see in it elements hitherto ascribed to Christianity alone. Hence the following observation of Mungo Park's:

> Some of the religious opinions of the Negroes, though blended with the weakest credulity and superstition, are not unworthy of attention. I have conversed with all ranks and conditions upon the subject of their faith, and can pronounce, without the smallest shadow of doubt that the belief of one God and of a future state of reward and punishment is entire and universal among them.[52]

Imagine what benefits would have been derived by Africans and white men if Christian missionaries in Africa had attempted to understand these and other aspects of African traditional religion; imagine the conflicts and misunderstanding that would have been avoided in Afro-white relations if the religion of the Africans had not been dismissed with levity by the conquerors and colonial governors as 'pagan' or 'fetish'!

And take the arbitrary and jaundiced view of armchair writers on African governments in the nineteenth century that African rulers were totalitarians or despots. African communities, it was abstractedly believed, were incapable of rational and democratic constitutions. In the language of a

very casual visitor to the West African coast in the early nineteenth century in respect of the Dahomian constitution, the Dahomian monarchy was 'the most unlimited on the face of the earth'.[53] All explorers and travellers who cared to examine how African communities were governed, knew only too well that the white man could claim no superiority or greater ingenuity at constitution-making than African communities. In relation to their political, social, and economic aspirations, Africans governed themselves as well as any other people; the constitutions they devised for themselves, in response to local conditions and exigencies—constitutions that were by no means fixed quantities—were believed by Africans to be best for them. Constitutions were many, varying from one community to another, but possessing monarchical, conciliar, sacerdotal, oligarchic, and democratic elements. Unmitigated totalitarianism, which has never existed anywhere at any age in human annals, never existed in Africa. There were checks and balances. What Mungo Park saw and said of the Mandigo about the way they governed themselves applied essentially to African communities in the precolonial era.

> The Government in all the Mandigo states is monarchical. The power of the sovereign is, however, by no means unlimited. In all affairs of importance the king calls an assembly of the principal men or elders by whose councils he is directed and without whose advice he can neither declare war nor conclude peace.[54]

There are other aspects of the understanding of the African by the classical explorers of the century under consideration to which attention could be focused, but a consideration of these aspects would take too long. However, if only to persuade you to keep longer in your mind Mungo Park, a keen student of human understanding and a balanced and fair judge of others, we should have a glimpse of the understanding of the African exhibited by him in hazardous conditions when he suffered very badly in the hands of such individuals.

No better example offers itself than Mungo Park's analysis of Ali, the Muslim ruler of Ludamar, in whose hands he suffered in a special manner. Not only did Mungo Park's health decline irretrievably, but years after he had escaped

from the clutches of his Muslim enslaver his psychological dread of his master never disappeared.

Ali was one of the very few African rulers in the era of African exploration whose hostility to white intruders was extreme, in the name of his sovereignty and the territorial integrity of his kingdom. Unlike other unfriendly rulers, whose hostility to the white intruders did not go beyond refusing them food and shelter or escorting them out of their domains, Ali treated Mungo Park with every conceivable ignominy and inhumanity that can never fail to evoke pathos in readers of that part of his journals. For Ali caused him to be captured and converted to a slave. Mungo Park was forced to live in the same room with a hog; he was fed inadequately once a day; he was considered as a sub-human unqualified to drink water in a bowl; he was starved of water; he and two cows had to drink together in a pit! He was in chains, frequently ridiculed and jeered; he was spat upon.[55]

Other explorers in Mungo Park's position, for example such people as S. W. Baker, R. F. Burton, and H. M. Stanley, could not have endured such a gruesome experience in the hands of Africans for whom they had implacable contempt. Had they escaped such an experience, which required infinite patience which they never had, they would have painted the most macabre picture of Ali as a uniquel wicked man without compeer in other parts of the world, a sadist who found pleasure in inflicting unspeakable pain on an innocent white man.

Mungo Park, who survived the ordeal with his infinit patience, would not exaggerate Ali's viciousness or regar him as an exceptionally wicked man. Rather he explained h relations with Ali from the latter's viewpoint, and recogniz his merits as a ruler! From Ali's viewpoint—our hero w prepared to understand—Mungo Park deserved all t treatment meted out to him. What right had this white m to trespass on his domain? Did Ali invite him to Africa? W Mungo Park not a spy? And there was the fact that, in A eyes, Mungo Park was not a human being: his skin unnatural and his eyes looked like a cat's. There was, course, the unforgivable crime that the explorer was

infidel definitely believed to be inferior to the faithful. Was Mungo Park not an illiterate, in the sense that he could neither write nor speak Arabic, the only language which Muslims believed was worth knowing? To Ali's anger his white slave, Mungo Park, was useless in Ludamar society: he could not kill and dress a hog; he could not even shave the head of a small boy with a razor. How could Ali be friendly towards this white intruder who was also a dabbler in magic? For Ali quivered before Mungo Park's compass which went on pointing in the same direction, no matter how much Ali turned it.

Indeed Mungo Park went beyond understanding Ali from the latter's viewpoint. He also understood that his powerful master was after all a human being. For strong as he was, Ali, like other great and powerful figures in history, was under the spell of a woman whose influence over Ali was a godsend to Mungo Park. Moreover, like Benito Mussolini who was a great believer in charms, Ali was superstitious, seeing magical properties in the compass. Ali was not even a completely bad man. He took great care to preserve the explorer's effects against thieves. Above all in his domain he was a popular ruler, loved and feared.

One more illustration of the innate goodness and nobility of heart with which Mungo Park was able to achieve such human understanding that is a crying need today in international relations: at the height of his exploration career, when he saw the majestic Niger flowing from west to east in Segu, Mansong, the king of Segu, gave the order that this white man should not cross the river to see him. It was a time when others would have been very dejected and might have made a foolhardy attempt to seize victory when an African ruler was robbing him of it, by crossing the Niger and forcing his way on and on up the river. In a needy state, when he would have slept in a tree with an absolutely empty stomach, it was a woman who sheltered and fed him, composing in the process the song of pity which a Duchess in this country turned into music. Rather than pour a tirade on Mansong, Mungo Park appreciated that much as this ruler might have wished to welcome him he could, and should, not do so in defiance of his counsellors who had grave doubts about the object of

the white man's mission. These counsellors, and perhaps Mansong as well, found it difficult to believe that Mungo Park had no motives besides 'exploring' a river which Africans knew and did not believe required 'exploring'. Nevertheless Mansong remained magnanimous and kind, resolved as he was to fulfil himself as a Good Samaritan to a fully needy fellow human being. As Mungo Park put it:

> I was, at first, puzzled to account for this behaviour of the king; but from the conversation I had with the guide, I had afterward reason to believe that Mansong would willingly have admitted me into his presence in Sego; but was apprehensive he might not be able to protect me, against the blind and inveterate malice of the Moorish inhabitants. His conduct, therefore, was at once prudent and liberal. The circumstances under which I made my appearance at Sego, were undoubtedly such as might create in the mind of the king, a well warranted suspicion that I wished to conceal the true object of my journey. He argued, probably as my guide argued: who, when he was told, that I had come from a great distance, and through many dangers, to behold the Joliba river, naturally inquired, if there were no rivers in my own country, and whether one river was not like another. Notwithstanding this, and in spite of the jealous machinations of the Moors, this benevolent prince thought it sufficient that a white man was found in his dominion, in a condition of extreme wretchedness, and that no other plea was necessary to entitle the sufferer to his bounty.[56]

By showing human understanding of the African, the explorers avoided or resolved tensions and were able to obtain full co-operation from Africans. As the latter perceived the humanity of the explorers, they began to reciprocate; they began to seek knowledge about the white man. Was he living on land or in water? Was his country as beautiful as Africa? Did he have any religion? Was he blessed with slaves in his society? How many wives had each white man? He must be a very poor man indeed, to be pitied, if he had no slaves and was a monogamist.

Once confidence begat confidence Africans began to perceive the technological superiority of the white man and to ask the latter for guns or clothes, or to repair watches or give them special kinds of medicine to increase their libido. The

advisability of co-operation between Africans and the white man was clearly perceived by both sides and positive efforts were made by Africans, in response to commercial offers by the white man on the basis of equality. Indeed in some cases so great was the confidence of Africans in tested and proven explorers, that the white man's opinion was sought on political, diplomatic, and military problems within the continent.

The result of the mutual understanding between Africans and the explorers was the absence of war between them. The absence of mutual human understanding between peoples and between nations has been from time immemorial the bane of mankind and the cause of wars. What kind of world would emerge if the message of the explorers of Africa were accepted and made the touchstone of behaviour and relations between peoples? The world is yet to learn that cultures differ; technological levels differ; there are two sides to issues which make two peoples quarrel and if both genuinely and patiently seek to understand each other's views, it would be clear that no one people is ever absolutely right or absolutely wrong; all the peoples of the world belong to one single human race and have a common nature; in every human community there are good and bad men, the humble and the arrogant; there are as well the ethnocentric and the liberal-minded, ideological and religious bigots and so on.

The oneness of mankind and the basic unity of human history are the message which Mungo Park and his fellow explorers of the classical century of African exploration have for us. They are saying to us that on the level of humanity Africans and non-Africans are no whit different from one another. This is the credo for which they would like to be remembered. In the words of Heinrich Barth in respect of his recorded human understanding of the peoples of western Sudan:

> If, in this respect, I have succeeded in placing before the eyes of the public a new and animated picture, and connected those apparently savage and degraded tribes more intimately with the history of races placed on a higher level of civilization, I shall be amply recompensed for the toils and dangers I have gone through.[57]

Today, thanks largely to the efforts of the historians of Africa, the credo of Mungo Park and his exploration colleagues about the oneness of humanity has been resuscitated. In this respect I would like to record the appreciation which the world of scholarship owes to British historians in the last two decades and to the University of Edinburgh in particular, where a strong tradition of understanding of the African has existed since the last quarter of the eighteenth century. One cannot but be impressed by the long list of African celebrities who have studied in this University with gratitude to the British sense of love and humanity—J. A. B. Horton, Bamidele Ọmọniyi, and Julius Nyerere, to name a few. The only regret that must be expressed is that the audience commanded by the historian of Africa is very small indeed, hardly comparable to that of the news media. One can only hope that the perception of the unity of mankind, the oneness of humanity, which Mungo Park had to an unrivalled degree, would one day become a possession of an increasing number of influential directors of human affairs. After all, do the Scots not have the Mungo Park credo in one of their aphorisms, 'We are all Jock Tamson's bairns', and did Robert Burns, another famous Scot, not say:

> It's comin yet for a' that,
> That man to man, the warld o'er
> Shall brothers be for a' that.

NOTES

1 From the variety and voluminousness of works on African exploration which abound in the Africana sections of libraries one is bound to be impressed by the large audience of admirers enjoyed by the explorers. And it should be remarked that the works of such explorers as Park, Barth, Burton, and Nachtigal were translated into several European languages.

2 See Robert I. Rotberg (ed.) *Africa and its Explorers (Motives, Methods and Impact)*, Harvard, 1970.

3 During the autumn of 1971, BBC 2 presented a six-part series entitled 'The Search for the Nile', and BBC 1 have produced a still larger and more lavish series on explorers in general.

4 National Library of Scotland, Acc. 3463, Mungo Park Papers, Mungo Park to Alexander Park (his brother), 20 May 1794.

5 Bryan Edwards wrote a racist book, *The History, Civil and Commercial, of the British Colonies in the West Indies*, 2 volumes, London, 1794.
6 Mungo Park Papers (MS 9609), Mungo Park to his wife, 10 January 1800.
7 John S. Roberts, *Africa and African Travel and Adventure* (n.d.), p. 618.
8 Mungo Park Papers, Mungo Park to Dr Anderson, 10 November 1804.
9 The best account is Philip Curtin, *Image of Africa (British Ideas and Action 1780-1850)*, London, 1965.
10 Mungo Park Papers (MS581), Mungo Park to Dr Thomas Anderson, 26 April 1805.
11 *Ibid.*, Walter Scott to Editor of Park's Journals, 24 April 1815.
12 See the portions on these explorers by various authors in Rotberg, *op. cit.*
13 Richard Baxter, *Christian Directory*, quoted on p. 18 of Theophilus Vincent, 'Changing concepts of the Negro in English Literature with special reference to the period 1700-1807', unpublished PhD thesis, Ibadan University, 1967.
14 For details see Vincent, *op. cit.* pp. 134-90.
15 S. Tenkorang, 'British slave trading activities on the Gold Coast in the 18th century', unpublished MA thesis, London University, 1964, last chapter.
16 The African Institution, 1809, 3rd Report, p. 494.
18 *Ibid.*, p. 496.
19 Robin Hallet (ed.), *Records of the African Association, 1788-1831*, London, 1964, p. 14ff.
20 *Ibid.*
21 *Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford, 1917, vol. 11.
22 *Ibid.*, vol. 13.
23 See Oliver Goldsmith, *The Traveller*, London, 1888.
24 Jonathan Swift, *On Poetry: A Rapsody* II 177-80.
25 John Leyden, *Historical and Philosophical Sketch of the Discoveries* . . . , Edinburgh, 1799, p. 2.
26 Curtin, *op. cit.*, pp. v-vii in which he acknowledges his approach, namely that British ideas about Africa and Africans were bad throughout the period of his investigation.
27 Mungo Park, *Travels in the Interior District of Africa:* vol. 1, *Travels in 1795, 1796 & 1797*; vol. 2, *Travels in 1805*, London, 1816, p. 80.
28 *Ibid.*, p. 42.
29 E. W. Bovill (ed.), *Missions to the Niger*, vol. 2, *The Bornu Mission 1822-25*, part 1, Cambridge, 1966 (published for the Hakluyt Society), p. 266.
30 Park, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 2.
31 *Ibid.*, p.52.
32 Heinrich Barth, *Travels and Discoveries in North and Central Africa*, London, 1855, vol. 1, pp. 380-1.

33 Park, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 2.
34 R. and J. Lander, *Journal of An Expedition to Explore the Course and Termination of the Niger*, London, 1832, vol. 1, p. 11.
35 Hugh Clapperton, *Journal of a Second Expedition into the Interior of Africa from the Bight of Benin to Soccatoo*, London, 1829, p. 13.
36 *Ibid.*
37 Park, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 177.
38 *The European Magazine*, September 1792, p. 189.
39 Park, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, pp. 256-7.
40 *Ibid.*, p. 257.
41 *The European Magazine*, September 1792, p. 189.
42 Park, *op. cit.*, vol.1, p. 15.
43 *Ibid.*, pp. 18-19.
44 Denham, D., Clapperton, H., & Oudney, W., *Narrative of Travels and Discoveries in Northern and Central Africa in the years 1822, 1823 and 1824*, London, 1826, Appendix, p. 75.
45 *Ibid.*
46 Park, *op. cit.*, vol.1, p. 255.
47 *Ibid.*, p. 290.
48 *Ibid.*, p. 279.
49 Denham, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 334.
50 *Ibid.*, p. 54.
51 Barth, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 151.
52 Park, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 267.
53 John McLeod, *A Voyage to Africa with some Account of the Manners and Customs of the Dahomian People*, London, 1820, pp. 37-8.
54 Park, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, pp. 17-18.
55 *Ibid.*, pp. 120-52 for details of Park's sufferings.
56 *Ibid.*, pp. 195-6.
57 Barth, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, Preface, p. xv.

2

Dr Heinrich Barth as a Diplomatist and Philanthropist

A cursory glance through the massive literature on Africa by the explorers of the so-called classical period[1] reveals in bold relief a great contrast between the white man in pre-colonial Africa and the European in the colonial period. The colonial administrator, Africans in this generation have witnessed, was the imperious master, at times a bully, the law-giver, a sort of demi-god whose presence imposed fear on traditional rulers and awe on the communities. Also, to a great extent, the white man in the colonial days ordered the political, economic, and social life of African communities, substituted his language for the traditional ones, and paraded his religion, values, concepts, customs, and institutions as models for Africans to copy.

In contrast was the white man in the pre-colonial era, an intruder as far as Africans were concerned. In Heinrich Barth's words he was 'no better than a slave'.[2] Finding himself in environments, societies, and circumstances often uncongenial to him, he had to become a conformist, eat the people's food, gratefully share their shelter, learn to speak their language, and be solicitous about the well-being of the African rulers whose authority he willy nilly recognized and respected. His movements were regulated in detail; he could not go from one place to another, except with the permission and protection of his hosts; not only must he refrain from advocating ideas offensive to the communities into which he had intruded, but he must learn and conform to the codes of behaviour of the societies in which he found himself. There was no question of his being a bully who could bludgeon a

chief to submit to his wishes. Even though he did not approve of their customs and institutions and entertained unfavourable opinions about the nature and degree of their civilization, he dared not condemn them until he was safely out of the continent.

It can hardly be overstressed that the European intruder was not regarded as an equal, much less as a superior. This was why in the state of Bagirmi, south-east of Bornu, Heinrich Barth was put in his place when he sat on a carpet, thus arrogating to himself the status of a dignitary which he did not possess in that country.[3] If by nature the intruder was phlegmatic like Richard Lander, he had no alternative to assuming a vivacious mood in a society that was largely convivial;[4] if he was an infidel, and because of this was deliberately made a room-mate with a hog, as Mungo Park experienced near Bambara,[5] he dared not complain; if he should make the mistake of borrowing anything from his hosts and in return for this kindness be compelled to spend his time repairing watches, as Overweg, one of Barth's companions, was forced to do in Bornu, he knew it would be dangerous to protest.[6] The European intruder had no choice but submit to such treatments as have been mentioned because he was completely at the mercy of his African hosts; the slightest act of misdemeanour or miscalculation could cost him his life.

In the circumstances of pre-colonial Africa then—that of the white man's helplessness, loneliness, and the contempt in which he was held[7]—the intruder became necessarily a pragmatist, and in that sense a diplomatist. Considering the disturbed political situation of the Western and Central Sudan in the middle of the nineteenth century, the naturally suspicious disposition of African rulers—by no means simpletons or easy bargainers—and the complexities and anxieties of human relationships with which the European explorer had to contend, Barth must be regarded as an astute diplomatist.

THE DIPLOMATIST

Heinrich Barth had a number of personal qualities that aided his resourcefulness as a diplomatist and contributed to the

success of his hazardous mission to Central and Western Sudan. He enjoyed excellent health which survived the burning heat of the plains of Bornu, the humid months in Timbuktu, the mosquito attacks of the Niger valley, the fever and rheumatism that harassed him in Yola, and the dysentry that prostrated him in Sokoto. In this respect he was more fortunate than his colleagues—Richardson, Overweg, and Vogel—all of whom succumbed to the rigours of the Sudan climate.

Perhaps Barth's greatest asset as a diplomatist was his almost infinite patience which made him bear difficulties with uncommon courage and philosophic calmness. To a very great extent he was the master of circumstances; there was no instance when he lost his temper in the face of provocations and disturbing experiences, such as the few occasions when he was refused a shelter, or was given peremptory orders to leave particular towns, or was being openly cheated by an indispensable member of his staff, or was put in chains. Even in the most trying circumstances Barth adopted a philosophic attitude, deliberately looking around him for things from which he could derive pleasure in order to alleviate the pains he was suffering. Take for instance the humorous description of the army of black ants which bore holes into his clothes, unseated him from his chair, attacked him fiercely and destroyed his food in Masena, capital of Bagirmi. The 'relentless war' which he fought with the foraging ants was only an additional bitter experience to the unconcealed hostility of his hosts, the flood that had threatened to raze his hut, and the imprisonment he had suffered. Yet this resilient traveller found amusement in the battle that was waged between the red ants and white ants and discerned 'a beneficial effect' in the 'hostile attacks' of the black ants on men and their grain stores![8] Or consider the healing effects which geographical phenomena had on him after he had been expelled from Yola in a state of extreme weakness, 'a very severe fit of fever', and had fainted twice. All these seem to have disappeared as he perceived in a Wordsworthian manner the beauty of the outskirts of Yola after a heavy downpour. He wrote: 'the country appeared to me much more beautiful now than when we

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> being sure that, if obliged to trace my steps, I might do so with safety.

Perhaps more than other explorers in Africa Barth used material goods for diplomatic purposes. Carefully selected goods could evoke the goodwill of African rulers and people. But it must be emphasized that the African recipients did not see themselves selling their (independent) sense of judgment to the foreigners making gifts. For them, exchange of goods was customary as a symbol of friendliness between one person and another. It should be remembered that gift-making was not a one-sided affair, and that African hosts often returned such gestures with materials of much higher value than they had received from the intruders. This is not to say that African hosts had no interest in obtaining European articles whose novelty caught their fancy and which were in many respects superior to indigenous wares. It was the duty of the diplomatic explorer to know the taste of various African hosts and thereby obtain maximum co-operation, goodwill, and succour from them. In this respect Barth was shrewd in the selections he made for the rulers of the Central and Western Sudan. In matters of clothing the Sudanese had for centuries adopted Muslim dress and would hardly have appreciated European attire. Except for a few printed calicoes and shawls, Barth selected Muslim garments made in the Arab world for the rulers. The most expensive and most highly valued materials were various classes of burnous lined with silk and gold lace. When he learned that from the western half of the Sokoto Caliphate as far as Timbuktu it was the excellent cloths of the Nupe and Kanawa that commanded prestige, he bought them in enormous quantities for the potentates of these areas. Barth perceived the passion of the Sudanese for scents. It was his habit to give the rulers frankincense, scented soap, and cloves, apart from such glittering European wares as gilt cups, silver-mounted German mirrors, knives, and needles. In order to predispose people to give him information, he was very liberal in the distribution of gifts, mostly shawls, caftans, and needles; in Kukawa daily cups of coffee for informants produced the desired result.

As should be expected in the disturbed political situation

of the Central and Western Sudan the gift most coveted by the rulers was the gun. Fearing that it might be dangerous to present firearms to people who could be driven by events to use them against him, he gave out firearms very sparingly. In fact there were only one or two occasions when he presented pistols to his hosts, in spite of the persistent demand for firearms by the rulers. Barth was aware that in the last resort weapons of precision were the last means of defence he had with him and in many instances his threat to use them on hostile people warned off potential assailants.[12] Next in importance in obtaining a warm reception from rulers and people was the white man's medical skill, often exaggerated by Africans. Barth's pretensions to medical skill went a long way in winning the favourable countenance of hostile rulers and the affection of people. In Bagirmi his medical skill was believed to be powerful enough to restore vigour to old, decrepit people, whilst in Katsina blind animals were brought to him for healing. Barth made it his deliberate policy to heal people free of charge.[13]

One example of the successful diplomatic use of both material goods and medical skill was afforded by Katsina during Barth's first visit there in 1851. His coming into the town aroused some apprehension in Mohammed Yerima, the Emir. This was because Barth's two companions, Richardson and Overweg, respectively, had gone to Bornu and Maradi, two States with which Katsina was not on friendly terms. It was natural that the Emir should doubt that Barth was a disinterested visitor. Therefore the Emir decided to detain him and send him to the Sultan of Sokoto, rather than allow him to go on to Kano and Bornu. Barth began to wear down the opposition against him by making gifts to Bel Ghet, the most powerful man after the Emir. Fortunately for Barth this man's eye got swollen and required a lotion from the German explorer. After further flattering, this man became useful and used his influence on the Emir. The Emir too needed medical attention. In addition to two fine caps of printed calico, scissors, and frankincense, he was offered epsom salts, quinine powder, tartar emetic, acetate of lead, and drops of laudanum. Although the Emir's disposition became genial after receiving these gifts and Barth thereby

achieved his main objective—permission and protection to proceed to Kano—yet the Emir became less friendly when Barth could not grant him two requests which he believed the German explorer could fulfil. These were medicine that would increase his sexual capacity and rockets that would frighten away his enemies.[14]

However, gifts alone would have been of little value in the diplomatic relations of African potentates and European intruders. The latter could not approach the former except through African intermediaries, whose services had to be employed by the intruders. These intermediaries, or 'mediators' and 'advocates', as Barth chose to call them,[15] had to be men of position and substance in society, people well known in the localities in which they were to mediate. Their presence with the European intruders reduced the suspicion in which the latter were held. At times their knowledge of the road, of the caprices of particular rulers, of the mood of particular communities, of the etiquettes of courts, and of devices that could overcome particular obstacles made them of the highest value for explorers of Africa. These mediators were of different characters and to use them to the fullest capacity required great tact, patience, and liberality in expense on the part of the explorer.

In order to retain the services and loyalty of his servants and mediators Barth made it a condition of employment that they should not be paid their salaries until after the successful end of his mission. Mohammed el Gatroni, a native of the Fezzan, his most faithful servant who accompanied him for most of his mission, was employed on a salary of four Spanish dollars per month with a promise of fifty dollars as bonus after the successful completion of the mission. Abd-Allehi, a Shuwa from Kotoko, accompanied him to Bagirmi and Timbuktu on a salary of two Spanish dollars a month and a bonus of twenty dollars at the end of his contract. He was a 'pious' Muslim—'a useful link between myself and the Mohammedans'.[16] Mejebri Ali A'geren, an Arab and a native of Jalo, was employed on more generous terms: he was to receive nine dollars every month and be allowed to trade on his own account. He was to be a mediator who would be of 'extraordinary assistance in overcoming many

difficulties'.[17] Without the good offices of Eleaji, a Kelowi Tuareg and a prosperous salt trader between Asben and Kano, Barth's difficulties in Katsina would have been greater than they were. In Kano both Eleaji and Sidi Ali, sons of a former Sultan of Fezzan, served as unpaid mediators between Barth and the Emir of Kano.

The crucial importance of the human factor in Barth's diplomatic manoeuvres is best illustrated in the services rendered to Barth by El Walati from Libtako to Timbuktu. El Walati was a clever Arab well known to the Tuareg inhabitants between Libtako and Timbuktu, and he was a very important person in Timbuktu and an intimate friend of Sheik El Bakay, the paramount ruler of the town. Barth had no alternative but to put himself under his protection, at enormous expense. He gave El Walati a fine black robe and a black shawl and promised to reward him, on safe arrival in Timbuktu, with a present of twenty dollars and a white helali burnous, besides buying him a horse. Although he was not a congenial companion, Barth would have been killed by the fiercely Muslim Tuaregs but for the device concocted by this dignitary. Hostile Tuaregs were disarmed by the disguise of Heinrich Barth as 'a great Sherif', that is a direct descendant of the Prophet Mohammed and therefore a sacred person with plenty of *baraka*, the celestial unction which, it was believed, could confer great blessings on the true believers.[18] The deceived Tuaregs became hospitable and begged for blessings from the Sherif! Barth, a convinced Christian, had on one occasion to say the *fat-ha*, the opening prayer of Muslims.

Barth's resourcefulness as a diplomatist did not suffice for all occasions. After all, as the German explorer himself observed, African rulers were diplomatists in their own way. There were instances when the most dispassionate expression of disinterestedness, the most exciting gifts, and the most skilful African mediators, could not win entirely the affection of the African rulers. The latter had to give priority to the security of the state. Hence his warm reception in Bornu notwithstanding, neither Bornu nor Yola overcame the suspicion that Barth had intruded into their territories for reasons other than scientific and geographical. In

Bagirmi, Barth was believed to be a Turkish spy. His journals were seized and all the scholars of the State were summoned to go through his recordings in order to testify to their professed harmlessness. The Sultan of Bagirmi believed that this German intruder was a sorcerer.[19] This belief became current when rain refused to fall every time Barth looked out to see from what directions thunderstorms came. The people came to believe that he had command over the clouds. As Barth put it, the people believed that 'as soon as I looked at the clouds with a certain air of command they [the clouds] passed by without bringing a single drop of rain'.[20]

Barth was not on all occasions a diplomatist. He would have been more than a mortal if in a space of over five years, amidst all kinds of difficulties, his skill as a diplomatist never once deserted him. In his behaviour in Yola, Barth was demonstrably undiplomatic. Apart from the fact that to a certain extent his chances of success in Yola were affected by the boundary dispute between Yola and Bornu, Barth was believed to have intruded illegally and was asked to go away until he could produce a letter of recommendation from either the Sultan of Turkey or the Sultan of Sokoto. This off-putting manner of Mohammed Lawal, the Emir of Yola, was by no means unusual. Indeed in Katsina, Bugoman, and Bakada greater problems than that posed to Barth in Yola had been dealt with successfully. For reasons not clear from his accounts Barth lost control of the situation. He was not immediately asked on arrival to leave, and appropriate gifts to the Emir might have worn down the hostility against him. A pistol was likely to have altered the disposition of the Emir. The latter provided an excellent opportunity by sending the precious gifts of two slaves and a horse to Barth in expectation of the gifts the explorer had hinted he had for the Emir. Barth spurned the gestures of the Emir and refused to make any gifts. In the meantime Barth had offended the people of Yola by refusing to say the *fat-ha*, after he had been prayed to do so. In the circumstances he was ordered to leave Yola 'instantly'.[21] After the event Barth regretted that he had been so 'obstinate' in not repeating the *fat-ha*.

Perhaps never during his exploration travels was Barth as ndiplomatic as when he made his humiliating excursion into agium. In a sense he entered the country illegally, without e formal approval of the authorities of the State. It is not urprising that his reception was very cold and became rogressively more hostile. He added one indiscretion to nother when he naïvely thought that he could go out of the ountry without being put on trial and awarded due punishment for his illegal entry. He was apprehended when he tried o escape and was put in chains for four days before an nfluential friend secured his freedom.[22]

In concluding this estimate of Heinrich Barth as a diplomatist it is important to mention that it was not his astuteness as a diplomatist that saved him from the peril that hung over him in Timbuktu, but the disinterested friendship of the Sultan there, Sheik El Bakay.[23] Once his identity as an infidel was known in the city his life was threatened from several quarters. The Tuaregs would have been glad to kill him; in the city, Hamadi, a rival of Sheik El Bakay, demanded Barth's head and Taleb Mohammed, the wealthiest merchant in the town and leader of the intriguing merchants from Morocco, began to plot against him. Above all Shekko A'hmedu ben A'hmedu, Sultan of Masina, under whose sway Timbuktu had fallen since 1826, ordered that Barth should be killed. El Walati believed that Barth's end was inevitable and he began to plot against Barth, in the hope that his property would at his death fall into his hands. Only Sheik El Bakay stood between Barth and death and he staked his office, his army, and his material possessions to protect the German traveller. After eight hectic months the Sultan succeeded in making it possible for Barth to go to Sokoto under his protection.

To sum up: Dr Heinrich Barth was a gifted and successful diplomatist, in circumstances in which lesser explorers might have failed. But in considering the factors that made him so successful, his genius as a diplomatist must not be emphasized to the exclusion of the hospitality of his African hosts and the disinterested friendship of many individuals to whom the German explorer himself paid deserved tribute.

THE PHILANTHROPIST

Barth cannot be regarded as a philanthropist in the vein of Fowell Buxton or William Wilberforce or even James Richardson, the originator of the Central African Mission in which Barth played the most significant role. Unlike these classical humanitarians, he joined no humanitarian organization such as the Anti-Slavery Society; he never addressed credulous gatherings on issues on which humanitarians were wont to arouse the passion of their listeners; he never spilled ink in pamphlets on the slave trade, slavery, and castration, the customs and institutions of the Central and Western Sudan of which he disapproved. As far as is known he was content with writing about the slave trade to the British Consul in Tripoli and with discussing this traffic 'energetically' once with the British Prime Minister, Lord Palmerston.[24] It is clear from his accounts that Barth gave the quest for geographical, scientific, and historical knowledge an overriding priority over issues a detailed study of which would have quickened the humanitarian pulse in England and Germany.

Nevertheless, in several respects, Henry Barth was a philanthropist. Deep in his heart he hated the slave trade and the institution of slavery; he commiserated with the unprivileged in Central and Western Sudan society; he believed in the superiority of Christianity over Islam, and would have loved to see flourishing in the Sudan the three Cs of the humanitarians—Christianity, Commerce, and Civilization.

It was the philanthropic impulse in him that determined his unscholarly and prejudiced attitude to the institution of slavery and the slave trade. Of course it has to be remembered that Barth witnessed the atrocities of slave hunts which involved the destruction of farm products, arson, and the coldblooded butchering of old captives in Mandara and the Musgu countries. Consequently he came to see in slavery 'the principal cause' of the 'speedy overthrow of all the Islamic dynasties and empires that had ever flourished'.[25] Had he attempted to study the rise and fall of Islamic States, he would have discovered that in many ways slavery contri-

buted to the progress, the stability, and the military strength of those States in many phases of their existence; that in the Sokoto Caliphate itself the slaves who occupied key posts in the courts and in the administration were a source of strength rather than of weakness; that the causes of the decline of Islamic States, indeed of all States, were to be found in other factors. Barth was, like most philanthropists, a visionary when he expostulated on the necessity for paid labour in the Sudan without considering the political, social, and economic upheavals which such a revolutionary action would bring into the area. In later years colonial administrators who studied closely the institution of slavery recognized its virtues and the hardship that a hasty abolition would bring upon slaves and masters alike.

Barth was prepared to believe, like the other humanitarians of his age, that the wars that were going on between one State and the other, between one people and another, were primarily due to African proclivities for slave hunting. He even went to the extent of claiming that slave hunts were organized whenever a ruler ran into debt.[26] We know that, as in other contemporary societies in the world, the causes of inter-State wars in the Sudan were largely political, and that slave catching was no more than a concomitant of these wars. It was a contest for supremacy that was largely responsible for the wars that occurred between the larg states of Bornu and Wadai; it was the natural desire t extend their boundaries and sovereignty at the expense c weaker and less united societies that made Bornu wage wa against the Musgu and the Bedde.

Barth testified to the humaneness of slavery in Norther Nigeria in particular. 'The quiet course of slavery has ve little to offend the mind of the traveller; the slave is gene ally well treated, is not over-worked, and is very often cons dered as a member of the family.'[27] Nevertheless, witho investigation, he described the institution as 'baneful a pernicious', on the alleged grounds that slaves were deni the liberty to marry and procreate and that the only way which the large numbers of slaves were maintained was slave hunts.[28] It is known from the records of earlier a later visitors to the Sudan that inter-marriage was frequ

and that it was in the economic interest of masters to encourage their slaves to marry.

Like all humanitarians Barth wanted the slave trade in the Sudan to be abolished by the encouragement of legitimate trade between the peoples of the territory and Britain, through the Lower Niger. Up to the time he was exploring the Sudan, American ships were sailing up the Niger to the Nupe kingdom and exchanging their wares mostly for slaves from all parts of the Sudan. In Barth's opinion Britain must endeavour to stop this by flooding the Sudan with manufactured goods which the people would have in return for the cultivation of such crops as cotton, indigo, vegetable butter, ivory, rhinoceros' horns, wax, and hides.[29] Barth directed the attention of Haj Beshir, the vizier of Bornu, to the abolition of the slave trade in Mediterranean Africa by Muslim rulers and to British attempts to negotiate abolition treaties with the rulers of Dahomey.[30] Another practice, itself connected with the institution of slavery, which Barth wanted abolished was castration in which north-eastern Nigeria specialized. As a rule only about ten per cent of those gelded survived the cruel operation. Those who survived were the eunuchs very much in demand in North Africa and the Levant. 'The abolition of this practice in the Mohammedan world ought to be the first object of Christian governments', declared the explorer.[31]

Barth would have liked to see parts of Northern Nigeria colonized by peoples he believed could achieve the abolition of slavery and hasten the commercial development of the country. He believed that the Adamawa province was an ideal site for colonization by liberated Africans from Sierra Leone. He wanted Europeans to settle in 'the most favourable tract of the country inclosed by the Kwara, the Benuwe, and the river Kaduna'. He was emphatic about this. 'This is the only means to answer the desired end [civilization of the Sudan]; everything else is in vain.'[32]

Although Barth was a convinced Christian and he made it his habit to carry his Prayer Book with him, he was not a Livingstone to proselytize among peoples who never failed to impress him with their strong commitment to Islam. In many places he was persuaded to abandon his faith for

Islam. He did not consider it out of order to present the Shehu of Bornu with an expensive Koran, nor did he have qualms about reciting Muslim prayers. He was aware that the situation in the Sudan was not one in which he could proselytize, or even parade his religion. In Bornu he was warned that no attempt should be made by intruders to bring with them two things—the Holy Bible and spirituous liquor. As far as missionary activity in the Sudan was concerned Barth remained a realist, in contrast to James Richardson who did not perceive the futility and foolhardiness of missionaries attempting to propagate Christianity in the Sudan.

NOTES

1 Cf. Margery Perham and J. Simmons, *African Discovery*, London, 1942, p. 24.
2 H. Barth, *Travels and Discoveries in North and Central Africa*, 5 vols., London, 1858, p. 367.
3 *Ibid.*, pp. 380-1.
4 R. and J. Lander, *Journal of An Expedition to Explore the Course and Termination of the Niger*, London, 1832, vol. 1, p. 11.
5 C. Howard and J. H. Plumb, *West African Explorers*, London, 1955, p. 109.
6 Barth, vol. 2, p. 20.
7 Particularly in Muslim territories.
8 Barth, vol. 3, p. 397.
9 Barth, vol. 2, p. 496.
10 Barth, vol. 5, p. 511.
11 Barth, vol. 2, p. 15.
12 Barth, vol. 4, p. 303, also p. 444.
13 Barth, vol. 3, pp. 364-5.
14 Barth, vol. 1, p. 468.
15 Barth, vol. 4, p. 9.
16 Barth, vol. 4, p. 8.
17 *Ibid.*, p. 11.
18 *Ibid.*
19 Barth, vol. 3, p. 416.
20 *Ibid.*, pp. 377-8.
21 Barth, vol. 2, p. 496.
22 Barth, vol. 3, p. 361.
23 Barth, vol. 4, p. 458ff.
24 Barth, vol. 2, p. 134.
25 Barth, vol. 3, p. 397.
26 Barth, vol. 2, p. 189.

27 *Ibid*., p. 151.
28 *Ibid*., p. 152.
29 Barth, vol. 3, p. 233.
30 *Ibid*., p. 132ff.
31 Barth, vol. 2, p. 290.
32 Barth, vol. 3, pp. 365-6.

3

Traditional Rulers and Missionaries in Pre-Colonial West Africa

Christian missionary endeavour was nothing new in West Africa in the nineteenth century. As early as 1471 Pope Sixtus IV had assigned the Christianization of the Atlantic seaboard of West Africa to the Archbishop of Lisbon. Nor was Christian religious penetration attempted from the coast only. Evidence is being collected that there were Christians in several parts of Northern Nigeria in the seventeenth century and that a Roman Catholic Bishop was appointed for a Bornu mission in the first decade of the following century.[1]

These early missionary activities were not entirely devoid of religious, cultural, and political results. In 1518, that is more than three hundred years before Samuel Ajayi Crowther became the first African Anglican Bishop, Dom Henrique, a prince of the Old Kingdom of Kongo, was consecrated a Bishop of the Catholic Church. A century later Domingos I, an Itsekiri prince who had been educated in Christian theology for eight years in Portugal, ascended the throne and encouraged the spread of Christianity among his subjects. A native of the Gold Coast, by the name of Philip Quaque, had by the middle of the eighteenth century obtained a BA from Oxford University, thereby becoming the first West African graduate from a British university. Politically the decision of Agonglo, king of Dahomey from 1789 to 1797, to embrace Christianity offered by Portuguese missionaries climaxed his unpopularity: a woman in his palace assassinated him.[2]

However, these earlier efforts were a mere feeble rehearsal for the activities of Christian missions in the nineteenth

century. In the earlier phase missionaries were few and far between, support for them from Europe was erratic, the climate was too severe for their health, the political situation along the coast was extremely unstable, the African rulers were apathetic, if not hostile, to Christian doctrine and, being masters in their own house, they would not allow European penetration into the interior.

But by the second half of the nineteenth century the atmosphere in Europe and West Africa had in many respects become more congenial for missionary propaganda. The great missionary societies, which began to come into being in Europe and the United States from the end of the eighteenth century, had enormous financial and human resources to deploy in the territory; though still dreaded, the climate of West Africa ceased to be the white man's irresistible killer. Moreover missionaries were no longer alone in their wish for a moral and social regeneration of West African society. In commercial and political agents, whose number multiplied progressively in the century, they had companions, sympathizers, and collaborators. By 1900 Christendom could boast of having in West Africa no less than twenty-nine missions, 518 foreign missionaries, 2,538 African auxiliaries, nearly 2,000 churches and stations, and almost a quarter of a million converts and adherents.[3]

And yet, seen in relation to the human and financial investment of the Christian missions, this achievement—made mainly in the coastal enclaves within the reach of the gunboat—was disappointing. Why did the walls of West African pagandom fail to collapse like those of Jericho? Of the many obstacles that deterred the missionary effort, by far the greatest was the opposition of the chiefs to the religious, political, and social concomitants of missionary propaganda. It is in this sense that the relation of the Christian missions with traditional rulers is an important facet of nineteenth century African history, thereby enabling us to understand African-European relations from the African viewpoint.

In their attitude to missionaries the traditional rulers of West Africa may be divided broadly into two categories. The first group consisted of the chiefs who were instinctively alarmed at the appearance of a people who had not been

invited and whose presence, it was feared, might disturb traditional political and social life. The second category consisted of chiefs who initially welcomed, or even hankered after, missionaries, in the hope that these foreigners would prove a political and economic asset. By 1869 the two groups had begun to close ranks: the erstwhile patrons of missionaries were already regretting their contact with the patronage of a band of foreign teachers who not only failed to fulfil the purpose for which they had been invited, but whose activities began to threaten their sovereignty and subvert the existing order. So exasperated did the traditional rulers become that, but for the military threat against them by such secular agents as the British consuls in the Niger Delta, the French naval officers in Porto Novo, and the British governors on the Gold Coast, missionary propaganda would have been completely banned by West African traditional rulers.

Why did some rulers at the outset welcome missionaries and why did others reject them? To take the latter half of the question first, in some parts of Yorubaland many chiefs and people believed that missionaries, in their capacity as white men, belonged to the world of spirits because their skin was white and therefore, in the thinking of traditionalists, unnatural. It was for this reason that the Ijẹbu were so horrified at the sight of James White, a CMS missionary, that they sacrificed goats, sheep, and fowls to appease the gods who were believed to have been offended by the white man's presence on Ijẹbu soil. In fact the Awujalẹ, the paramount ruler of the Ijẹbu people, had so much contempt for the supposedly inferior European that he swore never to defile himself by shaking hands with him.[4] It was African contempt for the white man that made the Asante troops who in 1869 captured Ramseyer and Khöne, two Basel Evangelical missionaries, ridicule their captives as 'spirits' closer to the society of horses than that of men.[5] It is an irony that in the middle of the nineteenth century, the very time when racist writers in Europe and America were propagating the pernicious doctrine of the organic inferiority of the Negro race, several chiefs and people in West Africa were holding the view that white peoples were not proper members of the

human species. As a missionary at whose sight many people took to their heels, in the belief that they had seen a goblin, put it: 'No philosophical ethnologists ever doubted the proper humanity of Africans more sincerely than some of the Africans doubt ours'.[6]

Part of the belief that the white man was of the world of spirits was the idea that he was a harbinger of evil as well. In many parts of Yorubaland several traditional rulers refused contact with missionaries because, according to a missionary, it was widely believed that famine or destruction or a calamity of some sort would be the lot of any town or settlement that welcomed missionaries. Consequently many of the traditional rulers refused to allow missionaries to pass through their towns.[7]

In areas of West Africa such as Dahomey, Opobo, and Ijẹbuland, which enjoyed relative internal tranquillity, high organization, and elements of strength, the rulers wanted no intrusion from outside. They believed that missionaries would be a liability rather than an asset, a source of weakness rather than an agency of strength and stability. For instance King Gezo of Dahomey, in whose reign from 1818 to 1858 the kingdom of Dahomey reached the height of its power, was convinced that his ability to rule and his mastery of the art of statecraft in his country were the best for his State. He did not believe that Queen Victoria was his superior, and considered that he, not she, was the master of the white people in his country. He confined European activities to the coast and administered European residents effectively through the *Yevogan* and the *Chacha* in Ouidah. To assert his supremacy over the white residents he made it obligatory for them to witness in Abomey the annual 'customs', the gruesome human sacrifice part of which was particularly offensive to white people's moral and social values. It was unthinkable that Gezo would brook a potential rival like a missionary in his capital, although he was not opposed to their activity at Ouidah among the African repatriates from Brazil whom he did not regard as genuine Dahomians. King Jaja, ruler of Opobo from 1870-87, was convinced that no good could emanate from the missionary. He was opposed to the introduction of Christianity into Bonny in

1864 and when he had founded his own kingdom he informed even the white traders that he would never require their 'advice' and that they should never stay overnight in his State. Throughout his reign he refused to have missionaries in Opobo and did all in his power to oppose Christianity in the Niger Delta.[8] Ademiyewo, the Awujalẹ of Ijẹbu-Ode from 1851-86, too, saw Ijẹbu-European relations only in purely commercial terms and he did all he could to persuade his neighbours, the Ondo, the Ẹgba, and the Ibadan, to drive away the missionaries and their wards, the educated Africans, from their midst.[9]

There is abundant evidence in the records to sustain the fears of several traditional rulers of West Africa that the missionary was a threat to their authority. The missionary, it should be stressed, was not a servant or a rival but, in a sense, a master of the chiefs in whose domains he was operating. He claimed a revealed and higher religion, superior to that of the rulers' traditional religion. This implied that he was the religious superior of the chiefs whom he sought to turn into acolytes. Even when chiefs refused to acknowledge the missionary's alleged spiritual superiority, their supremacy and prestige could hardly be sustained by the emotional and over-zealous denunciation of traditional religion, customs, and institutions of the society by many of the missionaries. In season and out of season the zealous missionaries dinned into the ears of the chiefs loud complaints of their supposed lost and miserable condition by their attachment to traditional religion, social habits, and even innocent conventional usages.

It was only natural that the chiefs were provoked by condemnations of their customs; the language employed came to be regarded as abusive and insulting; their pride was wounded. There is no doubt that many of the missionaries were in a hurry, looking for a harvest without tillage. In the eyes of the missionary's followers, hitherto loyal and faithful subjects of the chiefs, loyalty to the new religious head was counted as surpassing, if not effacing, that to the chiefs and community. It was fear of losing their prestige that made many chiefs of Yorubaland and Asante inform the missionaries they patronized that their subjects should not be

converted to the Christian faith or initiated into the mysteries of reading and writing.

Indeed the insubordination of the missionary's acolytes became the constant complaint of the traditional rulers in all the enclaves of the Atlantic seaboard where missionaries were allowed to establish themselves. In the Niger Delta city-states of Brass, Bonny, New Calabar, and Old Calabar the chiefs became alarmed at the threat which the egalitarian doctrine of the missionaries began to have on their subjects, the majority of whom were of the slave class. For the latter saw in the Christian doctrine a message of hope and liberty. The missionary's announcement that all men were equal carried with it the belief that their temporal bonds were dissolved as well and that they could no longer be in servitude to masters to whom they henceforward believed they were spiritually superior. By 1854 King Eyo Honesty II of Creek Town (Old Calabar), the most influential and powerful Efik ruler of his day, experienced with intense bitterness disobedience of his laws by his subjects in the name of the new religion.[10] In 1878 the reformist Christian group in Old Calabar which styled itself Young Calabar succeeded, with the aid of the British Consul, in forcing the Efik authorities to absolve them from customs and practices they considered repugnant to the Christian faith, but the observance of which was obligatory for every member of Efik society. In the following year the slave converts of Brass staged a successful *coup* against their masters, whom they forced to become Christians and to grant them a large measure of independence. Two years later, having judged that discretion was the better part of valour, the Bonny authorities granted concessions similar to those enjoyed by Brass Christians.

Worthy of note, too, is the successful defiance of the Fante nation and chiefs by the fourteen Christians of Assafa, a few miles east of Cape Coast. In the belief that the best way to display their zeal for Christianity was to insult the great Brafo, the guardian god of the Fante located at Mankessim, these Christians took no pains to conceal their detestation of the national god by mocking and abusing its worshippers. They cleared the bush and made their plantation in the vicinity of the sacred grove with a levity and irreverence which so

exasperated the traditionalists that the latter attacked the Christian zealots. Under the leadership of Adu, the King of Mankessim and custodian of the sacred grove, the village of the Christians was burned down and they were taken captive. Upon the interference of the missionaries and the British Government in Cape Coast, the Christians were set free, Adu was bullied and lectured on the virtues of freedom of worship. For hesitating to answer the peremptory summons of the British governor at Cape Coast he was asked to pay a fine; he was ordered also to compensate the Christians for their lost property.[11]

What about the chiefs whose initial decision was to patronize missionaries? Their hopes and experience in the earlier years contrasted with the fears and dismay of their anti-missionary colleagues. In many ways they found missionaries an asset. The Ẹgba for instance gave such an enthusiastic welcome to missionaries that missionary journals presented them as peace-loving virtuous people who loathed slavery. But the Ẹgba had political motives for adopting their pro-missionary policy. Surrounded by enemies in all directions—the Ibadan in the north, the Ijẹbu in the south and east, and the Dahomians in the west—Ṣodẹkẹ, the leader of the Ẹgba settlement in Abẹokuta, made the Ẹgba motive clear: expectation of military help from the British Government against all their enemies. Not long after the missionaries had settled down in their midst the Ẹgba asked for British help for wars of aggression and revenge. In Ijaye, a large Yoruba town destroyed by Ibadan in 1862, Kurunmi, the ruler, believed that the presence of missionaries would enhance his prestige in the Yoruba country and draw traders to his capital. At Itebu in south-eastern Yorubaland, Manuwa, the king, patronized the CMS in the hope that his town could become a trading entrepôt for the Ijẹsha, Ondo and Ekiti countries.[12]

In all areas in West Africa chiefs valued missionaries for the gifts which the latter were constrained to make from time to time in their effort to court the good will of the rulers. It was through the missionaries that many chiefs in the interior became familiar with many of the more sophisticated articles of European society. The disposition of the paramount ruler

of the Asante, the Asantehene, towards the Wesleyan missionaries changed from one of suspicion to that of friendliness when he was offered a carriage; he was also pleased with the gifts sent to him at the same time by Queen Victoria, viz. a portrait of herself and a view of Windsor Castle.[13] Gifts commonly made to West African rulers by missionaries included chairs, velvets, glassware, footware, cutlery, and umbrellas. The umbrella in particular became an emblem of royalty. In another way chiefs benefited economically from the presence of missionaries in their midst: they valued the religious teachers as money-lenders in times of need. Many of the chiefs were also attracted by the idea of their States becoming as powerful and developed as contemporary European States, a prospect dangled before their imagination by missionaries.

Many patrons of missionary enterprise appreciated the usefulness of missionaries in other ways. Intimate friendship developed between many chiefs and missionaries to such an extent that the latter became advisers to the former. Consider, for instance, the friendship between Thomas Birch Freeman, pioneer of the Wesleyan mission in Nigeria and the Gold Coast, and Gezo of Dahomey. Freeman advised him on how to humanize the laws of his country, and the Dahomian king in turn was able to transmit his grievances against the British through this missionary.[14] In Asante and the Yoruba country all the chiefs appreciated the position of missionaries as honorary secretaries to correspond either with other chiefs or with the British Government in Lagos and Cape Coast. Many chiefs could not have been unimpressed by the fact that, before the imperial ambitions of the European powers began to threaten the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the chiefs, missionaries smoothed their relations with the secular agents on the coast by their role as intermediaries. In this capacity missionaries explained to the chiefs in Yorubaland and Asante the behaviour of the British, and to the latter the injured feelings of the chiefs on issues of dispute.

It should be stressed, however, that in no place in West Africa were the traditional pro-missionary chiefs disposed to embrace the Christian faith. Convinced that the traditional

religion was best for them and their subjects they did not feel any need for the religious interference of the missionaries. This was why the king of Ijaye instructed the missionaries in his domain that they should not commit the error of converting his people to Christianity or instructing them in schools. Among the Mahin the only man who became a convert before 1893, that is seventeen years after the advent of the Christian faith in their midst, relapsed to traditional religion in that year because no female member of his tribe would marry an apostate.[15]

In Kumasi the reports of the Wesleyan missionaries continued to be gloomy. In 1853 the report was that 'The state of the work of God in Asante is rather discouraging at present, from the circumstances of the people being afraid to expose themselves to the ire of the King, whose frown means death for his people becoming Christians'.[16] Apathy to the spiritual side of missionary activity was not confined to chiefs. In 1876 the Asante told the missionaries 'The Bible is not a book for us ... we will never embrace your religion'. Even in Abẹokuta, the celebrated citadel of Christianity in the interior of West Africa, the chiefs did not want genuine Ẹgbas to be converted to Christianity. One of the chiefs who put those of their subjects who aspired to become Christians into chains was quoted by the missionary sources as saying that the real Ẹgba 'must do as their forefathers used to do, and they have no business with us [missionaries] they not being emigrants, he said moreover, that we never gave them any person to make Ogboni, nor to worship Ifa, nor Sango etc.'[17] In New Calabar, in the Niger Delta, so horrified did the chiefs become only five years after the introduction of Christianity in their State that they prepared a lotion with which they wiped the faces of their schoolchildren in the hope that all that they had been learning under missionaries might disappear from their minds.[18]

The opposition of the pro-missionary chiefs to the spiritual side of missionary activity was enough to strain the relations between these chiefs and missionaries. But the factor that turned these erstwhile patrons to relentless enemies of missionaries was the belief among the former that the missionaries were more than religious teachers, that their

activity would overthrow African rule, that missionaries were plotting with traders and secular agents to occupy their states. By 1869 the Yoruba chiefs and the rulers of Asante, the patrons of missionaries in the interior of West Africa in the pre-colonial era, had become persecutors of the Christian teachers. In 1867 the Egba looted the mission stations in their capital, destroyed libraries, and expelled the white missionaries. Two years later an Asante army descended upon Anum and Ho, two stations of the Basel Evangelical Society, appropriated the belongings of the missionaries, and levelled their buildings with the ground. The missionaries were taken to Kumasi as captives.[19] In 1890 the Dahomey ruler instructed his troops to capture the French priests and sisters from their stations on the coast and imprison them in Abomey. In the interior of Sierra Leone suspicion of the intention and consequences of missionaries by traditional rulers was even earlier than in other parts. In 1815 the Susu burned down the mission stations in their country in the fear that the missionaries in charge of these stations were political spies for the British Government. In 1860 the Temne plundered mission establishments at Magbele.[20]

How valid were the suspicions that the missionaries were forerunners and collaborators of the secular agents? Theoretically the preachers of the gospel were not anxious to interfere in politics as such, but what they found in West Africa struck them as so objectionable and so contrary to their religious teaching that they found it difficult not to protest. Protests were sometimes made to the chiefs on the spot by audacious missionaries, often to the mission headquarters in Europe and America, and intermittently to the secular imperially-minded European agents, who began to seize and administer enclaves on the West African coast in the nineteenth century. In their protests to headquarters and administrative officers, a majority of missionaries indicated that a change of 'the whole social existence' of West African peoples was necessary for a successful sowing of the gospel seed. In the judgment of the missionaries traditional West African society presented a number of obstacles to the appreciation and acceptance of the Christian faith by the masses. Among these obstacles were the unending opposi-

tion of the chiefs to the conversion of their subjects, the recalcitrance, if not outright hostility, of religious traditionalists, the apathy of the population, most of whom did not feel lost and doomed as the missionaries liked to imagine, warfare within and between States and slave dealing. In addition to these were customs and institutions of traditional society repugnant to European conceptions of morality and justice such as human sacrifice, twin-murder, slavery, immolation, wakes, elaborate burial and marriage practices, and the so-called despotic tendencies of the chiefs.

It is clear that if the chiefs could not be swept away by the removal of the above obstacles their authority would be severely undermined. In a sense, then, the desire of the missionaries for the transformation of West African society was a potential threat to the *status quo* and a veritable blow to the position and authority of the chiefs. In their hope for a suitable environment for the sowing of the gospel seed many missionaries became advocates of the use of force, or hailed with undisguised delight military subjugation of anti-missionary chiefs and peoples. In this light the British bombardment of Lagos in 1851 was hailed by a missionary as a providential blessing that would open a way for the evangelization of other parts of Yorubaland; and the expedition against the Asante in 1896 was described as 'a righteous war' by another missionary. The favourable disposition of missionaries to military expeditions against the 'pagan' West African rulers was well expressed by a Southern American Baptist missionary on the eve of a military expedition: 'War is often a means of opening a door for the gospel to enter a country. A sword of steel often goes before a sword of the spirit.'[21]

It is important to stress that the missionaries were not necessarily a trigger-happy set of people delighted with the carnage and terrible sufferings which European superior arms used to inflict on the African resisters. Certainly they would have been happier if many of the expeditions had not taken place and the obstacles to their work removed by other means. But they felt that military expeditions, though an evil, would yield good. They were earnest, zealous, and passionate well-wishers of the peoples it was their duty to

evangelize. They imagined that the principles of the Christian faith for which they had so much passion ought to be perceived automatically by their converts and 'pagans'; they made no allowance for the fact that human nature cannot be transformed overnight, that the customs and institutions of a people could not disappear by exhortations.

But apart from the belief among many missionaries in pre-colonial West Africa that maxims and seven pounders would bring recalcitrant chiefs to their senses, there was also the fact that many of the missionaries became imperially-minded. Like their secular colleagues, they began to think in terms of 'spheres of influence' for their respective countries. To a certain extent their wish in this respect was imbued with the sense that their enterprise could flourish best only under the flag of their respective countries. As a British missionary said 'under no government will the agencies of the kingdom of heaven work with greater freedom and force than our own'.[22]

The imperial ambitions of the pre-colonial missionaries were encouraged by the fact that two different nationalities and two different forms of Christianity were sometimes represented in many areas. The Protestants were largely British, the Roman Catholics largely French. In Sierra Leone, a territory where British influence was already strong, the Protestant missions more or less monopolized the field; in the Gold Coast British Protestant missions anticipated the Roman Catholics by eighty years. In Dahomey supremacy went to the French Catholic priests of the Society of African Missions. It was these missionaries who prepared the way for the eventual occupation of that territory by France. In fact in 1891 one of the missionaries, P. Dorgere, was publicly invested with the medal of the Legion of Honour by Rear-Admiral Cuvelier de Cuverville at Porto Novo.[22] An official who watched the patriotic services of the SMA priests in West Africa wrote of them in 1890: 'we bow to them as foremost champions of civilisation, preceding and sustaining the flag of France for which they consciously die without noise and simply as a duty'.[23]

It was in the territory that became Nigeria that the British Protestant and French Catholic missionaries strove most

vigorously to win areas of influence for their respective countries. In 1848 the United Presbyterian Missionaries of Scotland Mission prevailed on Efik chiefs to reject French influence[24] as they were to ask the Efik in 1889 to reject German influence in Old Calabar. In 1888 French priests attempted to secure Abẹokuta for France, whilst they declared time and again that Yorubaland would be best Christianized by Catholic priests under a French Protectorate. On the Niger, observed Mattei, leader of French trading companies in the early eighties, the activities of the Niger Mission under Bishop Crowther hindered the prospects of French influence in the Lower Niger. It was in an effort to replace this British influence that Mattei and Father Planque, the Superior-General of the Society of African Missions, decided to introduce Roman Catholicism to the Niger in 1884.[25] On the role played by British Christian missions in winning Nigeria for Britain, there is no better evidence than that of Sir H. H. Johnston, himself one of the builders of British Nigeria, who told the British public in 1911: 'In fact, the CMS, for good or for ill, has done more to create British Nigeria than the British Government'.[26]

The traditional rulers of West Africa were not unaware of the close relations between the missionaries and the imperially-minded secular agents on the coast. In fact the missionaries never scrupled to impress it upon the rulers that they had a common identity with their secular countrymen. Claims to association with their government agents by missionaries had practical advantages for the latter. It made the chiefs aware that any physical molestation of the missionaries in their midst would be avenged by the latter's governments in Europe; and it increased the missionary's prestige in the interior as long as the chiefs' relations with the secular officials on the coast were cordial and mutually beneficial.

But there came a time when the association of missionaries with British or French governments had disadvantages for missionaries. Whenever the secular agents offended the chiefs, the onus of responsibility was placed on the missionaries. This was quite logical. Fear of the chiefs became strong when the imperial ambitions of the European

administrations on the coast in Lagos, Port Novo, Cape Coast, and Freetown became visible to the traditional rulers. It was natural that the blame was put on the preachers of the gospel and the wrath of the chiefs was visited on them.

The 'Deliver the people from chiefly tyranny and into our hands, O God!' pattern of relations between missionaries and traditional rulers in pre-colonial West Africa can be illustrated in several parts of the territory. But since the Nigerian and Sierra Leonean patterns are more or less known from other accounts our attention may be chiefly concentrated on the situation on the Gold Coast, that is on the relations between the Wesleyan and Basel Evangelical missionaries on the one hand and the King of Asante on the other.

After considerable hesitancy the Asantehene responded favourably to the requests of the Wesleyan Missionary Society to establish a station in Kumasi. The latter made strenuous efforts to convince the Asantehene that Christianity would not only confer economic benefits on Asante, but make the State as powerful and progressive as Britain. In all the visits made by Thomas Birch Freeman to Kumasi he never went alone in his capacity as a purely religious propagandist. In every visit he gave the Asantehene the impression that he was an agent of the British Government as well. In 1839, on the occasion of his first trip to Kumasi, George Maclean, the illegal British ruler of the Gold Coast from 1830-44, sent two soldiers to accompany the missionary with a letter of recommendation to the Asantehene.[27] Two years later the missionary was escorted by a sergeant and six soldiers and he delivered a message from Queen Victoria. In 1848 Freeman was appointed as secretary to the purely political mission of Lieutenant-Governor Winniett to Kumasi. In this last trip the Asantehene not only witnessed the Christian services held by Winniett and the troops on Sundays but was commended for his patronage of missionary propaganda. In all cases Freeman reported fully on his visits and passed on valuable information on the Asante country to the British administration in Cape Coast.[28]

Freeman became an informant and an adviser of some importance on Anglo-Fante and Anglo-Asante relations. In

1857 he accepted the secular appointment of civil commandant of the Accra district; successive administrators asked him to undertake delicate political missions in the interior and his knowledge of African affairs was useful in the settlement of disputes between one Fante group and another, and between the British and the Fante. It was in the logic of things that in 1873, when Sir Garnet Wolseley wanted to attack Asante, he made a special request to the Wesleyan Missionary Society for permission to use Freeman's services for information that would facilitate victory over the Asante.[29]

It can be seen that Freeman's association with the reports to the British administration were a potential threat to the sovereignty of the Asantehene and his State. In fact by 1853 other Wesleyan missionaries had begun to see in the Asantehene the real obstacle to the Christianization of the Asante and they had begun to paint him as a despot. According to the report of that year by a missionary in Kumasi:

> The Asantes are not a free people, they are fast bound in the chains of despotism, so much so, that no one dares to do what he thinks proper in his own eyes. . . . They always do what the king sanctions, whether good or bad, so that as the king is a pagan, they must all remain so.[30]

When therefore in 1874 the British attacked Asante the mission world hailed the attack as a step in the right direction which they believed would reduce the authoritarian hold of the Asantehene on his subjects. By 1894 missionaries were claiming that 'the whole country', except its paramount ruler, was craving for British protection and anxious to be freed from the despotic rule of their 'tyrant' and impatient to accept Christian missionaries.

In the meantime the Asantehene was having second thoughts on the usefulness of missionaries in his country. Up to 1853 the Wesleyan missionaries had proved excellent intermediaries in the settling of disputes between the Asante and the British. But the 1863 expedition against the Asante by the British in which the latter were worsted had created bad blood between the Asantehene and the missionaries. The Wesleyans were compelled to fold up their enterprise in

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Kumasi. In 1869 Asante forces captured two missionaries of the Basel Evangelical Society in their stations at Anum and Ho, after the Asante had been provoked by the territorial incursions of the British administration in south-east Asante. In Kumasi the missionaries were treated as slaves and were made to erect a European-style residence for Karikari, the Asantehene.[31]

As should be expected the Asante refused to allow the Wesleyans to reopen their enterprise in Kumasi after the punishment meted out to them by the 1874 British expedition. The missionaries in turn became decidedly hostile to the Asantehene in their records and appeals to the British Government for a really overwhelming military subjugation of the Asante. As a Basel Evangelical missionary put it, the British Government should do this 'For God's sake, for humanity's sake, for THE PRESTIGE the English Government has still on the Gold Coast sake'.[32] The missionaries became newsmongers and they furnished the British with news of alleged human sacrifice and countless atrocities continually perpetrated by the Asantehene. In 1894 they urged the British Government to 'act at once' and declare a Protectorate over Asante. On the eve of the expedition against the Asante in 1896 the missionaries in the interior informed the British Government about a plot which, they alleged, the Asantehene had to kill all the Christian adherents in his State.[33]

The expedition, which paralysed the military capacity of the Asante, was described publicly in London by a Wesleyan missionary as 'a righteous one, to effect the protection of those natives who were under the sway of the inhuman chiefs of that dreadful country'.[34]

Indeed, against the will of the chiefs, the Wesleyan and Basel Evangelical missionaries were imposed on Asante by the bayonet. The sulking chiefs refused to patronize mission stations which they regarded as political outposts of the British Government. In 1900 when the Asante rebelled against the British for the last time in their history, the chiefs wreaked vengeance on the chapels and buildings of the Christian teachers. Once more the missions were reinstated by British force. It is significant to note that the ill-conceived

and ill-judged decision of the governor, Sir F. M. Hodgson, to attempt a seizure of the Golden Stool, the great symbol of the Asante spirit, solidarity, and nation, was to a certain extent inspired by the advice of the Reverend F. Ramsayer. It was quite in order that at the special service held in Accra on 22 July 1900 to commemorate British success over the Asante and the safety of the governor, the Reverend W. Hastings Kelk, the Colonial Chaplain of the Gold Coast, should declare: 'We thank Him for this, and more especially as British subjects, that the Representative of our Queen has been preserved, her brave and loyal soldiers and subjects saved, and that the prestige of the British Empire remains unharmed'.[35]

In 1900 the Asante rulers were not alone in their sulking at the bitter experience of missionaries as heralds of European rule. By 1891 the Ẹgba authorities had become unyieldingly convinced that the Christian elements in their midst were protégés of the British administration in Lagos. Therefore in this year they 'begged' the missionaries and Christian adherents to leave Ẹgba territory.[36] Two years later the French brought fire and sword upon the Dahomians, exiled the king who had imprisoned French missionaries, and had the Mass publicly celebrated in Abomey by Father Ignatius Lissner, Chaplain to French troops.[37] In 1898 the Ekumeku of Asaba hinterland, a society organized against the intrusion of missionaries into their country, were severely punished by the Royal Niger Company for attacking mission stations. The CMS and SMA missions were reimposed upon them.[38] Even Muslim rulers knew that Christian missionaries were forerunners of an infidel takeover of an Islamic State. This was why the Emirs of Northern Nigeria resisted the Christian missionary after 1888. In 1900 the Sultan of Turkey sent emissaries to advise the emirs to resist the intrusion of the five CMS missionaries heading for Kano,[39] who went praying on their journey that the British Government should 'deliver' the masses of the territory from the alleged tyrannical rule of the emirs.

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4

The Coming of Western Education to Africa

The feverish energy with which practically all independent African countries have been sponsoring literary education since attainment of independence, signally underlines their full recognition of the strategic and decisive role which this *sine qua non* dynamic of social change and progress should play in their programme of modernization. The bewildering fervour of post-Independence Africans in the matter of Western-type education should not mislead non-African observers into thinking that the scales are just dropping from the eyes of Africans, that it is only now that Africans are learning that Western-type knowledge constitutes power, that it is only in this generation that Africans are having a perception of the absolute relevance of Western education to their vision of, and hope for, a modernized continent. For African States are intensely engaged in a 'soul-catching' race in the pursuit of literary education at all levels, multiplying Western-type primary schools by the thousands, secondary schools by the hundreds, and university institutions by the tens. Hence the ambition of the Nasser regime in Egypt to build one school every day; hence the fact that Western-type education has been far and away the biggest single item of government expenditure in practically all African States; hence the spectacle of a poor country like Lesotho in which ninety-five per cent of all children are thrown into school.

And yet the essence of the matter is that despite the energetic sponsoring of Western-type education we are witnessing, this system of education has not suddenly descended

upon Africa from the moon: it has been present on this large continent for nearly two millennia, producing results which have added luminous stars to the intellectual firmament of mankind. In Roman Africa Western-type education produced political thinkers, intellectuals, and bishops of world renown;[1] in Ethiopia, thanks to the arrival there of Christianity in the fourth century AD, centuries of literary tradition produced massive and indigenous literature in which researchers have begun to find consolation. And, as has been amply demonstrated by several scholars, nineteenth century West Africa, a territory where the white man's religious presence was both early and highly rewarding to its inhabitants, produced a galaxy of educated people whose ideas, aspirations, and visions manifestly anticipated those of present-day illustrious leaders on the continent.[2] Even in areas where the white man's rule was prejudicial to the mental development of Africans in the Western literary fashion, a few Africans—whom one could count on the fingers—were able to receive high-quality Western education. For example, Professor D. D. T. Jabavu of South Africa graduated with honours in English in the University of London in 1912, the first South African of Bantu origin to obtain a British degree. Ntsu Mokhehle of Lesotho acquired the MSc degree with a thesis on the parasitology of birds.

Before the middle of this century then, when the craze for Western education began to gather momentum, the value of this brand of education and its relevance to the aspirations of 'New Africa' were clearly perceived by a tiny minority of Africans. So keen was their awareness that these Africans were very anxious to have the trickles of Western-type knowledge introduced by private agencies—almost exclusively missionary bodies—transformed into a deluge by the colonial powers. And when the colonial masters would not respond to their aspirations, African nationalists accused them of deliberately withholding this instrument of modernization from Africans in order to delay the progress of the continent. As early as 1908, Egyptian nationalists had on their own founded a Western-style University;[3] in Kenya, Jomo Kenyatta's Kikuyu Central Association established 'Independent' schools;[4] in Nigeria the educated elite

demanded universal and compulsory primary education as early as the twenties.[5]

The non-implementation of the dream of the educated elite in respect of Western education—a factor responsible for the embryonic form of this instrument of modernization in Africa today—should not be ascribed solely to the indifference of the colonial masters. There is another reason which educationists should seek to understand through more and more research.[6] It is that the African dreamers of Western education were few and far between and were not necessarily authentic spokesmen for the majority of Africans in pre-colonial Africa for the larger part of the colonial era. The majority of the African population did not perceive, or share, the 'New Africa' vision of the tiny educated elite. For the unlettered majority Western education had nothing to recommend it: it was repulsive, obliterating the identity and dignity of the African, putting him mentally in a milieu hardly relevant to his needs, sense of values, and aspirations. In other words, Western education sought to turn his world upside down.

The instinctive response of the unyieldingly apathetic unlettered African majority to Western education in this way must be clearly appreciated. For in conception, in content, and envisioned results Western education was an edition of the world of the white man, a palpable danger to the society in which Africans had lived, had moved, and had their being from time immemorial. For this majority there was only one proper system of education and that was the non-literary traditional system which had attributes that the Western-type system has not been able to acquire to date.[7] The non-literary education of the traditional world integrated the individual in society from birth to death; it was related to, and blissfully meaningful in, its milieu; it was comprehensive in scope, imparting effectively moral values, giving vocational training, and teaching codes of behaviour—all in one breath; the entire society was the school and the teacher; training went on all the time. And relations between individuals and the position of individuals within the hierarchy were clearly regulated. Above all, the individual found solace in the education he acquired; he

understood his world in relation to which he developed his philosophy and cosmology. In this world he fulfilled himself.

Set against this non-literary educational system was the Western type which began to mould and direct the minds of its African adherents to ideas and habitudes out of the traditional milieu. As the majority of the traditionalists witnessed the licensing of the ideas and opinions of the intruding Western educators at the expense of traditional opinions and ideas, they became apprehensive and began to view Western education as mis-education. They could not approve of a system which began to dissolve their natural collective consciousness into individual components, which began to substitute instruction in schools for education, and which began to encourage cleverness in place of wisdom. Little wonder that in several parts of Africa where the colonial religious masters tried to persuade chiefs to send their children to school, slaves were handed over to the missionaries to be sent to—as the Yoruba put it—*Ile Ọdaju*, an institution for the breeding of impertinent children.

That there was substance in the fear of the traditionalist majority about Western education, that it made the African less educated than it found him in the traditional milieu, is clear from the observations of Western-style educationists right from the beginning of this century. In this connection one might reproduce an observation by Henry Carr, a Western-style educationist of no mean order, in 1908:

> School education has not produced in the young people the habit of self-control. Our youths exhibit the ugly faults and unpleasant symptoms of an age of transition. These faults are not the characteristic qualities of the Yoruba. All foreign observers have been struck with the innate politeness of the people; some have even said that this politeness verges [sic] on timidity and subservience. It is partly from a desire to cast off this reproach, partly from the want of social control and partly also from the conceit bred by a little learning in the midst of ignorance that many have erred in becoming rude and offensive.[8]

However, the attachment of the majority of Africans to traditional education and their contempt for the Western system notwithstanding, Western education has come to stay.

Whilst this state of affairs chagrins the traditionalists, it gives undisguised delight to the minority educated elite to whom the colonial masters transferred the destiny of this continent. It therefore behoves us to have a glimpse of how this Western education came to Africa in the nineteenth century, the form this system took, the aims of its apostles, and its significance in the evolution of the continent.

The credit for the advent of Western education in Africa goes entirely to Christian missions. This point should be strongly emphasized in view of the fact that many of us are wont to read retrospectively the present-day zeal and enormous financial commitment by governments in this matter of Western education. All over Africa outside the Islamic zone governments are latecomers in the spread of Western education; their assumption of control of schools in our day and their habit of barking at the Christian and other private agencies, should not make us forget that governments are reaping where they did not sow. The real sowers were Christian missions who in the process enlisted the moral and financial support of their African adherents.

The missionary was necessarily an educationist; education and Christianity were handmaids. Although the primary aim of the missionary was to Christianize Africans, he perceived from the beginning that the Gospel could not be divorced from the written word; that to establish the Gospel among Africans the latter must have Bibles which they must read, and this implied instruction, hence the fact that wherever there was a missionary the Church and the school were inseparable. Converts had to be taught the elements of reading and writing in order that they might be in the position to understand God's message to man through the Holy Scriptures. But the majority of missionaries felt that if Christianity was to be successfully established in Africa the missionary must give the converts more than the three R's; his whole being should be changed by high-quality education. Therefore the missionary tried to elicit ideas, evolve emotions, and develop character in Africans, a people almost despaired of and dismissed as 'a miserable spectacle, deplorably wretched in body and in mind'. Moreover, the shrewd missionaries knew that the Church in Africa must depend on the children

instructed in the school, rather than on their parents whom missionaries found dificult to wean from the traditional world. As a missionary put it:

> In carrying on the work of instruction, the day school is a most important and indispensable institution. It is with the young that our hope of the advancement of our churches to a higher standard chiefly lies, and by giving them the power of reading the Scripture and an amount of instruction which those advanced in life are incapable of receiving, we hope the succeeding generation will be able to start from a higher platform, and obtain a more robust Christian life, in which the evils which cling to those emerging from heathenism will disappear, or at least be much less exhibited.[9]

But it should be remarked that the founders of Western education were divided into two schools of thought on the way the primary school should go. The more liberal group favoured fully-fledged school curricula but the more conservative and dogmatic group doubted whether the Western education being introduced into Africa should ever be encouraged to go beyond the three R's and a narrowly conceived Bible-tied curriculum. This latter group were narrow-minded and bigoted interpreters of the purpose of man's existence on earth. In their view all that mattered was that man should have the vision of Heaven as contained in the Bible; this Bible was the 'Book of Books', the one literature that he should read and make the touchstone of all his actions; to make him read literature on, or acquire knowledge of, this sinful world or the universe would be diverting his soul away from perception of the Heavenly Vision. True in Europe and America where, members of this conservative school contended, such knowledge of the terrestrial globe had been encouraged, it was an infernal sort of knowledge that resulted, and this should not be given to the African. In any case, argued the conservative but well-intentioned group, once you began to instruct the African on matters not exclusively spiritual, what evidence had you that he would not prefer the mundane to the heavenly?

It is instructive to note that the 'three R's only' school of thought was by no means confined to nineteenth century

Southern Africa where the racist missionaries of the Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa were salving their conscience with the argument that the school was primarily a civilizer and not necessarily a breeder of Christians. In West Africa it also had its representatives. Perhaps the most vocal member was Father Zappa of the Society of African Missions. Once given education beyond the three R's, argued Zappa, African boys would wish to work for Europeans either as clerks or traders and would thereby be removed from the guardianship of their families and the missionary mentors. The way was clear for them to be led into places of corruption where their morals and faith would be practically lost. In this sense 'the school method involves a misunderstanding of our mission which is simply an apostolic affair. We would virtually be committing a crime against the souls of these children if we were to be the first means of leading them into this dangerous situation'.[10]

However, the more liberal group, who believed that Western education should go beyond, far beyond, the three R's in Africa, took a more comprehensive view of the purpose of man's existence on earth. Whilst agreeing that the primary aim of the missionary was to turn the African's mind to God in the way prescribed by Christianity, they believed that perception of the Heavenly Vision was impossible for a man's soul until his body, the container of his soul, was first in a state of happiness and well-being; to be in this state the African should attain mental victory, understand the laws of Nature, and be able to apply these laws for the development of the material well-being of mankind. In the words of T. J. Bowen, a pioneer missionary in West Africa:

> But the experience and the sober sense of mankind will always decide that true faith and true piety are inseparable from a due regard both to the body and the soul, and to the mental as well as the moral nature of man. The Gospel was never intended to feed and to clothe us, or to instruct us in reading, writing and printing, or in grammar, history, geography and other things necessary to a correct understanding of the Bible. Yet without food and clothing, and several branches of secular knowledge, the Bible and the Gospel cannot exist in any country.[11]

Whilst it has sufficed to speak in general about the establishment of primary schools in Africa by Christian missions, it is essential to be specific about grammar schools and University institutions, the beginnings of which Africa also owes to Christian missions. In this regard this writer intends to reveal highlights about the first secondary school and the first university institution in modern Africa, both of which by historical circumstances were founded in the nineteenth century in the Colony of Sierra Leone in West Africa.

The first secondary grammar school was founded in Sierra Leone on 25 March 1845 among liberated Africans and their offspring in whose society primary schools, described as 'Christian Institutes', had been introduced early in the century. Beginning with fourteen students the roll number had gone up to seventy-eight in 1853 and over 250 in 1933. By 1935 a total of 3,740 students had entered the school.[12] A peculiarity of this grammar school is that in the early years many of the students were admitted at the age of thirty or thirty-two. Robert Gross, one of the foundation students was thirty; David John and John During (enrolled 4 September 1846) and Joseph O. Wilson (enrolled 2 December 1857) were thirty-two.

However, this peculiarity should not detract from the fact that the founding of the CMS Grammar School was not an ordinary event in the history of Western education in Africa in general and in West Africa in particular. For this institution was far more cosmopolitan in its intake of students than has been realized, drawing to itself students from East Africa and the West Indies.[13] As for West Africa, students came regularly from Old Calabar, Bonny, Opobo, Lagos, Badagry, Whydah, Accra, Cape Coast, Liberia, and the Gambia. Particularly worth mentioning are Barth Jass Boss from Zanzibar (enrolled 17 January 1867), Douglas Maluti and John Ouladi—both from East Africa (enrolled 7 August 1877), and Robert Morgan from Jamaica (enrolled 28 March 1886). From West Africa one might mention R. Tundy from the Cameroons (enrolled 14 January 1881), Thomas Beres Williams from Lokoja (enrolled 27 September 1892), and John A. Beecroft from Fernando Po (enrolled 1 July 1853). And it should be stressed that this

secondary school did not lose the attribute of cosmopolitanism decades after such territories as Nigeria and the Gold Coast had their own secondary schools. Thus although Nigeria had five grammar schools for boys by 1900 (the first of them in 1859), Joseph I Yokorogba from Nembe (enrolled 9 February 1909), John M'Cral from Sapele (enrolled 8 February 1910), Yaya Shitta Kosoko from Lagos (enrolled 25 April 1915), Okonetim Ekeng from Old Calabar (enrolled 14 October 1920), and Babafunmi N. Agbebi from Lagos (enrolled 19 January 1926) still went to the CMS Grammar School in Sierra Leone. And as late as 1909—the existence of the Methodist Grammar School on the Gold Coast since 1876 notwithstanding—Kofi M. Adde left his country for Sierra Leone and enrolled in the first grammar school on 22 May 1909; Gottdield N. Alema did the same, leaving Accra, and enrolled on 26 January 1914.

The value of this cosmopolitan pattern of the student population for the development of healthy inter-ethnic and international relations, which apostles of international schools all over the world are advocating in our generation, might well be contemplated. And one is bound to wonder whether the Pan-West African attitude of many of the old boys of this institution in the nineteenth century could not be traced to the Pan-ethnic and Pan-African atmosphere of this institution, apart from its emphasis on the racial neutralism of the Christian message. To give a few examples. Though Igbo by his ethnic label, J. B. Horton (enrolled May 1846) became a spokesman for all West Africans and drew programmes of development for all of them;[14] Charles Pepple of Bonny (enrolled 13 August 1856) became a postmaster on the Gold Coast; Samuel Lewis (enrolled 6 July 1857) was a lawyer with interest in events in other parts of West Africa.[15]

One other significant characteristic of the first secondary grammar school is that Africans were taken into partnership in its policy-making and directorship. In 1863, within eighteen years of the founding of the school, James Quaker, one of the foundation students, was appointed by the Church Missionary Society as the principal. This post he held with credit and commendation for the next twenty years. It was a courageous and magnanimous experiment, only effaced by

the colonial era in several parts of Africa, indicating the liberality and non-racialism of the mission proprietors of schools in pre-colonial West Africa. By this appointment of an African the ability of Africans to head a secondary school and direct its affairs was recognized. This tradition was followed by the Methodists in subsequent years when C. J. May, another able African, was put in charge of the Methodist High School in Sierra Leone in the century. Such a liberal tradition was carried on by the Church Missionary Society and the Wesleyan Mission in respect of their secondary schools in Nigeria. Thus T. B. Macaulay, Isaac Oluwọle, and J. S. Fanimokun successively headed the Lagos CMS Grammar School right into the first decade of the twentieth century, whilst E. W. Euba was principal of the Wesleyan High School, Lagos for more than a decade.

In terms of academic distinction the first secondary school gave a solid and well-rounded education to its students, many of whom went into universities. A few of the alumni acquitted themselves in so distinguished a manner that they should be mentioned. J. B. Horton so distinguished himself in medicine that he was patronized by white people on the Gold Coast and it may be noted that he was only twenty-five in 1859 when he obtained the MD of Edinburgh. Nathaniel S. King from Abẹokuta (enrolled 5 March 1866) returned to Nigeria ten years later as the first Nigerian medical doctor. Samuel Lewis became the first African to be called to the English Bar and the first African to be honoured with a knighthood. In the field of education was Christian F. Cole (enrolled 17 November 1862), the first African to obtain the BA of Oxford University and who tutored there. In the Church, James Johnson (enrolled 8 July 1851) was the first Grammar School alumnus to be raised to the status of Assistant Bishop. In the field of literature was, again, J. B. Horton who used his pen in defence of the Negro race against the vilification of such negrophobist pseudo-anthropologists as R. F. Burton, Winwood Reade, and T. J. Hutchinson. He also advocated independence for all West Africa more than a hundred years ago.[16]

Of no less significance for Africa in general and for West Africa in particular was the Fourah Bay Institution which

had been founded in 1827 and which was upgraded to a University institution in 1876. It is a pity that this institution, again founded by the CMS, is still waiting for its historian; all that readers can obtain for the moment are no more than flashes and glimpses of its history. For lack of space the story cannot be mentioned here, even briefly. It suffices to say that from 1876 onwards University education became available in West Africa, its graduates holding degrees of the University of Durham; by 1950, according to the General Register—the one opened in 1827 with Samuel Ajayi Crowther, later Bishop, as one of the foundation students—slightly more than a thousand Africans from a wide geographical area, were admitted to Fourah Bay;[17] Fourah Bay College became the nursery of high-level man-power deployed mainly in the Church, but also to the advantage of secondary schools and the civil service of former British West Africa.

Nevertheless the academic achievement of this institution in the nineteenth century should not go unmentioned. There can be no doubt whatsoever about the high standard of the institution as reflected in the attainment of its alumni. For it was here that Isaac Oluwọle, one of the first graduates and for many years principal of the CMS Grammar School, Lagos, and Assistant Bishop, from 1894 to 1932, received his university training. No one privileged to read Oluwọle's correspondence and addresses can escape the spell of his brevity, 'the soul of wit', and a reflection of his very refined mind. Fourah Bay produced Archdeacon Henry Johnson, nicknamed 'Powerful Johnson' and 'Jerusalem Johnson', whose trenchant pen and mastery of the English language bewildered so eminent a scholar of languages as Dr R. N. Cust. Indeed so distinguished was Henry Johnson's achievement in the study of some West African languages and other non-African languages that Cambridge University welcomed him with an MA, the public Orator describing him as *litteris et Anglicis et Hebraicis et Arabicis eruditus*. And last, though not least, it was Fourah Bay that equipped Henry Rawlinson Carr, whose contribution to the development of Western education in Nigeria from 1889 till his death in 1945 is only just receiving attention. A passionate

lover of books, he cultivated his mind through the thousands of books which made his library the biggest personal library in the West Africa of his day and the nucleus of the Ibadan University College Library.

However, the greatest merit of Fourah Bay, in the academic sense, is the contribution it made to the study of West African languages between 1827 and 1880, leading to the production of vernacular literature in over a dozen languages—a thing of important cultural value. Even today the scholarship of Bishop Crowther's translations, grammar, and dictionary as the foundation of written Yoruba literature, the largest and most popular vernacular literature in West Africa, has been recognized. Of S. W. Koelle's *Polyglotta Africana*, a collection of vocabularies of West Africa, a distinguished linguist has said: 'In giving linguists the guidance of the *Polyglotta*, Freetown made a notable contribution to African advancement in literacy and literature .... No collection as wide, as accurate and as detailed as this, had been achieved previously in the whole field of African languages: and none has been achieved single-handedly ever since'.[18]

Although the feverish energy with which languages were studied and taught in the nineteenth century disappeared in the institution for several decades, the relevance of such academic pursuits to the interests of Africa has been appreciated by African universities since 1960. In other words the vision of Fourah Bay has been picked up by the Departments of Linguistics and Languages.

What has been said about the origins and achievements of the CMS Grammar School, Sierra Leone, and the Fourah Bay College—as the handiwork of Christian missions—applied to the greater part of the African continent outside the Islamic belt. In this regard no amount of praise for the Christian missions, as the heralds and sustainers of Western education in Africa, would be an overstatement. The two institutions we have mentioned illustrate the crass indifference and irresponsibility of colonial governments in respect of Western education. The CMS Grammar School was not assisted by the government of Sierra Leone until 1942. As other similar institutions in other parts of West Africa, this

secondary school was able to pay its way, thanks to the poor salaries of the dedicated teachers, paid from school fees and subvention by the churches. Consequently as early as 1863 the institution recorded a credit balance of £427.

But Fourah Bay, a much more expensive enterprise, had a sad experience. Largely maintained from fees, bequests from wealthy Africans, and by the Church Missionary Society, it ran into one financial crisis after another and was often in danger of folding up. Perhaps the worst year was 1909 when the CMS decided to close it down. And although the colonial government was earning a lot of revenue, there was no question of its considering it expedient to come to the rescue of this university institution. What saved the institution from closing down in this year was the sacrifice by its staff, particularly Dr James Denton, the Principal, and the Reverend T. S. Johnson (later Assistant Bishop), who contributed part of their stipends for its upkeep. In 1918 the Methodists, and later the American Evangelical United Brethren, associated with the CMS and began to participate in the funding of the institution. The attempt to introduce science teaching in 1928, intended to lead to pre-clinical training in medicine, had to be dropped for lack of funds. Christian missions maintained the institution until 1951 when the colonial government came to its rescue.

The terrific indifference of colonial governments to the welfare of the peoples over whom they were presiding in the matter of Western education and responsibility for the spread of this means of modernization by Christian missions continued until very lately in several parts of the continent. In respect of higher education the shaping hand of Christian missions could be traced to the South African Native College at Fort Hare and Pius XII University College in Roma, Lesotho. Ideologically and in effect Fort Hare was a projection of the Lovedale Institution, the famous institution of the Scottish Presbyterian Mission, which since the middle of the nineteenth century had become the main nursery of the educated elite of Southern Africa. Indeed the father of Fort Hare was Dr James Stewart, the famous and second Principal of Lovedale Institution. This remarkable man, who believed that the African was by no means biologically

inferior to the white man, dreamed of raising Africans in so impossible an atmosphere as South Africa, to the level of the white man in different walks of life through the agency of Western education.[19] He therefore conceived the idea of a university institution for which he was still exerting himself when he died in 1905. However by this date his idea had been bought by other missionaries in Lovedale, including a Bantu African and an alumnus of Lovedale, John Tengo Jabavu. In 1915 the idea began to be put into effect. Three Christian missions—Anglican, Presbyterian, and Methodist—made financial contributions which they began to administer, though the Union Government was represented on the Governing Council from the beginning. It was not an accident that the first Chairman of the Governing Council was the Reverend James Henderson, Principal of Lovedale Institution.[20] Little wonder that right into the second half of the twentieth century the University College of Fort Hare, as it came to be named subsequently, carried on the traditions of the mission school, emphasizing the Christian way of life.

There are one or two points worth noting about this nursery of high-quality African personnel in the midst of apartheid South Africa. It started as a non-racial institution and for more than forty years the degrees obtained there in Arts, Science, Theology, Education, and Agriculture were those of the University of South Africa. It should be noted that one of the original members of the staff was a Bantu African, Davidson Don Tengo Jabavu, a son of John Tengo Jabavu. One of the first two Africans to obtain the matriculation certificate of the Cape of Good Hope, D. D. T. Jabavu studied in Wales and the University of London, obtaining BA Honours in English in 1912. Thence, he went to Birmingham for his postgraduate certificate in Education. He then went to the United States where he visited Negro education institutions. He was to remain on the staff of Fort Hare for thirty years and in 1945—still before apartheid was applied—was upgraded to the status of Professor by the Union Government and made Head of the Department of African Studies.

This brief glimpse of the gargantuan role of Christian mis-

sions in the matter of Western education should include a word or two about the excellent work of the Roman Catholic Church in Basutoland (now Lesotho). Here practically all education was in the hand of the missions, the British rulers flatly neglecting the inhabitants in this matter.[21] The dominant mission was the Roman Catholic Mission. In 1945 this mission founded Pius XII University College in Roma, twenty-five miles from Maseru, with five students and four lecturers. By 1963 the student population had risen to 170 with thirty-nine lecturers and it had begun to give courses in Arts, Science, Social Science, Commerce, and Education. Its catchment basin was Central and South Africa.

The crass levity of colonial governments in respect of Western education is understandable to the historian of Africa. These governments were deliberately lukewarm, or indifferent, or hostile to the provision of Western education to their African subjects for selfish imperial reasons. Apologists for colonial rule cannot deny that the colonial masters knew that it was in the intrinsic interest of Africa and Africans to have the best type of Western education. The truth of the matter is that, as beneficiaries of this kind of education, colonial rulers—one of whose claims to lording it over Africa was that they were educated in the Western fashion—did not want the subject peoples to be like themselves. At best colonial rulers wanted their African subjects to be auxiliaries to whom only a small dosage of Western education would be given. It was clear to these colonial rulers that once Africans were as learned as they were, once Africans were made to acquire such literary and technical skills as these colonial rulers desired to monopolize, the moral justification for monopoly of authority and power would be effaced. It would no longer be tenable to speak of the ethics of imperialism. Therefore it was not until the forties, when a number of factors began to persuade the colonial powers that they would not be able to rule Africa colonially for ever, that in fact they should begin to desire to decolonize, that colonial governments began to give positive encouragement to the spread of Western education.

But not only were Christian missions the planters, propagators, and tenders of Western education in the greater part

of the continent outside the Islamic belt north of the tropical forest; they were also the only builders. They built well indeed. There is hardly any conception or idea or vision of education which present-day educationists wish for Africa that did not occur to the missionary founders of Western education. In this regard let us examine what these founders conceived as the aims, purpose, and content of education and let us then assess the results of the education they gave.

In the conception of practically all missionaries in the early days, the primary aim of Western education was to assist the African convert to know God in the manner prescribed by the Holy Scriptures. The knowledge of the Bible was considered the only true knowledge, all other knowledge being regarded as inferior. For the Christian message to be acquired, the African must be able to read this 'Book of Books' in his local language. In order for the Bible to be available in the vernacular, and have its message put across to converts intelligibly, it was essential to raise up African auxiliaries as teachers and preachers. Present day Christian missions have not altered this conception of education as being by far the most important and the most legitimate.

In order that Western education might produce Christians exemplifying Christian virtues, Christian missions insisted that no matter the level of education being given, the Bible should dominate the curriculum. In the pre-colonial period pupils in primary schools were forcibly overdosed with Christian religious teaching. When colonial governments began to emphasize secular education they incurred the hostility of Church leaders, African and non-African, and had no choice but to allow Christian organizations to go on emphasizing religion in their schools—though with the proviso that non-Christian pupils were not forcibly made to listen to the Christian message. Even in post-independence Africa no government has been prepared to modify the permissiveness of the colonial era in the propagation of the Christian message in Church schools, in the knowledge that Church leaders and proprietors of schools would pronounce anathema on such a government and stir up trouble against any such attempt.

The domination of the curriculum by Christian religious

subjects is clearly attested to by the documents. Greek, Latin, and Hebrew—languages on which Church literature has depended for centuries—featured prominently in Lovedale and Fourah Bay. The first aim of Lovedale was, according to the founders, 'to train as preachers such young men as may be found intellectually and spiritually fit for such work'.[22] And as proclaimed in 1873 the ordinary curriculum of Fourah Bay College was 'Holy Scriptures, Latin, Greek and English, History and Geography, Moral Philosophy and the evidences of the Christian religion'. In fact in that year it was stated clearly that anyone who would not make his career in the Church should not be admitted to the College with the instruction 'That all candidates bring satisfactory testimonials from three persons, one of whom must be a clergyman, ministers or Church members of any protestant denomination as to their moral and religious character'.[23] Even in a situation like that in the last decade in Old Calabar when the Cross River peoples had been asked to send boys and girls to be trained as artisans, carpenters, printers, and ironmongers, it was emphasized by the Presbyterian founders of the Hope Waddell Institution that the primary aim was not to train such boys and girls in these professions but to turn them into evangelists and pastors of their villages. Consequently they had to spend a great deal of their time on 'christian work'.[24]

The attempt by Christian missions to see that their schools fulfilled Christian religious and moral purposes should not be dismissed as an exhibition of mere bigotry. In the pre-colonial period, Christian moral values were held out to the world as best for mankind and secular officials endorsed such views. Moreover one cannot read the writings and sayings of educated Africans in the nineteenth century without being persuaded that they too expected Western education to purvey Christian morality. Even so blatant an advocate of emphasis on science in the curriculum, J. B. Horton, never doubted that Western education was *ipso facto* 'Christian education'.[25] Perhaps the best example, apart from 'Holy' Johnson, of the African educationists who saw morality as the core of any worthy education system was Henry Carr. This distinguished educationist was an ardent Churchman

and *par excellence* a specimen of moral probity and integrity. All his life he went on dreaming of schools which would inculcate in scholars 'the practice of virtue, and the right conduct of life, manner, the science of improving the temper and making the heart better'.[26]

Today the absence of morality as an ingredient in Western education is being lamented in modern Africa. Again, as educationists say time and again, Western education has demonstrated its inferiority to the traditional system, the latter with its emphasis on effective and wholesome moral restraints. And so much has unadulterated secularism and materialism purged Western education of whatever moral content it had that thoughtful educated Africans have long begun to share the anxieties of unlettered traditionalists that the coming of Western education to Africa has not been an unmixed blessing.

But though the primary aim of the founders of Western education in Africa was to put the souls of students in touch with God according to the prescription of Christianity, they sought to achieve other ends as well. One aim was to enable beneficiaries of Western education to understand, and be able to explain, the world around them and acquire knowledge about other peoples in the world. As the Secretaries of the Church Missionary Society opined to pupils in Sierra Leone in 1820: 'The Committee are not only desirous that you should know the word of God, but that your minds should be opened and your views enlarged by a knowledge of the world in which we live, and a history of the different nations of the earth and of their present state.'[27]

In particular, Western education was expected by Afrophile mentors of Africans to enable the latter to have confidence in themselves as 'the normal equals' of other races, able to use to advantage opportunities to reveal their creative genius, their resourcefulness, capacity to become authors, medical doctors, bishops, practising scientists, successful businessmen, political thinkers, statesmen, and technocrats. Once such classes of Africans began to appear, argued people like Henry Venn, J. B. Horton, and E. W. Blyden, people outside Africa who were being led to doubt the humanity of Africans, or their ability to contribute some-

thing to the sum-total of human knowledge, or their equality with other races in various fields of human endeavour, would begin to revise their views and begin to learn to respect Africans. That the founders of Western education had to consciously hope that their educational institutions should achieve this end should be understood against the background of the stuff and nonsense disseminated in Europe and America about the Negro in the second half of the nineteenth century by racists and detractors. And as the hopes of Negrophiles were being fulfilled and several educated Africans were vindicating the ability of their race, disparagers of the Negro race were reminded time and again of this achievement of Western education. Exhorting 'the rising generation in West Africa', one such African success of Western education remarked:

> That the African race possesses undoubtedly this ability may be further proved by the result of competitive examination in Europe between those who are educated there and their more favoured schoolmates by the progress they make in different undertakings in their native climate; and it behoves them, therefore, to labour steadfastly for the regeneration of their country, and to dissipate from the minds of those indisposed to the advancement of their race, the false theory always advanced, that they are incapable of advancement.[28]

There were not wanting as well from the earliest days European and African apostles of Western education who wanted science and technology taught and applied to the social and economic aspirations of the continent. Ideologically, and in their vision, these apostles anticipated the aspirations of post-independence Africa. Perhaps the most ardent of these apostles was Dr James Africanus Beale Horton who went to the extent of conducting some research into the flora of West Africa.[29] On the basis of his investigation he saw no reason why coffee, which was doing very well in Liberia and the Gold Coast, should not be massively cultivated in Yorubaland and the Niger valley for export. Tea, which he claimed was indigenous to West Africa—and he discovered a species called *Thea ridlia*—could be produced on a scale that would throw India and China out of the world market; the black

pepper of the hinterland of Sierra Leone and the Gold Coast could be cultivated in superabundance to the point of throwing the East Indies out of competition in the world market; indigo, particularly *Indigo tinsteria* and *Indigo coerulea*, common throughout West Africa, could be cultivated to displace indigo being imported from other parts of the world by the textile industries in England. Upon the basis of his knowledge of the potential richness of West Africa, Horton argued that the University of West Africa, which he had asked for in 1862, should establish Departments of Science, including that of Mineralogy. But not only did Horton ask that institutions of applied science and technology be established, he also argued the case for a research institution—a medical school which would direct its efforts primarily to research into tropical medicine and diseases endemic to Africa. This institution would also teach 'the preliminaries of Medicine viz: Anatomy, Physiology, Chemistry, Botany (of Africa), Natural History, Hospital Practice and Pharmacy'.[30] And such importance did he attach to his proposed medical institution that, even in those early days, he was perspicacious to see what others were to see only very much later—that it was Africans who would be primarily interested in conducting research into African diseases and that a right step in the right direction was a medical school pioneered by Africans. As he said, it was his belief that already Africans were 'perfectly competent to keep such establishment and to bring up young Africans in every branch of the medical profession'.[31]

That Africans in the nineteenth century looked forward to science and technology to bring about industrialization and physical transformation of the type in contemporary Europe and America is clear from their writings. In the language of one of them, the Rev. Spain, in 1887:

> If the present affords any indication of the future, it appears to me that we shall develop in the pathway of science and industry. This is the true road in self-discipline and ultimate independence.... Let us remember that science and industry have made England what she is today—'a marvellous empire spread over all parts of the globe and ruling members of every human race ...' Let our future be directed to science and industry.[32]

The social and economic revolution which the shrewd among the nineteenth century advocates of Western education wished for the African continent apart, there was an awareness by many of them that an educational system that was not functional and related to the aspirations of the community in which it was operating would be gravely defective. Aware that the technological know-how and economic aspirations of nineteenth century Africa were elementary, the improvement of the skills of artisans and farmers was an objective of the designers of technical and vocational training in pre-colonial Africa. In the words of the policy-makers of Lovedale, this institution was expected to 'train a certain number in the various arts of printing, wagon-making, agricultural work and a few as telegraph clerks'.[33] Or as the Rev. T. J. Bowen, a pioneer of Yorubaland, asserted: 'There ought to be farmers and mechanics at every station. . . . The art of reading is not more important than the art of working. A little farm at each station in which we should exhibit such improvements in tools and especially in the mode of cultivation as the people can understand and imitate'.[34]

From these extracts it can be seen that the virtue of the dignity of labour was an objective of some of the early apostles of Western education in Africa; they never thought of producing the type of elite that later emerged—a band of sedentary and arrogant white-collar job-seekers who considered it *infra dig*. for a literate person to till the soil or perform any kind of labour. It is also clear that these early shrewd educationists envisaged a gradual improvement of the implements and machinery used in the handicraft industries and on the farms. The technical aspect of education at the lower level did not escape their attention.

It should be stressed that Christian missions went beyond merely talking about vocational training and the virtue of the dignity of labour. On the Gold Coast the Basel Mission gave industrial education, as technical education was usually described in the nineteenth century, every encouragement. In 1857 two master carpenters, one specializing in house-building and one specializing in furniture-making, were sent out from Europe and workshops sprang up at Christianborg; in 1859 a master chariot-maker followed; in 1860 a master

blacksmith, a mason, and a shoemaker, a potter, and hat-maker. By 1860 not less than seventy-eight Africans were apprenticed by the Workshops.[35] In fact, the Basel Mission-trained craftsmen found employment all along the coast right to Old Calabar. And one might mention here that one such person was Tete Quarshe, who smuggled cocoa seeds into the Gold Coast in 1879 from Fernando Po and thereby provided the foundation stone of the cocoa industry upon which Ghana has depended for decades. Tete Quarshe had gone to Fernando Po as a shoemaker and goldsmith. What the Basel Mission on the Gold Coast meant to the West Coast of Africa, Lovedale meant to all South Africa as the nursery of artisans—tradesmen, farmers, and printers. A legacy of Lovedale is still there today, after more than 100 years, in the form of the Lovedale Press.

Because of the importance of technical and technological education for 'New Africa' and the criticisms which it is customary to heap upon Western education in Africa, with its bias on the literary side, this author would like to illustrate the fact that the apostles of the nineteenth century laid the foundation of the technical aspects of Western education but failed in ways and for reasons that should be pondered by present-day zealots of practical education. In this respect, I want to tell the story of the Hope Waddell Training Institution, Old Calabar.

From the early days of the United Presbyterian Mission, industrial education had been within the thoughts and vision of its missionaries. In fact two people in Jamaica volunteered themselves for a sugar industry in 1846, but the plan was dropped. For the next four decades all that was done was that, in the hope that the Efik people would appreciate the value of a diversified economy and plant cash crops, individual missionaries introduced from Jamaica, the Kew and Glasgow Botanical Gardens, and other parts of the West African coast, a wide range of plants including cocoa, the breadfruit, the avocado pear, Jamaican cocoa, Liberian coffee, two species of arrowroot, pawpaw, ginger, cinnamon, tomato, lemon, the custard apple, jack-fruit, and the Batanga currey.[36]

However, only a few responded by planting cocoa and

coffee. But the failure of the Efik to respond to the wishes of the missionaries in the matter of planting new crops did not deter the mission from holding the idealism of industrial education before the Efiks. In the last decade of the nineteenth century it was considered that the Efik would be ready to appreciate industrial education. By this time there had arisen in Old Calabar an educated elite with tastes for high-quality furniture, printed materials, and houses. And Efik soil was good for brick-making.

But rather than respond merely to the modest needs of the Efiks for a limited number of tradesmen, shoemakers, printers and engineers, the Foreign Mission Board in Scotland conceived a large scheme, in the hope that the non-Efik peoples of the Cross River basin would take advantage of it. Following a comprehensive on-the-spot assessment of the needs of the Cross River peoples by the famous Dr Robert Laws of Livingstonia and the Rev W. Risk Thomson of Jamaica, already in 1893 appointed Missionary Superintendent of the Institution, the Presbyterian Mission started work in earnest and with high hopes.

The Hope Waddell Training Institution opened in 1894 with eighteen apprentices (seven carpenters, five engineers, five printers, of whom two were girls, and one cook-in-training.) The instructors—all Europeans from Scotland—were one printer, two engineers, three carpenters, one bricklayer, and one instructor in manual training. The idea was that lads from all over the Cross River basin would be attracted to this Institution, obtain training for six years, and return to their villages as artisans and evangelists. A chief feature of the Institution was its apprenticeship system, according to which the trainees received wages from the end of the second year, starting with three pence a week and increasing at the rate of three pence a quarter. It was hoped that in a way the Institution could aim at being self-supporting by charging the Mission for the labour of the trainees who were to replace the Basel Mission artisans from the Gold Coast.

Three departments were established: carpentry, engineering, and tailoring. For the first five years the maintenance cost of the Institution was in the neighbourhood of £2,300.

Two departments did very well from the beginning. These were the carpentry department and the brick-making section of the engineering department. The carpentry department made tables, chairs, chests of drawers, and other types of furniture for the Mission as for the white traders and Africans. The brickworks was started at Okorofiong in the interior. By 1897, 88,000 bricks had been made, and these were sold for £224.2s.6d, most being purchased by the Government. So well was this doing that government orders alone could not be satisfied. And it should be remarked that within these early years more than a third of the financial outlay on the brickworks had been realized.[37]

Nevertheless by 1900 the enthusiasm of the Mission had begun to cool on the matter. In spite of the promising nature of the brick-making enterprise, it was decided to pack it up and sell the machinery to the government. In spite of the fact that 'as an industrial and an educational agency the Institution has achieved substantial success', yet the feeling of the controllers of the Mission by this date was that the Institution had been given too much prominence. Therefore the hopes and vision of 1893 died suddenly.

We should explain the reason for the failure of the Hope Waddell to gather momentum. As mentioned above, to some extent it was the deliberate choice of the Mission. It was feared that industrial education was being emphasized at the expense of evangelism. It was not quite clear that industrial education would produce primarily religious and evangelistic results. As it was declared:

> The expectation, however, that within the period during which the Institution has existed—six years—native evangelists and pastors might have been trained within it, is one which is not warranted by the facts of the case ... the Superintendent has been overweighted by the claims of the industrial section of the Institution, and so has not had sufficient time and opportunity to attend to the religious or theological and educational side of the work.[38]

But even if the directors of the Mission had been willing to allow the Institution to develop at the expense of evangelism, it is extremely doubtful whether industrial education

would have caught the fancy of the Cross River peoples. As was the experience of the Basel Mission on the Gold Coast and of the Presbyterian directors of Lovedale, society was not yet ready for the technological improvement being sought, or for the diversification of the economy. For the unlettered majority the traditional agrarian economy and handicraft industry were all right, tied as these were with the cosmology and the moral and social aspirations of the community. Ask the man in pre-colonial African society to plant cocoa in place of maize, or develop tastes for imported glittering and sophisticated goods, or substitute a table for a mat and you upset the social order. A man could not acquire such tastes without being in contact with the white man's world, a world that was not only in contrast with, but decidedly inimical to, the political, social, and economic aspirations of the community. And it should be added that, outside the relatively small areas in which apostles of Western education were allowed to introduce their new system, the white man or his African ward was not welcome.

It is clear, then, that the number of Africans who desired superior articles that could be produced by industrial schools was very small indeed. It was only they—the educated elite, as they are commonly referred to—who wanted to have wealth in monetary terms in order that they might be able to acquire superior articles and thereby widen the gap between themselves, 'the haves', and the vast majority around them, 'the have-nots'. And it may be stressed that such a phenomenon was strange to the traditional milieu where the educational system did not undermine the communalist pattern of society. Viewed against the very small number of would-be customers of the industrial institutions there is no doubt that industrial education could not be an economic proposition.

But apart from the odds with which industrial education had to contend, there was the fact that technical education had very little chance of success in the colonial situation. As the colonial administration expanded and the white man expanded his economic opportunities, the demand for clerks was terrific. Clerkship became financially more rewarding than manual labour. In the colonial setting the clerk mono-

polized prestige and status, and yet he sat in the office where the elements could not batter his body and where physical exertion was really minimal. The clerk was much closer to the seat of power than the technical man. This strange spectacle, which to this day puts the engineer or agriculture graduate higher on the status ladder the more he sits behind the desk, began in the early days of colonial rule.

One other factor that militated against industrial education from the earliest days was the fact that imported articles were cheaper than those which the artisan could produce. In Lagos in the first decade of this century, for instance, skilled carpenters could hardly make more than £60 per annum. It was cheaper to import timber and boards from Europe and America than to make local purchases; it was cheaper to import frames, doors, windows, and other items of furniture than to make these things locally, even when the latter were of inferior quality.[39] It is a trend that has not disappeared and might take quite a long time to disappear.

There are other aspects of Western education which the nineteenth century apostles advocated and pioneered but for which we have no space here. Among these are the following: their awareness of the importance of the vernacular as the medium of teaching in the early years in the school; their awareness of the fact that the curriculum in various disciplines should be designed to emphasize the African environment; their awareness that teaching should be professionalized, rather than remain the means to a career in the Church; their advocacy that teaching should be recognized by society and governments as a noble profession deserving of adequate remuneration.

But we cannot omit a few remarks about the results which followed the coming of Western education to Africa. Practically in every field of human endeavour, thought, and aspirations Western education achieved a lot in two generations. It sowed the seeds of the ideology of nationality, Pan-Africanism, and modernism. Perhaps above all Western education engendered in Africans the hope and conviction that they are abundantly endowed with resourcefulness to contribute to the sum-total of human knowledge in the arts, in science, and technology, that with this *sine qua non* of

human progress they can look forward to the future in hope to catch up with the rest of mankind and thereby put to shame racist denigrators and disparagers of the Negro race.

Quite a formidable list of the products of Western education who became pioneers in the articulation of African nationalism, or in the patronage of a modern-type economy, or in the field of writing, or in the defence of the Negro race against the vilification campaign of racist white writers, or in the education of the wider world outside Africa about the virtues of Africa's cultural heritage and its peoples, or in the vindication of the capacity of Africans in medicine, engineering, and political philosophy, can be easily produced. But we have to limit ourselves to a few, leaving out West Africa, about which ample hints have been given in respect of the legion produced by Western education. Taking Southern Africa, the much less known, and the contribution of Western education to journalism for example,[40] as early as 1837 the Wesleyan missionaries had published a paper called *Umshumaveli Indaba*. Twenty-five years later, the Lovedale Mission Press began to publish *Indaba*, a monthly, two-thirds of which was in Xhosa. Little wonder that by 1870 African wards of missionaries began to be involved in journalism. Right from the first appearance of *Isigidimi Sam-Xhosa*, 1870, it was edited by the Reverend Elijah Makiwane, and in the eighties by John Tengo Jabavu, who has been mentioned in connection with the founding of Fort Hare University. J. T. Jabavu (1859-1921) founded his own journal, *Imvo Zabantsundadu*, through which he expressed Bantu nationalism. Or take the case of Solomon Thekiso Plaaje (1878-1932), a great pioneer of Bantu literature and Secretary-General of the African National Congress which was inaugurated in 1912. He established and edited *Koranta ee Bechuana*.

In order to reveal the variety of the men of quality produced by Western education three characters—arbitrarily chosen—are suggested to readers. These are Henry Carr of West Africa, Sir Apolo Kagwa of Uganda, and Professor Zachariah K. Matthews of Botswana.

Henry Rawlinson Carr was perhaps the most relentless advocate of Western education as the instrument which

should raise Africans to the highest moral plane. Himself an educationist without an equal in tropical Africa before the First World War, he rose to the highest position possible in the civil service, in spite of the prejudices with which Africans had to contend in the early decades of the twentieth century, becoming Resident of the Lagos Colony from 1916 to 1924. Henry Carr's philosophy of education is worth pondering over, not only by Africans who have been mourning the dislocating effects of Western education upon African society and the demoralization that accompanied Western civilization to the continent in general, but by white peoples worried about the failure of the educational systems in their countries to fulfil a moral purpose or produce well-behaved and ethically-guided communities. It is significant that at a time when rationalism, science, anti-clericalism, and secularism were squeezing out the moral content of Western education in Europe and the USA, Henry Carr believed that, properly conceived, this brand of education could, and should, be the purveyor of virtue and the breeder of a vice-free African society. An intellectual revelling most of his time in academic contemplations, he dreamed throughout his life of a society that would be founded, governed, and eternally inspired by virtue. A philosopher-king ensconced on the olympian heights, he lived far from the madding crowd and saw himself in a state of spiritual war with the Nigerian society in which he found himself, that in which for the majority of the people the material (which he described as 'worthless pleasures') was more important than the spiritual. This man of noble character and a clear head has left behind papers, the brilliance and scholarship of which are prominent in his dignified and unemotional style, his economy of words, and the candour of his diction.[41]

About the same time that Henry Carr was born and began to make his mark in the civil service, Sir Apolo Kagwa was born in Buganda. He rose to the position of Katikoro (Premier) in the court of the King in 1889, by which time he had become leader of the Protestant faction in his country. This man who lived till 1927 had learnt his three R's at one of the mission centres, acquired a passion for writing, and became an historian with merits which cannot fail to strike profes-

sional historians of Africa in our generation. His three books—*Entalo Z'Abuganda* (1894), *Bassekabaka Bebuga-Nda* (1901), and *Empisa Z'Abanga* (1904)—are by far the most important sources of the history of Buganda from early times to the end of the reign of Mutesa I (1889). The characteristics of his works worthy of note are that at a time when imperial history was being fostered and educated Africans were being persuaded to disbelieve that Africa had any worthy past, this man saw the value of his country's past; he used oral evidence in an impressive manner; he had a deep insight into the past of the Buganda as well as the chief features of their society. West Africans who know only of the works of Samuel Johnson on the Yoruba and of C. C. Reindorf on the Asante, might note the fact that Sir Apolo Kagwa was a better historian in the way he chronicled the history of his people.

The last but not the least of the early products of Western education we should note is Professor Zachariah K. Matthews of Botswana who on the international plane has been able to have the ability of Africans recognized and respected. Born in 1901 he was educated at Lovedale. He was the first graduate of Fort Hare University College as well as the first African graduate in Law anywhere in South Africa. He studied under Malinowski, the famous anthropologist, in the University of London. In 1935 he was appointed a lecturer at Fort Hare, having obtained the MA degree of Yale University. So highly regarded was this African that in 1936 he became a member of the Imperial Commission which W. Ormsby-Gore set up to investigate Makerere College which had been founded in 1921 as a Technical College and which did not produce its first School Certificate students till 1935. Professor Matthews was associated with the recommendation to upgrade Makerere to a post-secondary institution. In 1945, still at a time when apartheid had not been applied in South Africa, the South African Government recommended that Zachariah Matthews be promoted to the status of Professor. He headed the Department of African Studies from which he had to resign in 1960 when apartheid was fully applied in South Africa. Recognizing his talent the World Council of Churches em-

ployed him as one of its Secretaries. Lastly, he has represented his country, Botswana, as ambassador to the United Nations and United States.[42]

From all that has been said it is beyond doubt that the coming of Western education to Africa was not an ordinary event and that the defects we decry in this system of education today are not necessarily traceable to, nor intended by, its apostles. Africa's debt to them in the nineteenth century is priceless. It is for this reason that the leaders of agitation for independence recognized and appreciated the indebtedness of modern Africa to Christian missions whose contribution to the spread and growth of Western education in various parts of Africa continued to be crucial throughout the colonial period. In this regard the following tribute by a product of mission schools, Nnamdi Azikiwe, at the height of his philippics against missionaries in the thirties, is worthy of note:

> We submit that whatever progress we may have made today in Africa is due directly to the efforts of missionaries. Forget their shortcomings. Overlook their errors. Discard the crimes committed by some of them. Still, these could not overshadow the great emancipation of Africans, mentally and physically, through the efforts of missionaries ... it is too evident that missionaries are a necessity and not a luxury in the growth of African society from a simple to a more complex civilization.[43]

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5

A Visionary of the African Church: Mọjọla Agbebi (1860-1917)

As a churchman whose mind has since 1960 been engaged with such subjects as the planting, the spread, and the fortunes of Christianity in Africa, it seems to me that today four basic problems constitute a formidable, though not an insuperable, challenge to the Church on the continent. Perhaps the most important of these problems, to which the attention of those genuinely concerned about the Church in Africa has been drawn increasingly in our generation, is how the transplanted churches from Europe and the New World are to be transformed into the Church of God in which African culture can integrate, in which the African can worship uninhibited emotionally or psychologically 'in spirit and in truth'. Second, there is the problem of how institutionalized Christianity in Africa is to acquire an identity and self-dignity of its own as a unit within the organic whole of the Church Universal, in the manner of the virile 'historic' churches in Europe and the New World of which the churches in Africa are the offspring. Third, the Church in Africa has got to contend with the demon of nationalism *per se*, a veritable obstacle capable of preventing the African Church from acquiring a global outlook through co-operation with other races in the spirit of comradeship and oneness in Christ. Last, but by no means least, the Church in Africa has got to inhale the air of ecumenism, deal the mortal blow to sectarianism, and weld together Christian communities in the direction of unity at regional and continental levels.

Although the imperativeness for the Church in Africa to

perceive and resolve these problems is pressing now more than ever before, it is instructive to note that as far back as the second half of the nineteenth century a few uniquely clairvoyant and dedicated Christian African leaders had recognized the challenge of these problems and had made some effort to tackle it. It is in the hope that the thoughts, observations, idealism, and sense of total commitment to Christianity of some of these leaders may inspire us to a higher level of perception of our responsibilities with respect to the evolution of the ideal Church for Africa that I wish to discuss the life, career, hopes and vision of David Brown Vincent, popularly known as Mọjọla Agbebi, the African name which he assumed on 24 August 1894.

Mọjọla Agbebi was born on 10 April 1860 at Ilesha, the principal settlement of the Ijẹsha branch of the Yoruba inhabitants of south-western Nigeria. His parents belonged to different ethnic groups—his father, George Vincent, was an Ekiti Yoruba from Oyẹ; his mother, Peggy Yoko, was born in Sierra Leone Colony, but had Igbo blood in her veins. It was in Sierra Leone Colony that George Vincent, a victim of the Yoruba civil war of the nineteenth century liberated by the British Navy and resettled in the Colony, married Peggy Yoko. A beneficiary of the Church Missionary Society's philanthropy, George Vincent became a catechist in the village of Hastings, whence he was transferred to Ilesha in 1859, where he laboured continuously as a minister until his death in 1914.

The multi-ethnic origins of Mọjọla, the third of nine children, is significant in one way: it may explain, in part, his cosmopolitan outlook and rejection of ethnocentrism as a determinant of his attitude to, and relations with, people. However, the bedrock of the catholicity of his attitude towards all men was Christianity in which he was brought up from childhood. His understanding of the verities of the Christian faith, of its humanistic principles, and of the virtues of love, brotherhood, and equality of all men that it fosters was aided by the literary education he acquired formally for fourteen years. In 1866, he was sent to Ibadan where he attended the CMS Kudẹti School under the tutorship of a puritanical relative, Daddy Levi Green Agbelehusi, a

member of the Southern American Baptist Mission Church. In 1875 he was admitted to the CMS Training Institution for post-primary education, an institution meant for young men who intended to make their career in the Church, graduating from a school teacher to a catechist and finally to a fully-ordained minister. In 1878, he completed his training and was appointed a teacher at Faji School, Lagos, until 1880, when his connection with the Church Missionary Society came to an end because of the premarital sexual experience he had with Miss Adeọtan Sikuade whom he married in the same year.

From 1882, when he began to appear in public life, till his death in 1917, Mọjọla applied the Christian concepts of universal brotherhood of mankind in his human relations. He eschewed bigoted provincialism and tribal jingoism at a time when these fissiparous factors were dismantling West African nations and encouraging inter-tribal wars. Agbebi saw himself at home whether in Buguma among the Kalabari of the Niger Delta, or in Monrovia among the Kru, or in the polyglot society of Sierra Leone, or among the Negroes, 'Africans in exile', of the New World.

Nor was he a racist. He dealt with individuals on their merits rather than on the accident of their colour or their ethnic label. Hence in 1883 he mourned the loss of the Reverend James A. Lamb, a CMS missionary in Yorubaland, with a dirge 'Voice of Sorrow'. Four years later, when it was an eminent Nigerian in Lagos, Henry Robbin, who passed away, he wrote an elegy which was publicly acclaimed by Sir Alfred Moloney, Governor of Lagos Colony and Protectorate. In 1912 it was the turn of the Pan-Negro patriot, Edward Wilmot Blyden, whose loss he felt so much that he organized a Memorial Fund out of which in 1914 came the portrait of this prince of African *literati* in the Glover Memorial Hall, unveiled by Sir Frederick Lugard, Governor-General of Nigeria. Among his closest associates, helpers, and mentors were men of all races. In the consolidation of Baptist work among the Kalabari of the Niger Delta, Agbebi worked in harmony with the chiefs and Church leaders—the Amakris and Batubọs—in a manner still cherished by Baptist adherents in the Niger Delta.[1] His con-

tact with the Reverend W. Hughes, one-time British Baptist missionary in the Cameroons, resulted in the *gratis* training of a number of Africans by the African Training Institute, North Wales, in medicine and other professions. As early as 1898, he had corresponded with J. E. Bruce, the Negro journalist and co-founder with Arthur Schomburg in 1911 of the Negro Society for Historical Research.[2] In 1903, Agbebi went to the New World and in Yonkers he found a group of supporters who raised money in aid of his evangelistic work in West Africa.

Slender though the opportunity was that he had for learning—he was less privileged than such contemporaries as Henry Carr and Isaac Oluwole, both of whom enjoyed university studentship at Fourah Bay—adventurous and studious Agbebi developed a voracious appetite for learning, and indeed by 1882, he had begun to reveal himself as an erudite man with a literary skill and oratorical power that had begun to gain for him a respectable audience in English-speaking West Africa. Throughout his life he never ceased to improve himself, ultimately winning the titles of MA and DD which were conferred on him *in absentia* by colleges in Liberia and the United States *honoris causa*. His resourcefulness and versatility were clearly revealed in his contributions as a debater, journalist, author, educationalist, and preacher of the Gospel. No one who has perused his fifteen-odd publications can doubt the excellence of his mind and the breadth and depth of his knowledge. Particularly worthy of stress is the fact that, unlike the majority of his contemporaries whose knowledge was oriented towards Europe, he applied his mind to an understanding of the local environment of West Africa in general and of Yorubaland in particular. And with the conviction that accompanied his knowledge of the purposefulness, the functions, the vitality, the qualities, and legitimacy of very many of the African customs and institutions, irrationally and unjustifiably denounced as unchristian by missionaries and Europeanized Africans, Mojola Agbebi's writings, with their pugnacious diction and piquant style, were essentially African in content, in feeling, in aim, and in perspective. In this way, he was able to recognize and appreciate African culture and values in which he was to

insist throughout his life the Christianity of the Bible should be incarnate.

The first major point to note about Mọjọla Agbebi is his eternal gratitude to the missionaries who introduced Christianity to the continent and kept the torch of the faith burning. For him, as well as for the martyrs of the Christian religion in several parts of Africa, in the nineteenth century Christianity was the best gift and the highest revelation to mankind; it was the elixir of life, the Open Sesame to all human happiness here on earth and in the world to come. Surely those who brought this divine gift to Africans, he said, deserved the highest praise and the deepest gratitude, notwithstanding the shortcomings of individual missionaries and the errors of their evangelization methods. For Agbebi, Christianity was so priceless a gift of gifts that Africans must be ready to die for it if need be. In his day, particularly in the pre-colonial era when the missionary alone was the detector, revealer, and spokesman for the interests of Africans, the practical achievements of Christianity, through the agency of missionaries, were patent for all to see. Through the exertions of his brethren in Europe, it was the missionary who freed the African from the physical bondage of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, and appealed to his home country from Africa for the suppression of slave-catching, slave-selling, and slave-holding; it was the missionary who, through his school, rescued the mind of the African from the trammels and shackles of superstition and ignorance, and made the African literate, and consequently a beneficiary of knowledge of human achievements in other parts of the world; the missionary, again through the school, made it possible for the gifted African to develop his talents and thereby reveal to the wider and sceptically-disposed world that he was biologically the equal of the white man; and it was the missionary who sought to improve the material well-being of the African and quite often identified and defended the interests of the African against the oppressive measures of the colonial ruler and the greediness and exploitation of the white trader. In a debate in Lagos on 16 February 1885, Agbebi summed up his views on the tribute that Africa owes to missionaries in a manner worth quoting in full:

> Missionaries, and Missionaries alone, are the real pioneers of African civilization. It was commercial Europe that invented slave labour and discovered the victims of slavery but it was evangelical Europe that promulgated the edict of universal emancipation. It was adventurous Europe, under the title of 'Anthropological Society', that placed us, the inhabitants of this good land, in the category of the brute creation; but it was Missionary Europe that proved us men. It is not and has never been the pleasure of commercial Europe to impart education in whatever scale to the natives of the soil, as this would lessen their hold over them and give them less scope to cheat, and enrich themselves from the products of the country. But Missionary Europe holds education as one of the important levers towards the amelioration of the people, and considers that without it their work is in vain. Whatever these pioneers of civilization are, whether they are Belgians, Frenchmen, Germans, Portuguese, English or American, tell them we shall ever hail them with delight, and God shall bless them.[3]

The clear understanding of Christianity *per se* by Mojola Agbebi and the due recognition of the apostolic dedication and exertions of the genuine planters of the gospel seed in Africa should be food for thought for the present generation of Christians in Africa. For quite often we fail to see the distinction between Christianity *per se* and its human purveyors—European and African—whose foibles and frailties we are appalled to observe are incompatible with the sublime tenets of the Christian religion. Therefore we conclude, quite wrongly, that Christianity is discreditable and inherently inimical to the true interests of Africans; that it is the religion of the white man who had employed it, sometimes through the missionary, to herald colonial rule and economic exploitation of Africans. This kind of thinking, which was widespread among African rulers in the pre-colonial days, who saw the missionary associating with white trader and secular agent, infected several leaders of African nationalist movements and one needs only to read the writings and pronouncements of such people as Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya, Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Nnamdi Azikiwe of Nigeria, and Hastings Banda of Malawi to be convinced of the pervasiveness of this kind of thinking in which Christianity is dismissed as an enemy of Africa because of the actions

or inactions, statements or speechlessness of the Church leaders on specific issues in colonial Africa.[4]

Mojola Agbebi never became sceptical about the Christian religion and its role in Africa. Indeed he comprehended its eternal tenets and their potentialities for the creation of the ideal society, the ideal people, and the ideal policy in Africa. Therefore he separated the human element in institutionalized Christianity from the Faith itself, blaming the human agency, and absolving the Christian religion *per se* from all blame. Aware of the enormities being committed in Africa by white missionaries, merchants, and secular agents, all of whom described themselves as Christians, Mojola Agbebi lectured audiences time and again that it was European Christianity, not the Christianity of the Bible, that should be blamed for the material and political interests of Europe that were being gratified in Africa with the blessings, if not the collaboration, of missionaries and the Church. Consequently, he denounced the 'Scramble' for, and the establishment of colonial rule in, Africa.[5] His denunciation of these events arose out of his conviction that these events had no valid basis in Christianity, as well as from his passion for justice and humanity. No one people, he said, could claim in the name of Christianity to destroy the sovereignty of another, grab their land, exploit their resources and, through the kind of discreditable lives of some European rulers, pollute African morals. As he declared in his great and widely publicized sermon of 2 December 1902, on the occasion of the first anniversary of the African Bethel Church, Lagos:

> European Christianity is a dangerous thing. What do you think of a religion which holds a bottle of gin in one hand and a Common Prayerbook in the other? . . . A religion which points with one hand to the skies, bidding you 'lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven', and while you are looking up, grasps all your worldly goods with the other hand, seizes your ancestral lands, labels your forests, and places your patrimony under inexplicable legislation? . . . a religion which arrogates to itself censorial functions on sexual morality and yet promotes a dance, in which one man's wife dances in close contact, questionable proximity and improper attitude with another woman's

husband. O! Christianity, what enormities are committed in thy name.[6]

Rather than disown Christianity and notwithstanding the discrediting of the Church by its human agency in the colonial era, Mojọla Agbebi dedicated his life to spreading the religion. He was first and foremost an evangelist. For him the Church was the noblest institution in which Africans should invest their talents; it was in the Church that the social and political aspirations of Africans could best be fulfilled. Properly conceived, he said, the Church should be the *primum mobile* of the existence and development of Africans. In his view nothing was worthwhile unless it was the creation or outgrowth of Christianity in the affairs of men. Christianity was the Cause, all other things the effect. 'The termination of colonial rule and the economic development of the continent,' he said, 'could be achieved by acceptance and application of Christianity by Africans.'[7]

With this conception of Christianity, Mojọla Agbebi remained in the service of the Church all his life, in spite of the patent attractions of the civil service, journalism, and commercial firms. His connection with the foreign-established churches was brief—with the Church Missionary Society from 1878 to 1880, with the Roman Catholic Church for a much shorter time, and with the Southern American Baptist Mission from 1886 to April 1888, when he joined with others in the formation of the Native Baptist Church, the first breakaway independent African Church in Nigeria. From that year until his death, Mojọla Agbebi was an evangelist for, and in, African Churches, particularly the Native Baptist Church. For although he moved freely with other African Churches in Nigeria, notably the United Native African Church (founded in 1891) and the African Bethel Church (founded in 1901), Mojọla Agbebi assumed and paraded the label of a Baptist, becoming President of the African Baptist Union of West Africa, which he founded. By 1903, this organization which spread along the cost from Sierra Leone to the Congo and which embraced diverse ethnic groups such as the Kru, the Fanti, the Yoruba, the Ijaw, and the Igbo, could boast of twenty churches and

schools, seventeen ordained and unordained preachers, twenty-five church officers, five hundred Sunday school scholars, seven hundred weekday schools, and nearly three thousand worshippers.[8]

Since it was the Baptist mode of worship and organization that he admired best and fostered in the churches he founded and controlled, his warm ecumenical spirit notwithstanding, it is essential to explain his preference for the Baptists. The forms and formularies imported into Africa by the alien missions, he argued, were by and large man-made; they constituted what he described as 'the non-essentials' of the Christian religion. 'According to the Apostle's estimate,' he declared, 'the preaching of Christ, the triumph of the Gospel, the success of practical righteousness is the essential thing, all others are non-essentials.'[9] And it grieved him as he observed the emphasis which different denominations, particularly the Anglicans and Roman Catholics, were putting on 'rituals' and the 'non-essentials' of religion. In his belief, the Baptists were the least ritually-minded and he was fascinated by the simplicity of their worship which, they claimed, was based entirely on the New Testament teachings. He also loathed the hierarchical and elaborate organizational structure of the Anglican Church and the latter's doctrine of the 'historic espiscopate'. In contrast to all this was the congregational organization of the Baptist community, the spirit of independence fostered by each church administering its own affairs, and the concepts of individual responsibility, freedom of conscience, and personal accountability which the Baptists tried to encourage.[10]

From all available evidence, it would seem that Mọjọla Agbebi was out for a career in the Church. From childhood when he dreamed of an angel rescuing him from being clubbed by the Devil[11] to his death when fire mysteriously consumed his personal effects, the spiritual element predominated in him. It is known that as a small child he won six converts for the Church in a way that surprised his Sunday School teacher; in the CMS Training Institution he set a record in Theology and Sacred History; the esoteric exerted considerable influence on him and he was a hypnotist of international fame.[12]

It was around 1886 that Mojola Agbebi began to consider the formation of an African Church. Having made a special study of the New Testament and the history of modern missions, he came to the conclusion that the solution to the problem of African evangelization was the planting and nurturing of independent churches. Feeling that he should blaze the trail in this direction, he sold all his property with the intention of moving into the interior of Yorubaland to implement his ideas.[13] However, he had to defer his intentions because of the civil war still raging in the country. In the meantime, in 1888, events in the Baptist Church in Lagos, under the control of an American missionary, developed into a major crisis in which Mojola Agbebi played a prominent part, leading to the formation of the Native Baptist Church.[14]

Hardly had this independent African Church been founded than Mojola Agbebi began to formulate his philosophy of the ideal African Church he would like to see evolve in Africa. The most important strand of this philosophy was that the Church should be a symbol and an expression of the African personality by acquiring characteristics of the African environment without sacrificing the eternal principles of the Christian faith. In other words, Mojola Agbebi was advocating that Christianity in Africa must be incarnate within the African milieu, that the Church was not to be absorbed into this milieu. In this respect he stressed and preached incessantly that those parts of the African cultural heritage that were not incompatible with the essentials of Christianity should be preserved and that foreign hymn books should be entirely discarded. Among the parts of the African heritage that he wished to see preserved were names, the vernacular, clothing, and marriage ceremonies (but not polygamy). By and large, in his exposition of views like these, Mojola was one of very few among the educated African elite who saw that there was no necessarily logical connection between Christianity and European culture. The universal belief of his times, a belief that still exists in the minds of thousands, if not millions, of Christians in various parts of Africa today, was that to be a Christian one must throw away his African name for a European or Hebrew

one, boycott African dress in favour of European dress, and abandon African methods and style of courtship and marriage for the European (not necessarily Christian) methods and style.[15]

Although Agbebi was not alone in his age in urging that the Church should be an expression of African personality—Edward Wilmot Blyden of Liberia, 'Holy' Johnson of Nigeria, and Orishatukeh Faduma of Sierra Leone, propounded similar ideas—he alone went a long way to translate belief into practice. As mentioned earlier, he threw away the 'denationalized' alien name of David Brown Vincent on 24 August 1894 while he was in Liberia to be ordained as a Baptist minister. From 1894 until his death he refused to wear European clothes even when he was in Britain and the United States. At home he was often clad in the loose garment consisting of a single piece of native cloth wrapped round the body; outside he wore the voluminous dress of the Yoruba in all its variety.

In all the churches that he founded, he preached adoption of all these customs,[16] but there was one that concerned him most—hymnology. He made it a policy that the hymns in his organization were composed by members of the congregations, that they were sung to native tunes and in the native fashion. In order that Africans might express the warmth of their nature and the sense of participation to the fullest at services, he stressed that African drums and musical instruments should be used rather than alien musical instruments. As he lectured a congregation that had just sung with gusto the 'Hallelujah Chorus':

> The hymns of one nation may not necessarily be those of another nation, and they may not be put in a book. The Christians of England may sing hymns differently from the Christians of Armenia, of France, or of Africa. One tribe may sing differently from another tribe.... Tastes differ. English tunes and metres, English songs and hymns, some of them most unsuited to African aspiration and intelligence, have proved effective in weakening the talent for hymnology among African Christians.... No one race or nation can fix the particular kind of tunes which will be universally conducive to worship.[17]

Mojọla Agbebi's demand for, and dream of, an African Church that would be in harmony with the African environment is still to be fully appreciated. Today the regret being universally expressed by Roman Catholics and Protestants, Europeans and Africans, who are deeply interested in the evolution of a virile Church that would command the allegiance and evoke spontaneous response from Africans, is that the western-founded Churches have remained prefabricated edifices of Europe and the New World in which the African cannot fulfil himself spiritually, in which he is by and large psychologically, emotionally, and spiritually in a void. This is the kind of regret found in the writings of such scholars as Professor Bolaji Idowu of Nigeria, Dr V. Mulago of Congo-Kinshasa, and Dr John Mbiti of Kenya.[18] It is only now, with the research-findings of such scholars as Professor J. H. Nketia of Ghana about African musicology, that the truth and rightness of Agbebi's advocacy of African hymnology are being fully appreciated.[19] And, in the light of the research that has been done on the independent African churches in different parts of the continent, there can be no doubt that, to a very great extent, it was the inadequacy, the foreignness, and the failure of the Western-established Churches to provide a home for the African that inspired the existence and proliferation of the much-vilified African Church organizations.[20] Indeed, up to this day the complexion, the formularies, the liturgies, and the hymn books of our churches remain essentially what they were in past generations. In this sense, the following observation made in 1902 by Mojọla Agbebi is still valid: 'Prayerbooks and hymnbooks, harmonium dedications, pew constructions, surpliced choir, the white man's style, the white man's name, the white man's dress, are so many non-essentials, so many props and crutches affecting the religious manhood of the Christian African.'[21]

Deriving logically from the first major strand of Agbebi's philosophy for the ideal Church for Africa just examined, is the point that this Church must be controlled and financed entirely by Africans. This was because it was the missionaries who, out of the best intentions, in the conviction that the industrial, scientific, and technological progress of

their metropolitan countries was determined by Christianity, transported to Africa the patterns, organizations, dogmas, and structures of the homeland Churches. It was with sincerity that these missionaries believed that the African milieu must be changed first to the European type before the genuine Church could be established and made to flourish. These missionaries did not perceive as 'non-essentials' the forms and formularies so labelled by Mọjọla Agbebi; they held firmly to the view that the more Europeanized their converts became, that is, the less African they became, the more Christian these converts were. It was natural that the wards of the missionaries shared the views and prejudices of their masters.

Such people—the white missionaries and their African auxiliaries—Agbebi said, could not be expected to be builders of the authentic African Church. Indeed, since their advent in Africa they had been a veritable hindrance to the evolution of such a church by their method of alienating African converts from the African milieu. Consequently, the churches that dotted the continent were not African edifices; in them Africans were never at home and could never derive inspiration. In these churches, the Europeanized Christians had become aliens: 'we have become aliens in our Father's house'.[22] It was a situation that demanded African personnel, upon whom the Christianization of Africa should devolve. Once they were able to evolve an appropriate attitude towards their cultural heritage in relation to the Christianity of the Bible, once they responded fully and spiritually to the demands of the Christian Faith, once they manifested enthusiasm and zeal for the spread of Christianity and displayed adequate liberality in financial matters on behalf of the Church, then there would emerge the ideal African Church which he defined in 1892 as 'a Church governed by Africans, supported by Africans, minus the trammels, complexion and domination of a foreign and alien race'.[23]

Time and again Mọjọla Agbebi emphasized that in his view, the Christianization of Africa and the creation of the ideal Church on the continent must be the obligatory duty of Africans themselves. Europeans could not achieve these

ends, he said, no matter how well-intentioned; they could not comprehend the African milieu and they would never understand Africans; they could never be dissuaded from parading the cultural values of their countries as the models for Africans to copy. Africans had racial characteristics and idiosyncracies which differed substantially and materially from those of the Negroes in the New World, and therefore knowledge of the Negro in the United States was no qualification for ability to understand Africans and their environment. As he lectured his American friends of the Yoruba Association, the nucleus of the Nigerian Baptist Convention, on 10 March 1915:

> We believe, however, that there is some difference between the African in his own country and among his own people and the African abroad and perhaps in exile. The missionary may be able to find out and understand the former, but it may take him all his life to understand the latter. Social conditions which are repugnant to American or European taste may be found here and customs and manners which find no acceptance in foreign lands may be met with in this country. We have to reckon with them.[24]

Research into African culture and particularly African religions, Mọjọla Agbebi said, was a *sine qua non* for the evolution of a virile and authentic African Church. His research into the religion of the Yoruba revealed to him that there were elements in it that should have been made the basis for explanations of the tenets of Christianity to the Yoruba with abundant dividends for the Church. For he was astonished to discover that the Yoruba were sophisticated exponents of the concept of the Deity; they were worshipping the one Supreme Being, through the agency of myriads of divinities; they had a conception of the immortality of the soul; physical decay and death meant for them transmutation of man from the corruptible to the incorruptible; the concept of sacrifice formed a part of the Yoruba religious system; and all these were apart from the moral values and virtues fostered by the Yoruba religion. A knowledge of such features of African religion, declared Mọjọla Agbebi, was indispensable to the missionary and the Church, if the former was to

speak in intelligible language to Africans, if the propagators of the Christian Faith were to perceive the fact that what the religious system of the Africans required was transformation rather than destruction, sublimation rather than desecration.

In other words, Mojola Agbebi called for a positive and objective investigation of African religion with a view to finding out its theology, the known from which potential converts could be led to the unknown. He recognized that racial idiosyncracies and customs which were devoid of sin constituted no barrier to the conversion of, and availability of, divine grace to Africans. This kind of positive response to African religion was a great contrast to the nihilist attitude exhibited by the early missionaries and other African auxiliaries. It is only now that Agbebi's demand for an African theology and his declaration concerning the unsuitability of imported theologies, forms, and formularies, are being endorsed by scholars. Indeed, one wonders whether enough effort is being given to carrying out a comprehensive survey of the indigenous religions of Africa—which have refused to disappear—with the aim of achieving the lofty ideals that Agbebi had in mind and which Professor Idowu, formerly of the Department of Religious Studies, University of Ibadan, has been putting across to Church leaders in our own generation.[25] Today, by and large, the majority of our Church leaders who are still inhibited by the dogmas and prejudices against the worthiness of the study of African traditional religion, would not understand the importance, relevance and urgency of the following appeal made by Mojola Agbebi nearly ninety years ago:

> Our heathen brethren are entitled to our respect. Ile-Ife, the reputed cradle of mankind, would be a fitting subject for disquisition to the religious student, and the mastering and collecting of the unwritten Yoruba classics would not be an unworthy task. To be successful, we have to study the names, designs and influences of the stone and wooden gods of our fathers; the folk-lore of stranger-tribes, and customs unfamiliar.[26]

Throughout his life, Mojola Agbebi never wavered in his conviction that the spread of Christianity and the proper growth of the Church along right lines were obligatory on

Africans. He stressed time and again that the resources in men and money for the achievement of these ideals should be provided by Africans, who should never count the cost but spend and be spent on behalf of the Christian faith. He called for 'consecrated Africans, holy men, sons of the soil' and declared in a language that is worth heeding by churches in Africa today, which still look to the whites in Europe and America to evangelize Africa and bear the cost in money, if not in men. Addressing the Native Baptist Church on 7 April, 1889, he declared:

> To render Christianity indigenous to Africa, it must be watered by native hands, pruned with the native hatchet, and tended with native earth. A grave responsibility rests upon the shoulders of Native Churches in Africa for the propagation of this Holy Faith among the untold millions of their brethren. It is a curse if we intend for ever to hold at the apron-strings of foreign teachers, doing the baby for aye.[27]

The concept of independence from alien control was inherent in Mojola Agbebi's exposition of the African Church. As mentioned earlier, he believed that any form of control of one people by another could not be supported on Christian grounds, and it was in the Church that he believed the emancipation of Africa should begin. Christianity itself, he said, set the African free by inculcating in him the concept of 'Liberty in Christ Jesus'.[28] It was imperative that Africans controlled and directed their religious affairs in order that the African Church might have a distinct identity, an identity that would confer on her self-dignity. Although he did not mention a specific date when he expected alien control of the Church in Africa to cease, he hinted time and again that it must be soon. As early as 1889, he had begun to see the beginning of the end of this alien control. As he said: 'Yet I see a glimmer . . .. So also the time will come when it shall be said that the Bishops, Archbishops, Abbots and Cardinals of Europe or America have no jurisdiction in the continent of Africa.'[29]

Since he saw independence of the Church as a *sine qua non* for the undoing of the work of the partitioners of Africa, he did not expect European imperialism to develop into colonial rule. He very much hoped that the African Church would be sovereign before the end of the nineteenth century, her sovereignty heralding 'an end of Privy Councils, Governors, Colonels, Annexations, Displacements, Partitions, Cessions and Coercions'.[30] He observed that in several parts of Africa, Christian missions had by the era of the 'Scramble' stayed too long, and that they ought to have decolonized. Missionaries ought to have imitated the Apostle Paul, who never stayed too long among the converts to 'sit over their councils'. He castigated Christian missions for failing to withdraw, in an address to the United Native African Church on 20th September 1891:

> It does not seem that it is appointed to foreign teachers with their countless sects and myriad dogmas to clothe African personality with the toga of manhood. The Sphinx must solve her own riddle. The genius of Africa must unravel its own enigma. It is within the inclination of foreign teachers to meddle in some shape or form with this Ark of God. They would not be content with driving and directing.[31]

In Agbebi's view, it was only by being absolutely independent that the African Church would be fulfilling fully the purpose of God in Africa and for Africans. In order that this independence might be real, he advocated that the Church should live within the limits of her own financial resources; there should be no dependence upon, or reckless seeking after, aid from outside the continent. In this respect, he singled out the wages of ministers and the factors that should determine their earnings. First, he said, ministers of the Gospel must regard their profession primarily as one of service, rather than as an avenue for making money. They should 'labour not to be rich. They must not seek for money.' In other words, financial considerations *per se* must not enter into the thoughts of a prospective minister: 'The Ministry is not a commercial speculation.'[32]

This is not to say that Mojola Agbebi was opposed to large earnings by workers of the African Church. In fact, he was in favour of fat salaries for them, provided the Church could afford large wages. The distinction he was making was that prospective clergymen must be spiritually qualified; they

Africans. He stressed time and again that the resources in men and money for the achievement of these ideals should be provided by Africans, who should never count the cost but spend and be spent on behalf of the Christian faith. He called for 'consecrated Africans, holy men, sons of the soil' and declared in a language that is worth heeding by churches in Africa today, which still look to the whites in Europe and America to evangelize Africa and bear the cost in money, if not in men. Addressing the Native Baptist Church on 7 April, 1889, he declared:

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must have a sustained interest and be fully convinced that it was in the priesthood that they could best fulfil the divine purpose; love of, and ability for, the job, rather than hope of the material reward, must determine the choice of the Ministry as one's profession. Second, Agbebi pronounced the view that Ministers of the African Church 'should prepare to live within the means of the people over whom they pastorate'.[33] In other words, the style and standard of living of the pastor of a Church must reflect the financial capacity of his Church and the style and standard of living of the members of his congregation.

These two points underlined by Mọjọla Agbebi are crucially relevant to the interest and prospects of the Church in Africa in our generation. It is a very well-known fact that today a major problem that confronts the Church is her inability and failure to recruit intellectually suitable people for the ministry and that the majority of clergymen are in the Church because it is only in the Church that their qualifications are marketable and from which they can obtain maximum material satisfaction. The mercenary motive of the majority of Church workers and leaders is clear from the incessant demand for equation of the salary structure of the Church with that of the civil service. Of equal importance is the fact that, in spite of the grumbling by the clergy that their earnings are lower than those of their compeers in other walks of life, the gap between their standard of living and that of the majority of Church members is very wide.

Yet it is patently in the interest of the Church to recruit dedicated, intellectual, and spiritually pre-eminent leaders who would make the pulpit and the pew spiritual and mental equals. For it is a fact that today, unlike in the pre-colonial era when the pulpit was intellectually superior to the pew, an ever increasing number of the laity are becoming even more literate than the majority of the clergy. It is a trend which should be halted if the Church is to be a meaningful and relevant institution in the rapidly changing Africa. In the same manner, the African Church cannot ignore the social and material gap between the clergy and the majority of Christian adherents in an Africa where demand for social

justice is increasing. Already, to the disadvantage of the Church, Bishops, Primates, Archdeacons, and other Church dignitaries are being grouped with the over-privileged class in society.

It should be emphasized that Mọjọla Agbebi was not just an armchair theorist and visionary of the ideal African Church. As has been shown, in some ways he applied his philosophy in the Native Baptist Church, which became such a virile and successful institution that it outrivalled the churches of the Southern American Baptist Mission. The virility of the Native Baptist Church was emphasized by the fact that in 1914 when the two Baptist bodies began to consider a merger, *at the instance of the foreign mission*, Mọjọla Agbebi could have been employed at a salary much higher than he ever got as evangelist and a pastor within the African Church organization. Also with his trenchant pen he could have made headway in journalism after the manner of J. B. Benjamin, proprietor and editor of the *Lagos Observer*, and G. A. Williams, editor of the *Lagos Standard*. The spiritual in Agbebi may be judged from the ascetic life which he led to a point where he ate sparingly—usually a handful of parched corn or beans. He believed in occasional fasting as an aid to the speedy answer of prayer. He was a vegetarian in the Gandhian style, a total abstainer, a non-smoker, and a believer in the Judaic doctrine on pork. He sought to impose some of these severe regulations on his followers, demanding from candidates for baptism a solemn pledge that they would neither drink, nor smoke, nor eat pork.[34] Indeed, the Native Baptist Church acquired the reputation of being the only one in West Africa which on account of the evils of the liquor traffic, excluded liquor from the Communion table. There was a streak of puritanism in Mọjọla Agbebi, hence his deep-seated hatred for the European form of dancing which he described as sexually tempting and therefore morally debasing.

As a pastor, Mọjọla Agbebi was extremely sympathetic and accessible to the poor. He was hospitable, sharing the little he had with those less privileged, a virtue he had shown from boyhood when he insisted on sharing his meals with the family dog. Spiritually rich and materially poor, he dedicated

his life to the 'struggle for a rising Africa' by inspiring the formation of 'a Church governed by Africans, worked by Africans, supported by Africans, minus the trammels, complexion, and dominations of a foreign and alien race'.

Not only did Agbebi rule out the mercenary motive from his services for the Christian cause, but intellectually he made the pulpit higher than the pew. With his superior intellect he was able to deliver sermons, the publication of which was eagerly sought throughout English-speaking West Africa and among the Negroes in the New World. His sermons showed a great deal of erudition, historical allusions being drawn from ancient Greece and Rome, Europe and America, as well as from the African continent. Never did he confine his sermons to exegesis on the Scriptures only. Rather it was his habit to make reference to Protestants and Catholics and draw examples from the experiences of secular society. In an age when his audiences were far less literate, far less well read, and far less in a position to enjoy the consolations of history, he made history his handmaid to illustrate spiritual truths. His examples were drawn from the spectrum of human history—Mohammed the Prophet, Buddha, Confucius, Francis Xavier (all eminent in the history of religion); Alexander the Great, Oliver Cromwell, George Washington, and Napoleon I (eminent statesmen and brilliant soldiers); Columbus, the famous explorer and Wedgwood, the inventor.

His philosophy of the African Church apart, Mọjọla Agbebi was an early apostle of ecumenism. Nothing annoyed him more than the divisions brought into the Church by the 'non-essentials' of Christianity to which various denominations and sects attached so much importance. Sectarianism, he believed, was the handiwork of the Devil which only the independent African Church should, and could, wipe out. In Agbebi's view, sectarianism could not claim divine approval and was a disastrous source of weakness for the Church in Africa. Unity of action and cooperation by the Churches would be only a second best; the ideal was a union, for 'the Spirit of Union is the Spirit of God'. 'Sectarian bigotry, denominational pride and exclusiveness,' he declared, 'are enemies to the Cause of God.'

Therefore, it behoved the African Church which he envisaged, to raise a 'standard against the strife and divisions which have been introduced among us by foreign teachers and which have long remained as bugbears on the gospel plain'.[35]

Much as he believed that in some respects the doctrines of one Church were more basically Scriptural than those of another, he was no dogmatist. In respect of the best form of marriage, for instance, he was convinced that monogamy was the best form: 'Personally, I can conceive of no other union between man and woman so happy, so salutary, so blest, as that between one man and one woman.'[36] However, this view did not prevent him from becoming a minister of the United Native African Church, an organization which accepted polygamists into its membership and ministry. Also, while he believed that the right baptism was that of adults by immersion, he was prepared to countenance the sprinkling of water on infants by the UNA, a practice inherited from the Church Missionary Society. Much as he doubted the spiritual relevance of the ritual and historicity of the 'historic episcopate' doctrine of the Anglicans, he did not allow these 'non-essentials' to interfere with his harmonious relations with Bishop Herbert Tugwell, Bishop of Western Equatorial Africa from 1894 to 1920. Guided by the conviction that the Christian community was one, the difference in the 'non-essentials' of religion notwithstanding, he changed from one denomination to another in his dedication to evangelization with an ease and a confidence quite uncommon in his age. Thus between 1878 and 1880, as we have noticed, he was a CMS worker; between 1882 and 1885, he was a pastor among the Methodists in Dahomey; from 1886 to 1888 he was a worker for the Southern American Baptist Mission; from 1892 to 1894 he was pastor of the United Native African Church, and from 1894 till his death, he was a Baptist evangelist and pastor. In 1891 he was very active in connection with the attempt being made in Lagos in that year to establish a non-sectarian African Church, going so far as designing and publishing a sheet almanac in its interest.[37]

The spirit of union impelled Mojola Agbebi to encourage

the amalgamation of Churches in Nigeria and in West Africa. The amalgamation of the Baptist churches was at two levels—one as the Yoruba Association, the nucleus of the Nigerian Baptist Convention, and the other as the African Baptist Union of West Africa. Concerning the latter, about which some remarks have been made, it suffices to say that it was a unique organization in its inter-territorial structure and in the success it achieved in co-operation at the international level. Whilst he, a Nigerian, was President, the two Vice-Presidents were Joshua Nibundu of the Cameroons and M. T. G. Lawson of Sierra Leone. The Secretary was the Rev Marke C. Hayford of the Gold Coast, who was ordained in 1898 by Mojola Agbebi.[38]

The Yoruba Association, in which the Baptist adherents of the Native Baptist Church and of the Southern American Baptist Mission united in 1914, requires some comments. In 1888 the schism that occurred in the Baptist Church in Lagos and which gave birth to the Native Baptist Church had engendered a great deal of bitterness between African leaders and American missionaries. By 1901 wiser counsels began to prevail, the leaders of both communities stretching out the hand of fellowship to one another. The result was the Yoruba Association which healed the wounds of the past, and of which Mojola Agbebi was President until his death in 1917.

Mojola Agbebi also encouraged co-operation and unity of effort and purpose among the African churches in Nigeria which numbered more than a dozen by 1910 and had been operating independently of one another. In 1913, again under his presidency, the African Communion brought these churches together. The Communion settled disputes between members, joined hands in organizing weeks of prayer, and encouraged the exchange of pulpits by ministers. Of great interest also is the fact that the members of the Communion made an attempt to work out a basic doctrine. It should be remarked that Agbebi carried his spirit of ecumenism to the theological institution, Hope Institution, which he founded in 1888 and which he made completely undenominational. And yet in another sense, Mojola Agbebi had some message for the Church in Africa: he never allowed the

desire for independence to develop into antipathy for the whites. Indeed he was only too willing to co-operate with individuals and bodies outside Africa who were genuinely interested in the spread and growth of Christianity in Africa. Hence, he did not reject outside help in principle, and all that he insisted on was that such help should only be accepted so long as it would not do any injury to the evolution and virility of the African Church. Such aid came to him from two quarters, to the decided advantage of the Native Baptist Church. One was the African Training Institute, Colwyn Bay, Wales, an institution founded by a group of disinterested philanthropists and lovers of the Church in Africa. The aim of the Institute was to train, free of charge, promising and talented African youths, in medicine, the ministry, agriculture, civil engineering, and similar professions, in the hope that the beneficiaries of such training would use their skill for the furtherance of evangelization. Through his meeting with the Rev W. Hughes, Agbebi himself was a beneficiary, receiving training in the Ministry. By 1898, when he returned to West Africa, he had become the local secretary for the Institute. Through his recommendations a number of Africans—Yoruba and Ijẹbu in particular—were able to receive training in medicine. It was also through this Institute that Agbebi brought to Yorubaland in 1898 the Rev J. E. Ricketts, a West Indian. An evangelist through Industrial Mission, Ricketts established his mission at Agbowa among the Ijẹbu, teaching the people how to cultivate cotton, rubber, kolanut, oranges, and pears. Ricketts set up a sugar factory as well as 'a well-equipped coffee plantation'.[39]

The second source of aid for Agbebi's work was in the New World, among the Negroes in Yonkers, New York, who were highly impressed with his evangelistic achievements in West Africa. The total worth of the financial aid given to him is not known, but it must have been substantial, judging from the gratitude expressed to the Negro supporters by the prominent members of the educated elite in Lagos and 'a West African National Confederation of 16 Native States'.[40] From 1903 to 1904 Agbebi was in the United States where he reinforced the confidence of his supporters in his work.

Neither his British supporters in Colwyn Bay nor the Negro admirers attached any strings to the aid they gave to Agbebi's Native Baptist Church in West Africa. There was no question of these supporters seeking to dictate any policy to him or to suggest to him how he should run his organization. It is significant to note that Mọjọla Agbebi had hard words for the Negroes of the New World whom he urged to leave America for Africa in order that they might be able to reassume their cultural identity, race instincts, and race pride which they had lost in American society. As a result of his experience there, he did not believe that the Christianity of the Bible *par excellence* was anywhere to be found in the United States, 'the breeding ground of Race Antipathy to the Negro . . . made as it is of the scum and dregs, the rebels and outlaws of Europe'. He further observed, 'the United States places no exorbitant value upon character. The almighty dollar is the "open sesame" to all things.'[41] Mọjọla Agbebi did not withhold his independence of judgement in fear of offending his Negro supporters to the point of persuading the latter from withholding their financial aid. He told them in unmistakable terms that Africa was the ideal place where the Negroes could have the opportunity to practise the tenets of Christianity; that they should leave America for Africa; that rather than America sending missionaries to Africa, it was the latter that should send missionaries to the United States.

Today it is the much-vilified breakaway African churches and organizations unconnected with the Western-founded churches that live up to Mọjọla Agbebi's ideals in the matter of financial independence and self-reliance. By and large, the churches which owe their origins to Europe or America are those which look eagerly for foreign aid[42]—even when they are more affluent than the African churches—at the expense of sovereignty and self-dignity. It is clear that these Western-established churches, their vaunted self-government notwithstanding, depend to a great extent on external grants either for their sustenance, or for the survival and excellence of their theological institutions, or for the maintenance of their national and continental secretariats of inter-church organizations. One might press this point home

further by asking whether this heavy dependence on the 'elder' churches in Europe and the New World has not dented the image of the Church in Africa in this post-independence era when Africans are increasingly becoming suspicious of foreign aid from 'neo-colonialist' quarters.

It should be emphasized that Mọjọla Agbebi was not a bigoted nationalist when he gave the sovereignty of the African Church in cultural, ecclesiastical, liturgical, and policy-making matters—insofar as these were in harmony with the essentials of the Christian Faith—primacy over considerations of the aid that could come from outside. He did not want foreign aid which would reduce the sovereignty of the African Church and thereby erode the self-dignity, self-pride, distinctiveness, and identity which the founders and controllers of the Western-established churches were never disposed to foster or sponsor. Given a choice between attenuated independence with enormous financial assistance from outside and full independence with poverty, he preferred the latter as infinitely the better.

His insistence on independence for the African Church at all costs may be illustrated with two examples. First, although the Hope Institute which he had founded in 1888 for the training of evangelists and workers for the African Baptist Church had a precarious existence, due to lack of adequate funds, he preferred to see the institution collapse in 1902 rather than beg for foreign aid that would force him to compromise the purpose and ideals for which the institution had been founded and existed.[43] Second, rather than transfer his relatively poor churches of the Native Baptist organization to the financially strong Southern American Baptist Mission, he stood his ground until the white leaders of the latter organization sought his co-operation on terms of equality, racial harmony, and recognition of the dignity, legitimacy, virility, and identity of the African organization. It was from a position of strength and with pride that in 1915, when he was proposed for the post of President of the Yoruba Association by the white leaders of the American mission, Agbebi declared:

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> But the Association is not only a mark of progress as touching

> its existence, but it is also remarkable that it has been able to make its start clear of race-domination; a religious gathering of higher pretensions. In an assembly of missionaries and African workers, it is not generally, not often, or perhaps has never been the case for an African to preside.[44]

It was his jealousy for independence and self-dignity that made Agbebi insist on living on what could be provided for him by the African congregation rather than on the relatively heavy salary he could have had in the mission establishments which were replenished from sources from subscribers in Europe and the New World. Consequently, he supported himself partly by the free-will offerings of his congregation, partly from his writings as a journalist, and partly from the aid given him by his wife, a petty trader.

The philosophy of the African Church adumbrated by Mojola Agbebi is of crucial significance for us in another way: it emphasizes that the Church should be related to, or be an expression of, the political, economic, and social aspirations of the society in which it is situated. The African society he had in mind was not a static one, or an inward looking reactionary traditionalist society, impervious to progressive and salutary forces from outside. Thus while he insisted on the retention of the vital customs and institutions around which the Christianity of the Bible should crystallize, and the meaningfulness and relevance of which were beyond doubt, he wanted African society to enter the modern age through the patronage of literary education and the scientific cultivation of the soil.

Furthermore, he did not believe that there was any distinction between the temporal and the spiritual, or that a good Christian should regard the church as the only theatre of his activities, closing his eyes to politics and having nothing to do with the State. In his view, man was a political, a social, and an economic animal, just as he was a religious being. Hence he was active in politics in many directions. As a member of the Lagos branch of the Ekitiparapo, the organization of the elite Ekiti which incited their countrymen in the hinterland to rebel against the imperial yoke of Ibadan, he urged the British Government to intervene in the Kiriji War of 1877-93. His aim was to see peace and justice reign

in Yorubaland with each kingdom or sub-ethnic group regaining and enjoying its pristine independence and sovereignty. As a member of the Yoruba nation, he protested against the British attack on, and occupation of, Yorubaland; as an African he denounced the partition of Africa and the establishment of colonial rule on the continent; as a member of the Negro race he defended his race at the 1911 Universal Races Congress, London, against the scorn, contempt, and prejudices which white racists had entertained against Africans and their customs for generations.[45]

Agbebi did not confine his participation in secular affairs to Nigeria or West Africa; he corresponded with several organizations with avowed political and literary interests on Africa and Africans. He was a member of the Aborigines Protection Society for which he began to raise funds in 1901, and a Vice-President of the Lagos Auxiliary of the Aborigines Protection Society from 1911 to 1914, an organization which strove hard to put across to the parent body in Britain the grievances of the Nigerian peoples against the colonial regime. Among the literary societies of which he was a member were the Royal African Society, founded in 1901 in memory of Mary Kingsley, with the aim of encouraging academic study of Africa and Africans, and the Royal Colonial Institute of which he was a Fellow. Among the religious organizations outside Africa with which he had connections were the British and African Incorporated Association, North Wales, of which he was the local Secretary for West Africa, and the Men's Sunday Club of New York of which he was an Honorary Member.

On 24 May 1917, Mọjọla Agbebi breathed his last after a brief illness. Towards the end of 1916, his health had begun to decline as a result of work, over-anxiety, and the buffetings of fate. By then the physical exertions of supervising his extensive field of evangelization had told upon his youthful energy. From 1914 onwards, he began to experience financial embarrassment occasioned by a series of libel suits filed against him in respect of a number of publications that had appeared in 1914 when he was acting editor of the *Lagos Weekly Record*. Moreover he had his due share of human

sorrow—four of his eldest children died in rapid succession. However, Mọjọla Agbebi did not allow earthly misfortunes to rob him of his heavenly vision and therefore, in the last months of his life, he mustered and expended all his remaining energy in the service of God. In early 1917 he returned from Buguma, really sick. By March, when the Yoruba Baptist Conference was held in Lagos, he had rallied enough to participate actively in its affairs.

Although Mọjọla Agbebi died poor in things material, he was abundantly rich in the things of the spirit. The world meant little to him; it was no more than a place where he sought to get ready for the eternal life hereafter. His death was mourned all over British West Africa as a loss to the cause of African patriotism and the African Church. Tributes were paid to his memory as far away as the United States, where J. E. Bruce recorded:

> Of the few African gentlemen of my acquaintance, he was one whom I especially honoured and of whose friendship I was proud and I loved him as a brother. He was a good man and a great man in a larger sense than some who knew him realised. His many friends over here have heard with sincere regret and sorrow of his leave-taking, and at an appropriate time will give public expression to their appreciation of his moral and public worth.
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26 David Brown Vincent, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-14.
27 *Ibid.*, p. 9.
28 *Ibid.*, p. 10.
29 *Ibid.*, p. 11-12.
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33 *Ibid.*
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6

James Johnson: Pioneer Educationist in West Africa

The emergence of Departments of Education in West African universities in the past decade is a pleasant reflection of the yearning of Africans for literary education since the end of the Second World War. Not only have primary and secondary schools increased in number, but teaching has become more professionalized than ever before. This is a state of affairs that has provided scholars with excellent material for major studies, in sober reflections, and prophecies. Research has covered such fields as traditional education in unlettered societies, philosophy of education, and the science of teaching.

The impressive efforts made in these various fields have obscured the existence of one unexplored but rich and beckoning field—the history of literacy on the continent of Africa. It is a hoary-headed field, nearly two thousand years old, and it promises high dividends to investment by Africanists. It is like a great fountain overflowing almost the entire continent. In the wake of Christianity, literacy had by the end of the fourth century produced in Mediterranean Africa African bishops (St Augustine), intellectuals (Lactantius), and theologians (Tertullian) of international stature in Christendom. Under the banner of Islam, which reached Africa in AD 639, literacy had by the end of the eighteenth century produced north of the tropical forest philosophers (Ibn Khaldun), medical scholars (Averroes), erudite jurists (Ahmed Baba), and historians (Muhammad Kati).

Surely an account of the educational institutions that produced these eminent Africans is worth knowing, worth tel-

ling, worth retailing. As far as this writer is aware, no effort has so far been made at any history of education for the period before the middle of the nineteenth century. It is regrettable that in spite of the mounting interest of scholars in the political, constitutional, administrative, ideological, and economic developments in the Islamized northern third of the continent, no historian has come forward to pioneer the study of the spread of literacy by Islam through the myriads of Koranic schools—the *madrassas* and *khuttabs*—which have been in continuous, though precarious, existence in this vast area of Africa for more than a thousand years. Even the universities of Kairouan, Sankore, and Jaghbub are still to attract the attention of chroniclers. With respect to the record of the educational achievements of Christianity in Africa, the position is slightly, but only slightly, better. It is commonplace to come across comments on, and casual attention to, pioneering activities of Christian missions in West Africa since the middle of the nineteenth century.[1]

Those familiar with the existing literature and research on the educational contribution of Christian missions in the last century should not regard this writer's judgment on the commendable and impressive progress made as severe. The point I wish to convey is that the existing literature and research should be seen as making no more than a significant beginning. They serve mainly one purpose: to reveal that in matters of literary education, the colonial administration was more of a prop than an initiator; the real initiators were the Christian missions.

This point may be driven home by a summary evaluation of the well-known research works on Nigeria. M. J. Walsh, 'The Catholic contribution to education in Western Nigeria 1861-1926', MA thesis, London University, 1951, is well written and comprehensive but exclusive, dealing with the achievements of only one Catholic sect—the Society of African Church Missions—in education in Yorubaland, where they were late-comers in relation to other missions in point of time and educational progress. T. High, 'The history of the educational work related to the Nigerian Baptist Convention 1850-1959', PhD thesis, Louisville, 1960, is less

satisfactory, less academic in quality; it is far more sectarian in outlook and is overdosed with religious emphasis. P. E. M. Inyang, 'The provision of education in Nigeria with reference to the work of the Church Missionary Society, Catholic Mission and the Methodist Missionary Society', MA thesis, London University, 1958, is a misnomer. It deals mainly with the work of the Primitive Methodists in south-eastern Nigeria and makes superficial historical evaluation of the Crowther regime in the Niger Mission. T. T. Solaru, *Teacher Training in Nigeria*, Ibadan, 1964, is a fine piece of work but as it is only about the training of teachers, it excludes a great deal of the educational contributions of the missions in other spheres before and during the colonial period. Sonia F. Graham, 'History of education in relation to the development of the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria, 1900-1919', PhD thesis, London University, 1955, is not as comprehensive as one might hope.[2] Originally intended as a work on the career of one man, Hans Vischer, it makes scanty reference to the Sudan Interior Mission, the Society of African Mission, the Sudan United Mission, and the Mennonite Brethren, all of whom were active in various parts of Northern Nigeria during the years covered by the thesis.

The richness of the history of literary education in West Africa in the last century may be gleaned from the contributions of colonial administrators such as Sir Frederick Lugard, Sir Gordon Guggisberg, and A. G. Fraser that have been brought to light in the past decade.[3] These imperial educationists had African predecessors among whom may be noted Dr Beale Africanus Horton (1835-83), Dr Edward Wilmot Blyden (1832-1912), James Johnson (1836-1917), and Dr Henry Rawlinson Carr (1863-1945). These African pioneers of literary education deserve special study for two reasons: first, because their views on this type of education in its various forms—its philosophy, its purpose, its nature, its content, and the levels at which it should be pursued—have a modernist ring and credit them with remarkable clairvoyance; second, because they conceived their views in relation to, and in the context of, the African environment. In Horton, for instance, we have the prophet of science and technology as the branches of education on which West

Africa should fix its hope in its evolution into the modern age;[4] in James Johnson, the apostle of a literacy that would transform Africans into Christianized statesmen, a Christianized citizenry, Christianized scholars, and Christianized civil servants;[5] in Blyden, the relentless advocate of the classics and these languages as the veritable keys for the unlocking of the sluices of true knowledge;[6] in Henry Carr, the pragmatic, intellectual rationalist of literary education in relation to man's mind and its utility in West African society.[7]

Perhaps the most convenient way of investigating the evolution of literacy in Africa is through biographies, first of the Europeanized educationists of the last century about whom information is relatively easy to come by, and then of those famous educationists in Muslim Africa, such as Ibn Yasin, Ibn Khaldun, and Al Maghili. This chapter, which attempts to reveal the ideas and contributions of one of the Europeanized elite mentioned above, James Johnson, to literary education in West Africa between 1864 and 1917, is intended as a gauntlet to the Faculties of Education in West African Universities; it is hoped that they will not hesitate to pick it up by launching full-scale research into the history of literacy in Africa, or parts of it, without further delay.

The fact that James Johnson was neither a teacher by profession nor a civil servant formally connected with a Department of Education in Sierra Leone or Nigeria does not affect his stature as an educationist. Historically, it should be stressed, his ideas concerning literary education spanned the first two phases of the development of western education in modern West Africa. These were the 'pre-ordinance' era (up to 1882 in Nigeria and the Gold Coast) when Christian missions were the involuntary monopolists of the field, and the early years of colonial rule when the dominance of Christian missions remained crucial and decisive, the colonial government merely exercising a feeble control through grants and making a spasmodic effort in the establishment of schools.

It is essential that scholars of the history of literacy in West Africa should note that educational ideas, policies and philosophies were not just being initiated in the era of colonial rule by African officials such as Dr Henry Carr of

Nigeria or imperial educationists such as Guggisberg of the Gold Coast. They had predecessors in many missionaries, European and African, whose ideas, thought, and achievements are wrapped up in mission archives difficult for classification by the archivists.[8] In this respect James Johnson was no more than one of a long list of pioneer educationists deserving attention.

James Johnson was born to an Ijẹsha father and an Ijẹbu mother in Benguema, a small village in the British Colony of Sierra Leone, about the year 1835. After a few years of elementary education in the Lancastrian type of school at Campbell Town and the CMS school of St Matthew's, Benguema, he entered the CMS Grammar School in 1851, that is, barely six years after the founding of the first secondary school in modern West Africa. In 1854 he entered the Fourah Bay Institution as the 125th student of this theology-orientated college, the only place of higher education in West Africa until the founding of university colleges in the Gold Coast and in Nigeria after the Second World War. By 1858 he had completed his studentship, emerging as an Anglican of the deepest hue with a mind cribbed, crabbed, and confined by the dogmas of the Christian religion, and as a voracious reader. Except for a brief spell as tutor at Fourah Bay from 1860 to 1863, he spent all his life in the service of the Church, as a catechist at Christ Church, Pademba, Freetown, from 1863 to 1874; vicar of St Paul's, Breadfruit, Lagos, 1874 to 1877 and 1881 to 1900; as Superintendent of the CMS Interior Mission (Yoruba), 1877 to 1880, and as Assistant Bishop in charge of the Niger Delta Pastorate, including the Anglican churches in the Edo, Itsekiri, and Urhobo areas, from 1900 to 1917.[9]

Nevertheless the one subject of absorbing interest to him continuously from 1864 to 1917 was literacy, in his judgment the greatest benefit accruing to Africans from their enforced contact with the European world. It should be noted that James Johnson stressed literacy, not education, because as he reiterated time and again, there was, and there always had been, a system of education in Africa before the intrusion of the white man began; in traditional society, he declares, Africans evolved and taught *mores*, morality,

habits and virtues which it should be the endeavour of Africans to retain against the corroding and 'decivilizing' tendencies of the penetrating so-called European civilization. For instance, he said,

> Yoruba heathenism alone taught respect and reverence for age and for all authority, filial regard and reverence for and obedience to parents on the part of children always, and care and concern for them under the infirmities of sickness and old age, and in times of need produced by other circumstances; a great regard for marriage and the perpetuity of the bond, submission to their husbands on the part of the wives, and care and protection on the part of the husbands; the exercise of the duties of hospitality to all and especially to strangers; fidelity to friendship under all circumstances, chastity, truthfulness in speech, honesty, kindness, and amongst some tribes courage also; whilst ... murder and theft, and sometimes the practice of witchcraft, are punished by death; adultery and fornication with severe social disgrace and fines; ... and it discountenances amongst other things, pride and vanity and extravagance.[10]

In discerning the distinction between literacy and education, in perceiving that the unlettered Africans in the pre-colonial era were educated in a way and to a level that should command the respect of the contemporary educated African elite and European commentators, James Johnson was more than two generations before his time. Only in our time, thanks to scientifically-minded anthropologists and educationists, has this simple fact been recognized and appreciated; only now are scholars becoming informed to the point of qualifying the word 'education' with the adjective 'literary'.

This is not to say that James Johnson minimized the disadvantages under which unlettered and uncontaminated Africans laboured with regard to literate communities. Literacy, he perceived, was indispensable to Africans if they were to achieve and claim equality with the other races of mankind. He recognized in literacy the only agency that would bring Africans to high-level development and put them on the same footing with other peoples; he saw in literacy the key to the storehouse of the cumulative knowledge and achievement of the human race since the dawn of the alphabet.

Literacy would afford Africans the opportunity to make use of their minds, vindicate their creative genius, and thereby add to the sum total of human wisdom in the realms of art, wisdom, and literature. It behoved Africans, said James Johnson, to patronize literacy in its best and sophisticated form, through higher education, otherwise 'the continent is bound to be backward'.[11]

So paramount was the subject of education for James Johnson that at a time when pastors looked upon the school as nothing more than a proselytizing machine, hardly ever caring to supervise the schools under them, he was throughout his career an effective manager of the schools in his parish or diocese. Invariably he usurped the functions of teachers and inspectors of education. It was his practice to test pupils in oral and written examinations, producing reports that would have done credit to inspectors of education.[12] It is significant to note that on the four occasions he went to Britain—1873, 1887, 1899, and 1909—the state of literary education and the role he was convinced the British ought to have been playing in its development in the interest of Africans were discussed directly with the Colonial Office. In the period 1886 to 1894, when he was a member of the Legislative Council of Lagos, he paid greater attention to literary education than any other member. By membership of the Council he was one of the foundation members of the Board of Education, the first government co-ordinating institution in Nigeria. James Johnson used the Council chamber to persuade the British government to create a sub-inspectorate department for the Lagos Colony at a time when there was only a common department for British settlements in West Africa. He was also instrumental in the appointment of Henry Carr as the first Sub-Inspector of Education in Nigeria.[13]

Not only was the subject of literary education perennially in James Johnson's mind: he also thought very deeply about it, his thinking crystallizing into a philosophy. Basic to his philosophy was that education must be completely saturated with Christianity, the Bible forming the pith. This idea formed part of his dream to see all Africans thoroughly and sincerely Christianized; Christian ethics, the Christian abso-

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lutes of justice, goodness, humanity of man to man, love a
other virtues, as contained in the Bible, were for Ja
Johnson higher than the ethics and virtues that could
fostered by Islam and African indigenous religion. T
Bible, he said, came to men from heaven,[14] was the purvey
of the divine, the touchstone by which individuals and co
munities should test their acts. All other books were of mu
dane origins; therefore they were of baser educational valu
mere repositories of human wisdom.

The Bible, James Johnson insisted, must be taught to ch
dren very clearly. Only the Bible would make a child 'go
and holy, fit for the world and meet for heaven'.[15] In othe
words, in James Johnson's conception, education was c
divine origin and must look heavenward; it must not be con
ceived in purely human terms. Its purpose was not just th
refinement and development of the human mind for earthl
ends; its cardinal purpose was to prepare the human soul fo
the world to come. As he said, the greatest calamity tha
could befall a country is to have its education secularized
'education not based upon religion, the religion of the Bible
will be found productive of a race of infidels, atheists
freethinkers and mere moralists.'[16]

In emphasizing and defining the pervasiveness of th
moral content of education in Christian terms, in giving pri
macy to the Bible, and in investing education with a divin
purpose James Johnson was unique. None of his contem
poraries philosophized so rigidly about education in terms o
Christian dogma as he did. True, none of his contemporarie
in the Victorian era doubted the value of Christian moralit
in the character training of children in primary and secon
dary schools, but it was more the earthly, the secular utilit
of literacy, that they emphasized. Hence Sir Samuel Lewis
the Egba Saro legal luminary of his day, echoed the thinkin
of the majority of the educated African elite when h
declared that the immediate purpose of education should b
to aid the African to achieve mental victory, to understan
the laws of Nature, and apply them for the development o
the material well-being of mankind. The 'happiness of th
present life', he stressed, should be the primary concern o
educators, not the religious emphasis Christian mission

liked to give in their schools.[17] Even Henry Carr, an earnest Churchman and an exponent and symbol of excellence in character and moral affairs, was not disposed to see education in predominantly spiritual and religious terms.[18] Sir Frederick Lugard, an unbeliever but another apostle of morality in the moulding of character, emphasized the humanistic rather than the Christian kind of moral education.[19]

Another strand of James Johnson's philosophy of education was that, under colonial rule, literacy was a prescriptive right of the governed. In other words, the State would be failing in its duty if it did not put literary education at the disposal of its citizens. The latter were not to demand literacy as a favour but as a right. In West Africa, the 'pagans' and Muslims, who were indifferent and apathetic to western education in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, declared James Johnson, should be persuaded by the State to send their children to schools established by the government.[20] Properly considered, contended this apostle of Western education, literary education was the exclusive province of the State; individuals and Christian missions in West Africa had merely been assuming the functions of the State because of the failure of the latter to do its duty. West Africans were to be commended for the enthusiasm and liberality they had been displaying in sending their children to schools in West Africa and overseas. Government had no right to demand more from Africans. Indeed, 'it is the duty of the Government to give very liberal help in such an important matter as education to those who are so liberally helping themselves.'[21] Literary education was also not the function of the Christian missions, although they had a vested interest in the moral development of the peoples of the territory and could be worthy instruments in the implementation of policy. But all the necessary financial resources must be borne by the State.

In James Johnson's judgment the responsibility of making Africans literate must devolve upon the colonial administration because it was the government and so the detector and guardian of the true interests of the governed. Since the governed were the providers of the revenue of the State, through customs duties, it was incumbent on government to

deploy the largest part of the money received on literary education. He felt that the British administrations in West Africa were misappropriating the money of the people by relegating education to the background and spending most of the revenue on prisons, housing, and an expensive civil service manned by European officials enjoying extravagant privileges like leave passage allowances.[22]

In support of his conviction that the provision of literary education was the obligation of the State, he lectured the Colonial Office in 1874, 1887, 1899, and 1909 that scholarships should be instituted at the secondary and post-secondary levels for poor but clever students.[23] In 1884 he charged the British administration in Lagos with niggardliness in matters of literary education, calculating that only two shillings were being spent on a pupil in contrast to forty shillings per pupil in contemporary England.[24] As early as 1874 he had demanded that the British government establish in Sierra Leone a higher institution of learning for all West Africa for training in engineering, pottery, printing, carpentry, and cotton-ginning.[25] Twenty-five years later he tried in vain to persuade the British government to 'establish or materially help to establish at some central point on the coast a college where besides the teaching of agricultural and other industrial subjects, some of the learned professions should have a place given to them.'[26] This college, he said, should be affiliated to a British university.

Nor was his philosophy that education should be seen in Christian terms entirely unfruitful. For in 1882 when the Lagos government announced the first Education Ordinance, imitating in law and spirit Foster's Act of 1870, James Johnson was able to lead an agitation against it. He found very offensive the attempt of the Ordinance to put Christianity at par with Islam and traditional religion by giving to leaders of all religions access to pupils of their respective persuasion. He also found it reprehensible that in 'public' schools, that is in schools that might be founded by the State, religious instruction was excluded. The Ordinance was objectionable to James Johnson on another ground—that grants were made by government for secular subjects only.[27]

Under James Johnson's chairmanship, a Memorandum

drafted by him was sent to the British government against the Ordinance.[28] The Memorandum emphasized that Muslims and 'pagans' should not and could not be properly regarded as true subjects or citizens of the British Empire. Since, in the judgment of the Memorandists, the Lagos government was 'Christian' it was its duty to 'express sympathy with the Christian religion which teaches the purest morality, and supplies to scholars the highest motives for the duties of life, and upon which we, and we are persuaded the Government also, mainly reckon for the improvement of our country and people'.

This Johnsonian philosophy of education, definition of citizenship, and functions of British administration in Nigeria, indeed in West Africa, was tacitly accepted by the educated African elite in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Among the educated Africans the idea that in British Nigeria Muslims and 'pagans' should qualify for citizenship did not begin to occur until the first decade of this century; demand for outright secularization of education was not made by African educationists until after the First World War. It was in the context of the religious-conscious Victorian Lagos that the reaction of the *Lagos Times*, the first Nigerian-owned newspaper, owned by an ardent disciple of James Johnson, R. B. Blaize, to the Ordinance should be understood. The secularism of the Ordinance, declared the newspaper, was a subtle plot by the British administration to prevent Nigeria from becoming a great and 'civilized' nation for 'we know that England and indeed Europe owes her prosperity, greatness and security mainly to Christianity and a Christian education'.[29]

With respect to the content, pattern, and quality of the formalized Western education he wished for West Africa, James Johnson's vision was truly grand. His curricula were all-embracing, designed to educate the head, the hand, and the heart at the primary, secondary, and post-secondary levels, in relation to the economic potentialities of the territory and the cultural heritage of its peoples. Even the body was not to be neglected. Like the Greek educationists of classical times, he was concerned about the physiognomy, the physique, and the healthiness of Africans, hence his

constant emphasis on physical exercises at schools.

James Johnson was gratified by the existence of primary and secondary schools in British West Africa. Throughout his life he never complained that they were numerically insufficient for the needs of the territory. In practically every mission station there was a school. In 1845 the first secondary grammar school in Sierra Leone was founded by the CMS; in Nigeria the same organization started the first secondary school in 1859; in 1876 the Wesleyans blazed the trail on the Gold Coast. In all three countries additions were made to secondary grammar schools by the time of his death.

Nevertheless he had many complaints about these institutions. The British administration, he said, was not showing sufficient interest in the elementary schools; money should be pumped into them in the form of grants to the managers; government should increase 'its interest in and support to Elementary Education for the people'; 'a government that seeks to promote their [the people's] education, and especially if this was conducted on the right lines, entitles itself to the gratitude of the people'.[30] Concerning the secondary school, his chief allegation against the government was that the latter did not award state scholarships which would achieve a dual purpose: 'stimulate diligence and a wholesome rivalry among scholars and provide opportunity to clever but poor students'.[31]

In his observation, all was not well with the primary and secondary schools of his age. There was, for instance, what he regarded as the unhealthy attitude and perverted understanding of the beneficiaries of these schools to literary education. First, he said, pupils tended to be less well-behaved to their elders and teachers than sanctioned in indigenous society; in manners and in codes of social and moral behaviour they were inferior to their unlettered and uncontaminated colleagues.[32] Second, they lacked reading habits; once they left the school there was no question of improving their minds or of widening their horizon in different directions; they saw literary education as a means for the achievement of enhanced social and material status in society; their philosophy was not education for its own sake.

But his greatest criticism of the students of his age was that

they ascribed to themselves a dignity that developed in them an implacable contempt for manual labour. This attitude, he said, was unrealistic and a disservice to West Africa. For a long time to come, he declared, the economy, prosperity, and development of the territory would depend on the fertility of the soil. Therefore rather than abandon farming, students should return to the soil with up-to-date tools and knowledge of mechanized and scientific cultivation and thereby displace 'the rudest and most primitive and ineffective implements' of traditional society.[33] In order that students might develop the appropriate attitude, he urged the British administration to start 'model farms' under English or West Indian instructors.

Indeed, what is known as industrial education engaged his attention. By 1870 he had attempted to persuade the government of Sierra Leone Colony to establish for literate ladies 'workshops' where they could learn millinery and basket-weaving.[34] He envisaged for all West Africa a huge technical institute which would turn out carpenters, civil and mechanical engineers, textile experts, and ceramics graduates.[35]

James Johnson's apprehension about the schools of his age and his idea of what they should be were certainly shared by some of his contemporaries. However, he had the advantage of a shaping hand by his membership on the Board of Education in Lagos from 1887 to 1900 at which he aired his views fearlessly and not entirely without effect. Annual school exhibitions began to be organized, prizes were awarded, and some attention given to industrial education. In concrete terms two contemporaries did what James Johnson did not have the means to do. In 1895 R. B. Blaize, who had been appalled at the absence of industrial departments in the secondary schools of Lagos, gave £1,000 to the Church Missionary Society for such a department in their Grammar School. His hope was that industrial training would spread into the hinterland of Lagos. As he observed in 1900: 'The Colony was overstocked with clerks; Oyo, Ogbomosho and other interior countries will soon be occupied by civilized Lagos people, and these will require good houses.'[36] Even more spectacular was the action of S.

B. Thomas of Sierra Leone who gave £60,000 for the establishment of an Agricultural Academy where the youths of the country could be taught mechanized farming. By 1909 this institution had been established at Mabang and it covered 1,000 acres.[37]

Up to 1876 the one level of literary education that was conspicuously absent and for which James Johnson agitated successfully was the university. That higher education was not sponsored institutionally by Christian missions or by the British government in West Africa until the Blyden-Hennessey-Johnson agitation of 1872-4 should not surprise us.[38] Higher education is an expensive enterprise demanding enormous investment certainly beyond the resources of the British administration in the West Africa of the last quarter of the nineteenth century. It is instructive to note that both James Johnson and Edward Blyden were fully aware of this fact, but that they expected that the British taxpayers should bear the burden. But even had the financial resources of West Africa been able to sustain a huge educational programme of the university kind, the will was patently lacking in the British governors. In contemporary Britain, university education was a privilege for the few. In West Africa, the primary stage of literary education was not on the priority list of the administrators. Little wonder that at the Colonial Office the officials were amused at the ideas of the Don Quixotes of West Africa—James Johnson and Edward Blyden. As Sir H. Holland minuted: 'Lord C. [Caernarvon] entertains very grave doubts as to the expediency of attempting to establish a West African University .... More reliable data would be required before he would sanction such an undertaking which must of necessity be costly and for which the natives are not yet sufficiently prepared.'[39] Or, as another official reacted to the emotional appeal of James Johnson about the university: 'Where is the money to come from?'[40]

Nevertheless but for the agitation of the Don Quixotes, Fourah Bay might not have been raised to the status of a university college, at least as early as it was. The authorities of the Church Missionary Society became apprehensive that the university idea might become a practical proposition.

Should this event happen, it was feared
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the *Negro* newspaper. Ever apprehensive
ship and initiative in educational m
Missionary Society decided to anticip
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Cheetham, Bishop of the Sierra Leone
83, declared to Governor Berkeley, the
never take initiative in the matter but
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tentative experiment, the right and safe
Indeed so frightened did the CMS becc
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Fourah Bay College affiliated to a univ

It was at this crucial moment that
summoned by the CMS authorities fo
the university scheme and other matter
those of Dr E. W. Blyden who is usuall
the success of the agitation, were focuse
As legislators and leaders of opinion c
West Africa' matter addressed James Jc
his departure to England:

> It is evident that their [CMS] attention h
> not only by your past labours in their se
> your views which have appeared from ti
> newspaper and which must have convir
> convinced us, that you may be safely tru
> vital questions upon which the proper
> and race depend.[42]

James Johnson did not disappoint his
several interviews he argued the cas
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details of the raising of Fourah Bay tc
sity college were discussed with Jame
idea, he was told, was to obtain fi
Oxford and Cambridge as the te

Henry Johnson, a Saro of Iḷorin ancestry who had distinguished himself in linguistics and had just finished a course in Arabic at Jerusalem. On his return to Freetown in early 1874, James Johnson was able to report positively that Fourah Bay would become a university institution in order that 'young people here and in other parts of the coast may have an opportunity of acquiring very sound and liberal education on the spot'.[43]

The significance of Fourah Bay College in the intellectual history of West Africa up to the end of the Second World War can hardly be over-stressed. Within ten years of its affiliation to Durham University, three men who were to make their mark in different walks of life had passed through the institution. There was Obadiah Johnson of Sierra Leone who was to win a prize in 1885 in medicine at King's College, London, achieve an MD of Edinburgh in 1889, and render memorable service in the medical departments of Sierra Leone and Nigeria. Destined to be a credit in the development of educational policy in Nigeria was Henry Carr, who left the institution in 1881 and sustained for well-nigh sixty years the reputation of an intellectual educationist in West Africa. An asset to the Church in Nigeria was Isaac Oluwọle, who graduated from Fourah Bay in 1878 and became an Assistant Bishop in 1894.

But James Johnson's interest in Fourah Bay did not end with helping in its affiliation to Durham University. He followed the fortunes of the institution in matters of staffing, curriculum, and orientation. He wanted Africans to be encouraged to join the teaching staff, in the hope that the institution would be completely Africanized. In this respect he mentioned three Africans who, in his judgment, were qualified to be appointed to lectureships there. These were Henry Johnson, C. Cole, an Oxford graduate, and E. W. Blyden. He wanted Fourah Bay College Africanized partly because of the death which the West African climate continued to bring to the white man and partly because he was convinced 'that it was impossible for a European thoroughly to educate an African, as one of his own colour who is identical with him in views, sympathy, feeling etc.'[44]

To some extent he was gratified that Fourah Bay retained

a Christian atmosphere and moral tone, but he wanted the institution to be broadminded in its curriculum. He believed that it was wise policy for the institution to train clergymen, but he wanted these workers in the Church to achieve a high academic standard in secular as well as in religious disciplines. As he said, the clergyman must be the most educated in society or at worst be equally educated as the best minds of the laity. From 1876 to 1887 he pressed in vain for the introduction of Arabic and 'the classics, higher mathematics, natural science and theology proper' for theological students.

However, by the last decade of the nineteenth century, James Johnson and other leading educated Africans had become disappointed that Fourah Bay College not only failed to add secular breadth to its curriculum but that, as Henry Carr put it, it had begun to relapse to 'its early days—as a mere evangelistic institution'.[45] Two attempts were made in the nineties to found the ideal university. In 1892 an attempt was made to persuade the Foreign Board of the Southern American Baptist Convention to sell the Baptist Academy buildings in Lagos for a sum of £1,000. The intention was to use these buildings for a post-secondary institution in which literary and industrial education would be provided.[46] Then in 1896 James Johnson led a number of educated Africans to propose that a university should be sited at Ebute Metta. The university, it was stressed, would be free from the infection of European civilization and foster the virtues of traditional African society.[47] However none of the plans matured. The former collapsed because the Foreign Board in America would not dispose of its buildings to a band of nationalists whose activities had led to a revolt against its mission in Lagos in 1888. The Ebute Metta proposal failed because the government of Lagos would not help the scheme with a penny. Since the educated Africans in Lagos alone did not have the resources for such a costly venture, they mooted the idea that all the educated Africans in British West Africa should combine and persuade the CMS to surrender Fourah Bay to them for development along ideal lines.[48]

It must not be imagined that James Johnson welcomed

literary education in West Africa uncritically. In a sense, he saw it as a mixed evil which at all levels gave cause for considerable anxiety. For literacy did not come to Africa unaccompanied by the moral and social values of the people who introduced it from Europe and America. James Johnson wanted for Africa a literacy that would preserve the moral and social values and the cultural heritage of the continent. In a sense he was asking for the impossible. He wanted the omelette without breaking the egg. As an agency that moulds the mind and, through the alien-orientated textbooks, literature, and alien teachers, directs the mind to ideas, attitudes, values, and habitudes out of context with traditional environment, it is bound to 'denationalize' the African.

The denationalizing concomitants of literacy were condemned by James Johnson in unmeasured language. As a part of Westernization, literary education began to discourage the traditional social habits of Africans, prejudicing the literate against traditional forms of dress, language, and *mores*, separating them in thought and feeling from their own countrymen. In other words the more literate an African was, the less truly African he tended to become. As early as 1873 James Johnson had made clear his view of literacy pure and simple, without the mental, social and moral values of Europe, which he wanted for Africa:

> It has been frequently remarked by those whose opinions we respect, that Africans under foreign culture are generally inferior to their brethren who have not been brought under it. That which we want is an education that will leave undisturbed our race peculiarities. We do not wish to lose them because we have learnt the natural and other sciences in foreign lands, or been taught them by foreign people. The injuring or destroying of such peculiarities is among the greatest calamities that can befall a nation.[49]

Of the denationalizing features of literary education in West Africa which James Johnson observed and denounced, space will allow examination of one only—teaching in the English language. In the last years of his life James Johnson was a lonely voice in the wilderness urging that the medium in

teaching up to the secondary school level should be the ver-
nacular. Literary education in the territory, he declared, ...
'on trial', lacking in solidity because both educators ...
learners refused to respect, much less accord priority ...
vernacular. The language of prestige and adoration ...
glish; the vernacular was being ignored and held i[n] ...
able contempt. English became the medium of tea[ching] ...
the kindergarten. That the empire-makers made ...
lingua franca of the areas that were being assi[milated] ...
British empire is easily understandable; it w[as] ...
the language aspect of the total phenomenon of ...
As the Director of Education of Southern ...
in 1908: 'English is already the lingua ...
Colony in official business, in the commun[ica-]
tions between natives of the ...
Southern Nigeria. ... There is ...
the part of the natives for edu[cation] ...
than English.'[50]

In imposing English on ...
after this alien language, ...
Africans respectively ...
appreciating mainly the ...
tion. In this age of clerk ...
began to be determined ...
his proficiency in the ...
sovereignty were ...
when the latter regarded ...
sine qua non for ...
and Africans were ...

In contrast was ...
the true purpose ...
utilitarian in the ...
true purpose ...
asserted, was ...
African. In this ...
be pursued for ...
harness, rather ...
he was convin[ced] ...
retained his la[nguage] ...
be as literate ...

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ıto the vernacular.
an emblem of African
ɖ in an ideal education
n had two other reasons
ɜrnacular. First, he said,
ɜign language could not
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tracts. With them there was no question of considering the vernacular as a basis of sound education or as a cardinal part of African cultural heritage. As late as 1890 Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther boasted that the vernacular would never be accorded any importance in the schools of his diocese, and that English would continue to be the only medium of teaching in the Niger Mission.[52] Neither Blyden, nor Horton, nor Lugard, nor Fraser, nor Guggisberg, shared James Johnson's displeasure and apprehensions about the disregard of the vernacular in West Africa's educational system. One educationist, Henry Carr, recognized and denounced the preposterousness of using English as the medium of instruction for primary infants. But beyond the lower classes in the primary school, he said, the emphasis must be on English. In this respect he was impatient with the failure of schools to make their students excellent writers and speakers of this alien language.[53]

If the teaching profession ever had an effusive friend and teachers a dedicated advocate of their interests, he was James Johnson. As early as 1874 he had invested teaching with a respectability and teachers with a status that must be the envy of present-day teachers. Technically there was no teaching profession or a teacher in West Africa before the First World War; there were no Teacher Training Colleges; it was not for nothing that the term 'schoolmaster' was used, rather than 'teacher', in the age of James Johnson.

True, schoolmasters existed in large numbers but these were no more than birds of passage for whom teaching was only a part of the experience and training for the priesthood. It is a mistake to believe that the Ọyọ Training Institution, founded by the CMS in April 1896, and the Wesleyan Missionary Training Institution, founded in 1901 at Ibadan, were at their inception teacher-producing machines.[54] They were not so intended, nor did they produce teachers in the period before the First World War. Until 1914 they remained what they were intended to be—producers of evangelists and catechists. As the man in charge of what was later named Wesley College said in 1908, the institution was fulfilling perfectly well its role of turning out 'evangelists';[55] and as the principal of the Ọyọ Training Institution re-

[illegible]mphasized in 1911, the aim of the institution was 'To train [illegible]oolmasters, who as a rule become Catechists later on, and [illegible]ently enter the Ministry. The men go to CMS stations [illegible]se directly under the Native Church. The men return [illegible] Divinity course before being ordained as a rule. A [illegible] men go to Fourah Bay College.'[56] The subjects [illegible]oth CMS and Wesley institutions betray their [illegible]nd religious functions. In Oyo the syllabus [illegible] Testament, New Testament, Christian Doc[illegible] England from the beginning to the end of [illegible] Good, Grammar, Simple Arithmetic, and [illegible]rope, Asia, and Africa. In the Wesley [illegible] syllabus was even less secular, con[illegible]eligion, New Testament Criticism, [illegible] Preaching, School Method and [illegible]ology, Old and New Testament,

[illegible] soon had thrown down a chal[illegible]tion on the timeliness and [illegible] regarded as a strategically [illegible] not be treated with indif[illegible]ent to think of 'a teacher [illegible]rofessionally inclined [illegible] needed for a proper [illegible] responsible duty'.[57] [illegible] West Africa. [illegible] of teaching, James [illegible] training institu[illegible] to exist in West [illegible] principle of pro[illegible] by governments, [illegible] certificates to [illegible] attractive [illegible]ial; there was [illegible] institutions [illegible] to govern[illegible] hence all the [illegible] government [illegible]ons into the [illegible] government

until after the First World War. As a CMS official decla
their training institution must be moved to the inte
order 'to avoid working for Government examin
For it had been observed that the schoolmaste
tended to lose sight of the goal of the ministry'
a rule for the Lagos schoolmaster to do
weekday schoolwork and no spiritual wo
1913 did the idea of professional
acceptable to missionary educatio
year the CMS in Yorubaland dec
Order of Schoolmasters'.[60]

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did he appeal for conditions
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Not only did James Johnson plead for handsome salaries for teachers. He wished for them as early as 1884 a solicitude that could have been shown only by the Social Welfare State—'provisions against old age and sickness'.[62] None of his contemporary educationists—Blyden, Horton, Carr and Lugard—manifested such deep, affectionate, and abiding interest in teachers and the teaching profession.

In another sense also, James Johnson was a unique pioneer educationist. He was an ardent champion of female education. The Christian in him made him accept as a maxim the equality of the sexes. He looked forward to an Africa that would be transformed by both sexes. By 1869 he had complained that in terms of the number of schools and the quality of the schools, women were being discriminated against. His belief in the capacity of women was infinite. As early as 1869 he had recorded in the Sierra Leone press: 'I do not think it will be long before we have some female authors of our race. All we want is opportunity.'[63] Judging from the example he showed by his marriage, it would appear he wanted African women to be trained to the highest level. He refused to marry unless he could meet an African lady whose training was completed in England. In 1868 he literally 'starved myself' to send his girl-friend to a post-secondary institution near Birmingham. Although death claimed this girl-friend there, he began in 1869 to gather his resources to send another girl to Britain. Not until 1895 did he marry, after meeting Sabina Leigh, daughter of a wealthy *Saro* in Lagos, who had been trained in England and was sophisticated to the level of being skilled in music and playing the piano.

In his desire for and vision of an Africa in which women would have equal opportunities with men in literary education, James Johnson, again, was ahead of his time. In the unlettered African society where the position of women was inferior to that of men, female education of the Western type was regarded as unnecessary and a waste of money. Even among the educated Africans women were regarded as less equal than men. In the Anglican Church women were debarred from formal evangelism and offices in the Church, a state

of inequality of the sexes James Johnson would have liked to remedy.

In practical terms it was in the Niger Delta that he was in a position to contribute to the development of female education. Here, where the Ijaw chiefs had long appreciated the value of literacy for their commercial enterprise, the rulers had never concealed their contempt and indifference to female education. They eagerly bore the cost of the education of the boys, whom they used as accountants and interpreters, but they would not pay fees for the girls. In 1901 James Johnson appealed to the chiefs for a change of attitude and persuaded them to accept the cost of female education.[64] On 11 April 1904, largely due to the success of his appeals for funds all over West Africa and England, the Female High School was opened in Bonny. It was the first girls' secondary school in eastern Nigeria.

The significance of the idealism, philosophy, and hopes of James Johnson about literary education in several respects for our generation can be easily assessed. The frenetic energy with which this singularly potent means of social change and advancement for Africa is being patronized today is a fulfilment of his dream; the dichotomy between religion and education in this increasingly secular world constitutes a threat to the prop of the educational system of his hopes; the awareness that has begun to dawn on African educationists that literacy should be purged of its harmful European social and moral accompaniments, but integrated with the best in traditional *mores* and culture, is a tribute to the prophetic insight of James Johnson and other contemporary pioneer educationists of the pre-World War I era.

NOTES

1 It is a pity that at present there are only two works, certainly due for supersession, that claim pretension to a history of 'education' in British West Africa. They are C. G. Wise, *A History of Education in British West Africa*, London, 1956; and F. H. Hilliard. *Short History of Education in British West Africa*, 1957.

2 Published as *Government and Mission Education in Northern Nigeria* by Ibadan University Press in 1966.

3 M. Perham, *Lugard—The Years of Authority 1898-1945*, London, 1960, pp. 489-511. R. E. Wraith, *Guggisberg*, London, 1967, pp. 130-59. W. E. F. Ward, *Fraser of Trinity and Achimota*, Accra, 1965.
4 J. A. B. Horton, *West African Countries and Peoples*, London, 1868, pp. 202-3.
5 See Chapter Two of E. A. Ayandele, *Holy Johnson: Pioneer of African Nationalism, 1836-1917*, London, 1970.
6 E. W. Blyden, *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race*, London, 1887, pp. 82-108.
7 See Henry Carr's Annual Reports in the CO 147 series, Public Record Office, London.
8 Searchers who desire to recover the history of literary education by missions must have infinite patience to wade through all journals and correspondence of individual mission agents. Education was hardly ever treated separately as a subject. It was often only one item out of many in a letter or journal.
9 For a full biography, see Ayandele, *'Holy' Johnson*.
10 James Johnson, *Yoruba Heathenism*, Exeter, 1899, p. 51.
11 *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 25/8/1900.
12 For instance, see CMS CA2/056, James Johnson to Wright, 30/1/1878; G3/A3/09, James Johnson to Tugwell, 15/4/1902.
13 CO 149/1, Legislative Council Minutes, 17/10/1888; CO 149/3, *Ibid.*, 27/5/1889.
14 *The Day Spring and Sierra Leone Reporter*, 8 & 15 January 1869.
15 *Ibid.*
16 CO 267/317, 'The Fifty-fifth Annual Report of the Sierra Leone Auxiliary Bible Society, 1871', by James Johnson.
17 *Memorial of the Celebration of the Jubilee of Her Majesty's Reign and of the Centenary of Sierra Leone 1887*, London, p. 79.
18 *Lagos Weekly Record*, 29/1/1898.
19 Perham, *op. cit.*, pp. 494-6.
20 Parliamentary Paper (Cd. 4477), Enclosure 2 in No. 16.
21 *Ibid.*
22 CO 267/369, James Johnson to Sir Henry Holland, 26/7/1887.
23 CO 879/8, James Johnson to Colonial Office, 21/1/1874; CO 147/62, James Johnson to E. Stanhope, 4/1/1887; CO 147/147, James Johnson to Chamberlain, 27/12/1899; CO 520/89, James Johnson to Colonel Seely, 20/1/1909.
24 Parliamentary Paper (Cd. 4477), Enclosure 2 in No. 16.
25 CO 879/8, James Johnson to Colonial Office, 21/1/1874.
26 CO 147/147, James Johnson to Chamberlain, 27/12/1899.
27 CMS G3/A2/01, James Johnson to Wigram, 14/8/1882.
28 See copy in CMS G3/A2/01.
29 *Lagos Times*, 9/8/1882.
30 CO 149/3, Legislative Council Minutes, 13/3/1889.
31 CO 267/369, James Johnson to Holland, 26/7/1887.
32 CMS CA2/056, James Johnson to Wright, 30/1/1878.
33 CO 267/369, James Johnson to Holland, 26/7/1887.

34 CMS CA1/0123, James Johnson to Secretary, 15/4/1869.
35 CO 879/8, James Johnson to Colonial Office, 21/1/1874.
36 CMS G3/A2010, R. B. Blaize to Baylis, 11/8/1900.
37 CMS G3/A2/013, James Johnson to Baylis, 30/3/1909.
38 Examined in detail in chapter three of Ayandele, *'Holy' Johnson*.
39 CO 267/326, Minute dated 5/6/1874.
40 CO 267/327, Minute dated 22/1/1874.
41 CO 879/8, Bishop Cheetham to Berkeley, 17/4/1874.
42 CMS CA1/0123, S. B. Boyle and others to James Johnson, April 1873.
43 CMS CA1/023, James Johnson to G. J. Macaulay, 4/5/1874.
44 CMS CA1/0123, James Johnson to Taylor and others, 19/4/1873.
45 CMS G3/A2/08, Henry Carr to Baylis, 21/9/1895.
46 National Archives, Ibadan, H. Johnson, Diary, H. Johnson to H. M. Tupper, 9/6/1891.
47 Egba Archives, Ake, Abeokuta, paper dated 28/5/1896.
48 CMS G3/A2/08, Henry Carr to Baylis, 21/9/1895.
49 *West African Reporter* (Freetown), 17/4/1873.
50 CO 520/58, J. A. Douglas to Egerton (undated), enclosure 2 in Egerton to Earl of Elgin, 10/2/1908.
51 CMS CA2/056, James Johnson to Wright, 30/1/1878.
52 CMS G3/A3/05, Finance Committee Minutes, August 1890.
53 CO 520/58, Henry Carr to Colonial Secretary (undated), enclosure 1 in Egerton to Earl of Elgin, 10/2/1908.
54 Attention is concentrated exclusively on Nigeria in the analysis of the purpose of missionary training institutions because it was only in this part of West Africa that institutions that claimed pretension to training teachers existed before 1914. See T. T. Solaru, *Teacher Training in Nigeria*, Ibadan, 1964.
55 Methodist Missionary Society Archives, London, Joseph Green to Perkins, 11/4/1908.
56 CMS CA2/015, 'Memorandum on Educational work in the Yoruba Mission in reply to Mr Lunt's Letter of August, 1911'.
57 CO 879/8, James Johnson to Colonial Office, 21/1/1879.
58 CMS G3/A2/07, Vernal to Baylis, 25/4/1893.
59 *Ibid.*, Finance Committee Minutes, 12/7/1894.
60 CMS G3/A2/015, Finance Committee Minutes, 20-27 January 1913.
61 CO 879/8, James Johnson to Colonial Office, 21/1/1879.
62 Parliamentary Paper (Cd. 4477), enclosure 2 in No. 16.
63 *The Day Spring and Sierra Leone Reporter*, 8 & 15 January 1869.
64 CMS G3/A3/09, James Johnson to Baylis, February 1902.

7

James Africanus Beale Horton, 1835-83: Prophet of Modernization in West Africa

The half-dozen havens of the educated African elite which dotted the Atlantic seaboard of West Africa in the nineteenth century were unique in contemporary Africa. For these enclaves were nurseries of a new species of African—hybridized, transmogrified, and passionate borrowers of Western values, ideas, norms, *mores*, thought-patterns, religion, and cosmology, deserters of their fatherland's cultural heritage, revellers in the white man's mental world, worshippers of the white man's literary education, and apostles of political, economic, social and cultural aspirations completely at variance with the aspirations of the rest of the continent. This educated elite, as the group is usually labelled, had more in common with white men in Europe and America than with the multimillion unlettered Africans in the vast interior of the continent. Little wonder that by and large the medium of communication of this relatively small group was either English, French, or Portuguese; they were unabashed hankerers after, and importers of, the white man's style of life in matters of dress, entertainment, freemasonry, marriage, burial, articulateness through the press and parliamentary system of government; or that very many of the group desired that, if need be, the white man should employ physical force to bring the illiterate interior to accept the white man's style of life.

These educated Africans were dreamers of an Africa that would begin to emerge long after they had died, a continent

moving in the direction of modernization, utilizing to the best advantage the science and technology which had begun to transform Europe and other parts of the white world into areas of marvel. One of the notable leaders of thought of this tiny minority of elite dreamers was James Africanus Beale Horton.

He was born in 1835 to an Igbo recaptive father in the settlement of Gloucester, one of the mushroom villages founded by liberated Africans in Sierra Leone, created by British philanthropy in 1787, and subsequently taken over by the British government in 1808. His tribal label was Igbo through his father who had been rescued in West African waters by the British navy and resettled in Sierra Leone Colony. As a colony-born, Beale Horton had an opportunity to be inducted into literary education which had been flourishing in the colony for decades, thanks to the activities of Christian missions. Although his parents were poor, a missionary, the Reverend James Beale, whose names our character adopted, trained him gratis at the primary and secondary school levels. In 1853, again on the philanthropic ticket of the Church Missionary Society, he was admitted to Fourah Bay Institution, the only post-secondary but theology-orientated institution of learning in West Africa in the nineteenth century. Being groomed originally for a career in the Church he was made to leave Fourah Bay for England in 1855, a year before he graduated, for medical training in Britain in response to a bursary award by the British government. Horton's brilliance flowered in the universities of London and Edinburgh. Within five years he had qualified, obtaining the MD degree with a publishable dissertation with a title significant for the evolution of African Studies.[1]

Sierra Leone, this province of freedom, became the dumping ground for thousands of slaves of West African origin intended for the New World but rescued by the British navy as part of the British attempt to suppress the slave trade. In a way the French never contemplated for Senegal nor the Americans for Liberia, the British accepted full responsibility for the moral, spiritual, intellectual, political, and economic rehabilitation of the multi-ethnic community in

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Sierra Leone, on the Gold Coast, and in Lagos, dangling before the educated elite models of a civil service and parliamentary system of government.[3] And in Britain, individuals and organizations aggressively committed to the improvement of the lot of Africans and the implementation of the vision of the province of freedom experiment arose. There was Thomas Fowell Buxton, whose prescription for the termination of the slave trade, the 'Bible and the plough', encouraged the British government to launch the 1841 Niger Expedition; there was Henry Venn, secretary of the Church Missionary Society from 1842 to 1872, who worked tirelessly to raise up a large number of the educated elite—botanists, naval officers, cotton farmers, traders, teachers, and preachers.[4] There was the African Native Agency Committee, composed of such people as Thomas Clegg, Baroness Burdett Coutts, Lord Shaftesbury, and Bishop Wilberforce, which spent thousands of pounds advancing middle-class educated Africans,[5] and the African Aid Society, by means of which educated Africans spoke to British audiences through the *African Times*, and which put the African side of affairs to the British government from time to time.

By the sixties, the vision of the Sierra Leone experiment originators had been partially and impressively achieved. Thousands of Africans had accepted Christianity, and preachers and teachers were actively spreading the gospel. Indeed Samuel Ajayi Crowther, the first African bishop in modern times, had by 1864 headed an all-African mission, the Niger Mission, for several years. In March 1845, the first secondary grammar school in black Africa was established in Freetown, and eighteen years later an alumnus, the Reverend James Quaker, was heading the institution as its principal. In the world of commerce and business, S. H. Pratt of Sierra Leone, Henry Robbin of Abeokuta, and Captain J. P. L. Davies of Lagos appeared. John Ezzidio of Sierra Leone and George Blankson of the Gold Coast were being considered as legislators. In the realm of politics, G. W. Johnson had begun to inoculate the Egba Board of Management.[6]

Little wonder, then, that great hopes were entertained by

the Hortons and their kind about the ultimate emergence of modernized West Africa by the end of the nineteenth century. Little wonder that Afrophiles, the Church Missionary Society, and the African Aid Society began to sing their *nunc dimittis*. And when in the early sixties a band of white denigrators of Africans appeared on the scene and informed the British audience that the vision of the Afrophiles for West Africans was wild, chimeric, and unattainable, when they began to say that the Negro was ineducable, biologically inferior to the white man, and incapable of comprehending and assimilating the tenets of the Christian faith, when they began to proclaim that the elite whom allegedly misguided philanthropists were holding out to the world as a credit to Christianity, British thinking and life-style were vice incarnate and a worse species than the uncontaminated Africans,[7] the organs of the Church Missionary Society and the African Aid Society effectively neutralized the jaundiced and unscientific views of R. F. Burton, T. J. Hutchinson, Winwood Reade—all foundation members of the Anthropological Society of London. The cudgel was taken up on behalf of the African, as the following extract from an open letter by Lord Alfred Churchill, president of the African Aid Society, testifies:

> I believe there is nothing in their [the Africans] physical development, or in the formation of their brain which would in any way incapacitate them for holding the highest position which civilized beings can aspire to. It is quite possible that it may take some time—some generations perhaps—before this can be effected; but by Christianizing them, and giving them instruction in industrial pursuits, I believe it will only require some two or three generations to make them, under favourable circumstances, equal to Europeans.[8]

J. A. B. Horton's *West African Countries and Peoples* should be understood against this background. Horton was one of the greatest beneficiaries of British philanthropy. His studentship in Britain had salutary effects upon him, confirming the respect he had for British philanthropy and his views of the purpose of the British presence in West Africa. He felt a sense of eternal gratitude to Henry Venn and the War Office

Education Committee which had been responsible for his training in Britain. And, of course, he saw Britain at the meridian of her power. He was overwhelmed by the marvels of science and technology; Britain became for him the model, its people an embodiment of all that was virtuous, and its government the altruistic benefactor of West African peoples.

J. A. B. Horton was undoubtedly a worthy leader of educated African elite thought, gifted with a clear and brilliant mind, demonstrated in bold relief in his major political treatise, *West African Countries and Peoples*, first published in 1868. Its combative diction and incautious optimism notwithstanding, it is no accident that it takes the second place in the African Heritage Books, a series of reprints of notable works authored by Africans, largely in the nineteenth century, sponsored by the Centre of African Studies at Edinburgh University. In several ways Edward Wilmot Blyden, whose *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race* is the first in the series, was foremost. Indeed, Blyden is a colossus—the most prolific writer in West Africa between 1859 and 1912, with an audience astride the Atlantic; a persuasive phrase-making orator; a missionary, diplomat, a civil servant, an educationist, a journalist, a classicist and, above all, one of the earliest exponents of the ideology of the African personality.[9]

J. A. B. Horton wrote less than Blyden, but certainly more than any other contemporary in West Africa. Compared to Blyden his audience was narrow, confined as he was to the medical profession as a civil servant within the British army in West Africa; only in the very last years of his life, from 1881 to 1883, after he had retired from the civil service, did he begin to go into banking and mining enterprises. But it would be invidious to compare Blyden and Horton—or for that matter any two of the educated African celebrities of nineteenth century West Africa—in quantitative terms in respect to what they wrote, or their stature in the world in which they lived, or their audience in contemporary West Africa. More to the point, they were patriots who, though with diverse talents and resourcefulness, were consciously working toward the same goal—the emancipation of the

African from the tyranny of obscurantist isolationism and insularism. They were all prophets of African modernization. Each of the men whose works are reproduced in the African Heritage Books contributed his own quota to the achievement of this set of Africans, whose literary skill, ideological exposition, and vision of a modernized African continent must give consolation and inspiration to their heirs in 'New Africa' and the sober apostles of black studies.

One major difference between Blyden and Horton, clearly revealed in these reprints, must be underlined, however, if only to warn readers that the nineteenth-century African educated elite and the blacks in the New World did not form a monolithic unity in their ideas and vision to the extent usually assumed by scholars of African-Negro relations. The thinking, the points of emphasis, and the visions entertained by Negroes in the New World, or with the New World background, were never identical with those of their African counterparts whose ideas and hopes were determined essentially, quite often exclusively, by the African milieu and events on the African continent. Hence the provincialism of Horton's *West African Countries and Peoples*. His message was inspired by love for West Africans and was intended for them and their British mentors alone; his ideals and his programme were exlusively West African. Significantly, the Negroes of the New World were beyond the pale of his thought, in contrast to the less provincial and definitely more Pan-African and Pan-Negro book of Blyden, himself from the New World and a settler in Liberia. Time and again Blyden's message was directed to an Afro-American audience. Sentiment-ridden or politically-conscious scholars who would wish to impose unity on the thoughts of Africans and those of the Negro leaders of thought in the New World in our generation should remember this essential difference.

Although Horton posed throughout his life, as is only too clear from *West African Countries and Peoples*, as a defender of the African who had a distinct and legitimate biological claim to equality with, and the respect of, the white man, his African is not an uncontaminated one, but transmogrified like himself, who dared not live in the authentic African milieu. The pure African did not have to search for his iden-

tity: it was already there, sphinx-like and venerated by him, as the research of such anthropologically-minded colonial officers as P. A. Talbot and C. K. Meek on Nigerians and R. S. Rattray on the Ashanti reveals. In the traditional milieu the pure African lived, moved, and had his being; in his religion he found consolation and solace. His world was one which he understood and in which he found a place as a member of the community, a unit within the organic whole. The educational system, though non-literate, was absolutely satisfactory in terms of his aspirations. He was integrated in his society with his professional skill or the code of behaviour he was trained to observe, with the knowledge of, and respect for, the cultural heritage he had acquired, with his own wisdom and the joy of the community in which he participated. He did not want his society altered from without in the way Horton desired. He welcomed neither the white man, whose ways of life he despised, nor the educated African elite like Horton, whom he regarded as de-Africanized and decivilized. In Abẹokuta, the capital of the Ẹgba branch of the Yoruba nation, the *Saro* were not regarded as pure Ẹgba and were ultimately treated with contempt; only fear of British intervention prevented their expulsion from Ẹgbaland in 1891. The Ijẹbu refused to permit any Ijẹbu exposed to the white man's culture to settle in Ijẹbuland. The Edo of Benin and the Fon of Dahomey would not allow the detribalized elite to find a home in their territories.

This is not to say that the pure African was unyieldingly impervious to forces from without. Even before the advent of the white man, African communities borrowed or learned customs, habits, ideas, and institutions from one another, but only when these innovations had been clearly grasped and their value and relevance to the aspirations of society duly assessed. In such circumstances innovations were directed or controlled by leaders of society, rather than by the innovators. There were certainly elements of the white man's culture, notably technology and trade, which appealed to leaders of West African society in the interior. As these forces did not come alone or gradually, however, and as their purveyors were whites or their minions who manifested

political ambition and aimed at exclusive leadership and supremacy, the pure Africans were not in the mood to toy with the innovations or flirt with the innovators. They saw clearly the writing on the wall that innovations would come at the expense of their cultural heritage, territorial integrity, sovereignty, and leadership of society.

The African of Horton's defence and expostulation, then, was de-Africanized like himself, living in the borrowed British milieu of the colony of Sierra Leone. Like Horton, who knew practically nothing of the Igbo society whose label he claimed, he had lost the African cultural heritage which could have moulded his thoughts, mental world, and aspirations. In his quest for self-awareness, he adopted an identity taken from the British atmosphere in which he had been brought up, even though it lacked the substance of the real Britain. As works on the nineteenth century Sierra Leone community have demonstrated clearly, the essence of that community was not proto-British. The Creoles were not Englishmen; as a matter of fact, they were such bad copies that several nineteenth century observers described them as 'the curse of the west coast', blind imitators who never comprehended the white man's virtues, even though at the same time they had lost all the restraints and characteristics of the uncontaminated African.

But the Hortons never saw themselves as hybrids, neither English nor African, having an identity difficult to define and certainly un-African. They looked upon themselves as modernizing Africans, and as the class that mattered; in their conception they had the best interests of the African continent at heart. Hence the unconcealed contempt and disdain which Horton pours on the pure unlettered African; hence the unconscious levity with which he dismissed the cultural heritage of the continent.

As is clear not only from *West African Countries and Peoples*, but from all that he wrote, Horton derived solace and consolation from the white man's cultural heritage,[10] so imperfectly represented in the province of freedom. Far more than any other leader of thought in nineteenth century West Africa, Horton was completely hypnotized by the white man's culture, believing that it was entirely whole-

some, innocent, and perfect. Neither Edward Blyden, nor
James Johnson, nor Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther—other
contemporary worshippers of the white man's culture
allowed himself to be so irretrievably enchanted by We
culture. As early as the 1860s, Edward Blyden had be
articulate the cultural nationalism which was to
become the main ingredient of his concept of the
personality.[11] Samuel Crowther had begun to urge
to recognize and respect African customs and
against which the Holy Scriptures did not
early seventies, James Johnson lectured
West Africa that 'God does not intend
confounded but that the Negro
upon his own idiosyncracies.'[12] By
had editorialized: 'We are British
ful for England's protection and
Africa. We respect and reverence
and Buxton and
Africans and have no wish to
By the end of the nineteenth
West Africa had gathered
Fantee'. This cultural
with the educated elite
Henry Rawlinson Carr
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Indeed, Horton
he believed that
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eighteenth century

nary values, he was proudly convinced that the culture that had produced contemporary English society must be equally capable of producing similar communities in other parts of the world, particularly in West Africa. His pronouncements on, and judgments of, African customs and institutions were, therefore, by no means based upon empirical data. Hence his denial of diplomatic activities or international law in pre-colonial African society; hence his unrestrained language and lack of understanding of polygamy and slavery—institutions which fulfilled definite purposes and were rationally meaningful in the context of the society in which they flourished.

Although there is no space for a detailed refutation of his views on African customs and institutions, which he never attempted to study and understand, a consideration of his assumption that there were no constitutions or polities worth speaking of in pre-colonial African society, and that Africans had no idea of international law or diplomacy, is pertinent. Research on nineteenth century Africa has proved Horton's assumption a monumental error and that the polities of the time were in fact similar to those of contemporary Europe. West Africans were political animals fiercely involved in power-politics, forming and forging states into kingdoms and empires; they nursed concepts of government which still await the attention of political scientists; they evolved administrative techniques and constitutions which did much credit to their inventive genius and which were undeniably suitable for the communities for which they were intended. Their cosmology, theology, and metaphysical concepts were sophisticated to an astonishing degree, and theologians are only beginning to study them; their diplomatic astuteness is only too evident from the accounts of nineteenth century travellers and explorers which Horton certainly did not read. West Africans fought among themselves, not because they were brutal but because, like their European or American contemporaries, they cherished the ideals and aspirations that have always haunted man—patriotism, jingoism, independence, rejection of alien domination, the desire to possess sources of wealth, megalomania, the desire to rule or impose one's religion on a

people. Careful investigation shows that the politics of West African peoples in the nineteenth century had other characteristics usually ascribed exclusively to so-called civilized communities—the quest for peace, and intrigues and ambition by individuals who emerged as heroes.

Horton's ignorance of pre-colonial African polities is clear from his remarks in *West African Countries and Peoples* that Ashanti and Dahomey were unmitigated autocracies. No doubt he was merely reproducing the jaundiced remarks of ethnocentric casual visitors to West Africa since no such autocracy existed in nineteenth century West Africa.[17] As various studies have shown, checks and balances were plentiful and government was conciliar; constitutions were constantly changing in response to changed or changing circumstances, such as the emergence of strong personalities, economic boom or recession, and the exigencies of war.

Horton's picture of Dahomey under Gezo cannot be further from the truth. The democratic processes in the Dahomian constitution were clearly demonstrated to European visitors who witnessed the women's army publicly discussing issues of war and peace at national festivals; each of the levels of the hierarchy of officials in the State had definite functions, the result of which was shared authority; the district heads (caboceers) shared authority at local and provincial levels.[18] Moreover, the Gezo vilified by Horton humanized Dahomian laws in a manner reminiscent of Robert Peel and anticipatory of Lord Lugard. For instance, Gezo enacted a law that forbade the immolation of slaves or the imposition of capital punishment, reserving the final judgment on such matters to himself.[19] Furthermore, pre-colonial constitutional development in West Africa included laws and customs which no ruler, however powerful, could flout with impunity. African rulers were neither the source nor the means of execution of authority; they were no more than its symbol. Years before Horton wrote, an American missionary in the interior of West Africa observed:

> Neither the king nor any governor or chief in the country, is arbitrary or above law. The ruler can do nothing without the assent of his council, and the ruler and council together cannot

> violate the ancient traditional laws of the country. Whatever despotic acts may be witnessed in Africa, they are all performed according to 'the Common law' of the land, the origin of which is lost in the immeasurable depths of antiquity.[20]

The pretensions of his book's title notwithstanding, Horton was not familiar with West Africa. He knew the enclaves only; he did not venture beyond Fantiland and Macarthy's land. He did not know, and could not have known, the communities in the interior, the changes occurring there, and the dynamics of its society. As a source book, *West African Countries and Peoples* is therefore of very little value and infinitely inferior to the accounts of such explorers as Mungo Park, Hugh Clapperton, T. E. Bowdich, Joseph Dupuis, F. E. Forbes, Rene Caille, and Heinrich Barth. Horton's information about indigenous politics is that spread by contemporary British officials and missionaries in whose interest it was to paint a very poor picture of the interior where they were regarded as uninvited intruders and harbingers of evil.

The Dahomian viewpoint, on the other hand, is entirely different from that presented by Horton and European writers. The Dahomians believed that they were the most civilized people in the world. They took great pride in their culture which, they said, was the best—an opinion to which they were entitled. They believed that the history of the world revolved around Dahomey. Whites performed pilgrimages to Abomey, their capital; they came from time to time to ask for favours. Furthermore, the white visitors were made to do obeisance to the Dahomian king and regard him as the greatest ruler in the world; white sojourners, confined along the Dahomian coast, were made to obey him and his laws through the *yevogan*. When a group of white 'ambassadors' visited Dahomey, the women sang this song:

> Let all eyes behold the king!
> There are not two, but one
> One only, Gezo!
> All nations have their customs,
> But none so brilliant or enlightened
> As of Dahomey
> People from far countries are here;
> Behold! all nations, white and black,

Send their ambassadors.[21]

None of the West African peoples appreciated the white man's culture in the way Horton did, and here is the source of his prejudice. Most West African rulers saw the white man as an intruder who could only bring ruin upon the territory, who had come to threaten their sovereignty and supplant the cultural heritage of West Africa with his own. He was virtuous in no way. Once he had come to purchase slaves, telling the African that human beings were the most valuable article of trade, and paying for them in liquor, gunpowder, tobacco, or glittering manufactured goods. Later he denounced the very trade he had once lauded. In several areas the white man was seen as a master of the art of luring away the coastal subjects of an African ruler, or of encouraging hostility between the coast and the interior. To the mortification of the king of Dahomey, the British offered protection to his Badagry subjects and the French to his Porto Novo subjects, and were accepted. On the Gold Coast, the British continually reinforced the hostility of the Fanti toward the Ashanti, with Horton contributing his own efforts on behalf of the Fanti in the 1860s. It is not surprising, then, that several rulers—those vilified by European writers in the nineteenth century—preferred to confine their relations with whites to commercial dealings, and then only when the price did not include self-dignity and independence. Horton regarded Christianity as the basis of civilization. To West African rulers it was not only irrelevant but fatal.

Horton, then, was not speaking for the majority of nineteenth century West Africa, and his aspirations and the changes delineated in *West African Countries and Peoples* were those of the elite enclaves. The reforms he advocated, and which he hoped to see implemented before the end of the nineteenth century, were products of his imagination. He advocated 'compulsory education' for the Igbo, for example, even though they were opposed to Western influence in their land in the nineteenth century. Horton did not know Igboland physically and the gap between his thoughts and vision for the territory was as wide as the imagination can suggest.

All that Horton cherished—the dynamics of modernization and the white man's culture—was anathema to the pre-colonial Igbo, who sealed themselves off completely from Western influence. The pre-colonial Igbo world was one in which each village enjoyed autonomy. Warfare raged endlessly for what they considered noble causes. A man demonstrated his courage and manhood by lopping off the head of an enemy and keeping it as a trophy. Every free man in the village participated actively in the assembly as the Greek in the *polis*. Society was divided into the free and the slave, and particular kinds of slaves, known as *osu*, were outcast and sacrified to the gods. Wrestling was a favourite sport. The most important divinity was the Long Juju at Aro Chukwu, and a man not only married wife after wife, but his wives encouraged him to do so.[22] When the white man first forced his way into Igboland, the Igbo believed that he was not a human being because his skin was white and that he had no toes![23] In 1905 the Owerri Igbo murdered a white man; they were displeased with his bicycle, which they regarded as desecrating their land, but they tied it to a tree, lest it went back to the British beyond the sea to report the fate of its rider.[24]

Horton's recommendation that vaccines be used to combat smallpox was ignored, particularly outside the Islamic zone. According to West African belief, smallpox was an affliction from the gods and its cure lay in contrition and penitence by the community and appeasement of the gods with sacrifice. Nineteenth-century West African peoples did not see themselves as meriting Horton's commiseration and pity. Rather they had pity for him and those like him who had succumbed to the cultural, mental, and political imperialism of the white man. They did not believe themselves backward; unaware of the triumphs of science and technology in Europe and America, they had no sense of loss, and continued confident in their elementary technology. Cherishing independence, they had no desire to be rich in the material sense of Horton's contemplation and hope. The two institutions most horrible to Horton, slavery and polygamy, were for these peoples noble, meaningful, and conducive to the well-being of society.

Perhaps the most telling evidence that Horton was not an authentic spokesman for the West African peoples is that even today, more than a hundred years since he penned his vision, his proposed reforms have yet to be fully implemented. He was not selective in his modernization vision. He would not first identify the best of Western culture for a marriage with the best in the traditional culture. His bias made Horton more platonic than the majority of his elite class as the century closed. By that time the resilience and legitimacy of Africa's cultural heritage had begun to be perceived by a large number of the educated elite, who had also begun to articulate that Western culture was not totally free from vice and indeed had ingredients that could make the African worse than it found him. By the end of the century, selective modernization was all they requested. Indeed, in their critical response to Western culture, the traditional rulers who did not oppose Westernism *per se* were perhaps more far-sighted than Horton. In the belief that, apart from political sovereignty, their cultural heritage was threatened with potential effacement, African peoples resisted vigorously the forcible invasion of their territory. And when the colonial powers succeeded at last in dominating, colonial governments dared not discountenance the cultural heritage, or trample the cultural prejudices and susceptibilities of their colonial subjects.

Horton was a very wild dreamer indeed. So impractical was his hopefulness that he expected his reforms not only to be accepted, but that by the last decade of the nineteenth century independent African nations under the control of the educated elite would have been fully established. Even if the British had been as favourably disposed to West Africans as he affected to believe, even if the enormous cost of such a programme could have been met by the British, and even if the unlettered masses had opted for it, Horton's dream was impossible.

In the light of the serious limitation of his book as source material for West African history, does *West African Countries and Peoples* have significance at all? Put in its proper context, this book is of great value in its revelation of Horton's attributes and position. Irrelevant and unrelated to the

aspirations of West Africans in the nineteenth century as this book was, it delineated a programme that was to become relevant to all of Africa in subsequent generations. Thus, in a sense, Horton was a prophet who discerned the forces that were to determine the future of Africa. For, small and insignificant as the educated elite were in the nineteenth century, the future belonged more to them than to the unlettered majority. The forces of the future were Christianity, in the wake of which was literary education, a white conception of government, the civil service, cash economy, banks, motorable roads, and so on—forces bound to shatter the splendid isolation policy of pre-colonial African society and integrate the continent with the rest of the world. The colonial powers were destined to introduce and encourage these dynamics of political, social, and economic changes in the colonial era; the educated elite, whose numbers increased with the colonial era, not only appreciated them in full, but hoped to implement them throughout the continent.

Ideologically, then, and in terms of aspiration, Horton's mantle devolved on the colonial elite. And much as the colonial masters feared the rivalry of educated Africans, the latter were used as hands, although not as heads, of the administration. It was the elite who began to acquire the attributes the whites possessed, attributes with which the Europeans justified their domination. When the colonial era set in, the way was made easier by the educated Africans, and it was to them, not to the illiterate majority, that the colonial officials had to transfer the reins of power. The triumph of Horton's hopes was in some way assured with the destiny of the continent in the hands of thousands, if not millions, of Hortons.

Horton's work is also significant in its assertion of the biological equality of the races at a time of intense anti-Negro propaganda by racist writers in Europe and the New World. Few educated Africans had the courage to refute this propaganda in nineteenth century West Africa. Alexander Crummel and Edward Blyden of Liberia and 'Holy' Johnson of Sierra Leone and Nigeria are important exceptions. But far more than Blyden and Johnson, Horton took up the challenge thrown down by Richard Burton, Winwood

Reade, and T. J. Hutchinson, whose subjective racist views were proclaimed in pseudo-scientific terms. Horton's knowledge of science enabled him to demonstrate with empirical data the scientific inadmissibility of the criteria applied by the pseudo-anthropologists for the classification of the races—criteria which have since been absolutely discredited. The book contrasts with detailed illustration of the data he collected in West Africa the unscientific pronouncements of the Burtons and Hunts.

But Horton was not satisfied with appealing to science alone. Like Edward Blyden, though much less forcefully, he argued that the resilience of Africans had been demonstrated by the centuries of the trans-Atlantic slave trade which had not exterminated the race. He declared that the sufferings they endured and survived as slaves would have crushed other races. Like James Johnson, though again much less vehemently than the fiery ecclesiastic, Horton contended that there was no greater evidence of the inherent ability of Africans to master the techniques of advanced development than the achievements recorded by philanthropic agencies in West Africa within two generations. Given the fact that history and geography had been adverse to the Negroes of West Africa, he argued, it was something of a miracle that missionaries, teachers, businessmen, legislators, civil servants, and intellectuals had been produced within so short a time; few peoples of the world similarly circumstanced, he contended with pride, would have been able to respond to civilizing influences as the Africans had done. Even Britain took a long time to record such success.[25] What had taken West Africans decades to achieve would have taken other peoples, including the white, hundreds of years.

The value of Horton's refutation of the biological inequality theory should not be minimized. Although the necessity for defending the African against racial prejudices existed in the colonial era, it is remarkable that more African intellectuals did not continue the battle on the literary and academic planes. The educated elite—or rather, those of them who spearheaded the agitation for independence from colonial rule—seemed to have accepted in silence the racial supre-

trine of their colonial overseers. Why were others
g out against the doctrine in colonial times?
rk like Horton's was heretical, deliberately
ccepted notions of the white man's biologi-
d the issue of the biological equality of the
In South Africa the white supremacy
by the Afrikaner ruling class. and
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he envisaged, force the illiterate interior to accept it, and then hand over power to the educated elite. At the time he was writing, the areas held by the European powers were very small; they included only Lagos, forts on the G[illegible] Coast, Sierra Leone, Barthurst in the Gambia, and D[illegible] He wanted the white man's presence, small as it was, t[illegible] nated, with the final withdrawal to take place in 189[illegible] Gambia. The result would be a cluster of independe[illegible] African nations. Horton emphasized strongly th[illegible] peans could never effectively develop West Afric[illegible] thing, the climate was hostile to them, forcing th[illegible] draw periodically to Europe. Under these circ[illegible] said, it would be impossible for them to asse[illegible] of Africa, or to discover its material and posit[illegible] But the African was in a different positio[illegible] natural to him, he was emotionally comm[illegible] nent, and he alone could identify his in[illegible]

Even before the scramble era, the [illegible] educated Africans nursed the concer[illegible] doing so, they were something of [illegible] hand, they were collaborators with [illegible] whom they shared cultural ideas [illegible] and styles they readily accepted [illegible] were not to be directors of [illegible] man's value systems and [illegible] looked upon themselves as [illegible] minority, they would [illegible] traditionalist majority. [illegible] held at the expense of [illegible] peans were affected [illegible] expected to derive [illegible] West Africa. Once the[illegible] ish ideas on education ha[illegible] ciety, and life, they w[illegible]

Although eventually W[illegible] prepare a modern [illegible] tation that it would b[illegible] century was impractic[illegible] was very small indeed[illegible] begun to understand[illegible]

Surely the legislative councils which existed in nineteenth century West Africa, in rather rudimentary form and confined to the coastal areas, were far distant from the House of Commons or the Houses of Assembly which were to be established in the territory in the 1950s. In spite of the spread of British ideas into the interior and of the very large number of literates in West African society, the Westminster model has remained an unattainable objective and has failed in post-independence Africa. But Horton had faith in Parliament and the ballot box, and expected the West African nations to be led by their real rulers, the educated elite.

Horton was apparently aware that independent West African nations led by the elite would still have need of British help. He insisted time and again that the British should not withdraw from the territory completely; they should be prepared to use force in the interior, and continue to serve in West Africa in a supervisory capacity. But like his doctrine of biological equality, ignored in the scramble era and throughout the colonial period, Horton's advocacy of independence for West Africa was never seriously sustained by the British. The British, particularly those in West Africa, did not see themselves in the role Horton had designed for them, and the climate notwithstanding, were not prepared to withdraw from the seat of power. People like Henry Venn were lonely voices crying in the wilderness. The medical officers, artisans, missionaries, traders, and government officials saw themselves as torchbearers of the British empire, particularly when keen competition arose with the French and Germans. The missionaries saw their work in the territory as extensive, taking an indefinite length of time; as long as they were there they must remain rulers. Traders expected business to flourish to England's benefit, and British officials were not ready to give up their power to the elite.

In spite of Horton's awareness of British opposition to his hopes for independence, in 1868 his writing still confidently expected the British government to disregard its own interest. He was also optimistic about the outcome of a resolution by a Parliamentary committee that the British should withdraw from West Africa with the possible exception of Sierra Leone. He misunderstood both the context of the resolution

and the realities of the British position in West Africa, realities of which he was himself a victim. By the time he published *West African Countries and Peoples*, events on the Gold Coast, where he invested much effort on behalf of the Fanti, should have shocked him out of his illusions. Moves for unity and independence by Aggrey and the Fanti along the lines suggested by Horton had been discouraged by the British.[26] In Lagos, Governor Glover's mood inclined not toward withdrawal but toward expansion, as a result of which missionaries were expelled by the Egba, an event which Horton did not understand and on which he passed subjective judgment. It was only after 1868 that Horton was to see more clearly the collapse of his vision.

Horton's dream of modernization was not confined to the realm of ideology. He was one of the earliest apostles of Western education in West Africa. It was logical that in this matter the ideas and thinking of educated Africans differed essentially in several directions from those of their white members and from the ideas and thinking of educationists in contemporary Europe. It is a crucial point which is yet to be given its place in West African historiography.

Africanus Horton was a credit to Western-style education. His intellect was refined in such a way that he was reckoned with in all the enclaves where he worked as a military surgeon. Erudite and articulate, he used his intellect to present the vision of the educated elite in West Africa to the British audience. His clearheadedness, his gift as a writer, and his optimism about the emergence of a modernized West Africa, are abundantly exemplified in his publications. It is singularly remarkable that of the prominent nineteenth century thinkers of Western education in West Africa, Horton was the only one who was neither a teacher, nor a policy-maker in the matter of Western education. For instance Bishop James Johnson and Edward Wilmot Blyden, his two foremost African contemporary apostles of literary education, were both teachers and missionaries, whilst Henry Rawlinson Carr, who emerged shortly after Horton's death in 1883, was to be both a teacher and a shaper of education policy in Nigeria. The essence of the matter is that in Horton's view Western-style education was the most

important gift that could, and should, be bestowed upon Africa and the Africans. It was the only instrument that could herald 'a glorious future' for the peoples of West Africa. Hence the ample space he devoted to the subject of education in his writings; hence his incessant plea with the British Government that every effort should be made to drench West Africa with literary education. For him the only African who mattered, and should be deemed to matter, was the literate African. It was only he who could, and would, imbibe and seek to apply ideas and reforms which would transform West Africa into a modern territory with peoples able to stand at the same social, intellectual, and economic levels as the progressive peoples in the world. In other words, Horton was saying, educate the African in the Western sense and you have the key to the prosperity and progress of the continent. Through Western education, too, Africans would be in a position to demonstrate their biological equality with other races. As he opined:

> the improvement of the West Coast of Africa ... can never be properly accomplished except by the educated native portion of the community, ... the more the educated portion of the inhabitants is increased the more will the rise of the other portion be made evident and the more so will impartial judges be able to prove the capabilities of the African.[27]

Horton was saying that Western-style education was the cause, and all other dynamics of change such as economics, politics, religion, and culture, were effects; that if you would only seek first the kingdom of Western education all other things would be added unto you.

Indeed so much was the subject in his mind that he enunciated principles of education of eternal value, some of them so highly idealistic that even today, more than a century after they were first pronounced, they are yet to be achieved. Prolific in suggestions, Horton wanted government to train teachers in very large numbers to meet the needs of all West Africa; teachers were to be so highly remunerated to the point that the principal of a secondary school, an Academy which he urged the British to establish on the Gold Coast, should receive a salary as high as that of a medical officer;

the British should set up all over West Africa Boards of Education on which a cross-section of the enlightened community should be represented; an inspectorate section should be set up. However, it is to the major facets of his philosophy that I want to confine my observations. For Horton was the most vigorous advocate of the concept that Western education was *ipso facto* one of the duties of the State, a burden that should not be pushed on to the shoulders of non-government agencies. Obviously for the age in which this principle was announced it was a remarkable statement. These were the years when, in England, education was regarded as a privilege exlusively available to the rich and the aristocracy, when it was believed that literary education was a private enterprise and not the business of the State, when private agencies, particularly religious bodies, were the proprietors of educational institutions, and when the Foster Education Act of 1870 was not yet on the horizon.

In West Africa Horton and, later, others were saying that education was not a privilege but a necessity; every citizen should be made literate even against his own will, as he might not know his own interest; and the Church and other private agencies should not be saddled with a responsibility that was not necessarily theirs and which they could not be expected to discharge satisfactorily. For, as Horton truly remarked, the resources of Christian missions were limited and intended for other ends. On the other hand, asserted Horton, the governments were richer, deriving enormous revenue from the territory, which revenue they should be prepared to use to provide schools at all levels.

This is not to say that Horton wanted Western education to be removed from the hands of the missions, the real disseminators of this kind of knowledge in the territory at the time he wrote; all that he wanted was that their efforts be supplemented and that they should not be regarded as the legal bearers of the burden of Western education in the territory. And it may be added that by 1870 when his views on Western education had been expressed, the opinion of Afrophile people in England was that the quality and quantity of literary education available in West Africa were enough and solid, that ample results had been produced.

For Horton, however, ample as were the results being produced by Western-style education, the efforts of the missions fell far short of the target that should be aimed at—the induction of every African into literacy. His conviction that literary education was a prescriptive right of the citizen saw him far ahead of his time. Few educationists in nineteenth century West Africa went as far as articulating that Western education should be made compulsory, as Horton did, for children from the age of seven to fourteen even in so backward a place as the Gambia.[28] Indeed in the colonial era few educationists desired and demanded compulsory education for the territory. And in this post-independence generation they are not many who favour the idea as a practical or wise proposition. Horton's hope and expectation, that every African should be literate, derived from his view that only the literate in the Western sense would constitute an asset to a modernized West Africa. Nevertheless, the idea of every African being literate is by no means abandoned, although its implementation is a matter for a very remote future.

Nor did Horton advocate just any type of education. Unlike the majority of nineteenth century missionaries in West Africa, whose emphasis was on the three R's for purely religious ends, he wanted the best for the territory. To this end he preached incessantly the virtues of post-primary education. At a time when there were no grammar schools in other parts of black Africa, when the CMS Grammar School in Sierra Leone (1845) was being patronized by pupils from as far afield as the West Indies and East Africa, Horton urged multiplication of secondary grammar schools in the territory. He was the earliest advocate of secondary grammar schools for the Gold Coast, a territory that had to wait till 1876 for its first institution of this kind. The only secondary school in Sierra Leone at the time he wrote, he said, was inadequate; more should be established there, apart from a teacher-training institution that would provide well-trained teachers for the whole of West Africa.[29]

Horton did not want Africans to be trained in literary skills alone. He was an exponent of technical and agricultural training in relation to the economic needs and progress of West Africa. He urged the establishment of an industria

institution at Gloucester, his birthplace, 'where paid carpenters, masons, blacksmiths, wheelwrights, etc., are to be continually kept at work'.[30] The agriculture of West Africa, he said, should be completely revolutionized to the point of making farmers knowledgeable in soil chemistry. There were to emerge eventually cash crop growers, growing for export cotton, palm oil, beniseed, tobacco, cloves, chicory, tea and coffee, many of which, he was convinced, could push the products of other countries out of the world market. For instance indigo: 'I am certain that Africa will be able, if only proper means be adopted, to supply all England with indigo, as well as with tea, with greater ease and far cheaper than she can be supplied from the East Indies and from China.'[31]

For Horton only the best was good enough for Africa. And to his eternal credit he was the first African to demand a university institution for West Africa. In an address to an Afrophile philanthropic organization in Britain, the African Aid Society, in 1866 he declared:

> We want a university for Western Africa, and the Church Missionary Society has long ago taken the initiative and built an expensive college which should now be made the focus of learning for all Western Africa ... Fourah Bay College should henceforth be made the University of Western Africa, under the auspices of the local Government.[32]

Horton's vision of a university institution for West Africa cannot be surprising. Research-minded as he was, and given the conviction he had that research relevant to African interest was to be found in the territory, it was only natural that he should desire to see research institutions located in the territory. One such institution was a medical school, a 'Government medical school' as he called it, which he had asked for in 1861. Here medical students would 'have in Africa preliminary education in some if not all the branches of medical science'. And it is significant that, in accordance with his belief that Africans were best to identify the curriculum and research themes relevant to their continent, Horton pleaded that the medical school should be headed by Africans, those already trained being 'perfectly competent to keep such establishment and to bring up young Africans in

every branch of the medical profession'.[33] It was unfortunate that in the early seventies, when his idea of a university institution for West Africa was being discussed in detail by Edward Blyden and James Johnson, Horton was in the Gold Coast and already condemned to silence because he was a civil servant who was not expected to participate in public discussion, after he had offended the colonial government with his good wishes for the Fanti Confederation, a movement which the colonial government killed.

Nevertheless Horton's vision for West Africa in the matter of higher education remains unique in two ways. First, as an examination of the subjects he wished taught shows,[34] he was in favour of a university institution geared to the economic aspiration of the territory. The physical and natural sciences outweighed other disciplines, in the hope that the sylvan and other resources of the territory would be developed by the products of such a technology and scientifically-based university. Mineralogy, physiology, botany, and chemistry were to produce African technocrats and scientists—the only class of people upon whom the economic and technological development of the continent must depend; Europeans were not to be depended upon for such development. As he recorded, 'it is not by the Europeans that we must expect to have them [the scientific resources of the coast] developed but by the African who is educated in the various branches of science'.[35] No one more than Horton preached the virtues of science and technology and the applicability of these disciplines to the development of West Africa. And it may be added that, howbeit in an amateurish way, he attempted to locate the sylvan resources of West Africa as well as cash crops that could become means of prosperity for the territory.[36]

His advocacy of the best of education at all levels for Africans apart, Horton's philosophy of education was unique in the sense that he did not emphasize religion as such in the curricula of the schools. In the nineteenth century all missionaries and their African wards saw educational institutions as primarily producers of Christians and pious people. And whilst such African educationists as James Johnson, Edward Blyden, and Dr Mọjọla Agbebi demanded

disciplines that would satisfy the social, economic, and political aspirations of Africans at the highest possible levels, they never failed to emphasize in categorical terms that religion—that is Christianity—should be given primary attention in the school curriculum. Of course James Johnson, Edward Blyden, and Dr Agbebi were missionaries, but Dr Henry Rawlinson Carr, a civil servant like Horton, gave Religious Instruction such prominence as may astound us today. Moreover, no colonial administrator in the century dared to challenge the prominence of Religious Instruction in West African schools in the nineteenth century. Horton was therefore alone in his eloquent silence on the place of religion—Christianity—in the Western educational system. In his prescribed curricula for primary and secondary schools, Horton did not regard religion as a 'principal' subject worth mentioning. At the primary school, he wrote, 'the principal studies taught should be English grammar, arithmetic, reading, spelling, geography, writing and dictation'; in the secondary grammar school: 'besides grammar and geography, the rudiments of Latin and Greek, Euclid, geometry, botany, mineralogy and music'.[37]

Not that Horton was an enemy of Christianity, or that he was opposed to the teaching of the Christian religion in schools. Indeed he was a Christian, though not a blatantly zealous and pious one; he had the highest praise for Christian missions, lauded their educational efforts, and pronounced the view that Christianity was the foundation of true civilization. His secular outlook was quite logical in view of his conviction that the State, rather than the Church, should be the educator. Thus his curriculum for Fourah Bay—'A systematic course of instruction should be given to the students in every branch—in Humanity, *Belles-Lettres*, Political Economy, etc.—by lectures; which plan I consider is the best mode of conveying literary and scientific instruction, and thus impart good moral principles in the minds of the youths under education.' He had no thought, then, for the functional value of religion as the vehicle of 'good moral principles'![38]

Horton's rather secular attitude to education definitely put him ahead of his time. He was concerned primarily with the

quality of the African here on earth rather than with what his mind should be in preparation for the world hereafter. As the colonial era came and progressed Horton's secular approach began to triumph, and has triumphed even more in post-colonial Africa. The philosophy of schools existing primarily or even secondarily as disseminators of Christianity has been discountenanced in independent Africa by State legislation, even when such schools are under the proprietorship of Christian missions.

Important as Horton's philosophy of education is for us, it should be remarked that it harboured one major defect, a defect which arose from his own personality. For Horton was undoubtedly the most thoroughly culturally-conquered of the leading African educationists of nineteenth-century West Africa. He held the view that Africans had no culture whatsoever and that education was completely absent from pre-colonial African society. Completely hypnotized by the white man's culture—which he believed was entirely wholesome, innocent, and perfect—he allowed himself to be so irretrievably enchanted by Western culture that he had no eyes to see the merits of Africa's cultural heritage. For Horton, West Africa was in cultural affairs a *tabula rasa*.

A man who was so monumentally ignorant about Africa's cultural heritage could not have had perception of the non-literary but virile, effective, comprehensive, rational, and wholly salutary education system in the pre-colonial African world. The existence of such a system was completely beyond his imagination and he would have doubted the sanity of any person who dared to suggest its existence, legitimacy, and merits over the Western pattern of education on behalf of which he was spilling so much ink. Horton was not the educationist to prescribe syllabuses on African history, African sociology, African religion, African government, African law, African international relations, African musicology and so on. For him the humanities and social sciences which could examine the African in relation to the traditional environment would be a colossal waste of effort. There was no question of Horton regarding uncontaminated Africans as having thought patterns, social organizations, political systems, patterns of human relations, and emotional

and psychological responses to their environment worth studying. Hence the fact that the curriculum he would design for Africans concerned the non-human elements—the sylvan and mineral resources, and the African's anatomy and physiology.

Nevertheless, the major defect in Horton's educational thoughts notwithstanding, his philosophy of education was unique for his age and is relevant to our educational aspirations today. First, he perceived the strategically elemental importance of education in the transformation of Africa into a modern continent and pronounced the fundamentally significant view that it is the obligation of the State to educate its citizens. Second, he saw the power and relevance of science to the aspirations of African peoples and urged its inclusion and emphasis in school curricula. Third, he perceived that religion—Christianity—should not be accorded the all-important place which the pioneers of Western education, out of excellent intentions but to the detriment of the other religions—Islam and African Traditional Religion—insisted on giving it. This last point calls for a remark or two. There is a sense in which religion in its extreme dogmatic form could have a Procrustean effect on a people, preventing them from giving maximum attention to material development and the technological improvement of a society. Hence the fact that all progressive and advanced peoples of the world have relegated religion to the background in their march towards modernization; hence the triumph of the State over the Church in practically all the countries of the world.

One characteristic of Horton's which is boldly imprinted on his publications is his Pan-African attitude. Though by birth an Igbo and by culture a Westernized African, he saw himself as a spokesman for all Africans in matters he considered intrinsically of African interest. For him there was no question of loyalty first to his tribe, next to his country, and only lastly to his continent. Rather, the continent came first, although his ideas and experiences were determined by the West African situation he knew. In practical terms, he spent his political energy on behalf of the Fanti and he considered programmes to facilitate developments in the various ethnic

groups he knew. Moreover, his institutions—the university, the medical school, and the teacher training college—were intended to serve the entire territory of West Africa.

One should not underestimate the remarkableness of Horton's cosmopolitanism and West Africanness. Shared by the elite leadership in the nineteenth century, and less fervently in the early decades of this century, these attributes began to be lost in the era between the wars. Nationalism completely absorbed the attention of colonial era elite leadership until the attainment of independence. Once it was achieved, West African statesmen became particularistic and provincial in outlook. And worse still, they dismantled the institutions for co-operation at the Pan-West African level which the colonial powers had set up.

NOTES

1 For more biographical information about Horton, see E. A. Ayandele's introduction to J. A. B. Horton, *Letters on the Political Condition of the Gold Coast*, London, 1970.

2 The authoritative work on the founding of the province of freedom is Christopher Fyfe, *A History of Sierra Leone*, Oxford, 1962.

3 For the ideas and activities of the Saro (Sierra Leone emigrants) in Yorubaland, see Jean H. Kopytoff, *A Preface to Modern Nigeria: The 'Sierra Leoneans' in Yoruba, 1830-1890*, Madison, 1965.

4 Henry Venn, *Notices of the British Colonies on the West Coast of Africa*, London, 1865.

5 Public Record Office, London, CO 267/325, Thomas Clegg to Lord Kimberley, 21 October 1873.

6 Kopytoff, *op. cit.*, 178-80.

7 R. F. Burton, *Wanderings in West Africa*, London, 1863, Vol. 1, 206ff.; Winwood Reade, *Savage Africa*, London, 1863, chs. 4, 5, 26, 38; T. J. Hutchinson, *Ten Years' Wanderings among the Ethiopians*, London, 1861, chs. 2, 3.

8 See the *African Times*, 22/7/1865, in which Lord Alfred Churchill, president of the African Aid Society, attacked the Anthropological Society of London.

9 For more about Blyden see Chapter Eight.

10 Other writings of Horton's include his *Letters on the Political Condition of the Gold Coast*, and a series of articles in the *African Times* during 1864, 1865, and 1866.

11 Robert W. July, 'Nineteenth Century Negritude: Edward Blyden', *Journal of African History*, 1 (1964), 73-86.

12 James Johnson to Pope-Hennessy, 24 December 1872, reproduced in the *Negro* (Freetown), 1/1/1873.
13 *Lagos Times*, 12/7/1882.
14 The best results of this cultural renaissance in the field of history are C. C. Reindorf, *The History of the Gold Coast and Asante*, Basel, 1895, and Samuel Johnson, *A History of the Yoruba*, Lagos, 1921. The manuscript for the latter was completed in 1897.
15 CO 520/50, Henry Carr to Colonial Secretary, enclosure I in Egerton to Earl of Elgin, 10/2/1908.
16 J. A. B. Horton, *West African Countries and Peoples*, Edinburgh, 1969, p. vi.
17 See Daryll Forde and P. M. Kaberry (eds.), *West African Kingdoms in the Nineteenth Century*, Oxford, 1967.
18 F. E. Forbes, *Dahomey and the Dahomians*, 2 vols., London, 1851; J. A. Skertchy, *Dahomey as It Is*, London, 1874.
19 John Duncan, *Travels in Western Africa in 1845 and 1846*, London, 1847, vol. 1, 259.
20 T. J. Bowen, *Adventures and Missionary Labours in Several Countries in the Interior of Africa*, London, 1968, p. 318.
21 Forbes, *Dahomey*, vol. 2, p. 166.
22 R. N. Smith, 'The Ibo People', unpublished PhD dissertation, Cambridge University, 1929; M. Green, *Ibo Village Affairs*, London, 1947; Sylvia Leith-Ross, *African Woman. A Study of Ibo of Nigeria*, London, 1938.
23 No toes because the white man wore shoes. A. E. Afigbo, 'The Warrant Chief System in Eastern Nigeria', PhD dissertation, University of Ibadan, 1964, p. 86.
24 F. D. Walker, *The Romance of the Black River*, London, 1930, p. 314.
25 Horton, *West African Countries*, pp. 24 & 26.
26 For a history of the Fanti confederation, see David Kimble, *A Political History of Ghana*, Oxford, 1963, 222-63.
27 CMS CA1/0117, J. B. Horton to Grey and Ripon, 13/11/1863.
28 Horton, *West African Countries*, 1969 edition, pp. 92, 212.
29 *Ibid.*, p. 185.
30 *African Times*, 23/10/1866.
31 *Ibid.*, 23/5/1864.
32 *Ibid.*, 23/2/1866.
33 CMS CA1/0117, J. B. Horton to Grey and Ripon, 13/11/1863.
34 J. B. Horton, *West African Countries*, p. 184.
35 CMS CA1/0117, J. B. Horton to de Grey and Ripon, 13/11/1863.
36 *African Times*, 23/5/1864, 'African Products' by Africanus Horton.
37 Africanus Horton, *Letters*, pp. 144-5.
38 *African Times*, 23/2/1866.

8

Edward Wilmot Blyden, 1832-1912: the Myth and the Man

Son's son shall sing thy Praise
Great Blyden thou sable champion of a sable race.

It is in the logic of things that Edward Wilmot Blyden has enjoyed hero status in the hands of historians of the nineteenth century African educated elite.[1] In erudition, in literary output, in the defence of the Negro race against jaundiced white disparagers, and in oratorical powers, he had no compeer. A distinct diadem in the Pan-Negro literary crown, he excelled his contemporaries with his international stature that extended across the Atlantic to the New World. His versatility was uncommon, having been at different times an educator, a scholar, a civil servant, a journalist, a missionary, and a diplomat. Above all, from the age of nineteen, when he first set his foot on African soil, until his death at the ripe age of eighty, Blyden was a truly sincere, dedicated, 'pan-Negro patriot', imbued all the time with a sense of service to his race. And so much was his spell on his contemporaries in West Africa that ditties were composed about him, one as early as 1890 as follows:

> Africa's destiny lay hid in night,
> God said let BLYDEN be, and all was light.[2]

Edward Wilmot Blyden was a West Indian by birth, born on the Dutch island of St Thomas on 8 August 1832. His parentage is not clear, some claiming he was of Igbo stock, himself claiming that his parents were Hausa.[3] Apprenticed for tailoring, he was sent to school through the kindness of a

Methodist missionary. Again through the philanthropy of a missionary, he was taken to the United States in 1849 for secondary education, in preparation for work in Africa. Due to the racial discrimination in the United States he found no admission to any suitable institution of learning there and became a ward of the Foreign Board of the Presbyterian Church which was about to establish a High School in Liberia. The sting of that discrimination, which in subsequent years was to be repeated in the United States and on the Mediterranean Sea, had an early and permanent influence on his thinking and writings. First, it bred in him the conviction that so long as they remained in the New World, the Negroes in the United States would ever remain cultural and mental slaves, unable to assert racial identity and independence, and that their salvation lay in returning to Africa. Like a captive released from bondage to freedom, he arrived in Monrovia, capital of four-year old independent Liberia, on 26 January 1851 in an ecstatic mood. Already revelling in romantic beliefs about the African past, through the classical literature in which he was already substantially well read, he burst out in his very first letter: 'You can easily imagine the delight with which I gazed upon the land of Cyprian and Tertullian, ancient fathers in the Christian Church; of Hannibal and Henry Diaz, renowned generals; yes, and the land of *my* forefathers'.[4]

This romanticizing of African achievements in Hellenistic and Roman Mediterranean Africa from very early days was to become part and parcel of the essential Blyden for the rest of his life. It served as a psychological boost to him, assuring him and others like James Johnson and James Africanus Horton that the African was not a whit biologically inferior to any other human being. It also served as a protective mechanism for him in a situation overwhelmingly against his race, an attempt to find an assurance in the past. It provided him with an authentic arsenal for refutation of unscientific and doctrinaire pontifications about Negroes by such nineteenth-century racist bigots and negrophobes as R. F. Burton, Dr James Hunt, T. J. Hutchinson, and other founders of the Anthropological Society of London.[5] African contributions to 'civilization' in the past, he contended

throughout his life, were far more enduring and more inspiring than the contemporary industrial and technological triumphs of the white man. The white man's 'civilization' was exploitative and selfish, he averred. Literally overwhelmed by the marvels of the pyramids in Egypt in the course of his visit to the Middle East in 1866, which he attributed to the 'blameless Ethiopians', 'that branch of the descendants of Noah, the enterprising sons of Noah, from whom I descended', he saw Negroes as having sent 'civilisation into Greece—the teachers of the fathers of poetry, history and mathematics—Homer, Herodotus, and Jupiter.'[6] He declared:

> In view of these immense structures. . . . What are Atlantic telegraphs to these incomprehensible and time-defying edifices,. . . . What is modern civilization, with all its activities and agencies? What is it, after all, but an extensive system of bargain and barter. . . . The pyramids saw the commencement of all the civilizations which have passed over the world since the Flood.[7]

But not only did Blyden live mentally in a world of sentimentality about the achievements of Negroes in the past, he also throve in a world of illusion and absurd dreams in his expection of a millennium in which Africans would be in the ascendant. He became a veritable dreamer of the Ethiopian utopia by a thoroughly sentimental and subjective interpretation of the Bible. In the Bible and classical literature, he indulged his belief, the Ethiopians were Africans and Ethiopia was Africa. He affected to believe that 'the basis of the civilization and literature' of modern times was Ethiopia.[8] The Biblical verse of Ethiopia stretching forth her hands unto God was a prophecy that would be literally fulfilled in the sense that Christianity would become the religion of the peoples of the continent and Africa would, by divine will, be ushered into an era of unprecedented glory. It would occur '*suddenly*'. As early as 1861 he had declared:

> A day of life and joy is rapidly drawing upon Africa, and there is a strong probability that he whose right it is to reign will suddenly come and take possession of that land. It need not imply any pretension to prophetic insight for us to declare that we live

> in the shadows of remarkable events in the history of Africa, events whose consequences will be of transcendental importance and unending interest, not only to that down-trodden land, but to the whole human race.[9]

Had he the eyes to see, Blyden ought to have perceived that, in his romanticization of the African past and his utopian dream, he was merely wasting words and overindulging sheer wishful thinking. The cultural pattern he wished to see established was not the indigenous one but the hybrid amalgam which Negroes in the United States had borrowed from the white man. The components of this 'civilization' were clear—literacy, Christianity, and modernization. These were for him the assets which both the Afro-Americans and educated Africans were to employ in the upliftment of their race. It is significant to note that he never saw the cultures of the myriads of African polities as 'civilizations' upon which the development of Africa should be based. Then the imperialist threat to African States never showed that a utopia was remotely on the horizon—even the Liberia he was in was a victim of imperial competition, hardly able to stand up to both the British and French in matters of international boundaries. He was to live to see the white man totally entrench his hold on Africa. His utopian dream receded surely and systematically with the colonial hold upon Africa. Little wonder that in the latter part of his life he stopped alluding to his millennium.

In philosophical terms Blyden was intensely proud of his colour and race. His pride carried with him an intellectual conviction. A firm believer that the races of the world had talents variously distributed to them by Providence for the mutual advantage of mankind, Blyden asserted time and again that there should be no racial cross-carpeting such as was being contemplated by many of his fellowmen. The white man, for instance, he said, with his 'harsh and stern life' was intended by God to be the conqueror, the imperialist, the industrialist, the moneymaker, and the materialist.[10] In the process of the white man fulfilling himself in these roles, the African should not stop him but gladly surrender himself to be governed and exploited by the white man. Acceptance of the colonial situation as a natural event in the

scheme of things implied, and explains, Blyden's eloquent silence on the colonial economic exploitation of Africa. Unlike James Johnson and Africanus Horton, both of whom regarded African independence as the lodestar, Blyden ignored the issue of self-government entirely. Rather he urged Africans to accept the white man's conquest and rule as 'an act ordained of God'.[11] For Blyden devotion of Africans to material things would be an irrelevant and unnatural diversion from their natural course—pursuit of the eternal values of religion and literature. Africans would be fulfilling their economic role by confining themselves to producing raw materials in exchange for manufactured goods from the white nations. Spolation of the natural world should be left to the white man, the city-man and the city-maker, the breeder of sins. By the time the white man had fulfilled his secular and mundane roles, he would automatically cease to be a spiritual being.[12]

The African, 'the feminine', was a contrast to the white man. His role was primarily religious. In this regard he was meek and closer to the world of nature, 'in the solitudes of the African forests'.[13] Blyden also believed that the Africans shared the spiritual gifts with the Jews, and that the African was also endowed with gifts in literature, through which he would be able to have a greater perspective of God than the members of any other race. To this end he was to be basically agrarian, 'speaking to the soil'. He was the rural man, the countryside being the creation of God as opposed to the cities created by man. Prophets arose from rural areas—the Bethlehems and Nazareths. The African continent was to be punctuated by villages, and he affected to believe that towns would never arise on the continent. Ultimately the African was to show the white man the path to religiosity, for 'Religion originated in Africa'.[14]

In Blyden's belief, a world of harmony would result from each race recognizing and accepting its role. The first law, in this respect, was racial purity. No matter where they were, Negroes should pursue the policy of cultural identity and pride rather than thirst after European culture. Hankering after the white man's culture was the crudest nonsense, indicating the abysmal ignorance and mental slavery of the edu-

cated elite. 'Any African who does not contend for the purity and integrity of his race is not worthy of a place in the ranks of humanity', he asserted.[15] In the borrowed cultural atmosphere of the white man in which they were thinking and living, he pontificated, they were misfits and out of their element: they could never be, nor was it in their interest to seek to be, Europeans. To have contempt for their culture and race, as most of the educated elite of his day were doing, he stressed, was the sure way to racial extinction, a denial for Africa of a legitimate identity, separateness, self-pride, and independence.

Negroes, Blyden pressed the point home further, must not seek miscegenation, another sure way to extinction. Miscegenation would degrade them from the pedestal of humanity to that of 'mongrels' who, by the inexorable law of Providence, would cease to exist, like 'flies of latter spring' which 'must lay their eggs and sting and sing and weave their pretty cells and die'.[16] Blyden's personal experiences reinforced his doctrine of racial purity—first, his unsuccessful marriage with a 'mongrel' who constituted a thorn in his side—'a home without love';[17] second, all his political enemies in Liberia, who gave him plenty of trouble and who were in power throughout his life, were 'mongrels'.

'The African is an African, and the European is a European and will remain so for ever and ever', he averred, 'and it is certainly well for the harmony, the peace, and the progress of the world that this is so.' On the platform of racial purity, he contended, the Negroes in the United States and in South Africa were not, and should not, be hankering after political equality with the white; segregation was part of the divine order.[18]

Racial purity was the linchpin of Blyden's divine order doctrine, the white fulfilling their roles of masters, rulers, moneymakers, scientists, and technologists and Africans fulfilling theirs of the meek farmers and religionists, 'sent forth to minister, to serve'. Racial purity would result in inter-racial harmony on the platform of equality. The gifts were mutually complementary, the resultant harmony yielding no room for racial superiority. The races would not see themselves respectively in the spectacles of 'the gifted' and

the 'non-gifted', but as 'each [race] doing its duty in its appointed place'.[19] This was no superior-inferior race syndrome. Said he:

> I believe that in the progress of human knowledge, when each man, each race knows its place, its gifts and its environment, its possibilities and its limitations, and knows that what it is and what is has have been arranged by Divine Wisdom and goodness for the welfare of all. . . . The whole world would move in harmony, without friction, without oppression, without guile, without deceit and without treachery.[20]

Blyden, then, was a pacifist who never questioned the blatant inequality, the master-servant relationship, imposed by the colonial situation. So much did he feel that Africans were making a terrible departure from their racial assignments that he trembled at African criticism of the colonial government of Sierra Leone in the last days in his life.[21] For him there was no question of his thinking of self-rule in colonial Africa, nor its exploitative aspects.

Blyden's inter-racial harmony theory was in conflict with a conviction earlier in his life that Liberia and other African nations ruled by Africans should lead Africa. Why should the Afro-American or African rule in Africa, if the white man had been pre-ordained to rule Africans? What was the whole purpose of the American-Colonization Society, or the founding of Liberia for which in the earlier part of his life he had carved a comprehensive political and cultural role?

The conflict between his inter-racial harmony theory and Africa for the African gospel was that the former crystallized with him in the scramble and colonial eras, the latter in the pre-colonial period. He attempted to philosophize away the European partition of the continent as a non-event worth the thought or attention of the African. He found in abstract philosophy an incredible consolation in the pacific mould in which his philosophical mind was cast. In this respect his consolations were much less on solid evidence than his consolations in the exaggerated historical achievements of the Negro race in classical and Roman Mediterranean Africa.

An implication of his racial purity doctrine, about which he was consistent throughout his life, was that Liberia was

not a country being governed by pure Africans. It was a country under the forcible imperial rule of Afro-Americans whose culture—insofar as they could be credited with any—was an adopted American culture. They were conquerors in Liberia, where they had forcibly imposed themselves upon the pure African peoples with whom they would not integrate throughout the nineteenth century, indeed until our generation.

The essence of the matter is that Blyden carved for Liberia a special role no less prejudiced and irrational than his sentiment for a lilliputian country that was to remain small, weak, and, until the Tubman era, an exotic aberration on the continent. His country of adoption had an irresistible spell for him in spite of the odds against him which made him fail in his three-time bid for the Presidency. Tested by his racial purist criteria of what an authentic African State should be, Liberia did not qualify to be a nation, much less the foundation for Africa's redemption. His hope that Liberia would become 'the glory of Africa, and the moral and political reclaimer of the coloured race'[22] was never remotely to be realized. Liberia was a failure writ large. In 1857 he had to denounce the materialistic, the 'love of money and riches to the exclusion of other virtues', that had got the better side of the imposter Afro-American population of the country.[23] Self-help was not their watch-word, but dependence on 'foreigners' for schools, for churches, for preachers, for teachers. Rather than patronize agriculture most of the settlers became middlemen traders, ignoring his plea 'Nature intends that Africa shall be an agricultural country'.[24] The country was lacking in co-operative spirit, 'extreme individuality' reigning supreme. As late as 1900 he admitted that Liberia could neither be a successful nation nor 'a permanent and useful place on the continent' until it had integrated itself with the 'millions of natives' in the interior, and Liberia College became a seat of learning of African literature and languages. Although he did his best to persuade his countrymen to stretch a hand of love to the indigenous peoples of the hinterland, even through inter-marriage, warfare and hostility with the latter were the order of the day.

Nevertheless Blyden found it very easy to eulogize Liberia

completely out of context. The picture of Liberia which he presented to his New York audience in 1883 was that of his imagination, completely unrelated to the real Liberia. 'The restoration of the Negro to the land of his fathers', he said of Liberia, 'will be the restoration of a race to its original integrity, to itself; and working by itself and from itself.'[25] 'The Liberian method [of state formation] is the chosen plan for Africa's generation'[26] *vis-à-vis* the Lagos milieu, which only a few years before he had observed as the best, possessing 'the advantages not only for the establishment of a civilization upon the basis of Negro idiosyncracies'.[27]

Far more than has been appreciated so far by those who have studied him, Blyden was by far the most perceptive and least prejudiced critic of missionary enterprise in Africa. On Christian mission matters he was on familiar ground. Himself a missionary of some sort and a Christian of some sort, he was consistent in his view that Christianity was the ultimate religion for mankind in general and for Africans in particular, infinitely superior to Islam which, he strongly believed, would eventually be replaced by African gospellers. He strove hard to convert Muslims to Christianity and would seem to understand Arabic with the sole purpose of being able to understand Islamic literature as a prerequisite for preaching to Muslims in their own language.

Although his unconventional views on Islam, polygamy, and the ecclesiastical imperialism of the Western-established Churches persuaded contemporary white missionaries to see him as an anti-Christ—and allegations of immorality against him did not help his reputation with them—Blyden's observations about the negative results of missionary activity in contemporary Africa were valid. As he said time and again, it was true that the majority of white missionaries were racial braggarts; they were more masters of African colleagues than servants of Christ in the Church; in their denominational divisions and conversion of individuals, rather than social units, they were a fissiparous force; their African products were de-Africanized apes of the white man's culture; methodologically Islam was far more successful in Africa than Christianity; and the anti-polygamy stance of the Western-established churches was more an exhibition of

stupid ignorance than a display of knowledge.

And yet, ironically, compared to any other patriot in his day, Blyden was the greatest advocate of more and more white missionaries flooding the continent. He was not opposed to missionaries because of their colour as such—one of his virtues being friendship with white people; what he was opposed to was the method of their activity. Time and again Blyden stressed that not only should white missionaries march further and further in the interior, but that they should be supervisors of Africans. As late as 1890, when both in Lagos and Sierra Leone the feeling had become strong that European missionaries were no longer welcome, Blyden was rejoicing that:

> The missionary work in Africa is also taking a forward move. . . . Men from the higher universities of Europe, of deeper culture, greater spiritual insight, wider sympathies are now enlisting in the work. On the Niger, on the Congo and on the great lakes these enlightened heralds of Christianity are lifting up the standard of the cross.[28]

The missionary thrust of the scramble era was no more than Blyden's delight and pleasure: 'Blessed are those who are partitioning and appropriating Africa'.[29]

The point to note about Blyden's advocacy of white agency in the Christianization of Africa is the difficulty of reconciling it with his other belief that the white man was not the religious man, especially when he was never tired of emphasizing the baneful effects of the white missionary's presence in Africa. Since Africa was to be 'the spiritual conservatory of the world', the white man would have to be shown and taught by the African how to be spiritual. Europeans would have to go to Africa, he said, 'to learn lessons of faith and piety'.[30] Missionaries ought not to have come to Africa at all. 'From our standpoint', he wrote, 'we do not believe that Africa needed the theological interference of Europe, for the Theology of Europe is derived from the conceptions of Roman, Celt and Teuton, which have modified the Semitic ideas promulgated in the Bible.'[31] By nature the European was impatient 'of guidance and control'.

The logical result of his belief, that the African was the

spiritual man, was an African agency. And yet he never originated this idea and only occasionally paid lip service to it. Also given his endless sermons on African personality on the cultural plane, an African Church should have occurred to him far more than to anybody else. It is significant to note that he did not give the slightest support to the African Church proposition of the Ethiopians being led in Sierra Leone in 1871-74 and that, apart from pious views on the need for an African Church in Lagos in 1890-91—a place where the Native Baptist Church had appeared in 1888—in the context of the CMS Niger Mission crisis, Blyden hardly gave a thought to such an institution. It never enjoyed a prime place in his thought. He never worked out a formula, much less gave direct inspiration by founding one. Even with respect to the African Church, unlike Mojola Agbebi, he was against Africanization for its own sake. 'Do not run to the other extreme of avoiding what is foreign simply because it is foreign', he lectured a Lagos audience on the theme in December 1890. 'There are many good things in foreign customs—many useful things, many precious things, not only conducive and helpful, but indispensable to a healthy Christian growth.'[32]

Refusing to imbibe the anti-Islam prejudices of his days, Blyden was convinced of the possibility of a rapport with Muslims and of their ultimate conversion by Christians. Recognizing the indisputable salutary social and spiritual achievements of Islam in Africa, Blyden was convinced that Islam was inferior to Christianity and that, ultimately, it would collapse before the latter. Like his fantastic Ethiopian dream, he nursed the chimerical vision that Islam, 'a borrowed light', was a temporary phenomenon and that when Africans were in control of the Church in Africa the religion would cease to exist and Africans would demolish the temple of Mecca 'after which it will not be rebuilt again for ever'.[33] If Christian missions would effect 'judicious modifications of [their] present missionary methods', Muslims would be converted to Christianity.

Not until towards the end of his life, when he began to have an insight into African Traditional Religion, did he begin to accord it intellectual respect. In his early days of

ignorance he had asserted that Africans 'have no system of religion protected by the sanction of a hoary antiquity' and that consequently African 'pagandom' would collapse Jerichowise, since the missionary had 'nothing to demolish'.[34] After his useful study of 'African Life and Customs' in 1908, he began to doubt whether Christianity or Islam had a prior claim to Africa and Africans and whether some other religion from the continent—an obvious reference to African Traditional Religion—would not provide salvation to other nations as well.[35] But he did not live long enough to understand African Traditional Religion to an appropriate depth and level of scholarship of post-war times. The logical end of his thought process would have been an endorsement of African Traditional Religion *vis-à-vis* Christianity and Islam.

One area in which Blyden did not compromise with Christian missions was polygamy. Unlike many of his contemporaries who cited Biblical passages in support of polygamy—just as their opponents used the Bible to oppose it—Blyden employed primarily an ecological and moral defence of the institution. Polygamy, he contended unscientifically, was an ecological rather than a moral issue. The terrific heat of the tropics, he alleged, necessarily made the African more sexually active than the inhabitants of the temperate zone. More rational was his defence of polygamy in the context of the high rate of infantile mortality in Africa. It is important to note that Blyden did not begin to argue in defence of polygamy until after he was living a polygamous life, that is after 1875 when he took Miss Anna Erskine as his mistress.[36]

A significant element in Blyden's career was his continuous application of his scholarly mind to Africa's cultural heritage. In this regard he was, in a sense, one of the nineteenth century protagonists of African Studies in Universities in Africa. Not that he went to the research depths of the Reverend C. C. Reindorf of the Gold Coast, or A. B. Sibthorpe of Sierra Leone, or Samuel Johnson of Yorubaland. He did not do any serious research as such, his best effort, *African Life and Customs*, being a tantalizingly short monograph. He wrote more or less in broad terms, using

ornamental and high-sounding diction. But because of his erudition in the general sense and the philosophical parameters of his analysis, he had a greater appeal and a greater audience than any other contemporary author in West Africa.

The incoherence of Blyden's ideas and thought on many issues should be seen as a consequence of his prolixity. He was words and words and words. In addition he was something of a politician, telling his audience what it wanted to hear whether in Sierra Leone or Lagos or London or the New World. All in all rhetoric meant far more to him than coherent thinking and consistency of ideas. And, carried away by his erudition and sweet tongue, few of his contemporaries ever discovered that in many ways he was a bundle of contradictions, grossly inconsistent in many of his ideas. He was morally opportunistic and was a split character. His racialist doctrine would today delight the exponents of apartheid in South Africa and the Ku-Klux-Klan of the United States.

The essence of the matter is that Blyden was a negation of African personality. Essentially a 'black Englishman', he wore a white man's clothes all his life, basked in the white man's culture of which he was very proud, boasting with pride that our civilization was English in its origins.[37] The fountain of his intellectual strength and thought-patterns was classical literature, liking best Latin. He left no doubt as to the content of the education he would offer ideally—Latin, Greek, Arabic, and 'some of the principal languages of the interior people'.[38] His judgment on other educated Africans applied to himself too. He was a scholarly Negro, not a Negro scholar. His racial feelings were diluted with foreign notions and he was abroad mentally when he was physically at home in West Africa. Blyden was a theoretician who could only show the way which he was never able, or never bothered, to take.

Reduced to substance, Blyden was a Negro patriot primarily in the realm of words, not of action. Full of sound idea which saw him far ahead of his times, he was a prophet wh on the platform of scholarship, would have been more home in post-Independence Africa. Foremost among t

very few verbal pugilists against the denigrators of the Negro race, Blyden was a Jeremiah rather than a Moses who could have led the educated elite out of their mental and cultural captivity. Certainly had he attempted to be a Moses, he would have found his self-imposed task frighteningly insuperable. As many of his contemporaries who attempted to put some of his ideas into practice discovered, the colonial tide was too strong in the areas of ecclesiastical, cultural, and mental imperialism and it was in the logic of the situation that after the First World War such educated elite succumbed to the irresistible tide. Blyden's major weakness was that he never attempted to try at all.

NOTES

1 The standard biography of Blyden is Hollis R. Lynch, *Edward Wilmot Blyden (Pan-Negro Patriot 1832-1912)*, London, 1967. See also Ruth Holden, *Blyden of Liberia*, New York, 1966, and Christopher Fyfe's Introduction to the University of Edinburgh's reprint of E. W. Blyden, *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race*, Edinburgh, 1967.
2 *Lagos Times*, 27/12/1890.
3 CMS Archives, London, CA1/L8, Henry Venn to Hamilton and Lamb, 4/8/1871, quotes Blyden.
4 *The African Repository*, vol. 27, September 1851, Blyden to J. B. Pinney, February 1851.
5 The Anthropological Society of London was founded in 1863.
6 E. W. Blyden, *From West Africa to Palestine*, Sierra Leone, 1873, p. 103.
7 *Ibid.*
8 E. W. Blyden, *The African Problem and other Discourses*, London, 1890, p. 48.
9 E. W. Blyden, *Hope for Africa*, New York, 1861, pp. 15-16.
10 E. W. Blyden, *The Origin and Purpose of African Colonization*, Washington D.C., 1883, p. 19.
11 E. W. Blyden, *Africa and Africans*, London, 1903, p. 45.
12 E. W. Blyden, *Africa's Service to the World*, London, 1880, p. 19.
13 Blyden, *The Origin and Purpose of African Colonization*, p. 19.
14 *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 8/2/1908.
15 Ruth Holden, 'Manuscript on Blyden' (with Mr Christopher Fyfe, Edinburgh, January 1963) reproduces Blyden to Wilson, 1/6/1900.
16 *Ibid.*, 29/6/1900.
17 *Ibid.*, Blyden to Dr J. C. Lowrie, 15/1/1876.
18 E. W. Blyden, 'The African and the European', *Liberia Bulletin*, February 1907, quoted in *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 8/6/1907.

19 *Ibid.*
20 *Ibid.*
21 E. R. Jerrimi, 'Some Letters of Dr E. W. Blyden', *West Africa*, 12/10/1929.
22 *African Repository*, vol. 30, Blyden to Pinney, 1/10/1853.
23 *African Repository*, vol. 33, p. 328.
24 *Ibid.*, p. 332.
25 Blyden, *The Origin and Purpose of African Colonization*, p. 18.
26 Holden, *op. cit.*, Blyden to Wilson, 31/5/1897.
27 E. W. Blyden, *The Return of the Exiles and the West African Church*, London, 1891, pp. 38-9.
28 Blyden, *The African Problem and other Discourses*, p. 54.
29 E. W. Blyden, *A Chapter in the History of Liberia*, Freetown, 1892, p. 34.
30 E. W. Blyden, *The Prospects of the African*, London, 1874, p. 9.
31 *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 8/2/1908.
32 Blyden, *The Return of the Exiles*, p. 30.
33 Blyden, *The African Problem and other Discourses*, pp. 102-3.
34 Blyden, *Hope for Africa*, p. 15.
35 E. W. Blyden, *The Arabic Bible In the Sudan: A Plea for Transliteration*, London, 1910, p. 19.
36 Holden, *op. cit.*, p. 1497 for details.
37 British Museum, Gladstone Papers, Blyden to W. E. Gladstone, 11/5/1859.
38 Holden, *op. cit.*, Blyden to Mary Kingsley, 7/5/1900.

9

An African Church: A Legitimate Branch of the Church Universal

It can be safely hazarded that until the publication of H. W. Turner's comprehensive and microscopic eight-year study of the 'Church of the Lord'[1]—one of the myriads of Aladura organizations in West Africa—African Churches were hardly examined by Church historians with scientific eyes. By and large these Churches, which began to appear on the continent in the nineteenth century, have been presented as unorthodox aberrations and bastards, beyond the pale of redemption and absolutely unqualified to be considered legitimate branches of the Church Universal. Their history, it has been contended, has been one of unmitigated sinfulness. Their origins were sinful: the founders were either rabid power-hungry rebels against 'constituted authority', or hyper-erotic individuals who wished to debase Christianity by flooding the Church with polygamists, or pagan-at-heart rebels who aimed at heathenizing Christianity. Their subsequent development was sinful: they departed from the forms and formularies of the Western Churches from which they had broken away, evolving their own theologies, systems of worship, hymnals, liturgies, doctrines, styles of witnessing and so on.

Even in the hands of the more sympathetic missionary-scholars such as B. G. M. Sundkler, F. B. Welbourn, and C. G. Baeta—scholars who had the privilege of studying the much vilified African Christian bodies at close quarters—those Churches are not regarded as compeers of the

'orthodox' Churches in the witnessing for Christ in Africa.[2] Rather they are portrayed as less good, less legitimate, and less respectable than the Western-founded Churches, as not a part of the Church in Africa, nor the Church Universal. Little wonder then that no dialogue exists between the two types of Christian communities, that the spirit of ecumenism which has been active among the Western-oriented Churches of late is yet to be extended to the African Churches by their 'orthodox' counterparts,[3] and that African Churches have up till now been ostracized from national and international inter-communion deliberations and conferences on the fortunes of Christianity in Africa.[4]

Such rather commonplace perceptions and thoughts of African Churches are not only uncharitable, but jaundiced and clearly unsustained by historical evidence and empirical data. Why should the leaders of thought and spokesmen of the Western-established Churches arrogate to themselves the prerogative to define 'orthodoxy' and determine the membership of the One Catholic Church of Christ? One would have thought that all Christian organizations proclaiming the Christianity of the Bible should be deemed legitimate members of the Church Universal, for 'whosoever is not against us is for us'. After all, neither the founders, nor the leaders, nor the rank and file of African Churches, ever thought that they were against Christ; they have never considered themselves inferior votaries of the Christian faith, or outcasts from the Church Universal. Indeed evidence abounds that all the time they have looked upon themselves as rightful professors, practitioners, and propagators of Christianity in Africa, as builders of the authentic African Church in which Africans feel and find themselves completely at home, fulfilling untrammelled their spiritual nature to optimum advantage, without in any way compromising the verities of the Christian religion.

Perpetually handicapped financially, as their relatively modest structures and literary backwardness testify, these African Churches have yet to produce their own scholars who would chronicle their history and explain their existence, their achievement, and their attributes from within, a task which up to now has been undertaken entirely by scho-

lars born into, or sympathetic to, the Western-oriented Churches. And oblivious of, or indifferent to, the taunts, jeers, contempt, and holier-than-thou attitude of the spokesmen of the Western-type Churches and the subjective approach of the investigators from without, leaders and members of African Churches have been preoccupied with the spread of the Gospel and consolidation of the quite substantial progress that has been achieved in the planting and spreading of a Christianity incarnate within the African milieu.

This is the substance and message of H. W. Turner's extremely instructive, illuminating, persuasive, meticulously illustrated, and scintillating research—undeniably a major breakthrough in the study of African Churches since the appearance of B. G. M. Sundkler's *Bantu Prophets of South Africa* in 1948. In the light of his anatomy of a single Church, the Church of the Lord, Turner demonstrates with impeccable insight, overwhelming evidence, and intellectual conviction that African Churches deserve a fair trial in the thoughts of the directors of the 'orthodox' Churches and from the pen of writers of African Church history; the contemptuousness, negative attitude, self-righteousness, and egocentrism of the 'orthodox' Churches to African Churches are totally unjustified; the Church of the Lord is *ipso facto* a legitimate branch of the Church Universal, not a whit inferior to any branch of the Catholic Church of Christ in its doctrine, discipline, liturgy, spiritual attributes, purposefulness, sense of mission, evangelism, and heavenly vision. In Turner's words:

> the Church of the Lord which essays to establish all belief and practice on the Bible, is definitely a church. Its use of 'Scripture proofs', its Bible classes and the hunger of its disciples for 'more Bible', the formal place of the Bible in the constitution and its regular use in worship, the injunctions to possess and use one's own copy, and the bringing of revelations and visions to the bar of Scripture; all these attest its biblical basis.... It does fulfil the criterion we have proposed, and should be classified as a Christian church.[5]

To the conscientious, racially and culturally uninhibited student who must tremble at the innocent prejudices and com-

prehensive ignorance being exemplified by some influential scholars in African Studies today, Turner's challenge to theologically-minded analysts that African Churches be studied with scientific eyes and that they qualify to be classified as Christian Churches has come in the nick of time. For, as in other disciplines in the Humanities and Social Sciences concerned with the study of Africa and Africans, the old prejudices and myopia still live with several writers on the Church in Africa. These are the 'scholars' who still find it difficult to perceive that Christianity is culturally and racially neutral: it cannot be tied to the apron-strings of any one race or culture. The African pattern of institutionalized Christianity must necessarily, and gainfully, be different from the patterns which it has assumed in other parts of the terrestrial globe; the differences in patterns of institutionalized Christianity found all over the world are essentially man-made in response to environment and constitute the 'non-essentials' of religion. These 'scholars', particularly in respect of Africa, do not see that these 'non-essentials' of religion are rational, natural, and indispensable to the growth and virility of the Church and Christianity in different climes and cultures. Underlining the potency of culture as an asset to the growth of the Church in Europe, E. W. Smith, the eminent scholar-missionary, gifted with a mind sharply keen on the relations that should subsist between Christianity and African culture, glued together Christianity and European civilization as late as 1949. 'Christianity was one of the originating factors of our civilization', he pronounced, 'the source of its most precious ideals and of its driving force.'[6]

Missionary-scholars like E. W. Smith and historians like Professor Herbert Butterfield know their European history well.[7] And there can be no denying that the dynamics of Church growth and virility in Europe and the New World, especially since the Reformation, have been nationalism, self-identity, self-pride, and self-reliance. Hence the Anglicanism of England, the various brands of Lutheranism of Germany and the Nordic nations, the different patterns of Calvinism in the Netherlands, South Africa, and Massachusetts, and the Anabaptism of some states in the United

States. Even in a measure and in some respects, the theoretical monolith of the Roman Catholic Church has had to give way before the imperatives of milieu, national self-dignity, and identity. Hence the Gallicanism of France and the Ultramontanism of the Iberian countries.

It was such dynamics that Henry Venn and Rufus Anderson, Secretaries of the Church Missionary Society and the American Foreign Missions' Board respectively for many years in the nineteenth century, perceived must be allowed to operate in every human society in which the Church of Christ is expected to flourish. Applied to Africa—Henry Venn exercised his mind on Africa for quite a while—these dynamics would see the Church of Christ emerge in which African cultural heritage is integrated.[8] In other words the Church of Christ in Africa could not be a prefabricated edifice from Europe or America. People like Henry Venn and percipient African leaders of Christian thought, some of whom will be mentioned presently, were the few who discerned the capacity of Christianity to preserve intact its purity, the 'essentials', in a different milieu; they were the few who were convinced that to be successful in Africa, such factors as African racial and cultural idiosyncracies, the sentiment of African nationality, African entitlement to a distinct identity, as well as a decent and adequate voice in the comity of Churches, had to be taken into account. They were the few whose attitude to Africa's cultural heritage was positive and scientific, some three generations before anthropologists began to expose the innocence and harmlessness of some elements of African culture that Christianity could have assimilated with advantage. For example in the last quarter of the nineteenth century Bishops Colenso and Bickersteth of South Africa and Exeter respectively pleaded for the legitimation of polygamy for the Church in pre-colonial Africa. And there was Dr R. N. Cust, a distinguished linguist with a first-hand knowledge of Christian missions in India, who pleaded with the Church Missionary Society that as, in his judgment, 'polygamy and slavery are not sins against the Decalogue', both institutions should be viewed with leniency and recognized as part and parcel of the Church in pre-colonial Yorubaland.[9]

Needless to say these shrewd European enthusiasts for the Church of Christ in Africa had their African counterparts. In West Africa the most prominent were Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther, Dr Mọjọla Agbebi, and Bishop James Johnson. In the words of one of these earnest and dedicated leaders of Christian thought, the Church must adapt itself to the circumstances of the continent to the point of losing 'every vestige of the character of a foreign plant.'[10] For, after all,

> Christianity is intended to be the religion not of one particular race of people only, but of the whole world. But in different countries it will wear different types, if it is to become indigenous to the soil. It should have in Europe a European type; in Asia an Asiatic type; and in Africa an African type—different types of one and the same with different formulae of Faith and different ceremonies of worship.

It is clear from the foregoing that the concept of an African Church as a legitimate branch of the Church Universal is not new; from the latter half of the nineteenth century, within the Western-founded Churches, there were individuals, European and African, who stressed that an African Church is a must if Christianity is to leaven African society, gather round it the affection of Africans, and ensure permanent existence and success on the continent; such a Church must be nurtured, respected, accepted, and treated as an equal in the comity of Churches.

Unfortunately, however, such perspicacious individuals were few and far between, an insignificant minority, lonely voices in the wilderness, in Europe and Africa. By far the majority of directors in mission headquarters and missionaries in Africa never hoped for the application of the rules and dynamics that had operated in the metropolitan countries. Consciously, but out of excellent intentions, they fostered the growth and flowering of the patterns of the institutionalized Christianity of Europe and America. In honesty, but in serious error, most missionaries conceived the Church in a self-centred, ethnocentric manner—that of their own countries—completely ignorant of the historical processes that had created the metropolitan Churches. R. N.

Cust's plea for leniency about slavery was summarily brushed aside by the directors of the Church Missionary Society, who lectured African Christians thus:

> As the law of gravitation determines the descent of heavy bodies, so, as its necessary result, the spirit of the Word of God has eliminated slavery from Christianity. The liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free has permeated all relations of society and all ranks and conditions of men, so that slavery and even serfdom are non-existent where Christianity is more than a name.[12]

At the Lambeth Conference of 1888 Bishop Bickersteth's tolerant views on polygamy were outlawed and the non-Scriptural, man-made doctrine against polygamists was promulgated and sanctified.

Indeed until quite recent years the concept of an African Church got completely lost within the Western-established Churches. The loss is a phenomenon worth explaining if the message and scholarship of H. W. Turner are to be truly and fully appreciated. From the last quarter of the nineteenth century, African leaders in the Western-established Churches who would not have a hand in the building of the European or American patterns of institutionalized Christianity in Africa had one choice only—to secede and found Churches of their own. Men like Bishops Samuel Ajayi Crowther and James Johnson of West Africa, who were never fully mentally and culturally emancipated, or who trembled at the odds that would have had to be contended with if they were to put their conviction into action, elected to conform. Therefore they became rocks of that Anglican orthodoxy and establishment which acquired enormous prestige and following throughout the colonial era and which up to now draws to itself the affluent in society. Others like Mojola Agbebi and Joseph William Egyanka Appiah of West Africa and Joseph Kate Mugema and Reuben Spartas of East Africa became non-conformists and founders of independent 'African' Churches the variants of which, until the present book by H. W. Turner, have been objects of negative investigation by writers. Up to now, in contrast to their Western-oriented counterparts, such Churches are

poor organizations with modest and un-ostentatious buildings, patronized mainly by the underprivileged in society, and hardly reckoned with by political controllers of sovereign Africa.

However, although the thousands of African Church organizations which are flourishing in their own way have at all times regarded themselves as legitimate branches of the Church Universal, the reasons for their being looked upon as beyond the pale of redemption, as outside the Church Universal, by the leaders of thought and spokesmen of the Western-established Churches, should be grasped. First is the fact that secessions have from the history of the Church been regarded with unabated aversion and as the work of the devil. Moreover the circumstances of the birth of most of the African Churches were such that the directors of the mission Churches from which secessions had occurred doubted the purity of the intentions of the seceders. As it seemed to the missionary mentors, no Church worthy of the name could be founded and built upon bitterness, or racial antagonism, or the struggle for power in, and control of, the Church, or tribal considerations, or rejection of European moral codes—the main immediate causes of most of the secessions. And when these breakaway organizations began to proclaim new doctrines and theologies which in some measure took an account of Africa's cultural heritage (polygamy, native medicine, and clitoridectomy for instance) these organizations seemed to have sinned against the Holy Ghost. Certainly the existence of these 'African' Churches, which sought to evolve distinct forms and formularies, was out of tune with the colonial atmosphere and ethos—that in which the governed were expected to be supple clay to be moulded into European-type models desired by the governors. By seeking a separate and different identity, the 'African' Churches were a religious and cultural anomaly in the colonial setting.

Second, the variety of the breakaway Churches seriously undermined their respectability. Within the same territory in some cases within the same town or city, a motley o 'African' Churches appeared, splitting and exhibiting diffe ent patterns of worship, organization, leadership, an

theology. To name a few, there arose the 'African' Bethelites, the Messianic Churches, the Zionists, the Ethiopians, and the Aladuras. The splitting into innumerable 'sects' was a strange and bewildering spectacle beyond the comprehension of European rulers in Church and State. Obviously it was difficult for those outside these new forms of Churches to say which of them were evincing distinctly African characteristics compatible with the sublime tenets of the Christian faith. And there was the fact that in places where minority white racists condemned the African majority to the status of servants, African Churches looked like anti-white organizations in a religious guise.[13]

However, discreditable as the motley of African Churches seemed in colonial Africa, they not only survived but their stature and creditworthiness increased with the appearance of the Aladura groups in West Africa and as the anomalous neo-colonialist status of the Western-oriented Churches in Independent Africa became prominent. For although in the years immediately before and after attainment of political independence the Western-oriented Churches began to be Africanized at the upper level and began to obtain autonomous status from their European and American mentors, a number of African leaders of thought within these Churches became unyieldingly vocal in saying that these concessions by, and the magnanimity of, the mission headquarters in Europe and America had not gone far enough; the Western-oriented Churches should be decolonized in matters of theology and culture as well; these prefabricated Churches planted on the continent should transmogrify into African Churches of the kind in which Christianity would be incarnate in the African milieu.[14] And naturally, nationally and racially inclined Africans looked upon the African Churches favourably as better reflectors and emblems of African personality than their rather exotic Western-oriented counterparts. In other words the climate became favourable to a fresh and more intensive look at these vilified African Church organizations.

It was in 1948 that B. G. M. Sundkler called the tune with his book mentioned earlier. Indeed so popular has the theme of secessionist and independent African Churches become

that theologians, historians, sociologists, and classicists have deployed their resourcefulness into investigating different types of them in different territories. And whilst one must hasten to state that all these studies have been extremely useful and are a great deal of credit to scholarship, it must be remarked that it is by avoidance of their errors of omission and commission that Turner has succeeded far more than his theologically-minded predecessors in proving beyond doubt that the Church of the Lord is a legitimate branch of the Church Universal. That historians like Shepperson and Webster, social anthropologists like Wishlade, and classicists like W. H. C. Frend, never established the conclusion Turner has now put before us can be explained.[15] By the very nature of their disciplines, the scope of their researches, and the aims they sought to achieve, the issue of orthodoxy or legitimacy of the African Church organizations they investigated did not come within their purview and seems to be beyond the range of their competence.

This means that the onus of the negative, partisan, and subjective verdicts on African Church organizations, which imply their exclusion from membership of the Church Universal, must fall on such theologically-minded ordained scholars as B. G. M. Sundkler, F. B. Welbourn, and C. G. Baeta. It is they, who because of their attachment to the dogmas, the forms, and formularies of the 'historic' and 'orthodox' Western Churches in which they have lived, moved, and had their being, fail to give due recognition to African Church organizations by discerning the merits of these bodies alongside their demerits. Practically all have studied the African Churches from without rather from within—some of them using mainly mission sources and colonial government records. Very few scholars ever bothered to stretch out the hand of fellowship to the leaders and members of these organizations, the only people from whom the most reliable information could be obtained on the inner spiritual life, the hopes, and the theological stances of their organizations. These organizations have been examined as if they should be more than mere projections of the exotic Western-oriented Churches. There was no question of the scholars seeing African Churches as pioneers or founders of

authentic African Churches essentially Christian but harmoniously wedded to the African milieu. Moreover, insofar as Turner's predecessors have recognized the values of these African Churches the aim has been that, as Turner puts it, these African organizations 'present a magnifying mirror wherein older churches may see their own strengths and weaknesses', in other words to enable the 'older churches' to see what elements in the breakaway organizations could be incorporated.[16] Last, another major error of the theologically-oriented scholars has been the disproportionate attention given to the causes of the rise of African Churches and the emphasis given to the points of departure in forms and formularies by the African Churches in a way discreditable to the latter.

H. W. Turner avoided these errors. Weaned from the prejudices and dogmas he had acquired from the Western Church in which he had been brought up, and consumed with the desire to understand, he went into his investigation with a scientific mind and a positive attitude. This is clear from his methodological innovation, according to which he has depended mainly on the abundant literature of the Church of the Lord, the kind of literature beyond the knowledge of people outside the organization, apart from seeing the Church in action from the inside. As he confesses in the Preface to volume 2: 'as for the methods employed, it will be apparent that personal involvement in the life of the Church has been the basic approach; one cannot appreciate the religion of a religious community without some genuine participation in its activities, despite many attempts to the contrary'.[17] Selecting a single Church of the Aladura species—again an advantage over others who covered large numbers and different types of African Churches—the Church of the Lord, with a total membership of 9,000 divided among 203 branches in Nigeria, Ghana, Liberia, and Sierra Leone, he anatomizes this organization in infinite detail. Using the criteria of the 'orthodox' Churches, he examines the litany, catechism, baptismal rites, burial concepts, forms of worship, conception of the Lord's Supper, and the content and quality of the hymns of the Church of the Lord. In the light of empirical data he arrives at the conviction that the Church of

the Lord is *ipso facto* an authentic African Church standing on a pedestal equal to that of the 'orthodox' Churches, by no means inferior to the latter; the Church of the Lord constitutes a proper foundation, the point at which the African Church has come to its own, a Church in which Africans truly and fully feel at home, fulfil their spiritual being and 'search for direct access to the ultimate and true religion'. In short the Church of the Lord exists in its own right as a propagator of the unadulterated Christian faith in harmony with the African milieu.

Turner's positive attitude to the Church of the Lord is exemplified in the balance of his treatment and the structure of his work. With him there is no question of lingering over causes of the secession of the individuals who formed the nuclei of the various brands of the Aladura movement from Anglican establishments in Ijebu-Ode, Ibadan, and Abeokuta;[18] there is no question of undue emphasis on the differences between these founders, on the crisis of leadership that developed as the Church of the Lord expanded, or the split into factions that has hit the organization. Volume 1, which gives the history of the movement, centres on the spread of the Church in West Africa, the spiritual fervour of the founder, Dr Oshitelu, the pioneers, the fortitude with which these leaders, the methods of establishing their organization in areas where Christian missions had existed and operated for more generations; how the infrastructure of the Church the founder and pioneers not only built, but the extent that the death of the founder on 12 almost spelt doom to the Church. In the much Vol. II Turner approaches his study of the Church as a geometrician. Using the criteria of 'historic', Western Churches as maxims and of the Church of the Lord' as the third, he resolves these theorems into components: Doctrine, Faith, Litany, Catechism, Rites of the Lord's Supper, Marriage, Burial of the Dead, Ordination to the Ministry, Membership, Mission, and Worship—and deduces, in each case, that the Church of the

Lord 'does fulfil the criterion we have proposed, and should be classified as a Christian Church'.

The brilliance and scholarship of the mathematical approach which Turner has demonstrated to reveal that the Church of the Lord 'should be classified as a Christian Church' are beyond doubt. Yet one cannot escape the impression that he reiterates the *ipso facto* membership of th
Universal Church of the Church of the Lord tantalizin
apologetically. Undoubtedly he is conscious of the fact
he is breaking new ground and that he is trying to ope
eyes of a large number of readers in Europe, America
Africa to a new perspective and conception of the A
Church. For lack of space only the salient character
the Church of the Lord, which mark it out as a uniqu
ian body possessed of attributes which the presti
'orthodox' Churches should seek to imitate, wil
tioned.

The point must be stressed that the Church
does not have the characteristics usually coun
'sects' and African Church organizations in
African continent. First, it did not origi
developed, as an anti-white movement in a
African-controlled Anglican Church in
in the belief that the exotic Western-ori
they were leaving had become spiritu
and had become primarily concern
The element of race did not enter
official title of the organization is
(Aladura) Throughout the World',
cans, For Europeans, For all Am
not have any hate, tribal or racial
Lord does not reveal any col
economic class and religious affili
people of substance and influen
people who see no connection
spiritual fervour and their econ
society. Their concern is prim
bers of this organization man
whose purpose of existence is
Hence, as Turner has detailed

the life of members is determined primarily by spiritual considerations. The member sees himself as a sinner, redeemed by Christ; his aspiration at all times is to be cleansed, to achieve purity of thought and spiritual excellence; he is making a titanic quest for spiritual values based upon the Bible, relentlessly hankering after the Heavenly Vision. It is in this sense that readers should understand the innumerable and elaborate observances, rules, and regulations prescribed to, and punctiliously carried out by, members of the Church of the Lord about prayer, the use of water, the state of mind which members should keep at worship, the use of special 'holy' names, violent twisting of the body at worship until emotions are stirred up to the appropriate level at which communion with God could occur through possession by the Holy Spirit.

The other-worldly purposefulness of the Church of the Lord should be given due emphasis. The point should be grasped that the elaborate rules of worship, the doctrine and theology evolved by the Church of the Lord, as well as the content of Christianity and the way to live the faith taught to the rank and file of the organization, have been achieved in a progressively secular and materialistic society. All this emphasis upon spiritual matters, all this absorption with the worship of Jehovah by the members of the Church of the Lord, should be contrasted with the picture in the Western-oriented 'orthodox' Churches. In the latter, in which African worshippers have been evidently petrified within the European and American forms and formularies, no attempt has been made to modify the theologies, the liturgies, styles of worship, in order to take account of the peculiar situation created by increasing materialism and secularism and with the aim of improving the spiritual qualities of the African adherents. Indeed, at least as far as West Africa is concerned, it must be remarked that, rather than focus attention on matters of the spirit, members devote more of their time and attention to political affairs and improvement of their physical comfort. In contrast the members of the Church of the Lord are by their spiritual absorption far from the madding crowd; they are in, but not of, the materialistic and secular society. It is clear from Turner's account that they

have no political aspirations. Never seeking any connection with the colonial government, they have never associated themselves with the governments of independent West African States, nor have they sought the patronage of politicians. As Turner has emphasized, insofar as members of the Church of the Lord have paid attention to politics, it is to decry the vices of political life, 'the low standards of political life' of African politicians and directors of government.

Further evidence of the Church of the Lord's preference for the things of the Spirit over mundane affairs is the very low and subordinate position of literary education in the organization. Remove the school from the portfolio of the Western-oriented Churches and you remove from them a source of their vitality and statistical success. For literary education, particularly at the primary stage and the secondary school level, the veritable means of social and economic improvement in 'post-scramble' Africa, has meant very little to the patrons and rank and file of the Church of the Lord. By 1962 the Church boasted of two elementary schools only—one in Liberia and the other in Ghana. This is not to say that leaders of the Church of the Lord are blind to the role that literary education could play in the spread of their doctrine, in the enlargement of the social classes in the Church, and in competition with the older 'orthodox' Churches. But they maintain, in a way that the older 'orthodox' Churches no longer can claim, that schools should be instruments of Church policy, an effective agency for the improvement of the spiritual life of students. Hence the literary achievement of the Church has been confined to the vernacular level at which literature is produced for the instruction of members about edification of their souls and performance of their spiritual functions.

The Church of the Lord, it must be stressed, is not a blind imitator of the older 'historic' Churches—a remark that can hardly be made in respect of African Churches studied by other scholars in different circumstances. Sifting the forms and formularies of the 'orthodox' Church from which they broke away, the founder and leaders have selected things of intrinsic spiritual value for sublimation within the African milieu and have consequently evolved forms and for-

mularies, wholly Christian but also intelligible and thoroughly meaningful to Africans. In particular, so Turner has demonstrated, the Church of the Lord can be proud that whilst achieving this feat of making Christianity incarnate within the African milieu it has a catechism superior to that of the Anglican Church in Africa. It can also claim that its attitude to burials and to marriage laws and customs is healthier, more rational, more African and yet not less divine than that of the Western-oriented Churches. Its hymns, use of drum and dance in acts of worship of Jehovah, are above reproach and, taken along with the personal participation which the member enjoys, 'produce a wholeness of worship adequate for every mood and need of African life ... an Africanization of Christian worship at the deepest levels'.[20]

Above all it should be asserted that there is no evidence of syncretism in the Christianity professed and practised by the Church of the Lord. Far more than the Western-oriented Churches have done, the Church of the Lord rejects totally and unreservedly 'heathenism' in any form. To this end there is no smell of ancestral worship, no vestige of 'idolatry'. The surrender to God, the Creator, is complete; His providence is accepted wholeheartedly in day-to-day life; in Him alone all hope is reposed. Jesus Christ is believed and accepted as personal Saviour and Redeemer, through whom the believer has won victory over death, expects to inherit eternal life, and has been delivered from the shackles of sin. It is to God alone that members of the Church of the Lord give and sing praises. They reject charms and amulets, evidently still being patronized by many members of the Western-oriented Churches. Members of the Church of the Lord reject medical science, patronage of and belief in which they regard as lack of faith by Christians. For the adherents of the Church of the Lord prayer alone with sanctified water—a symbol of purity—is enough to cure all ills, physical and spiritual. With prayer, they say and show, the body can be cured, the devil subdued, witchcraft exorcized, malevolent forces kept at bay, serenity of soul achieved, and 'mountains moved'. In other words the Church of the Lord maintains that the 'orthodox' Churches are neither orthodox nor Christian enough. This stricture cannot be said to be totally

unjustified: there is evidence that it is more the 'orthodox' Churches than the Church of the Lord that one can validly accuse of practising syncretism. For by rejecting association with secret cults like the Reformed Ogboni Fraternity and the Masonic Lodges they isolate and identify the Western-oriented Churches as spoilers of the Church Universal through their tacit approval of the marriage of Christianity and Freemasonry.[21] There can be no doubt that Freemasonry—whatever its form, European and African—is the biggest danger to the survival of the Christianity of the Bible in the Western type 'orthodox' Churches in Africa, Europe, and America.[22]

One may add that in their search for purity members of the Church of the Lord reject a number of social habits which today impair the spiritual life of thousands of adherents of the 'orthodox' Churches. Of the proscribed habits might be mentioned alcoholism and tobacco-taking. Even the demand that women should appear in modest dress at services cannot be laughed away by serious observers who have contemplated the evils of the equation of Church-going with dress-display by African women.

That the Church of the Lord is a legitimate branch of the Church Universal is beyond dispute after reading Turner. But it does him a great deal of credit that he recognizes that the Church of the Lord is not perfect. The weaknesses of the organization are indicated at every step. But it does him even greater credit that he has not magnified these weaknesses out of proportion and out of context; he has not made mountains out of molehills; he has not misconstrued, or misrepresented, or distorted facts about an organization still in the process of growth in the direction of making the Christianity of the Bible intelligible and meaningful to Africans within their own milieu. With the geniality and generosity of his spirit and the openness of his mind to his enquiry, which persuaded him to investigate before pontificating, Turner has explained many practices of the Church of the Lord which a less scientifically-minded, highly opinionated subscriber to the dogmas of the Western-oriented 'orthodox' Churches would have found extremely offensive and serious enough to write off the Church of the Lord as unfit to be a

legitimate member of the Church Universal. Among such practices one might mention the importance accorded to visions and dreams, observance of Jewish customs and taboos, the use of specially 'holy' names in prayers to God, and the peculiar form of the alphabet and certain instructions which the founder, Dr Oshitẹlu, claimed were transmitted to him in dreams. Turner's methodological examination of practices like these is two-pronged—to show that many of these practices have Biblical sanctions (in the Old Testament) or that they are phenomena found among 'sects' in Europe and America. Turner would not even pronounce anathema on Dr Oshitẹlu for adding wife to wife and gives greater credit to the Church of the Lord than to the 'orthodox' Churches for its Christian but pragmatic policy on polygamy.

H. W. Turner has refused to outlaw the Church of the Lord or label any of the organization's practices as heterodox. For him the Church of the Lord is essentially a Church of Christ in Africa as well as a legitimate branch of the Church Universal. One hopes that in the light of his brilliant and wholly successful book, self-righteous and egotistical advocates of their own Church as the authentic and legitimate institution that should be planted in all climes and in all societies would perceive their myopia, overcome their inhibitions, and recognize in the Church of the Lord (perhaps in other African Churches as well), a legitimate institution through which the Lord is fulfilling His purpose in Africa.

NOTES

1 H. W. Turner, *African Independent Church:* volume 1, *The Church of the Lord* (Aladura); volume 2, *The Life and Faith of the Church of the Lord* (Aladura); Oxford, 1967.

2 B. G. M. Sundkler, *Bantu Prophets in South Africa*, London, 1948; F. B. Welbourn, *East African Rebels*, London, 1961; C. G. Baeta, *Prophetism in Ghana*, London, 1962.

3 See Bengt Sundkler, *The Christian Ministry in Africa*, London, 1960, which completely ignores the African Churches.

4 C. G. Baeta (ed.), *Christianity in Tropical Africa*, London, 1968.

proceedings of a conference sponsored by the International African Institute which took place in Ghana in 1965.

5 Turner, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 332.
6 E. W. Smith, *The Blessed Missionaries* (the Phelps-Stokes Lectures 1949), Oxford, 1950, p. 20.
7 Herbert Butterfield, *Christianity in European History*, third impression, London, 1965.
8 See W. Knight, *Memoir of Henry Venn*, London, 1882, Appendix C, pp. 412-37.
9 CMS G3/A2/04, R. N. Cust to R. Lang, 22/1/1887.
10 CMS G3/A2/09, James Johnson, 'Lessons to be learnt from other Mission Fields, such as Uganda, Tinevelly and China'.
11 CMS Library, 'The Relation of Mission Work to Native Customs', paper read by James Johnson to the Pan-Anglican Conference, London, 1908.
12 *Church Missionary Intelligencer*, (1880), p. 399.
13 George Shepperson and T. Price, *Independent African*, Edinburgh, 1958; D. Thwait, *The Seething African Pot*, London, 1936.
14 By far the most outspoken African scholar has been Professor Bolaji Idowu. See E. B. Idowu, *Towards an Indigenous Church*, Oxford, 1965; and 'The Predicament of the Church in Africa', in C. G. Baeta (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 417-36. Professor Idowu is carrying his crusade further in his book, 'The Church's One Foundation (A Study of the Self-hood of the Church with particular reference to Africa)' forthcoming. However it should be remarked that Professor Idowu is yet to bring the African Churches within the fold of legitimate churches. See his observations on the Aladura Churches in E. B. Idowu, *Olodumare: God in Yoruba Belief*, London, 1962, pp. 211-12.
15 J. B. Webster, *The African Churches among the Yoruba 1888-1922*, Oxford, 1964. R. L. Wishlade, *Sectarianism in Southern Nyasaland*, Oxford, 1965. W. H. C. Frend, *The Donatist Church: A Movement of Protest in Roman Africa*, Oxford, 1952.
16 Turner, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 370.
17 *Ibid.*, p. vi.
18 For information about other Aladura Churches, see J. D. Y. Peel, *Aladura: A Religious Movement among the Yoruba*, Oxford, 1968.
19 For such correlation in Nyasaland, see Wishlade, *op. cit.*
20 Turner, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 121.
21 For the danger of the Reformed Ogboni Fraternity to the Christian Church, see Idowu, *Olodumare*, pp. 212-13, and E. A. Ayandele, 'The Nigerian Church and the Reformed Ogboni Fraternity', *Nigerian Baptist*, June 1966, pp. 19-23.
22 For the danger of freemasonry to the Church all over the world, see W. Hannah, *Darkness Visible*, London, 1952.

10

Writing African Church History

A bitter pill which the majority of writers on Christianity and missionary activities in Africa should swallow is that they have not been writing African Church History. But this fact is not to be construed as a judgment on their scholarship. With the exception of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and the Coptic Church of Egypt both of which, in our opinion, have not received the attention they deserve, scholars have had no African Church as such on which to focus their writings. For, rightly considered, an African Church must necessarily be the product of an organic growth on the African soil, an institution in which Christianity is incarnate within the African milieu. This was how the 'historic Churches' introduced into Africa had developed in their metropolitan countries.

Although the legitimacy of, and necessity for, a truly African Church have been perceived and preached for a long time by seasoned and clairvoyant missionaries with a long experience of Africa such as E. W. Smith, Bruno Gutmann, and Dietrich Westermann, the tendency among scholars today is to assume that the Churches established by the Christian missions are authentic African Churches. These scholars hardly perceive that the mission Churches, referred to in recent times as the 'young Churches', have been and remain essentially imitations of their mothers in Europe and America. Hence the reluctance, if not refusal, of many writers to recognize the Churches that broke away from Western-controlled missions as legitimate parts of the Church Universal; hence the designations coined for these Churches: 'separatists', 'rebels' and, at best, 'independent African'. In spite of the truth that has begun to dawn on a

number of Africanists,[1] it has to be admitted that today many students of Christianity in Africa have yet to recognize and approve of the matter-of-fact observation made in 1905 by Bishop James Johnson, one of the finest results of, and witnesses for, the Gospel in Africa, that:

> Christianity is a religion intended for and is suitable for every Race and Tribe of people on the face of the Globe. Acceptance of it was never intended by its Founder to denationalize any people and it is indeed its glory that every race of people may profess and practise it and imprint upon it its own native characteristics; giving it a peculiar type among themselves without its losing anything of its virtue. And why should not there be an African Christianity as there has been a European and an Asiatic Christianity?[2]

Most of the writing on African Church History has so far depended almost entirely on the enormously rich mission sources. At the time when the archives began to be explored in a systematic and scholarly fashion,[3] African historiography was patently biased in favour of European activities. It was fashionable to believe that African history began with the European presence. This belief was heavily reinforced by the documents left behind by the ethnocentric white missionaries who saw Africa as a *tabula rasa*. It is little surprising that historians have proceeded to chronicle exclusively the activities of the white missionaries who inevitably emerged as oversized 'heroes' planting the gospel seed and supervising its growth and nurture. The missionary endeavour is seen as no more than a part of the imperial establishment in Africa. In the words of Professor Bengt Sundkler, Christian missions looked, and are treated as, 'largely a religious accompaniment of the political, economic and cultural expansion of the West'.[4] In other words, in these writings the missionary is the centre of the picture and the African takes no part in the shaping of events. Evangelization is no more than the communication of foreign ideas to passive recipients who have to swallow every bit whether or not they approve. There is no dialogue, no adaptation, no growth.

And yet this kind of picture, we know from the records

and the biographical hints in some recent works, is only partially true.[5] The bias of the records notwithstanding, it is clear that there was African participation; that the white missionaries had African compeers after a generation of activity, or from the beginning as in the case of the *Saro* in the peculiarly favourable situation of Yorubaland and the Lower Niger. There is ample evidence that Africans were not passive as suggested in these works; the missionaries were utterly dependent from the start on African interpreters and other auxiliaries who bore the brunt of evangelization, discharging a number of functions which were necessarily beyond the reach of their alien white masters. It is fair to emphasize that apart from the evidence of these African auxiliaries, which is plentiful in the mission archives, the white masters often left behind observations on, and biographical glimpses of, their African aides.

Indeed so rich are the mission records for a revelation of African participation in, and contribution to, the planting and growth of the Church in Africa that we have on hand biographies of two eminent west African bishops, Samuel Ajayi Crowther and James Johnson of the Anglican Church, whilst Jean Farrant has turned out a sizeable account of the impressive pioneering exertions of Bernard Mizeki, an African from Mozambique, in Mashonaland in the scramble era.[6] We are in no doubt at all that writers on African Church history would be abundantly rewarded should they try to see the other side of the coin—the contribution of the African personnel to the planting, spread, and development of the Church in Africa. In this regard we might mention Mojola Agbebi of the Southern American Baptist Mission of Nigeria, C. C. Reindorf of the Basel Mission in Ghana, and Bishop Joseph Kiwanuka of the Catholic Church in Uganda, as possible subjects for research.

Efforts could, and should, go beyond biographies of African auxiliaries of Christian missions of the type listed above. For in terms of the local importance and the development of the Church the African leaders of the new Churches, often the first converts, were crucial. Only in Uganda where martyrdom has compelled notice have such leaders received attention. Sometimes, as in the case of Uganda, these were

men of substance in society whose conversion hastened the conversion of a considerable number in their communities. Others achieved prominence only as a result of their contact with, and service to the cause of, Christianity. For example, Babamubọni of Ekitiland, Tenabe of Ido-Ani, and Elegbeleye of the Ivasbiokon, all in Southern Nigeria, were sold as slaves to areas in Yorubaland where they had the opportunity to embrace Christianity. They became in their respective home towns men of prestige, successful evangelists, and church organizers at the beginning of the establishment of British colonial rule, an age when influence and leadership were ceasing to be hereditary and dependent on association with the new white rulers.[7] The rapid spread of Christianity and the strength acquired by the Church in the areas pioneered by these ex-slaves, even without the supervision of CMS missionaries for many years, are a clear testimony of the strategic positions occupied by Africans even with little or no formal education in the history of the Church in Africa. Certainly this is worthy of the attention of historians.

The neglect of the African *dramatis personae* in the establishment of growth of the Church in Africa is matched by the fact that the writing of African Church history, so far, has been largely the achievement of committed ordained Westerners, C. P. Groves, K. S. Latourette, F. B. Welbourn, J. V. Taylor, Adrian Hastings, Peter Beyerhaus, and Cecil Northcott, to name a few outstanding ones. They would be less than human if they were not affected in some degree by the theology and the forms and formularies of the 'historic Churches' in which they have been brought up. Inevitably, the perspective from which they have viewed the growth and development of the Church in Africa has been that of the 'mother' Churches. It is difficult for them to think of the Church as an African product, truly African though nevertheless a branch of the one Catholic Church. It is difficult for them to think of Christianity shorn of the incidental cultural and ceremonial accretions of Europe and expressed in the African concepts and institutions and vested with the cultural ceremonies that would give it life in Africa. Thus, even when these scholars admit that the Church in Africa should cease to be the European or American edi-

tion, they have found it difficult to refrain from judging the Church in Africa by the elaborate organizational patterns, ethos, liturgy, decorative art, and, of course, the theological orientation of the metropolitan Churches.

In other words, instead of African Church history being a scholarly exercise which seeks to explore what Africans have made of Chrisitianity and to understand the inner growth of the Church in Africa, it has tended to remain a part of the missionary presence, encouraging expansion without real growth. Many scholars are so emotionally and unyieldingly attached to Western civilization that they cannot help adopting a rather negative attitude towards indigenous African religious ideas and idioms, festivals, rituals, and institutions, much of which remain part of the spiritual life of African Christians, and are not repugnant to Biblical Christianity, but have found no place in institutionalized Christianity in Africa. The most obvious example of this is, of course, the great amount of fuss made about the issue of monogamy, as if it were the most fundamental dogma of the Christian Church and possessing indubitable scriptural validity. Even scholars who have presented in their writings sociological data that demonstrate in bold relief the merits of polygamy in African society[8] have failed to expose the fallacy of the doctrine that monogamy was divinely ordained and not an accretion of European cultural development. Till this day, nearly all European scholars and Westernized Churches in Africa continue to indulge in moral condemnation of the institution of polygamy in a manner prejudicial to scientific objectivity. For, studied with the mind purely of the scholar, it might have been obvious that the antagonism to polygamy, encouraged by the missionaries from the beginning to the disadvantage of the Church, ought not to have arisen; polygamy is not a moral issue in African society and an African Church could have crystallized around this social institution, endearing the chiefs and aristocracy to Christianity, without necessarily doing any damage to the Christianity of the Bible and without necessarily inhibiting modernization of the institution under social and economic pressures.

But attachment to dogmas formulated in the light of European Christianity is only one of the factors impeding

the approach of scholars towards a true history of the African Church. A more fundamental impediment is the corollary of this, namely, the fact that so many writers behave as if the Christian Church were in Africa, but not of Africa. They have concentrated on Christian communities as though they were self-contained units without relations with the wider African society, both formally in terms of religious interaction of one institution with others and informally through the everyday contact of members with those outside the group. And yet it cannot be denied that Christianity, like all religions, is a formative social force in society and that it is impossible to understand the Church without understanding its relationships with the rest of society. At no time had the Church in Africa existed *in vacuo*. The Church operated in the African social environment which exerted various pressures upon it, subjected it to many limitations, and provided a framework of general conditions for its formation, development, and survival. Church and African society interacted in a manner that made the Church help to mould, and was itself moulded by, the society in which it was established. For this reason, the Church has never at any time been exclusively the European or American edition imagined.

There is, therefore, a necessity to study more thoroughly the reaction of African converts, laymen and ordained men, to the Europeanizing posture of the Church. Consider, for instance, Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther whose adoption of European values and culture makes him in the work of a scholar the most relentless advocate of wholesale Anglican establishment in West Africa.[9] And yet apart from the pull of African culture on this African Bishop indicated in another work,[10] the true pattern of the Church in the Lower Niger during this episcopate is still to be revealed. For example, observing that the survival of the Church in this part of West Africa depended on an accommodating attitude to the institution of slavery, the Bishop had to preside over a Church consisting almost entirely of slaves; fully aware of the unsuitability of the Anglican form of marriage, with its law of inheritance, for the Niger Delta society, he did not perform a single marriage between indigenous people in the

Niger Mission throughout his long episcopate.[11]

In Crowther the reaction was caution, restraint, and quiet protest. In the mass of African Christians, this uncompromising posture of the Church has tended to produce ambiguity and confusion. It is the basic cause why so far the Church has not yet discovered its bearings in relation to the true spiritual yearnings of the African, his social and political expectations, his thought-forms and motives of action. Culturally and emotionally, the Church appears to be palpably out of tune with African society. As scholars who explore the inner life of the Church very well know, many of the traditional fears, superstitions, and beliefs in the existence of evil powers have by no means been effaced by the Church, even among the ordained leaders of the Church. Furthermore, there is complaint that the exotic Churches lack colour, that, by denying the laymen sufficient participation in the services, they do not provide enough scope for the emotions of the Africans, that the Churches are intellectually biased against Africans, that the African finds the European atmosphere of the services oppressive, and that the alien tunes notoriously distort African languages both in tone and stress, and destroy the meaning of the songs.

We cannot overstress the fact that greater understanding of the true nature of African Church history must proceed from a study of the interaction between Church and society, that is to say from a socio-historical analysis of Christianity in Africa. This approach will reveal broadly three different situations. First, there is the peculiar situation of Islamic communities where Christians are in the minority (Egypt, Sudan, and Northern Nigeria). Second, there are those areas where white immigrants have established a permanent home in the midst of Africans (Central, Eastern, and Southern Africa). Third, there are the territories which experienced no white immigrant intrusion but merely underwent European colonial rule. For lack of space we shall indicate a few socio-historical factors affecting the life of the Church in relation to the society in the third category of which West Africa is the best example. In this part of the continent the relations between the Church and society could, it seems to us, be examined in three phases viz., the pre-colonial era, the

colonial period, and the post-independence times.

In the pre-colonial era, the missionaries were dependent on African rulers; Christians were very few, the Church was embryonic, and it had a very precarious existence. Among the relevant questions researchers should ask are the following: Why was it that it was the oppressed slaves and ex-slaves (or offspring of slaves like the *Saro*) that constituted the nuclei of Churches? Why and how were the aristocracy and chiefs alienated by the Church? What social tension was created by the different reactions of these classes? What customs and institutions, which stood as a barrier between the Church and the people that mattered in society, could have been successfully adopted by Christianity with an eye to the emergence of an African Church? How far did the Church satisfy or stultify the aspirations of the Christian community? Since the chiefs were the masters of their houses and were powerful to the extent that their goodwill and patronage were important to the continued existence of the Church, to what extent was the Church forced by circumstances to be accommodating to domestic slavery, membership of secret societies, title-taking, oath-taking, initiation ceremonies, and polygamy? What is the significance of the extent to which these customs and institutions were accommodated in the sense that they constituted no bar to full membership for example, (Bishop Crowther in the Niger Delta), polygamists (Henry Townsend in Abẹokuta), and title-holders (Charles Phillips in Ondo)?

Two evangelizing aspects should be analysed in respect of this pre-colonial period. Why did missionaries not make use of the associative element in traditional African society, using the family as the unit for conversion rather than the individual, the clan or ethnic group rather than the family? Then what was the theological reaction of the converts to the new religion as essentially something analogous to the indigenous faith?

There are questions that should centre on the growth of the Church as a new community in the milieu of African society. In what respects, if any, did Church organization reveal or adapt itself to such social institutions as the extended family, kinship, and clanship? In what ways, if any,

did Church organization reflect the hierarchical pattern of authority and power in society? What analogies, for example, may be found between the age-grades and the *Baba Ẹgbẹ* and *Iya Ẹgbẹ*, respectively leaders of male and female societies in Yorubaland? In what ways were the respect and influence enjoyed by lay leaders of Christian communities related to established ethical ideals and practices in respect of age? How far did membership of the Church affect a Christian's status in society? In what ways did Christian organization fit into existing social and political structures? In what ways, if any, did Christianity bring to society either the benefits of cohesion and unanimity, or the torments of discord and tension?

Nor should the focus be entirely sociological. The presence of the Church should be related to the political and economic aspirations of pre-colonial West African society. Herein comes the very important factor of motivation. Why did the poor and social outcasts embrace the new faith of Christianity? What psychological or emotional security and hope did they expect from the Christian message? Or, as in the Niger Delta where there was the backing of the European man-of-war, what political benefits did the unprivileged in society expect to obtain through the Church? The factor of motivation becomes even more important in respect of the few accommodating chiefs who, whilst prepared to tolerate the presence of, and to protect, the Church, refused to embrace the new-fangled faith or allow their subjects to do so. Why, then, did they become patrons of the Church? Was it personal friendship, such as developed between Thomas Birth Freeman and King Gezo of Dahomey? Or hope of military or political aid against hostile neighbours, as was the case with Sodẹkẹ and the Ẹgba? Or hope of economic gains, such as prompted King Manuwa of Itebu to patronize the CMS Ondo Mission? Or was there genuine conversion such as led Chief Owolatan Okenla, founder of the Christian Ẹgba village of Shuren, to discard all his wives but one, and ascribe to Christianity his military achievements?

In the pre-colonial era considerable attention has been given by writers to relations between the European mis-

sionaries and African auxiliaries. But the *tertium quid* position of the Christian adherents between the European missionaries, with the menacing imperial presence of their secular countrymen on the coast, and the 'pagan' Chiefs is a subject that requires further exploration.

In the colonial period relations between the Church and society changed, in some respects drastically. Christians increased in very large numbers and Christianity became respectable. In the new atmosphere in which the pre-colonial milieu was partially altered, in which literacy conferred and defined status, in which the educated elite, however nominally Christian, were part of the colonial bureaucracy and thereby formed part of the new government, the position of chiefs was seriously affected. No longer were the chiefs and traditional priests able to proscribe adherence to Christianity; no longer could the village or town prescribe religion to the individual. This was *par excellence* the era of irrational abandonment of some age-old customs and *mores* by large numbers in society; it was an era which demanded new political, social, and economic aspirations.

It is in relation to this new milieu that the Church under colonialism should be analysed. In what ways had the influence of the Church increased or decreased in this period? For instance the economic stimulus which was inspired by Christianity created in the pre-colonial period a liaison between Christianity and the rise of capitalism. But this liaison was completely broken in the new era. Capitalism could no longer be associated with any particular religion, as 'pagans' and Muslims were competing with Christians in economic enterprises. How far did the Church associate with, or draw apart from, the new imperial secular order and with what consequences for the image of the Church? What association existed between the Church and European culture, confirming pre-colonial impressions in the African mind that Christianity was the white man's religion?

The parting of the ways between the leaders of African nationalist opinion and the Church is worthy of detailed examination. In what ways did the Church alienate the educated elite, who were themselves largely products of Christian education? Was it because this institution, which in ear-

lier years served as the incubator of African nationalism, disengaged itself from African political aspirations? Or because the Church was eloquently silent about some measures of the colonial administration which the educated elite deemed harmful to African interests? Or because the Church did not condemn the 'unchristian' acts of white traders or colonial officers? Or because the educated elite were imbibing secularist and atheistic ideas from literature obtained from, or contact established with, contemporary Europe?

The tension created in society between the young and the old during the period should be of interest to scholars. The young were prone to experiment with the new religion and were receptive of the concepts that accompanied the colonial era—new concepts of liberty, status, and power, new sets of values and *mores*, new aspirations. They made a bid for leadership. In contrast were many of the elderly folk who saw the traditional world as an ideal and who resented the encouragement which the colonial masters were giving to its collapse. The tension between the young and old, between Christian adherents and the religious traditionalists, developed into eruptions, minor 'wars of religion', particularly in the early years of colonial rule. Influence and authority changed hands as Christian adherents withdrew loyalties from 'pagan' elders, chiefs, and communities, and transferred these loyalties to teachers, Church elders, and pastors.

However, the centrifugal forces unleashed by the Church and Christianity in society were only one side of the coin. The integrative and centripetal achievements of the Church should not be ignored. For the Church became an association creating a new kind of communal feeling which transcended sub-ethnic frontiers. The role which literary education, which was almost exclusively in the hands of the Churches in the colonial period, played in the development of uniform aspirations, values, outlooks, and desires across ethnic frontiers, a factor of great significance in the emergence of a nation, is still to receive adequate attention from historians of Christianity in Africa. Although the relation between education, the new elite, and politics often engages the attention of political scientists, there is a serious

lack of such studies by scholars with the necessary socio-historical dimension and for whom the growth of the Church is of central interest.

Although the post-independence period is the shortest it is the phase that has attracted the greatest attention of scholars, obviously because the 'imperialist' and 'neo-colonialist' appearance of European Churches in politically sovereign African States seems anomalous. Naturally the wind of change could not avoid the Church, particularly when African statesmen who had deplored the failure or refusal of the Church to subscribe to their nationalist aspirations make statements that are embarrassing at the headquarters of Christian missions.[12] In an age of cultural renaissance, when African history has begun to come to its own and Africa is the cynosure of the world, it is only to be expected that Africans should desire that the Church should bear marks of the African personality.

By and large accelerated promotion of African personnel, even in the Catholic Church, is the watchword of all Christian missions.[13] Although European missionaries are still large in number and they continue to wield enormous power, in some places largely behind the scenes, all missions have endorsed the idea that the 'younger Churches' in Africa should be controlled predominantly by Africans. In several countries, leadership and property have been transferred to national Churches. Relations between Church and society have assumed quite a different pattern. Since the white man exercises no more political control, white missionaries can no longer be accused of collusion with African governments against African interests. It is at this point that relations between Church and society centre on the cultural element, how far the Church reflects the African milieu in its total life, including the school which the Church controls.

One thing which is clear from the characteristic relationship between the Church and society in its three phases in West Africa is that writers of the history of the Church in Africa, as in any continent, must necessarily be seasoned students also of the history of that continent. African Church historians must necessarily be concerned with the totality of the African past, the cultural evolution, the religious ideas,

the political aspirations, the philosophy of life, the psychology, the economic pattern, and social development of society. For a thorough appraisal of relations between the Church and African culture, the scientific approach of the social anthropologist, with data going back to the origins of the Church on the continent, is a pressing need.

There is need also for researches on African theology, on the cosmic views, myths of origin and creation of man in traditional society, on the didactic teachings which formed the core of morality, on the concepts and beliefs that constituted God's revelations to Africans, the known that should be made the point of leading 'pagan' Africans to the unknown but basically closely related Christian dogmas. The idea of the community of the Living and of the Dead, for example, is closely related to the Christian doctrine of the community of the Saints and of the Living. The concepts of atonement, sacrifice, retributive justice, and redemption which are principal Christian doctrines are by no means absent, in however crude a form, from African society. Equally important are the ideas of immortality inherent in the burial customs of Africans and the belief in the Supreme Being found among all African communities.

The extent to which this socio-historical approach has been neglected in the writings of African Church history which, as we indicated earlier, has so far been dominated by committed European Christians, raises the question of how far non-Africans can be expected to understand the inner workings of the African Church and its interaction with African society. There is clearly a need for more scholarly African participation in the writing of African Church history. The problems posed by the growth of an African Church are largely African and demand African solutions. The themes and emphasis of the few scholarly African writers on the history and life of the Church in Africa show clearly that there is no substitute for this participation.[14] Africans are psychologically and emotionally more drawn towards their continent and cultural heritage than foreigners. With the advantage of their background, in the understanding and interpretation of African customs and institutions, in analysis of a festival or even in its societal context

African scholars have an advantage over others. One can easily call to mind the light thrown by Jomo Kenyatta on the Kikuyu customs of clitoridectomy, so demonstrably misunderstood by the Church of Scotland Mission.[15] Or consider the insight thrown by Akiga, the first convert and first Tiv evangelist of the South African branch of the Sudan United Mission, on marriage customs and kinship among his people.[16] Or the depth of analysis of the religious aspect of chiefship in Ashanti by Professor K. A. Busia.[17]

Yet the contribution of some exceptional non-African scholars to the understanding of true African Church history must be acknowledged. They are the scholars who, in spite of their attachment to their own religious faiths and cultural ideals, are willing to respect the African's alternative choices. They are the few who understand the vital link between a living faith and society. Above all, they are the few who have carried their researches beyond the archives of European missions to the vital written and oral sources on the African Church in Africa; they have been willing to live with, study, and take pains to understand African Christians as well as the African society and culture which nurtures the African Church. Professor Bengt Sundkler's works amply demonstrate that the socio-historical approach which we advocate is not the exclusive preserve of African scholars. Indeed the crucial significance of his pioneering study of the Church among the Zulu is that he drew scholarly and respectable attention to the Churches which had broken away from European tutelage to seek solutions to their religious problems under African leadership. By its nature the study of these independent African Churches has drawn the attention of scholars to the rich sources on African Church history to be found outside the European archives.

Broadly speaking there are two classes of such African sources on the history of the Church in Africa, viz. the records (largely in private hands) of African leaders in the 'younger Churches', and the sources provided by the variously labelled independent Churches. As we have observed earlier, the evidence of African participants and leaders in the Western-orientated Churches is still to be systematically studied. However the 'African', 'Separatist', 'Spiritualist',

and 'Prophetic' Churches which came into existence by branching off from the mission Churches have been examined in considerable detail, thus revealing on an impressive scale the African response and contribution to the spread of Christianity in Africa. Since 1948 when Professor Sundkler blazed the trail with his classic work, *Bantu Prophets in South Africa*, attention to these African Churches has grown immensely, culminating recently in the miscroscopic survey of a single Church, 'The Church of the Lord' or 'The Aladura' of West Africa, in two volumes by H. W. Turner.[18]

Historiographically the writings on the African Churches mark an advance on the study cf Christianity in Africa. Reading through the literature one cannot but have a feeling that in this field European researches have at last begun to get the feel of the African environment. The *dramatis personae* are entirely African; sociological data are prominent; many customs and institutions are probed to depths beyond the reach of works based on the mission sources; the religious instincts of Africans and their spiritual yearnings are illustrated in emphatic terms.

Nevertheless the literature on African Churches reveals that even in this field the attachment to Western civilization remains powerful and inhibiting. There seems to be a conscious or unconscious reluctance on the part of most scholars to regard these African Churches as a part of the Church Universal or as a Church, if not the Church, of Africa. Hence, Sundkler, Welbourn, and, to a point, Turner adopt the view that these African Churches are worth studying only in so far as they enable the parent Churches to know how and in what circumstances these Churches broke away, in order that they might make amends.[19] Hence the conspicuous exclusion of these African Churches from B. G. M. Sundkler's *Christian Ministry in Africa* (London, 1960); hence the failure of the conveners of the Seventh International African Seminar, which discussed Christianity in Africa in Ghana 1965, to invite participation by these African Churches or recognize their existence as propagators of Christianity in Africa;[20] hence Professor Baeta's dubitable judgment that the 'Spiritualist' Churches in Ghana are con-

cerned entirely with mundane things and never with the divine.[21]

In other words, with the exception of H. W. Turner whose work, we hope, will mark the beginning of a fresh approach, the attitude of writers has so far been to treat the African Churches as enemies of the true Church.[22] They are represented as erring children who broke away from their parent because they could not conform to the high principles of the Christian religion, or because they were suffering from political ambition, or because they were guilty of sexual lapses, or because they desired to bastardize Christianity. Whilst, as several investigations of the causes of the rise of many of the African Churches have shown, these elements might be present, it is important to stress that they did not constitute the whole truth. There is the other side to the matter that should not be ignored—a genuine desire by Christian leaders to found a truly African Church in which the Christianity of the Bible would flourish in harmony with African customs and institutions that could not validly be described as 'unchristian'. Scholarly study has shown clearly that, contrary to the opinion of missionary denigrators and culturally inhibited historians, the quest for an environment in which the African could display his spiritual qualities to the best advantage was a strong force behind the movements for separation, and that the African Churches believed that they, rather than the mission Churches, were the true exponents of Christianity and that their programme should include conversion of the white in Europe and America to their doctrine.[23]

In our opinion, too much attention has been given to the causes of schism in the 'orthodox' Churches in Africa, and this in a negative way. Emphasis has been placed mainly on how far these African 'rebels' or 'separatists' have departed from the Western pattern and norms of the 'orthodox' Churches from which they have broken away. What is called for among historians is a positive attitude, an investigation of the African Churches, in their own right, in their internal growth, in matters of organization, liturgy, theology, forms and formularies, thought-forms, and style of life.

Take, for instance, the literature on the earlier Church in Mediterranean Africa. While displaying in bold relief quar-

rels with the Roman Church, the portraits reveal little of the internal life of the Churches in Africa. Frend's scholarly work on the Donatist Church—and it is significant that he is not an ordained man—illustrates forcefully our point with regard to the Maghreb.[24] Although he gives ample indication that the Donatist Church had an understructure of Maghrebian culture, yet this Church is not treated as the outcome of the inner yearnings of the Berbers for an African Church. Rather, as the sub-title of the book testifies, the Church is treated as 'a movement of protest'. The book is replete with the usual theological disputation, emphasizing how much the Donatists seemed to have departed from the metropolitan brand of Christianity, rather than how Berbers on becoming Christians had adapted European Christianity to the Maghrebian social and religious environment.

And yet the spiritual yearnings, inner thoughts, and the enthusiasm of the Donatists for a genuine African Church which won the affection of the masses are evident in the hints given by Frend. Christianity became acceptable to the Berbers, it is contended, because God was presented to them through the popular cult of Saturn, whose attributes were similar to those of the Supreme Being in the beliefs of many African peoples. Furthermore the Berbers' mass movement to the Donatist Church was owed to the affinities they perceived in traditional beliefs and practices and the Christian religion, including the concepts of monotheism, martyrdom and propitiation, burial rites, and symbols like the rosette, palm, dove, and lion. So much did the Donatist Church permeate Berber society that it developed its own art. In Frend's words: 'A vigorous native Christian art developed, an art which appears to have been inspired by the Donatist Church and whose tradition has survived down to the present day.'[25]

But not only is the theme of the organic growth of the Donatist Church tantalizingly abandoned, not only is attention concentrated almost entirely on the controversies between the Donatist and Roman Catholic divines, not only is the manner the Donatists were crushed by the secular might of the Emperors detailed, but Frend, like other scholars, cannot recognize the Donatist Church as a part of the

Church Universal. Rather he sees the Donatists as proclaiming an entirely new religion. 'We are likely to be on firmer ground', he speculates, 'if we examine the acceptance of Christianity by large numbers of North Africans from the point of view of a transformed popular religion, rather than that of conversion to a new religion.'[26]

Historians of Christianity in Africa have yet to learn that their negative attitude to the earlier Church in North Africa is responsible for their failure to perceive the reasons for the effacement of the Church in that area, and correspondingly, for the phenomenal success of Islam in the territory. For by crushing Donatism with the aid of the Emperors, the Roman Catholic Church killed a truly African Church and with it the social, cultural, and political aspirations and identity of the Berbers. When Islam came in the seventh century AD it was largely politically and culturally neutral. Islam proved itself adaptable. It assimilated Berber customs and institutions and assumed a complexion unique in the Muslim World. In Morocco, for instance, it became the catalyst for the monarchical institution in a manner that has endured till today in the Sherifian principle of succession. All over the Maghreb the cult of ancestors was transformed to the cult of saints. Consequently Islam survived.

The survival of the Coptic Church of Egypt in Mediterranean Africa in spite of the unabated and long hostility of Islam is, perhaps, the best testimony to the maxim that there is logically a necessary connection between the autonomy of a church to express itself and its survival in relation to its milieu. Unlike the Donatists the Egyptian Christians, the Copts, sustained their nationalist outlook and survived.

The monastic institution which they originated was accepted by Christendom and imitated by the Islamic *tariqas*; the Monophysite doctrine on which they staked the sovereignty of the Egyptian Church and established their identity, triumphed. For these nationalistic manifestations or independent expressions the Copts did not suffer the fate of their Maghrebian counterparts. Unlike Rome, Constantinople left them alone. Consequently by the time of the Islamic invasion the Coptic Church had assumed a national character with its own peculiarities. Today the quality of the Christian-

…ty of the Church is revealed by the fact that the Copts are
…id to have retained a high level of sexual morality uncor-
…ted by Islam and are the least disposed to crime in
…t.[27] Indeed they have a lesson to teach the Christian
… divorce is very rare among them.
… one might have thought that the evolution of the
…hurch and its survival in the turmoil of the historical
… of the Copts would be a priority of historians of
… in Africa.[28] But, as in the case of the Donatists
…day African Churches, it is the theological con-
… the nationalist struggle of the Egyptian
…with Constantinople that tended to monopol-
…f scholars. We wish to draw the attention of
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socio-historical terms. For even when a healthy and positive attitude is adopted towards these Churches, as in the case of Turner, the story of their evolution cannot be fully and meaningfully unfolded unless analysis assumes the dimension we have indicated. In this connection we shall illustrate the seriousness of the lack of this approach by a reference to an excellent work that may soon be published.[30]

Haliburton's work is important because his attitude is positive; he does not deal with a Church that broke away. Rather he deals with an African evangelist of a rare kind with a rare success that excited the admiration or envy of European missionaries. William Wade Harris, a Grebo from eastern Liberia, was an extraordinary man with a melodramatic career. Though ill-educated, without the elaborate formal training of the ordained missionary, he single-handedly won thousands of converts to Christianity in places where Christian missions had failed to evoke massive response after decades of hard toil. Harris did not stay permanently in any place in the Ivory Coast and the Gold Coast; his presence, physically, along the littoral of these territories lasted weeks rather than months, days rather than weeks.

And yet the shortness of his physical presence notwithstanding, his spell over his followers, fresh converts from traditional religion, lasted years. His message was precise and laconic; his theology the simplest conceivable belief in the Supreme God and acceptance of Jesus Christ as one's only Saviour. He was no sectarian. Before him the gods were powerless and the malevolent forces, which used to haunt the inhabitants of the coastal areas in Ivory Coast and the west of Gold Coast, retreated. He was a worker of wonders; his words became prophecies instantaneously fulfilled; whoever he blessed was blessed; whatever he cursed was cursed.

But in spite of all these revelations, Haliburton has failed to explain all these achievements in relation to the milieu of the Ivory Coast and western Gold Coast between 1910 and 1929 when the Harris spell, which has endured, was most effective. Why did 'pagans' and the gods surrender in the manner of Jericho to this ordinary, simple, and grotesque fellow in the way described? What extraordinary events

were occurring within the communities that led the latter to be loosened off their moorings? What upheaval or psychic disorder was experienced by the Ivorians that made thousands of people respond to the Harris appeal in the way they did? What about the organic growth of the Churches of the Harris movement in organization, in theology, and spiritual life? What was the significance of the calabash for Prophet Harris, as of the rattle for the Twelve Apostles Church of Ghana, in reaching the hearts of his followers? Why did the harmonium or saxophone or alien instruments of music not evoke similar spontaneity or arouse the spiritual instincts of Africans? Lest it be thought that only European historians could be guilty of such oversights we might raise further questions in the work of Professor C. G. Baeta.[31] Why did he fail to explore the significance, for Africans, of the decision of the Musama Disco Christo Church to allow no divorce to members? Why did this same African Church in Ghana foster a sense of communal feeling, regarding themselves as a unit, giving themselves mutual aid in a manner characteristic of traditional society?

Such questions must be asked and explored if we are to understand the true history of the growth and development of the Church in Africa. Such understanding is vital today in view of the culturally ambiguous position occupied by the Church in Africa, a situation that is embarrassing and confusing to many members of the Church and provokes the attack of many outside the Church. Such understanding of the true nature of African Church history is essential for the future growth of the Church. It is only such understanding that can ensure for the 'younger Churches' a meaningful survival in Africa without prejudice to essential Christianity in its prime form.

NOTES

1 C. G. Baeta (ed.), *Christianity in Tropical Africa*, London, 1968, pp. 23-8, 308-25, 433-5.

2 CMS G3/A2/010, Bishop Johnson's Journal Report, December 1904-July 1905.

3 This began with Roland Oliver whose PhD thesis (Cantab., 1947)

was published in 1952 as *The Missionary Factor in East Africa*, London.

4 B. Sundkler, *The World of Mission*, London, 1965, p. 120.

5 J. F. Ade Ajayi, *Christian Missions in Nigeria, 1841-1891*, London, 1965. John V. Taylor, *The Growth of the Church in Buganda*, London, 1958, (see in particular Appendix A).

6 J. F. Ade Ajayi had the plan to publish a biography of Bishop Ajayi Crowther for the defunct West African History Series ed. by Professor G. S. Graham. E. A. Ayandele, *Holy Johnson: Pioneer of African Nationalism, 1836–1917*, London, 1970. Jean Farrant, *Mashonaland Martyr*, Cape Town, 1966.

7 Ayandele, *op. cit.*, p. X.

8 Taylor, *op. cit.*, pp. 169-75.

9 Peter Beyerhaus, *Die Selbständigkeit der jungen Kirchen als missionarisches Problem*, Wuppertal-Barmen, 2nd ed., 1959, pp. 145-6.

10 Ajayi, *op. cit.*, p. 223-5.

11 E. A. Ayandele, *The Missionary Impact on Nigeria, 1842-1914*, London, 1966, p. 207.

12 Ram Desai (ed.), *Christianity in Africa as Seen by Africans*, Denver, 1962.

13 J. Mullen, *The Catholic Church in Modern Africa*, London and Dublin, 1965, pp. 24-9.

14 For example J. H. K. Nketia's research into music in Ghana and E. B. Idowu's searchlight into African theology: J. H. K. Nketia, *African Music in Ghana: A Survey of Traditional Forms*, London, 1962. E. B. Idowu, *Olodumare: God in Yoruba Belief*, London, 1962.

15 Jomo Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya*, London, 1938, pp. 130-54.

16 Akiga, *Akiga's Story*, trans. Rupert East, Oxford, 1939.

17 K. A. Busia, *The Position of the Chief in the Modern Political System of Ashanti*, Oxford, 1951.

18 B. G. M. Sundkler, *Bantu Prophets in South Africa*, London, 1948 (2nd ed., 1961). H. W. Turner, *African Independent Church*, Oxford, 1967.

19 F. B. Welbourn, *East African Rebels*, London, 1961, pp. 11-12; Sundkler, *Bantu Prophets* 2nd. ed., pp. 17-18; Turner, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 370.

20 Published as C. G. Baeta (ed.), *Christianity in Tropical Africa*, London, 1968.

21 C. G. Baeta, *Prophetism in Ghana*, London, 1962, p. 146.

22 Turner, *op. cit.*, His attitude is clear from the book, but in vol. 2, p. 332 he declares: 'Throughout this work we have endeavoured to observe the life and action of the Church of the Lord; we have now given our own interpretation that it does fulfil the criterion we have proposed, and should be classified as a Christian Church'.

23 J. B. Webster, *The African Churches Among the Yoruba 1888-1922*, Oxford, 1964, pp. 42-91. Turner, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, pp. 93-5.

24 W. H. C. Frend, *The Donatist Church*, Oxford, 1952, p. 19.

25 *Ibid.*, pp. 66-7.

26 *Ibid.*, p. 98.
27 Edward Wakin, *A Lonely Minority*, New York, 1963, pp. 22-3.
28 These remarks are applicable to the Church of Ethiopia as well.
29 Turner, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 371.
30 G. M. Haliburton, 'The Prophet Harris and His Work in Ivory Coast and Western Ghana', PhD, thesis, London University, 1966.
31 Baeta, *op. cit.*, pp. 59-63.

11

Mission in the Context of Religions and Secularization: An African Viewpoint

Perhaps the most important point to stress is that the message of Christian missionaries to Africans has never changed. Their unshakeable conviction at all times has been that the sublime tenets of Christianity constitute *the truth, the whole truth*. For them this transcendental monotheism alone prescribes, and gives, salvation to man's soul, reveals to him God and the divine will, provides him with divine guidance in such a way that he would prefer the sacred to the profane, eternity to temporal existence, the heavenly to the earthly, the incorruptible to the corruptible, the spiritual to the secular, and virtue to vice. However, the vision of God can be perceived, and God's purpose fulfilled, by the individual only through Jesus Christ who is God and the Spirit—'God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit'—three divinities rolled into one. For 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God', 'the Word became flesh'. Through no other way can man be saved.

To the Christian the Muslim ridicule of the Trinity is a sin against the Holy Spirit, whilst the Islamic teaching that Jesus Christ was only a messenger of Allah, one of 113, and an inferior one to the Prophet Mohammed, the latter being 'the seal of the prophets', is absolutely reprehensibly sacrilegious. Remove the person of Jesus Christ and Christianity ceases to exist. But not only must the convert see Jesus Christ as 'the author and finisher' of his faith: he must accept

as well, unquestioningly and undoubtingly, certain dogmas about Christ which see him combining divinity and humanity in the most perfect manner. For instance, the Christian must believe that, though born biologically (the human element), he had been conceived in a mysteriously divine way.

Throughout his ministry, which lasted only three years and was carried out in the land of the Jews, he proclaimed the Christian religion, the universal message of which is beyond disputation. He was the most perfect representative of man on earth, the only one who never erred in thoughts, in speech, or in action. And from him emanated words of infinite wisdom and sublimity, beyond the capacity of anybody before or after him: his sayings, or rather parts of his saying, are enshrined in the timeless and priceless, absolutely sacred, gospel books of the New Testament. These gospels, a cornucopia of moral truths and divine guidance, are the divine touchstone of the thoughts and actions of men for all time. Jesus Christ exemplified the greatest modesty, poverty, and humility ever recorded in history. Born in a place intended for animals, he was poorer than the birds of the skies which have nests, poorer than the foxes which have holes. Jesus Christ did not move exclusively with the elite of society, who hated him because he moved with the lowly and despised. And his love for mankind was such that, in his innocence, he offered to hang on the cross in the most painful way, thereby carrying away the sins of the world and ensuring redemption for those who believe in him as their personal saviour. In order to show his divinity, he conquered death when he rose again the third day. This victory over death was merely the climax of his ministry which had been one of unique marvels and miracle-makings. For he had revealed a divine, extraordinary power which he used to turn water into wine, feed 5,000 people on two loaves and five small fishes, walk on water, make the lame walk and the blind see, and, above all, restore life to the dead.

All this, which constitutes the essence of Christianity, must be swallowed by the faithful. To deny the existence of this Christ, to question the authenticity of the miracles, to be 'in quest of the historical Jesus'[1] by the application of scientifically valid methodology, or to raise points about the

reliability, authority, and credibility of the sources for the person of Jesus, allegedly claimed by the apostles of Jesus Christ (the earliest, St Mark, is dated 67 AD, that is a generation after the ascension and it may be remarked that Mark was not a disciple of Christ) is to be possessed by the devil, an attempt of the finite human intellect to comprehend the infinite, divinely revealed message and redemption, through the person of Jesus Christ. The faithful must believe that only one revelation has occurred in human annals, and that although all other religions may be fascinating, they are futile attempts of man to reach God.

But not only has the Christian message to Africa and Africans been impeccably consistent. Enormous effort and sacrifices have been made in the last century and a half by European and American missionaries to propagate this message in frustrating circumstances and against terrible odds. Millions of pounds and thousands of lives have gone into the enterprise. The ideal objective of missionaries was to wipe African Traditional Religion, in which Africans had been finding spiritual consolation for centuries, completely off the map of Africa, and to crush Islam, Christianity's main and seemingly more powerful rival, out of existence.

Many of the pioneering missionaries of Africa dreamed of an ideal Christian society in Africa, a society in which Christianity would purify the thoughts of the African, sanctify his political aspirations, and sublimate his customs and habits, a society in which Christianity would produce the most perfect culture which has always eluded human society, a culture that would make man virtuous; in which would be eliminated the concept of ethnic or racial superiority and exploitation of one class by another; in which Christianity would bring about a good government and compel Africans to practise the Christian virtues of humility, love, good neighbourliness, and so on; where vices, and man's inhumanity to man would be absent, and where man's yearning would be other-worldly, his primary pursuit being the heavenly vision, rather than the affairs of this world. In the envisioned society the African would fulfil his spiritual being, thereby achieving the ultimate and primal purpose of religion.

However, the context in which the Christian message has

been delivered since the last century has been one in which secondary and secular motives have been inextricably intermingled. Among these secondary secular motives were: the desire of missionaries to substitute the white man's ethos, laws, customs, and pattern of thinking for the cultural heritage of Africans, in the serious but erroneous belief that Christianity was inseparable from the cultural heritage of Europe and America; the desire to induct Africans into a formal education and sophisticated economy similar to that of contemporary Europe and America, in the honest belief that it was only people produced in such a milieu who could become genuine Christians. Convinced that they were superior to Africans in science and technology, in government and jurisprudence, in the display of humanity and the practice of virtue, in the improvement of the quality and nobleness of man, and in the material prosperity of society, an achievement at their time attributed to Christianity, the missionaries were intent on loving Africans as they loved themselves, truly desiring to see Africans inherit the kingdom of God which they themselves hoped to inherit through the instrumentality of Christianity.

The strictly non-religious neo-secular elements in the thoughts and activities of missionaries to Africa, which have accumulated in the last century and a half, as well as the religion of Islam and African Traditional Religion with which they have been contending, will be examined later in relation to the challenge they pose to Christian evangelization today. However, if only because of the tendency o observers of Christianity's impact on Africa and Africans t give undue emphasis to the negative or worldly achieve ments of this religion, an assessment of the religious c spiritual response of Africans to the Christian message i modern times is essential.

Right from the nineteenth century to the present day the have been African adherents of all shades who have believ all along, for a variety of reasons, that Christianity should the religion of Africa, and that the intrinsic interest a destiny of their continent demanded massive a wholehearted patronage of this religion which they belie ...ly superior to any other religion. For these A

cans, Christianity could not, and should not, be described as the white man's religion. Properly conceived, they said, Christianity was racially and culturally neutral; the Europeanized or Americanized editions of Christianity brought into Africa—which were offensive to nationalist Africans—should not be misconstrued as the true authentic Christianity, 'the fine milk of the gospel', the universality of which distinguished it from all other religions. To several Africans, Christianity was, and is, the divine embodiment of the self-manifestation of God to all peoples through Christ.

It cannot be denied that spiritually there have been from the beginning Africans who believed that the answer to their spiritual quest is contained in the verities of the Christian religion. Hence the martyrdom of those seven men and five women in the Maghreb on 16 July 180 AD, of the slaves in Bonny in the Niger Delta during the episcopate of Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther, and of the Ugandan martyrs canonized in 1970 by the Roman Catholic Church. Evidently these were Africans who understood Christianity in incommunicable spiritual ways, who found spiritual fulfilment in their adopted religion. Indeed people like St Augustine understood and digested Christianity to the extent that they felt that they had a message for the entire world.[2] Hence St Augustine's view that man is essentially a religious animal who should fulfil God's purpose here on earth, living in this earthly city as a sojourner in his pursuit of the heavenly vision in his march toward the celestial city. And in the finding of spiritual fulfilment in Christianity, St Augustine has worthy successors in people like 'Holy' Johnson,[3] the Savonarola of West Africa from 1863 to 1917, whilst in the present day the Aladura are emphasizing the other-worldly at the expense of the this-worldly on behalf of Christianity to a degree beyond the contemplation of people outside their fold.[4]

And when it is borne in mind that in post-colonial Africa thousands, indeed millions, of Africans are not only exponents of Christianity, but respectable people who would rather die for this faith than return to African Traditional Religion, or be indifferent to religion, the spiritual hold of

Christianity on a substantial portion of the African population can be fully appreciated.

This point of the strength of Christianity among Africans in the past century should be stressed. The wonder is not that this religion has not been accepted by the majority of the people in Africa, but that it has recorded so great a statistical victory and has won so many apparently genuine converts in this continent. For, as we shall be reminded later in this chapter, Christianity was being spread in the last century at a time when neutralizing forces of considerable magnitude accompanied the white man's intrusion and subsequent invasion of Africa. Today, more than a decade after the colonial powers have withdrawn themselves legally and politically from the greater part of the continent, Africans are in control of, and dedicated to, the growth and spread of Christianity outside the Islamic zone. And the potency of the Church has been such that African statesmen who put the political kingdom above all other things, and who would have been willing to put the Church in its place, have been compelled to restrain themselves even in the face of alleged provocation by Church leaders. Thus deified Kwame Nkrumah had to be mortified that his expulsion of the white Bishop Roseveare was an act frowned upon by Ghanian Anglicans and therefore he cancelled the order; Kenneth Kaunda has had to tolerate the affliction of the Lumpa Church led by Alice Lenshina; whilst the melodrama-lover, Kamuzu Hastings Banda of Malawi, has fulminated in bitterness against the Jehovah's Witness (the Kitawalans) members of his State who have been prepared to obey the anti-State and anti-order credo enunciated by Charles Taze Russell of the United States rather than himself.

It seems to me that the secularizing factors in post-independence Africa notwithstanding, Christian missions need no longer fear that Christianity will ever suffer effacement, the fate of the two earlier attempts that had been made to Christianize parts of the continent. In very many parts of the continent the religion has come to be regarded as Africa's most precious possession, the relevance of which to the social and political aspirations of African peoples is ... Christianity has been more or less accepted.

and would seem to be increasingly acceptable, as white ecclesiastics withdraw their overlordship, as the western-established churches purge themselves of the European and American cultural, theological, and institutional trappings in which Christianity was imported into Africa, and as African Traditional Religion loses its resilience and vitality.

CUMULATIVE SECULARIZING FORCES

But this is not to say that Christian missions do not have formidable secularizing forces to contend with today, or that in Islam and African Traditional Religion they are not facing a bigger challenge than ever. Although secularization is nothing new or peculiar to Africa, it is essential to stress that it came largely in the wake of the white man's religious, economic, political, and cultural invasion of Africa, undoubtedly the greatest experience of Africans since the middle of the nineteenth century. In this context it is important to understand the unity and unison of religion and politics in the traditional African milieu.

Indeed no contemplation of evangelization prospects in Africa today, where religion and secularism live together in a peculiar and dangerous harmony, can be intelligible without adequate knowledge of the pre-colonial African world into which Christianity made a decisive thrust in the nineteenth century. In that world, whether in the Islamized northern third of the continent, or in the much vaster part where African Traditional Religion was pre-eminently supreme, secularism *per se* scarcely existed.

In the Islamic belt, situated roughly north of the tropical forest, Islam was the *primum mobile* of society, fashioning the mental attitudes and thought-patterns of the people, dictating the pattern and quality of literacy, justifying enslavement of 'pagans' and arrogance and hostility towards Christian infidels. Islam became the frame of reference for social and political acts of State. Thus, in the name of Islam, State laws allowed a man to discard his wife without the slightest ceremony, enjoined administration of eighty strokes of the cane on a Muslim who tasted alcohol, and declaration of the *jihad* (holy war) on infidels who violated the sovereignty and

territorial integrity of the State. The Muslim attitude to Christian infidels, clear from the following words of one of the Church Missionary Society (CMS) missionaries who carried evangelistic zeal to the Central Sudan in 1900, was not unique:

> The Emir of Kano, known as Aliyu the Great, was hostile to us from the start. He was not prepared to accede to any of our requests. 'Start a school? No, we have our own and our children are taught the Holy Kur'an.' 'Medical work? No. Our medicine is in the Holy Kur'an and the name of Allah! We don't want you: and you can go. I give you three days to prepare and we never wish to see you here again.[5]

The state of affairs in non-Muslim areas was hardly different. As has been clearly revealed by social anthropologists and students of African Traditional Religion, religion was all pervasive in the life of the African in the indigenous milieu. To quote a leading African scholar, the African was 'in all things religious'.[6] All his thoughts, beliefs, and acts were within the framework of religion. He obeyed the chief or king because the latter was regarded as the vice-regent of God on earth; the chief himself held a position in the religious thought of the African and had sacerdotal functions or religious rituals to perform on behalf of the community. Cribbed, cabined, and confined in the hard shells of religion, the African responded religiously to his world. Hence his belief in supernatural powers and in the existence of spirits in rivers, lakes, mountains, trees, and animals; hence his propitiation of Mother Earth which he believed was responsible for the fertility of the soil; hence his worship of Jehova through intercessions of a myriad of divinities; hence his belief that, for the sins of society to be carried away, human blood must flow seasonally; hence his belief in life after death and his conviction that man is no more than a sojourner on this terrestrial globe where he prepares himself for heaven, the real home.

The sphinx-like strength and all-pervasiveness of African Traditional Religion were hardly perceived by uninformed and casual visitors to Africa who described it as 'fetishism' ... In the belief that this 'fetishism' was a fra... ...anism'. In the

thing that could be blown away like chaff by the hurricane of the gospel, pioneer missionaries to Africa entertained grand hopes of an early success over 'paganism'. However, hardly had they found themselves in the African milieu than they discovered that African Traditional Religion would not collapse Jerichowise, and that to assail indigenous religion was to assail all that society cherished, including its political life. In this respect the best illustration is provided by the experience of Christian missions in Abẹokuta, capital of the Ẹgba branch of the Yoruba nation, where in pre-colonial Africa missionaries, in response to the purely political, favourable disposition of the Ẹgba rulers, had nursed higher hopes of success than in any other African community. As Samuel Ajayi Crowther, later Bishop, was shocked to discover, not only would the rulers not have indigenous religion despised by missionaries as a 'lie',[7] not only would they put in chains any Ẹgba citizen who would abandon the indigenous religion for Christianity, but they were angry that the missionaries were not charitable by abandoning Christianity for *Ogboni*, *Ifa*, and *Sango*. As T. J. Bowen, the American Southern Baptist missionary pioneer, painfully learned in the Ẹgba capital, the divinities of *Oro*, *Egungun*, and *Esu* could not be separated from the civil government. 'To preach against their executive gods', he recorded, 'is more than you dare to do. It would be the height of sacrilege, rebellion, and of anarchy and the whole fury of the heathen soul would explode like gunpowder.'[8]

It is an irony that although Christian missions came into existence at a time when Church and State began to part company in some parts of Europe, particularly France (thanks to eighteenth century rationalism and the French Revolution), they began their activities in pre-colonial Africa with the credo that there should be no difference between the religious and the secular. In the view of missionaries, the white man in Africa was a 'Christian' not by mere mouth profession; in habits, deportment, and thought, he was a product of a hoary-headed 'Christian' civilization. Thus the trader was expected to be director of sanctified commerce, a purveyor of Christianity, and the consul or naval officer was expected to be a good churchman and an

ardent supporter of the missionary. By and large the British or French administrative agent in pre-colonial Africa was more patently 'Christian' in profession than he might care to be back in his country in Europe. And the British government did not hide its patronage of Christianity in providing colonial churches all over the empire. Evidence is abundant that in nineteenth century Africa the consul or naval officer gave physical aid to promote missionary interests. African rulers discovered to their dismay that missionaries could not be dealt with in impunity according to the laws of society, and that they must allow the Christian faith existence where the physical power of the white men could be waved before their eyes. In the second half of the nineteenth century in several parts of Africa the sword of steel prepared the way for the sword of the spirit.[9] It was a lesson the Africans learned only too well, to the eventual detriment of Christianity. For believing that the missionary, the trader, and the consul were birds of the same feather, the impression gained ground very strongly that Christianity was the white man's religion.

The conviction that the Christian faith was the religion for the white man was very current in the early years of the colonial era. In African eyes the missionary was a co-invader with the administrative officer. He was the overlord in the Church while the administrative officer was the overlord in the State. Throughout Yorubaland, for instance, the Anglican Church was known as 'Ṣọsi Ijọba', that is 'Government Church', and people believed generally that in order to be closer to the colonial administration it was obligatory to adopt the Christian faith.

The association of missionaries with administrative officers, potentially a secular force, not only compromised the tenets of Christianity in the eyes of the Africans, lettered and unlettered, who began to wonder at the dichotomy between scriptural injunctions and the tyranny of colonial rule. A greater threat to the position of the missionary was the fact that as the colonial period lengthened, administrative officers became more and more blatantly secular in their outlook and policies. The empire, they began to argue, was ligious, and a Christian was not necessarily a better

citizen than the Hindu or Muslim or the 'pagan'. Thus began the concept of separation between Church and State, a concept of very great potency in our age when the State has become wholly secular.

The secularization of the State in colonial Africa for a period of about sixty years is a theme of a great significance against which Christian missions should assess many of the difficulties they are wont to ascribe to the post-independence period. For the French and the British, the largest colonial powers in Africa, impressed it upon Africans that what mattered in life was not religion but the degree and level of material comfort that could be achieved. It was a new and dangerous notion. A new kind of life-style, which Africans were persuaded to endeavour to attain, began to be dangled before their eyes. Thus the man who succeeded was he who put formal education first, thereby becoming a lawyer or medical doctor or engineer or chief clerk, formal education becoming the Open Sesame to European-style life. He wore European dress, moved out of the quarters of the extended family into the new urban area created or enlarged by the colonial era, officially had a wife though secretly he kept mistresses, played cricket or tennis, spoke more of the English or French language than the vernacular, and nursed contempt toward his unlettered countrymen to whom he felt infinitely superior. His ambition was to correspond to the white man whose Masonic Lodge he joined, with whom he became proud to rub shoulders, and whose country he earnestly prayed to have an opportunity to know, whilst he was thoughtlessly ignorant of his own country. But whilst it is true that he was invariably a churchman, the clergyman being a member of his social class, religion was a social affair, and the church the most suitable place for him to advertise his social status.

The secularization of the State in the colonial period at the expense of the Christian religion took other forms. Perhaps the most significant of these was the alienation of educated elite political leadership from the Church, an alienation that made them give up the idea of a Christian theocratic State, or of a State in which the Christian religion would be recognized as a factor in the task of nation-building. The result was that

these alienated African leaders of opinion became progressively secular in their outlook. Shocked by the fact that their political aspirations could no longer be achieved through the instrumentality of the Church, an agency they were accustomed to hope would be politically useful to them, they were bewildered to see missionaries as a part of the colonial set-up, as a liability rather than an asset in their desire and attempt to shake off the imperial yoke.

The shock of the politically-conscious elite at the failure of the Church to be a secular agency in their favour should be explained. In the pre-colonial era, just as the white missionary mentors were praying for colonial rule as the best condition for the planting and spread of Christianity, politically-conscious Africans were thinking of using the Church for purely secular ends. Christianity, they urged, was relevant to the political, social, and economic aspirations of modern Africa. Whether one looks at West Africa in the nineteenth century, or East and Central Africa in the present century, there is abundant evidence that, in the judgment of the leaders of educated elite opinion, Christianity should be welcome because it could liberate Africa from colonial rule, create African nations, and form the basis of a continental African State in which the Christian virtues of love, neighbourliness, and brotherliness would be practised.

The ideological potential of Christianity for the awakening of national or racial consciousness of Africans, or of any people for that matter, was clearly grasped by the educated elite of West Africa in the nineteenth century. The principle of equality of all peoples in the eyes of God, irrespective of race, revealed the weapon which the elite nationalist leaders hoped to use against their white masters in Church and State. Among the educated elite leaders of thought in nineteenth century West Africa, the belief that Christianity was a *sine qua non* for the greatness of a people was strong. In the words of an African missionary patriot, Edward Wilmot Blyden:

> I have discovered the secret of England's greatness: it lies, I apprehend, in that deep reverence which exists in the high places of the land for God and his word; in those multiplied

> agencies which are everywhere in operation for the suppression of vice and for the propagation in every corner of the empire of truth and righteousness ... she must be immortal so long as her politicians are guided by Christian principles.[10]

In several ways knowledge of the Bible and of the concepts of liberty, liberalism, and nationality that held sway in nineteenth century Europe, led African acolytes of missionaries to dream of a State, or series of States, in which these concepts would be put into effect. Individuals who conceived of Christianity as a veritable sledge-hammer to tribalism and racialism, saw this religion as the answer to their vision of a multi-ethnic State. Indeed at least one man, James Johnson, dreamed of a continental African State (in principle the kind of State Kwame Nkrumah was to demand in recent years), seeing it as the logical result of the adoption of Christianity by the entire African population. And today the view that Christianity should logically efface the racial barrier is strongly upheld by leaders of some of the Aladura churches in West Africa who would like to go to Europe and America to Christianize the peoples of those continents.

But rather than help create African nations, missionaries were party to the effacement of indigenous polities. Not that Christianity itself was to blame for this; and it is instructive to note that this distinction was made by several African leaders of the colonial era who were disappointed that the white missionary mentors were hand in glove with the administrative officers in the perpetuation of the colonial regime. The colonial masters in Church and State were not keen on applying the principles of the Christianity of the Bible, or allowing their African followers to use Christianity for political ends. Rather the white masters used the Church to lord it over the African, a logical thing in the colonial set-up; they strengthened the ecclesiastical imperialism they had established in the nineteenth century and frowned at the attempts of Africans to institutionalize Christianity in a way different from that of the Western-established churches and beyond the control of white rulers. Seeing that, rather than aiding their nationalistic and political aspirations, the Church was reinforcing the imperial interest of their white

masters in several directions, the nationally-inclined educated elite became verbally hostile to the Church, and not a few rejected Christianity outright as an imperialistic agency.

The result was that throughout the colonial period the so-called political agitator, usually in the ranks of the best educated and destined to become one of the leaders in post-independence Africa, became predominantly secular in outlook—a political animal. Examples of anti-missionary attacks by this class of educated elite during the colonial period are numerous and reveal to a great extent the secular attitude increasingly imbibed by these future political leaders of Africa. These elite leaders—Herbert Macaulay, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Jomo Kenyatta, Kwame Nkrumah, Kenneth Kaunda, Julius Nyerere, Kamuzu Banda, to name a few—went all out to conceive of a New Africa in political terms, fully believing that Christianity and the Church were of little relevance to this New Africa.

One may illustrate the bitterness of African elite leaders of opinion toward missionaries in the colonial period by the following encounter in New York between a group of Africans and a missionary to Nigeria. The encounter took place during the Second World War.

> 'Africa cannot progress without Christ because he is the cornerstone.' [Missionary] 'How far has Europe progressed with Christ?' I [Mbonu Ojike] asked. 'Well. Satan has made Europe imperialistic, greedy, and hateful. That is not Christianity. We hope you Africans will not imitate the futility of Europe', he admonished. 'What is the future of Christianity in Africa?' I asked. 'Just as Europe is now Christianized, Africa will eventually be Christianized', he said. 'You mean that Moslems and Omenanans will have to be converted to your Christian ways?' asked another African. 'Not by force! Christ said, "I am the way, the truth and the life. No one cometh unto the father but by me." So you have it in the Master's own words', he said—'Why did you go to Africa to preach to people whose religion produces better results than yours?' I asked.
> 'We were sent', he said.
> 'By whom?' said I.
> 'By God', he said.
> 'Is that God different from ours?' I asked.
> 'No', he replied.

'Suppose we had come to Europe in the twelfth century and claimed we were sent; what would you have thought of us?' He said, with a depressing laugh, 'But you were not sent.'[11]

The fact that African political leaders who were to become heads of government did not feel disposed to regard the Church or Christianity as an agency for the transformation of Africa, climaxed the secularization policy of the State enunciated by the colonial rulers. Hence, when political parties began to be formed—and politics is undoubtedly the most important factor in Africa today—religion was completely excluded from party policies. Consequently, outside the Islamic zone, political parties have been wholly secular.

The only area where missions were indisputably strong, and in which until very recently they retained the goodwill of the elite, was in the sphere of formal education. Today, Christian missions would seem to have lost ground in this sphere, thanks to the completion of secularization of education by governments. It is essential to explain this fundamentally important element, the evangelization value of which missionaries have debated for a long time. For although the secular danger of formal education to the missionary had been foreseen in the nineteenth century by individuals who argued that to patronize literacy beyond the three R's would be to produce clerks and personnel for commercial firms and the secular State, the Church was able to retain decisive control over schools well into the last decade. But it should be stressed that colonial rulers had indicated from the last quarter of the nineteenth century that it was the secular aspect of education that interested them. And throughout the colonial era the various education ordinances progressively reduced the control of the Church over schools as the State became the greater financial partner. It is also a fact that, as many missions today may console themselves in observing, schools had long ceased to fulfil primarily evangelistic purposes, but had been essentially factories for personnel for secular governments and commercial firms.

Once the all-powerful State decided to take over the control of schools there was nothing the missions could do. In my considered opinion the loss of schools, both primary and

secondary, to the all-secular State is the biggest evangelistic blow to missions since the nineteenth century. For by and large, although many missions have underrated this with incredible levity, the mission in which a student could stay for thirteen years remained the strongest Christian influence from which young men and women could not entirely escape for the rest of their lives.

In yet another way the missions in Africa have, over the last hundred years, contributed to the evangelistic problems in Africa today. This was their association of Christianity with European culture in cause and effect terms. Although during the colonial era several missionaries were aware of their error in respect of Africa's cultural heritage, thanks to the researches of social anthropologists and some missionaries themselves, the equation of the secular culture of Europe or America with Christianity has done incalculable harm to the emergence of the Christianity of the Bible incarnate within the African milieu. Even now it is very difficult for Christian missions to decolonize culturally their church organizations in Africa. The non-essentials of religion which institutionalized Christianity acquired in the culture of Europe, as well as those forms and formularies which are more or less man-made, have been accorded quite undeserved pre-eminence. European or American versions of institutionalized Christianity planted in Africa are yet to give way to a legitimate, authentic African version—a Christianity that will be incarnate in the African milieu. It is essential to stress that from the nineteenth century unto this day, there has never been a lack of African leaders genuine in their devotion to the Christian faith, who have been warning that the universal Church of Christ cannot be established in Africa until missionaries stop exaggerating their culture a the expense of the gospel or forcing upon Africar European-make or American-make forms and fo mularies.[12]

Arising from the error of Christian missions in emphasi ing the metropolitan culture and the non-essentials religion—including the assumption of special powers by priesthood, which have made the eternal and spiritual tak subordinate place—is the fact that the Western-establis

churches have been revealed as more temporal than spiritual. This is the lesson being effectively and poignantly taught by the Aladura organizations in West Africa and by some of the 'separatist' churches in Southern Africa. Whether one contemplates the rise of Garrick Braide in the Niger Delta, or of Wade Harris in the Ivory Coast and Western Gold Coast, or of Babalọla and Oshitẹlu in Yorubaland, one cannot escape the evidence that, in a very large measure, the western-established churches were fulfilling primarily this-worldly human functions; these western-established churches had never successfully brought to West Africans the real message of Christianity; they were intrinsically spiritually sterile and morally bankrupt.

In Southern Africa where Africans have been under the grinding heels of their oppressors for a long time, African Christians cannot but view the western-established churches, and in particular the Dutch Reformed Church, as human devices for the attainment of worldly ends rather than as authentic branches of the universal Church. Overwhelmed by their powerlessness under their white oppressors, many Africans derive spiritual consolation from Christianity; they revel in the belief and hope that, like Lazarus who was admitted to the celestial home promised by Christianity, their suffering will be effaced when they are metamorphosed from the corruptible to the incorruptible; they will end in eternal bliss whereas their white oppressors are bound to live in hell in eternal pain and amidst gnashing of teeth.[13]

It is important to stress that it is high time Christian missions stopped dismissing the African churches, in the zones of the white man's oppression and exploitation in Central and Southern Africa, as bastards and illegitimate non-practitioners of the Christianity of the Bible. Certainly these churches do not see themselves in the way they have been presented by 'Christians', opponents, or even scholars.[14] As is the case with the much vilified 'African' church in West Africa, the 'separatist' and 'independent' churches of Southern Africa have no intention of repudiating Christianity. Rather they have been seeking to implant the Christianity of the Bible in the African milieu. It is certainly erroneous to suggest, much less assert as Sundkler has done in his famous

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they have interpreted in the light of their environment, experiences, and racial prejudices. Descendants of subscribers to the rigid and ruthless tenets of John Calvin who had come into South Africa in the latter half of the seventeenth century, the Afrikaners look upon themselves as children of Israel seeking and finding the 'Promised Land'—South Africa. Here they met the 'Amalekites', the Khoisans and Bantus, whom God had ordained should be conquered and converted into slaves. For were they not 'pagans'? And had it not been written in Psalm 105: 43-44: 'And he brought forth his people with joy, and his chosen with gladness; and gave them the lands of the heathen; and they inherited the labour of the people' (KJV)?

In this alleged Promised Land the Afrikaner has established a 'Christian' State, itself the creation of God rather than of man, in which he reads the Bible, the Old Testament portion of which he holds as infallible. Here, in this so-called Promised Land, Afrikaners have established a so-called kingdom of God which possesses the following theology and 'Christian' attributes.

The Republic of South Africa started in the way divinely revealed and intended by God by adopting the policy of separation and distinction of different racial groups ordained by God at the time of creation. This is the first law, which must be observed in face of all hazards. This means that the different racial groups should attend separate churches and that on no account should non-Europeans be permitted to be members of the Dutch Reformed Church. Only Afrikaner members of this church can claim that they are genuine Christians, entitled by divine will to have, and exercise, political rights and authority. The Afrikaner's citizenship in the South African State is a 'foreshadowing of, and transition to, the pilgrimage to the heavenly mountain; of citizenship of the Celestial Kingdom and of the ultimate eternal kingdom of God'.[16] He believes that the State is ordained by God and exists independently of its citizens. In every State God is the fountain of authority and power, irrespective of whether rulers and subject acknowledge it. In the 'Christian' State of South Africa, God's sovereignty, as vested in the Afrikaner rulers—God's earthly agents—is

acknowledged. But in non-Christian States—like the other States in Africa—it is the sovereignty of the people or of those in authority that is acknowledged.

The implication of the Afrikaners' theories of State and sovereignty is that it enables the Afrikaners to label liberalism, democracy, and communism as products of unbelief which the State should crush. In contrast, the exclusive control of power by the Afrikaners is justified. As the only 'Christians', as they see themselves, it is their duty to become the strongest political factor in the country and the vote should be their exclusive right, for they only as 'Christians', are 'politically mature'. Should a government decide to oppose God's will by flirting with democracy or communism, the citizens are duty-bound to overthrow such a government which has lost the mandate of heaven.

Thus in South Africa, Christianity is secularized and transformed into a political philosophy to which the leaders of the Dutch Reformed Church give priority over the Christianity of the Bible. It is a philosophy that prostitutes Christianity, sublimating the racist and exclusive political aspirations of the Afrikaners. Indeed it was an ecclesiastic, the Reverend Bertie Naude, who founded the secret society, the *Broederbond*, on 24 May 1918, a society that has the closest links with the ruling National Party. The supreme body of this secret society, the *Uitvoerende Raad*, consists of a group of men known as the Twelve Apostles and is ruled by a Trinity. Then there is the *Algamene Raad*, comprising the Twelve Apostles and the Disciples. It is instructive to note that the society is open only to those 'who are Afrikans especially of Protestant faith, of good character, and of fixed principles, also with regard to maintaining their Afrikanership, and who accept South Africa as their only home'. The *Broederbond*, the Afrikaners aver, 'was created by God to bring about his will. The AB will have to account to God himself for its action.'[17]

This is not to say that Afrikaners do not believe that other races could become Christians. Indeed the evangelistic and missionary activities of the Dutch Reformed Church extended as far north as Nigeria where the calvinistic organization started work among the Tiv in 1911. But in the opin-

ion of the Afrikaners other races, and members of other churches, remain at best lower classes of Christians.

ISLAM AND AFRICAN TRADITIONAL RELIGION

But apart from the afore-mentioned secular and secularizing forces that have produced the secular milieu in the bulk of Africa today, missions have yet to discover that neither Islam nor African Traditional Religion has given way. Although both have been weakened by the emergence of the secular State in twentieth century Africa, this weakening has not increased the evangelization prospects of Christian missions among Muslims and the votaries of African Traditional Religion. Whether one speaks of the Maghreb where Islam dogmatically held sway for centuries and where western-style education, science, and technology all of which nineteenth century *ulama* branded as infernal works of the devil, as Pius IX also did in respect of science and technology, have triumphed over classical Islam; it is the State, the all powerful State, that has triumphed. Thus in Egypt the State has been hobnobbing with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, a State whose Marxist communist credo dismisses Islam as a desert phenomenon. Thus in spite of the Koranic injunction against birth control, the Islamic State of Tunisia has not only decreed family planning, but has enunciated the monogamous marriage system and liberated women. Practically all Muslim States are much less bigoted than their forebears and have adopted friendliness towards, and co-operation with, Western countries which in the nineteenth century were seen through religious spectacles as 'infidels'. Today leadership in the Muslim countries has slipped from the custodians of the petrified dogmas of that once turbulent religion to the more worldly, blatantly secular, westernized patrons, if not worshippers, of western-style education, science, and technology.

However, the growth of secularism in the Islamic zones of Africa has not yet been to the benefit of Christian missions. All the factors which have in the last century made Christian missions admit that Christianity would never conquer Islam remain. In the Islamic belt north of the tropical forest the

Muslim retains the classical contempt for the infidels. In the forest belt of West Africa where, to the utter amazement of missionaries, Islam has statistically outrivalled Christianity (and this in spite of the much later arrival of Islam in this area), the Muslim would not be converted, though he is more tolerant of, and more ready to mix with, the Christian, who might be a member of his extended family. In the Islamic zone, achievements of Islam in the last centuries remain the pride of the Muslim; for in that zone Islam was a humanizing force, and transformer of society, to depths never to be reached by Christianity anywhere in Africa. It substantially eliminated the gods (a thing Christianity has not done anywhere in Africa), human sacrifice, infanticide, and cannibalism. It has tabooed alcohol (an ideal which Christianity has never been able to achieve), introduced and diffused literary education, and persuaded Muslims to acquire a cosmopolitan outlook. Here Islam has decisively permeated the judiciary, administration, ethos, prejudices, mannerisms, dress fashions, historiography, and languages of the peoples. Worth remarking, too, is the fact that Islam developed and promoted in its votaries self-dignity, self-reliance, a capacity for independent life, and missionary aggressiveness.

Challenging Christian missions in the sphere of Western education—now that they are convinced that they can acquire this dynamic of social change and modernization without the spectre of being proselytized—Muslims demonstrate religious fervour in a way that cannot escape the attention of observers. Well-organized and meticulous observers of the rituals of their religion, the Friday prayers in the central mosques demonstrate their great sense of communalism. Even though it is open to question whether they achieve, or can achieve, maximum spiritual fulfilment in a religion with an alien language (Arabic), which is learnt by the majority of worshippers in a parrot-like fashion, their prestige in society, even among Christians, is quite high, not least because of the potency ascribed to the charms prepared by the *malams* (religious leaders).

Although the conversion of the forty million Muslims in Africa should be ruled out by Christian missions, which

should rather feel more worried that Islam might have the lion's share in the possible conversion of the remaining sixty-five million 'pagans' in Africa, the strategy of Islam in winning the affection of African adherents at the expense of Christianity should be noted by Christian missions.

First and foremost is their missionary strategy—though strictly speaking, until very recently, Muslims were not formally organized for missionary purposes to any great degree. The agents of Islam are invariably Africans who lead a style of life which is not too different from that of the community in which they find themselves; they quickly integrate themselves into society, parading no racial arrogance. Important also is the fact that they are not iconoclastic in their approach to Africa's cultural heritage, as Christian missionaries were and still are, particularly in respect of the institution of polygamy which in African society is not a moral issue. For missionization Muslims preferred to convert the family rather than the individual, and patterned the institutions of the new Islamic community as much on existing traditional institutions as on the Koran and the *Hadith*. And yet these Muslim agents, usually itinerant traders and *malams*, emerged as 'civilizers' who raised society to a better level than they found it. Of the greatest significance is that they achieved this transformation without provoking such bitter opposition and physical violence as marked the history of Christian missions in Africa.

Nor should the moral achievement of Islam in the effective proscribing of alcohol be underestimated. Although there are a few exceptions among the westernized Muslim elite in the Arab world, the general prevalence of sobriety among Muslims is beyond dispute. One is bound to wonder whether the obedience to the Koranic proscription of alcohol is due to the excessiveness of the punishment prescribed by the *Sharia*, or whether it is just that the Muslim takes his religious injunctions far more seriously than his Christian colleague.

Another point worth exploring by Christian missions today is the fundamentally sociological question of why, in areas where Islam and Christianity compete for 'pagan' converts, the former wins the towns and the latter the villages.

In Hausaland, the racially purest Hausa, the Maguzawa who live in the rural areas of the Kano and Zaria provinces, refuse to become Muslims. It is significant to note that in Northern Nigeria it is in such rural areas—in the villages—that Christian missions have been successful, and never in urban centres. In Yorubaland Islam has been by and large a town religion, whilst Christianity has captured the villages in areas where they have been competing. In an attempt to explain this phenomenon, I offer the following views. Perhaps by its very nature urban life is less resistant to new influences, and more tolerant of innovation, thanks to its cosmopolitanism; also, the religious system in a town being more complex and varied than in a village, in the urban areas Islam would initially seem to be merely an addition to the pantheon. Or has the success of Islam in the towns been due to the fact that it was not revolutionary in its credo, and was unobtrusive in the way and manner in which it was introduced? On the other hand, might one explain that the relative success of Christianity in the villages has been due largely to the colonial situation?

Until very recently Christian missions have underrated the formidableness of African Traditional Religion, which throughout the colonial era they went on pretending had been defeated. But as scholars who have just begun to pierce beneath the surface have discovered, to their intense shock and amazement, African Traditional Religion is as resilient as ever and continues to exert very strong influence with so-called Christians.[18] In spite of the iconoclastic efforts of Muslims and Christians, shrines, groves, and 'idols' are as plentiful as ever, barely within public view, and intensely revered by their worshippers.

African Traditional Religion has been underrated simply because its votaries are predominantly farmers and materially the poorest in society. Mostly illiterate, they are conservative, and have scarcely been touched by the modernism heralded by the colonial era, which was eagerly imbibed by Christians and, with much less enthusiasm, by Muslims. In their mental world, religious thought-patterns, attitudes to life, and cosmological conceptions, they belong essentially to the pre-colonial world. The least affected by the technologi-

cal marvels introduced by the white man, the 'pagans' of Africa have been more witnesses than participants in the physical, social, mental, and political transformation of the continent in the last century. Whether one speaks of the rise of literary scholarship, or the press, or the nationalistic movement, or modern economy, the 'pagans' as such have no place whatsoever. They are neither leaders nor apprentices in the civil service, in government, in technology, or in the world of business. History has ignored the 'pagans' because they refused to come to terms with the history of modern Africa.

Nevertheless, by sheer number which roughly stands at sixty-five million, they nearly double the number of Muslims and constitute seven times the number of Christian adherents. But frightening as it is, it is not the large number of adherents of African Traditional Religion that should worry Christian missions, but the fact that, with very, very few exceptions, the African Christian remains 'pagan' at heart; he falls back on African Traditional Religion for psychological deliverance from the malevolence of spirits and the deadly influence of witches. One may ask whether African Christians anywhere have surrendered such essential parts of their traditional life, so offensive to purists, as title-taking, charms, belief in the existence of preternatural forces, secret societies, age-long customs at naming ceremonies, burials, and marriages. As two investigations of the situation in Ghana have revealed: 'That Christians go to the fetish, that they make use of amulets and charms, that they exhibit all the signs of a people not yet emancipated from the old fears, beliefs, and interpretations of life, is common experience'.[19] Or: 'After a century of the preaching of the Christian gospel and the establishment of Christian congregations throughout the country, Traditional Religion shows an astonishing power of survival and rejuvenation.'[20]

These findings are by no means surprising to students of institutionalized Christianity in other parts of Africa. I very much remember the forcefulness with which the Ọba of Lagos, Adeyinka Oyekan (a Christian) claimed he reposed faith in the spirit of the departed whose graves he showed to me in his palace in December 1969. Also I easily recall that a

very literate ex-mission Ọba in Ijẹbuland who bears the Hebrew name of Abraham, the Alaperu of Iperu, and has sat on the throne for thirty-four years now, took me to the backyard of his palace and showed me objects to which sacrifice had just been made, objects representing a divinity he assured me had given him his children. Students of contemporary events in my country might like to reflect on the fact that in Nigeria people bearing Christian names did not go unmentioned in connection with ritual performances that involved human sacrifice. Take, for instance, the revelations in connection with the Owegbe cult in the Mid-West state of Nigeria where Christianity has existed for more than sixty years: human skulls were exhibited in 1966 during the inquiry set up by the Federal Military Government and parts of the cult's offensive rituals were demonstrated. Or take the case of Ogbomọshọ, the citadel of the Southern American Baptist mission in Nigeria, with its twenty-three Baptist churches and with the Baptist version of Christianity going back to 1855: on 1 July 1969, the head of the Ọba was lopped off and several parts of his body eaten ritualistically!

That Christianity is only skin-deep in Africa, as evidenced by the continued strength of African Traditional Religion among Christian adherents, is not the biggest challenge to Christian missions. A much bigger and more baffling problem is the complex, almost impenetrable and unfathomable nature of Traditional Religion, a thorough knowledge of which is certainly required before Christian missions can begin to plan an effective strategy of evangelization among the millions of 'pagans' in Africa. For it is a fact that there are no first-hand documents on African Traditional Relig-ion. To this extent the researches of Christianity-oriented, o tainted theologians on African Traditional Religion, are o very limited value. Not a single adherent of the religion ha considered it necessary to describe or analyze his religion fo the understanding of people outside the fold, except occa sionally as informants to missionary or anthropologic 'interpreters'. The votaries remain unlettered and indiffere to any literary documentation of their religion. What more, there are several cults with taboos and oaths of se

recy forbidding knowledge of the deeper truths of the religion to all except all-favoured initiates. The Christian scholar who has no intention of joining religious groups or cults is left with only the externals of religions. For those seeking a closer look, it means many years of patient gathering of knowledge, cultivating intimacies, searching, questioning, and interpreting and always the doubts remain as to how authentic the material gathered or the conclusion formed have been.

African Traditional Religion has to be tackled seriously by Christian missions for other reasons. It is essential to identify those properties which make it continue to exert an effective pull on Christian adherents, with a view to making Christianity real, practical, and yet a true Christianity. Here is where the Aladura churches have a lesson for the other churches for they compete with Traditional Religion in the exorcism of witches, and the direct invocation of the divine in resolving day-to-day problems like childlessness, inadequate rain, ill-luck in business or in love.

No less important is the spiritual richness of the votaries of Traditional Religion, the like of which one would like to see Christian adherents endowed with. For the patrons of Traditional Religion look to the rules and rituals of their religion for their morality. Their religion provides them with an inclusive and commanding system of personal and cosmic values and explanations. For them the present life is providentially determined, that to come a reality. These are articles of faith, beyond theological disputation. The message and obligations of their religion are comprehensible, comprehended, appreciated, and accepted whole-heartedly as relevant to their self-fulfilment. The objects of their worship are supremely meaningful. They live, move, and have their being in the exacting ritual of their religion. Their whole being is completely absorbed in worship, prayer, singing, and propitiation—in all of which they employ the language and vocabulary of their own people, highly invocative and evocative. What is more, it is their religion which continues to shape the instinctive attitudes, ethics and aesthetics, if no longer the world view, of millions of African Muslims and Christians. They are the real custodians of the traditional

value system which remains an essential part of most Africans.

However, it is not enough for Christian missions today to understand and employ appropriate strategy for arresting the statistical progress of Islam and winning the hearts of 'pagans' for Christianity. It is equally important that a thorough and scientific survey of the quality of 'Christian' life of the nine million Christians in Africa be conducted, and measures taken to improve this quality, thereby turning them into a true leaven for the African dough. Of course I am by no means suggesting that qualitatively the average African Christian is inferior to his counterpart in Europe and America. There is no scientific basis for an opinion of this kind, which many a self-righteous, self-deluding, armchair churchman in Europe or jaundiced, presumptuous missionary was fond of expressing.

Nevertheless, the African Christian faces a number of patent temptations which should be appreciated by missions. The secular milieu that has been consciously created in the last two generations has accommodated other forces, among which might be mentioned unbridled materialism, and uncontrolled secular literature which emphasizes the erotic instincts of man, or preaches ideologies like communism or atheism or humanism or moral rearmament or agnosticism. Then there is the problem of urbanization, with its attendant social and moral problems, which the Church in Africa is yet to tackle with sustained attention.

So far the emphasis has been on Christian missions in Europe and America in the context of religions and secularization in Africa. But the missionary agencies within Africa should not be ignored. For some western-established churches as well as independent 'African' churches are involved in evangelistic activities which deserve the attention of missiologists.

As far as the western-established churches are concerned one is compelled to the conclusion that, *vis-à-vis* the much vilified so-called African churches, they are not doing enough in the realm of evangelization. They are more or less settled churches which allow their foster parents—the missionary organizations in Europe and America—to con-

tinue to bear the very heavy burden of missionary evangelism in Africa. Indeed rather than decreasing, the number of white missionaries to Africa has increased in countries which have attained political independence, though in several denominations missionaries have withdrawn themselves from the administration of churches. The overall result of this phenomenon is that western-established churches are not only lethargic in respect of evangelization at a time when millions of 'pagans' are available for Christian ministry, but that these churches have acquired attributes that do very little credit to the image of the Church in the sociological context of contemporary Africa, for the Church (the western-established church) has grown into a bureaucracy comparable to the bureaucratic system of the State. The archbishop, or primate, or president, has become a full-time administrator, overseeing the predominantly non-spiritual welfare of his church, through a hierarchy of administrative lieutenants—bishops, chairmen, provosts, pastors, and so on. The human, social, and routine day-to-day problems claim attention at the expense of the primal purely spiritual purpose of the existence of the Church.

Inherent in the elaborate hierarchical pattern of church administration is the elitist stance of the church personnel in the sociological context of contemporary Africa. For in spite of the habit of ministers of the gospel of complaining about their salaries—which salaries they love to relate to the salaries of officers in the employ of the secular State—they remain within the top ranks of elite leadership in contemporary Africa. Compared to the majority of their parishioners, their life-style, in quality and in material terms, puts them very high—to the dismay and wonderment of Marxist interpreters of the class system in contemporary African society.

The significance of their bourgeois identification is that the capacity of the western-established churches for effective evangelization has been weakened. With the relative poverty of the Aladura evangelists before them, potential converts to Christianity can hardly take the western-established churches seriously when they talk of the virtues of laying up treasures in heaven while the church hierarchy palpably

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Aladura in contemporary times have been undeniably stupendous.[21]

And just as Christian missions and the western-established churches in Africa have things to learn from the mission strategy of Muslims in Africa, so too they have much of value to learn from the Aladura organizations to which, so far, a scripturally unjustifiable, self-righteous, holier-than-thou attitude has been exhibited by Christian missions and western-established churches. Take, for instance, the success of these Aladura churches in retaining the religious emotionalism, affection, commitment, involvement, ecstasy, faith, and hope—attributes of the African within the traditional religious system—of their adherents in their adopted faith. Were these attributes possessed by the millions of adherents of the western-established churches, the Church in Africa would have become a model, indeed the model, for the other branches of the Church Universal in other parts of the world.

For, as has been pointed out with repeated emphasis by informed critics, the African Christian still finds himself a stranger in the pre-fabricated church imported into the continent from Europe and America in the nineteenth century. Except for the language, everything he uses at worship has been manufactured for him—the songs, the tune in which these songs are sung, the liturgy, the prayers (in some cases), the theology, the architecture of the church, and the materials therein. How could Africans feel at home spiritually in such an exotic atmosphere? Fortunately it is a question which African church leaders have begun to ask with intellectual and spiritual conviction. The earlier the question is asked at an international conference in respect of mission in the context of non-white countries the better, so that the Church in Africa may begin to correspond to the true Universal Church which thousands of missionaries have laboured for so long to plant in the second largest continent in the world.

NOTES

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4 H. W. Turner, *History of an African Independent Church*, vol. 1: The Church of the Lord, Oxford, 1967, pp. 197-202.

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11 Mbonu Ojike, *My Africa*, New York, 1946. See also Ram Desai (ed.), *Christianity in Africa as seen by the Africans*, Denver, 1962, for a compilation of the writing of a few of the educated elite.

12 See E. A. Ayandele, *'Holy' Johnson*, pp. 301-6; see Chapter Seven of this book; E. Bolaji Idowu, *Towards an Indigenous Church*, London/Ibadan, 1965; and C. G. Baeta (ed.), *Christianity in Tropical Africa*—Studies presented and discussed at the Seventh International African Seminar at the University of Ghana, April 1965 (London, 1968), especially the contributions by Professor E. B. Idowu, Nigeria, Dr V. Mulago, Zaire, and Professor John Mbiti, Uganda.

13 Vittorio Lanternari, *The Religions of the Oppressed, A Study of Modern Messianic Cults*, trans. Lisa Sergio, New York, 1963, pp. 3-62.

14 Bengt G. M. Sundkler, *Bantu Prophets in South Africa*, London, 1961; F. B. Welbourn, *East African Rebels, A Study of some Independent Churches*, London, 1961.

15 Quoted in Robert I. Rotberg, *The Rise of Nationalism in Central Africa The Making of Malawi and Zambia 1873-1964*, Cambridge, Mass., 1965, p. 71. James 5:4 reads: 'Behold, the wages of the labourers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out; and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts.'

16 William Vatcher, Jr., *White Laager*, London, 1965, p. 112.

17 *Ibid.*, p. 83.

18 For one brief but brilliant summary 'African Traditional Religion', by a scholar in this discipline for well-nigh a quarter of a century, see Geoffrey Parrinder's essay, in Colin Legum, (ed.), *Africa: A Handbook*, New York, 1971, pp. 458-68.

19 Noel Smith and Sidney C. Williamson, *Akan Religion and the Christian Faith—A Comparative Study of the Impact of Two Religions*, London, 1965, p. 82.

20 *Ibid*., p. 248.

21 See Chapter Nine for a full treatment of the Aladura as a legitimate branch of the Church Universal.

12

African Studies and Nation-Building

> There is sure to come, when the proper education is develope[d] and diffused, an African Literature, with the smell of Africa upon it, with an African freedom, African thought and African theology; for the African is not always to be an intellectual pauper, a pensioner of other lands, doing nothing but importing foreign ideas and quoting foreign expressions. The African is an African, and the European is a European, and will remain so for ever and ever. There is no more chance of developing the one into the other than there is . . . of developing a rabbit into a hare, and it is certainly well for the harmony, the peace and the progress of the world that this is so.[1]

In these eternally valid words a pre-eminently illustrious citizen of Liberia and Pan-Negro patriot, Edward Wilmot Blyden, had in the nineteenth century perceived the logically necessary connection between Africa's authentic cultura[l] heritage and the emergence of modern Africans to nation hood. Today these words of hope and prophecy are, visibly gradually being fulfilled in independent Africa. African per sonality, expostulated in cultural and mental terms by Bly den, has since his day found the philosopher in Leopo[ld] Sedar Senghor, the political firebrand Pan-Africanist Kwame Nkrumah, the pragmatic and practising statesman Julius Nyerere, and literary pundits in a battalion of Africa[ns] all over the continent. Pervasive to the point that it h[as] become the touchstone by which African directors of affa[irs] are seeking to assess their policies and judge themselves, t[he] concept of African personality is the fountain of the ho[pes] and aspirations of the Organization of African Unity. I[t] the signal that the liberation of Africa and Africans has tr[...]

The psychical, cultural, intellectual, and mental emancipation of Africans we are witnesses of, and of which we are a part, has conduced to ever greater respect for Africa as well as inter-racial understanding and harmony. This emancipation has been the magic wand that has transformed the master/slave relationship of the white and Africans of the colonial yesteryear to the legalized, though not necessarily functioning, equality relationship that has increasingly marked the international scene in the last twenty-five years. Far beyond the imagination of the most sanguine Afrophiles of nineteenth-century Europe and the New World, African nations have been rubbing shoulders with white society nations. In the ecstatic language of nationality and liberty used by the Irish poet, W. B. Yeats, 'A terrible beauty is born'.[2]

African awareness of themselves as culturally a distinct people is potentially the death knell to the white man's cultural imperialism. Not that emancipation is yet fully achieved, or that all of the educated elite have begun to throw off the incubus of borrowed culture. However such 'slaves' and cultural lepers are increasingly becoming aberrations. Gone are the days when the mentally enslaved, intellectually pauperized, and culturally benumbed educated elite revelled with undiminished fervour, impunity, and false pride in the borrowed artificiality of the white man. In short, although they are still far away from Canaan, the educated elite leaders have begun to leave Egypt.

Contrary to the now exploded belief of the deluded educated elite, a belief that goes back to the nineteenth century, modern African nations cannot be built upon the customs and institutions of Europeans and Americans, not upon Christianity, not upon the British form of parliamentary democracy, not upon the institutionalized version of the educational system in Europe, not upon the Russian or any alien brand of communism. The one and only enduring anvil on which African nations can, and should, be forged is Africa's cultural heritage, with its infinite richness, sublime inspiration, and, far more than most of us have been prepared to acknowledge, its continued relevance to African aspirations for racial fulfilment, self-identity, self-pride,

self-reliance, and self-dignity. The cultural heritage of Africans is their only exclusive God-given possession, indispensable evidence of their creativeness and inventiveness, the mainspring of their pride, their badge of identity, the trump-card in their dealings with other races and the primary reason for their being genuinely respected by non-Africans.

Borrowed ideas, customs, and institutions have their value, but only to the extent that they are adapted, or adaptable, to the indigenous milieu in which they are being adopted. To miss this point is to miss one's bearings, to cease to know oneself. History is yet to reveal genuine nations born out of a cultural womb completely alien to it. It is a law of nature that the pride of any people is found in those customs and institutions peculiarly their own. Not that these customs and institutions are fixed, immutable entities, but they cannot reasonably or easily or peacefully be effaced or wished away overnight, just as they did not come into existence overnight. The process of their being changed is necessarily gradual. The extent to which a people ignores this fact and turns its back on its culture is the extent to which it is inviting humiliation and effeteness.

Indeed so resilient is a people's culture that it would be nothing short of midsummer madness to wish it away. The collective achievement of society over centuries, the customs and institutions of a people provide them with emotional stability, psychological consolations, the relationship and responsibilities of individuals to others in the community and constitute priceless treasures around which collective affections converge.

With reference to Africa since the nineteenth century two classes of people, until very recently, wished away Africa's cultural heritage, thereby flying in the face of Providence. These were the European colonial rulers and their educated elite collaborators. The first, the European colonial masters were, of course, not concerned with nation building; their primary interest was empire-building, part of which was the vast spread of Western culture. The result: alienation of the vast majority of unlettered Africans, who refused to be reconciled to the imposition of colonial rule. The fictionalize

reaction of this class of Africans to the white man's intrusion into the indigenous world is the ubiquitous culture-conflict theme of novels by Africans in the past twenty years in which unlettered Africans aver that the traditional is morally superior to the white man's culture. Take, for instance, religion. The majority rejected the religion associated with the white man by either clinging to the traditional religion or embracing Islam. Even the few who apostatized by professing Christianity have been departing from the prefabricated forms and formularies exported to the continent by Christian missions, in some cases to the point that the latter may have begun to wonder what value they have got from their enormous investment in men and money in the past century and a half.

But while the colonial rulers in Church and State must have been regretting their error of judgment by expecting African peoples to adopt the essence of metropolitan culture and institutions, their educated African collaborators who had dreamed of building nations on the quicksand foundation of ill-digested, ill-suited, and ill-applied ideas and institutions of their white mentors have been paying the higher price. Themselves for a long time mis-educated, de-Africanized, de-tribalized, and de-civilized out of indigenous civilization, they had been brought up to over-rate the values and relevance of the white man's culture for nation-building. Now that their white mentors had gone they began to discover that the nation-states they had inherited cannot be transformed into nations until they first unlearn most of the white man's ideas and think primarily in the context of the African milieu, until they go back to, and understand, primordial African roots.

A few words about the experience of the educated African leaders with politics, western education, and economic development. Haunted by political instability the educated elite, themselves struggling for power, have all over Africa put the blame on the European-type constitutions they had adopted and have, therefore, brushed these aside. In no part of ex-colonial Africa has the constitution left behind by the colonial power remained intact. And although, as a temporary measure, the military branch of the educated elite have

taken over, or a consensus one-party rule has been substituted for multi-party parliamentary democracy in several parts of the continent, African States will know no stability, cohesion, and peace until they evolve constitutions that would accommodate primordial allegiances and sentiments in the multi-ethnic communities within the State. Hence the indispensableness and imperativeness of African Studies.

Or consider Western literary education, hitherto regarded by the mis-educated, though highly literate and skilled elite as wholesome, comprehensive and most suited to Africans. Today the illusion is no longer there. Formal education *per se* is accepted as the foundation upon which modern Africa is to be erected, but, it is correctly rationalized, the content, emphasis, objective, orientation and philosophy must be African and be related to the political, social, moral and economic aspirations of the State. In their effort to have truly national educational systems African educationalists have increasingly seen the imperativeness for Africans to drink from the fountain of the indigenous non-literary education which possessed the following virtues and ingredients. The individual was trained for the good of the community, rather than for personal selfish ends. He was integrated in society as a unit within the organic whole. The curriculum was as comprehensive as life itself, was not compartmentalized, religion, morality, aesthetics, mathematics, history, the *mores* of society and so on being taught all the time. The training was continuous, the teachers ever present, whether in the compound or on the farm or in the village. Training was directly related to the world the society knew, the individual being able to explain that world meaningfully and for the good of his psychical balance. The education was vocational in an integrated way: no excess skill. There were no idle hands; there was no unemployment.

Lastly, ponder the professed search of the educated leaders of African States for an egalitarian society through the white-man type economic development. The result: ever disturbing polarization into the rich-get-richer few and the poor-get-poorer majority. Although in some States African statesmen have attempted to look for solutions through proclamation of neo-Marxist communist ideology, they have

necessarily run into difficulties. First, many of them have been demonstrably insincere (Leopold Sedar Senghor), or unwilling to apply it to themselves (the late Kwame Nkrumah), or regard it as a mere propaganda stunt (Ọbafemi Awolowo). Second is the fact that the concept of communism is elementally alien to the African and that no version of this concept, however modified, would be endorsed by the unlettered majority. Hence the fact that even in Tanzania, where the chief ruler of State has proclaimed a brand of socialism, there is no pretence of neo-Marxian communism being established in the country. For socialism, a less emotive word than communism, to become the bedrock of an African nation the ingredients of African communalism must not only be identified but made the essence of the socialist philosophy. Among these are little evidence of disparity in the style of life of different sections of the community, solicitude for the sick and the aged, the fact of everyone being his brother's keeper, and full employment. A fact which ideologues are yet to grasp is that the Marxist brand of communism in the white man's country has yet to produce the kind of egalitarian society that flourished in pre-colonial Africa.

Apart from the political and social problems in independent Africa that should persuade African statesmen to re-examine and re-orientate their efforts of nation-building in relation to the African milieu, there is also the fact that the ideas, concepts, and institutions of Europe and the United States, which the nineteenth century and colonial educated elite used to believe were infallible, have in our very eyes been proving fragile. A few examples. Science and technology, it is now widely admitted, is no longer an unmixed blessing. Indeed it has been a matter for debate whether, in relation to the moral and social goals of a nation, technology has proved more of a blessing than a curse. As has been clearly revealed by the social afflictions being endured in the so-called developed parts of the world, man is being displaced by the machine as the object of affection. Hence the not so irrational or irresponsible protests of youths in Europe and the New World—protest against skyscrapers that have dwarfed man; protest against an educational sys-

tem that does not seek to make them happier beings, but is rather treating them as tools in the making for employment in establishments in which they have lost faith; protest against an affluence that favours a few at the expense of other sections of the community and so on.[3] And even in the Soviet Union disillusionment has begun with a technological progress being achieved at the expense of the traditional culture.[4] Little wonder that thinking men in Africa and other so-called developing countries, who have come to terms with technology, have been asking relevant questions on how to enjoy the juices of technology but not its afflictions. And the more African statesmen inform themselves of the philosophy of life in indigenous society, with its emphasis on man as the centre of thought and affection and the pursuit of higher spiritual and moral values, the more they would be aware of the calamity they should strive to avoid in their titanic endeavours to industrialize Africa and allow the machine to begin to take over from man on the continent.

Or consider the political ideas and systems of Europe and the United States which Europeans and Americans, and those of us who have gone into exile mentally into their milieu, had been led to believe were infallible. Right now the British have begun to ask themselves whether the two-party system will not die out, or whether it is capable of saving them out of the constitutional dilemma in which the ballot box has thrown them. As for the French, who are yet to recover from the fissiparous effects of the 1789 Revolution, they have been experimenting and experimenting ever since. Even in the United States where the concept of separation of powers, equally lauded and adopted in this Republic, had up to now been viewed with mystical reverence, a number of people have been wondering whether the events of the recent past in that country connected with imperial use of the Presidency by Richard Nixon, have not begun to strain that concept; whether that concept does not require a drastic revision in the changed conditions of the second half of the twentieth century.

I hope I have directed enough attention to the case for African statesmen to build nations on the solid rock of the African milieu and rationalized intrinsic aspirations of Afri-

cans. This is not to say that African customs and institutions are enough, or that they should be left intact, or that they should be romanticized. Nor have I been contending that the ideas of other peoples and science and technology should not be borrowed. All I have been saying is that our nation-builders should emulate the Japanese who have been transformed into a modern nation while retaining and adapting their customs and institutions to the requirements of the technology age. But how can we arrive at the ideal state of affairs unless we first recognize ourselves as a distinct people, not intended by providence to subserve the racial or national interests of other races, or be mental and psychical victims of other peoples' cultures and institutions; unless we first study ourselves, the environment and clime in which we have been created and which we are expected to see as a challenge to our genius, our past, our geography, flora and fauna, our psychology and cosmology, our endemic diseases and healing arts, our parables, totems, lyrics, myths and legends, many of which constitute the quintessence of family and national histories, the tale which our poetry, works of art and manufactures, which though rude, can tell those who are willing to listen to them, our rock paintings and gongs, witticisms of men of yore and so on—all of which constitute monuments of unaging intellect, inspiration and morality? In short, unless we embark on the gargantuan task of African Studies, appositely defined early in this century by Mary Kingsley as the study of 'Africa as it is, from its backhair to its burial customs, from its soil to its statistics'?[5]

However, a quick essay into the state of affairs in Liberia and of nation-building.

No African State can compete with the primacy of opportunities Liberia has had since the middle of the nineteenth century. As the first independent African country in modern times, led by an educated elite mentally equipped with the ideas with which contemporary Europe and the United States were building nations, Liberia had more than an edge over Ethiopia, a country only just entering into the phase of modernization. There was the inspiration of the Vei alphabet, the only one in Negro Africa, which might have been worked and developed into a national language of the

country and could have become an African showpiece to b[e] dangled in the eyes of white racists. Familiar in the land o[f] bondage in the New World with the infinite power of literar[y] education, science, and technology for the evolution of [a] modern nation, the leaders of the State of Liberia had mor[e] than fifty years' leadership more than any other Africa[n] country, with the possible exception of Sierra Leone. Excep[t] that even though the *Saro* had nineteenth century ideas o[f] the dynamics for nation-building, they did not have thei[r] destiny in their own hands as the Liberians had, the Sierr[a] Leonian Creoles being only 'British subjects'. And last though not the least, Liberia had in Edward Wilmot Blyden the philosopher of African nations on the foundation o[f] Africa's cultural heritage and the intrinsic aspirations o[f] Africans.

And yet one hundred years after attainment of indepen-dence Liberia was yet to be transformed from a nation-stat[e] to a nation; it was yet to evolve a distinctly national, global culture; the Americo-Liberians, in my judgment a label o[f] shame rather than of pride in present-day Africa, the tin[y] oligarchy that had been holding, indeed monopolizing, th[e] reins of power, were yet to dissolve themselves into Afri-cans. Rather they went on hankering after an American cul ture the substance of which had all along eluded them, bu[t] the shadows of which continued to mesmerize them, induc ing them to look more Washington-ward than interiorwar[d]. Little wonder that, literally bewildered by what he considere[d] a unique spectacle, Raymond Leslie Buell, the famous write[r] on colonial Africa, dismissed Liberia in 1947 as 'a country [in] a comatose situation ... a sick country, perhaps the sicke[st] in Africa'.[6]

Of course, R. L. Buell was not saying anything new. [In] 1894 a Nigerian, D. B. Vincent who changed his name [to] Mojola Agbebi on 8 August 1894 in Monrovia, had in [a] public lecture urged the Americo-Liberians to cast off the[ir] Americanness and dissolve themselves into indigenous s[o-] ciety.[7] Much earlier still, and far more important than Bu[ell] and Agbebi, was E. W. Blyden, whose disillusionment t[with] the course being charted by Liberia had begun to be diff[er-] ent from that of his dream dates back in 1857. His vision

Liberia deserves more than mere mentioning.

Edward Wilmot Blyden lived before his time, a prophet without honour in his own country.[8] Born on the Dutch island of St Thomas in the West Indies on 8 August 1832, some say he was of Igbo stock, although he himself claimed Hausa parentage. Apprenticed for tailoring in childhood, he was sent to school through the kindness of a missionary. In 1849, again on the kind ticket of another missionary, he moved to the United States for secondary education, in preparation for service in Africa. However, there he became a victim of racial prejudice when he wanted to enter an institution of higher learning; he had to transfer to Liberia where the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States was about to establish a High School. Naturally the racial discrimination he suffered affected his thinking, breeding in him the conviction that the Negroes in America would never be able to preserve their racial identity in that country and that their salvation and redemption lay only in migration to the African continent. He arrived in Monrovia on 26 January 1851 in an ecstatic mood, like a slave suddenly released from bondage. From that date till his death sixty-one years later, Blyden remained in the limelight in Liberia, in West Africa, in the Negro world, and in the United States, and was an ardent spokesman for and defender of the entire Negro race. As an orator and a prolific writer, he had no compeer.

However, no matter where he was, his heart was all the time in Liberia in, and for, which he laboured for the greater part of his life. His vision for his adopted country, the 'asylum of Liberty', was 'THE REDEMPTION OF AFRICA, AND DISENTHRALMENT AND ELEVATION OF THE AFRICAN RACE'.[9] Liberia would be the spearhead of dissemination of the Christianity of the Bible which would be made incarnate within the African milieu, spread literary education on the continent, and become a nation on the foundation of African culture. Liberia would become 'the glory of Africa, and the moral and political reclaimer of the coloured race'.[10] Liberia would be the nucleus of a modern nation, a veritable inspiration to other parts of West Africa. He boasted to W. E. Gladstone on 20

April 1860: 'This little Republic, planted here in gre weakness, is no doubt destined, in the Providence of God, revolutionize for good the whole of this portion of Africa'. The entire continent was to draw inspiration from Liber that was to offer leadership. Said he, 'our duty and privileg is the laying of the foundation of future empire in Africa.'[1]

Blyden advocated that the Americo-Liberians should di solve into the indigenous milieu by merging themselves wit the indigenous peoples. Leadership was to remain in the hands, he said, because their knowledge of science and tech nology was absolutely essential to the development of th nation. Whilst he did not discountenance diversification o the economy in terms of industrialization, Blyden held the view that the basis of any African nation was agriculture opining that God intended Africans to be primarily agricul- turists. This, he said, gave Africans a richer and better legacy than white peoples, the latter specially assigned industrial- ization, with its concomitant moral pollution and social chaos. In Blyden's judgment Africans should eschew urban- ization, the white man's curse, which was sapping the spiritual being of the white races. Rather Africans, whom he saw as primarily spiritual animals, should live in villages where they 'in the simplicity and purity of rural enterprises will be able to cultivate those spiritual elements in humanity which are suppressed, silent and inactive under the pressure and exigencies of material progress'.[13] In other words objec tive African nation-builders should pursue the higher mora and spiritual ideals.

Blyden was at his best when analysing the virtues of culture to a people, particularly to the Africans, and h reserved the worst epithets for the educated elite whom h saw manacled to the white man's ideas, thought-pattern habits, and institutions. So paranoid was he about the cu tural danger of the culturally-contaminated educated eli that he believed that African redemption could begin or with the racially pure Negro. As he said, the mulatto 'mc grels', quite many in Liberia of his days, were a deadly liat ity.[14] Ideally, for Blyden, the fullest redemption of Afric lay in their moving closer and closer to nature, that is furtl and further from the triumph of man over matter be

achieved by the white in industrial society. Surely he was carried away more by passion than by scientific objectivity in his defence and sanctification of some African customs and institutions. Take, for instance, his defence of African polygamy which, he said, was ordained by God for Africans to compensate them for high infantile mortality which, he argued, was due to swamps.[15] The heat of the sun, contended Blyden, was intended by God to make Africans uniquely sexy and thereby add woman to woman.

Although Blyden romanticized African life and customs and believed too readily the inflated achievements credited to negroes in classical literature, he was keenly interested in African Studies, in particular African languages. In 1900 he wished that Liberia had become a university for the whole of West Africa, specializing in African languages.[16]

Blyden was destined to be disappointed as year followed year and Liberia followed a path the exact opposite of what he had envisioned. The Americo-Liberians saw no reason to live the rural life of Africans, no reason why they should not lead an aristocratic style of life which Blyden described in 1857 as 'a style of living and habits of expenditure ill-suited to our present condition'.[17] Lamented he as late as 1885:

> We have not yet got out of our weak and blundering youth. And a great deal of the superstition, the tags and rags which we have brought from the house of bondage still cling to us. We have not yet moved as a nation into the great world of African life, so as to take part as Christian, civilized and intelligent Africans in the great questions which affect this continent.[18]

Blyden, of course, was a lonely voice in the wilderness, an unheeded prophet preaching a gospel far beyond the comprehension of those for whom it was intended. The why and how the Liberian nation of Blyden's vision had not been born in 1947, how much less of it being the leader and inspiration for the rest of the continent, is a crucial theme for the historian of Liberia. However it is essential to explain the inevitability of the phenomenon, the state of affairs in which the Americo-Liberians inescapably found themselves until the Tubman era which marked the beginnings of a new Liberia.

First, the point should be stressed that the first generation Americo-Liberians were a cultural liability to themselves. Unlike the educated African elite in contemporary Sierra Leone, even more so of Lagos, who were liberated youths and adults already brought up in the indigenous milieu, the settlers in Liberia were descendants of 'Living tools' whose cultural identity had been effaced in the New World. Unlike the *Saro*, many of whom till this day are able to trace their genealogy back to families in other parts of West Africa, the umbilical cord of the settlers in Monrovia with Africa had been severed generations, if not centuries, back. Surely such people could not be expected to manufacture feelings of affection for an African culture that must be as strange to them as the habits of the Aztecs or Eskimos would seem to us. In the circumstances they could only fall back on the one culture they knew, that of the New World in which they had not been allowed to participate fully as citizens.

Second, the point should be stressed that the founders of Liberia had no acceptable formula for meaningful dialogue and liaison with the ethnic groups in the interior. Naturally the latter looked upon them as intruders and conquerors. The barrier between the two groups was real in areas of language, religion, mental attitudes, thought-patterns and so on. The result was that the young Republic had to observe the first law—that of survival—in the warfare relationship with the interior ethnic groups. And were the Americo-Liberians in a position to adapt themselves to indigenou life, which of the several languages and the customs an institutions of which ethnic group were they to adopt fo development at the Pan-Liberian level? Kru, Grebo, Basse or Mende? Not until the inauguration of the unification po icy by President William D. Coleman and its execution b President William V. S. Tubman in our own generation, d the two groups begin to come together meaningfully ar with the same set of purpose.[19]

Third, there were the hostility and imperial fists of t French and the British, both of whom disputed frontiers w and pinpricked the young Republic. Like the United Sta that did practically nothing positive to put the State on feet, the British and French looked upon, and treated,

Republic with contempt, refusing to treat with it on the basis of equality.

Fourth, the so-called American foster-father of the Republic was anything but a father, leaving the State to go it alone in spite of serious economic and social difficulties. And yet the United States was always eager to use the Republic for selfish ends—political, military, and economic.

Last, the Americo-Liberians themselves spent most of their time in factiousness and struggle for power. They did not coalesce into a coherent community. Little wonder that the country lapsed into what a Liberian observer described as 'doom, darkness and despair'.[21]

Happily within the last twenty-five years a part of the vision of Blyden for Liberia has begun to be achieved. The late President W. V. S. Tubman, whose mantle has devolved on President William R. Tolbert, Jr., strenuously began to transform the nation-state to a nation; Liberia began to look more interiorward than Washington-ward; Liberia began to play a leading role on the continent. As Tubman himself put it, his vision was 'To rouse a nation long forlorn to nobler destiny'.[22] It was as part of his effort at nation-building that in 1951 the University of Liberia was established. The African orientation which this University has begun to increasingly acquire in its curriculum, staffing, and research is a most happy development.

This is the point to dwell on the significance of universities, the institutionalized centres of African Studies, to African nations. Rising from two in 1947 to about sixty in 1974, universities are not just prestige symbols but institutions which African statesmen expect to provide solutions to several problems—manpower development, researches that would bring about the Green Revolution, formulas for economic development and industrialization and so on. Suddenly African statesmen have come to realize that only African experts focusing primarily on African problems would be able to provide valid answers to the problems of nation-building, hence the totally justifiable enormous public funds being poured into these expensive tertiary educational institutions.

In spite of the debate being sparked off in some countries

in Africa today about the relevance and certain manifest tions of universities—the elitism of the students, their va dalistic instincts, the tendency of some dons to dabble politics, the relevance of research for its own sake and so o there is no doubt whatsoever that universities have becom permanent institutions in Africa, absolutely indispensable t nation-building. It is in this respect that emphasis has to b placed upon researches appropriate to the needs of th developing countries. Research into every facet of the Afr can in atomistic detail is imperative; and no less imperative i research into the geology, flora and fauna, health problems and the challenge of modernization in all its ramifications The field is infinitely vast, beyond human comprehension, t the extent that the researches into African life and environ ment which have been done by thousands of scholars, liter ally throughout the world since the Second World War, are no more than specks of a himalayan mass.

Much as African statesmen should be commended for committing large sums to university institutions, often in competition with other demands on the scanty resources of the States and immediately affecting the welfare of the masses, the African scholar is bound to be pained by the fact that very little research is being encouraged; the strategic significance of research to every department of life of the African is yet to be fully appreciated; in ignorance research is sometimes talked of as wasteful and too slow to yield results.

Hence the ironic state of affairs in which the largest team of researchers on African Studies are outside the continent; it is outside the continent that the largest investments in money and men are being made on the study of Africa; it is outside the continent that the largest and most comprehensive works on Africa and Africans are being published; and it is outside the continent that the largest audience and readership with a keen appetite for African Studies is to be found. Indeed so bad is the situation that, but for the financial help of Foundations and international donor agencies outside Africa, many of the Institutes of African Studies of African Universities might not have come into existence.

The spectacle of non-Africans anatomizing Africans and

X-raying Africa far more than Africans themselves are doing is not only unhealthy but inimical to the long-term intrinsic interests of Africa: it represents a new form of imperialism—academic imperialism. Nor is it in the interest of unbiased scholarship. It has to be emphasized and emphasized again that the problems posed by African Studies are primarily African and, therefore, demand an African solution. The themes, emphasis, perspectives, and orientation of the writings and researches of Africans the continent has produced so far, show clearly that it is only from within Africa that the mainspring for the study of Africa can come. This is as it should be. Africans have a special responsibility which outsiders, no matter how technically able and well-intentioned, cannot discharge. Africans are psychologically and emotionally more drawn towards their continent and cultural heritage than foreigners. In the understanding and interpretation of evidence of, and on, African culture and institutions, in historical appreciation and use of oral traditions, oracles, myths, legends, and works of art, in analysis of the human drama in African society, African scholars have an advantage over others and are more likely to get at the truth than non-Africans.

It would be folly for Africans to imagine that non-Africans have been conducting massive researches into Africa and Africans primarily to provide data relevant to the social, political, and economic aspirations of Africa. A careful analysis of the types of researches going on in the United States and Russia, for instance, the themes and perspectives being emphasized, and the ends they are intended to fulfil, reveal in bold relief that they have been investing their material resources and human resourcefulness primarily to achieve their national ends. Take, for example, the aspects of the African past that have so far interested most American and Soviet Africanists. It is only natural that the ideologies to which the American people and the Soviets have committed themselves, and what they regard in Africa as of direct relevance to the interests of their nations, should preoccupy the scholars of these two nations. Consequently, more by design than by accident, a large number of American scholars are analysts of the success or failure of prefabri-

cated political institutions planted in Africa by the Western colonial powers, whilst the Soviets concentrate mainly on the colonial period which they interpret in Marxist ideological terms.

Obviously the ideological priorities of the Europeans and Soviets and their national interests, clearly reflected in their methodological approaches and the themes they select for research, are not congruent with those of African States.[23] Non-Africans cannot be expected to be fundamentally concerned with the theme of nation-building, which should be the preoccupation of every African State, in a world in which the super-powers, for instance, see themselves involved in an ideological scramble for Africa, or in which they are primarily interested in continued exploitation of her resources for the greater benefit of their respective countries. Non-Africans cannot be expected to research the ideological formulas or platforms on which African nation-states can be transformed into nations, research diseases endemic to Africans and of which the white man is not expected to be a victim, research history in a way that the cultural values of each people would be available in textbooks for transmission to students and pupils for national ends, research into African cosmology and philosophy of life in a way that would reveal properties that would stabilize the emotions of the African in the technological age, or inspire him to appreciate the higher ideals of life, research into authentic and distinctive African Christian theology, no less valid than the white-made Christian theology which is demonstrably incapable of striking the spiritual chord of the African, and research into the statesmanship of African leaders in relation to the unique problems they are contending with in their nation-building efforts.

Expensive in time and money as it is, African Studies are a must for African nation-builders for two other reasons. First, the African cannot know himself, in the Descartian sense, until he first sees himself in relation to the cultural values out of which he should derive his being and personality, to which he should owe most of his thought-pattern, and in relation to which he should locate his bearing in relation to other races It is the very beginning and quintessence of his redemption

as a truly independent and free being by which he would be able to show that he was no longer being enslaved to other members of the human family. Only African Studies could reveal to him how he should know himself in the name he wears, the clothes he dons, the religious forms and formularies in which he can truly feel at home, the enjoyments in which he can most spontaneously relax and so on.

Second, research is a *sine qua non* for the collection, collation, and sieving of data about the cultural values which African statesmen should seek to transmit down to children at the primary school level. For a people who have no national values to transmit from generation to generation cannot form a nation. Consider the strength of the United States, Europe, and the Soviet Union, the patriotism of the peoples which rests on the sense of commitment to the aspirations of the community, the values of which they are instinctively ready to preserve. That is why the curricula of schools, from the primary to the tertiary levels, in these countries are primarily, in most cases exclusively, coterminous with national boundaries. It is in these institutions, rather than on soap-boxes, that the patriotism that is indispensable to national progress can be truly inculcated. So far African nation-states are unique in that the opposite is the case; the ill-digested values of the white man's culture are being disseminated in their so-called national educational institutions. Even where this deficiency is noted and leaders are anxious to do something, the absence of textbooks containing appropriate information and knowledge is a handicap. This is where research, possible only at the university level, comes in. It is from the university that knowledge and information can seep downwards to the rest of society.

For the good of their soul and the well-being of society every school child, student, and undergraduate should be made to drink out of the inexhaustible fountain of the living past of Africa. Hence the trend in many African universities to make a 'Background to African Culture' course obligatory for every undergraduate, and I do hope that the University of Liberia will not wait any longer to adopt this trend.

It seems to me a grand deception for the educated Africans to seek to be other than Africans, to delude themselves

that they can become even artificial Europeans. And as i being constantly articulated by African literary writers, th educated African has not succeeded, nor shall he ever succeed, in wishing away the living past. Scratch the African pastor and you discover that he has greater faith in the amulets he wears and the witch-doctor to whom he pays nocturnal visits than in the Holy Bible and Jesus Christ; scratch the medical doctor and you will discover that he pays greater attention to the diviner and the psychical fears engendered by his village milieu than his scalpel and the white man's tablets; scratch the politician and you discover that his public bold face and animal courage are against the background of his endless grovelling before masters of the traditional society. The essence of the matter is that for us life is a continuum, the past constituting in our daily lives a palpable and working influence. We believe that the greater part of human consciousness is crystallized in the physical, psychological, and emotional legacies and manifestations of our culture and that we are living witnesses and part of that consciousness.

NOTES

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16 Holden, *op. cit.*, Blyden to Mary Kingsley, 7/5/1900, quoted p. 1179.

17 *African Repository*, vol. 33, 1857, p. 328.

18 *Ibid.* vol. 61, p. 84.

19 E. Reginald Townsend (ed.), *The Official Papers of William V. S. Tubman President of the Republic of Liberia*, London, 1968, pp. 180-83, for Tubman's address at the dedication of the Unification Monument, 5 January 1961.

21 *Ibid.*, p. XIX.

22 *Ibid.*

23 See *African Studies in America: The Extended Family* by Africa Research Group, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1969, which exposes the contexts and CIA element about researches on Africa by prominent American scholars; and *Africa in Soviet Eyes* 1968 Annual (translated from the Russian by Igor Gavrilov) for Marxist ideological approach to the study of Africa by prominent Soviet scholars.

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