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Arthur W. Machinske

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, ir\_machinskea@csl.edu

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HISTORY OF PROTESTANT MISSIONS IN NIGERIA

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A Thesis Presented to  
the Faculty of Concordia Seminary  
Department of History

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Bachelor of Divinity

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By  
Arthur W. Machinske  
May, 1948

Approved by:

E. G. Zimmerman  
H. G. P. P.

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## HISTORY OF PROTESTANT MISSIONS IN NIGERIA

### I. A Look at Nigeria

When studying the history of missions in a certain country, it is necessary that a study be made of that country. Without any knowledge of the land, its peoples, and its history the story of missions is not made complete, for these three things are so closely interwoven with missions that they cannot be separated. The beginnings, growth, and failures of missions all in some way tie up with the country in which they are operating. Why do missions grow in one country and not another? Why are some lands more favorable to mission work than another? These questions can be answered in part, by studying the country in which mission work has made a beginning.

When studying about Nigeria, it is easy to see why little more than a hundred years ago this was a "dark land" within a "dark continent."

Nigeria is a land with approximately 372,000 square miles, which is more than four times that of Great Britain. It has a population of twenty and a half millions, greater than that of Canada, Australia, and New Zealand combined. It

is a country that a hundred years ago was a land of mystery and sorrow, a land that mother nature refused to give up, where for centuries her barriers could not be torn down. To the north there was a waterless desert, the mighty Sahara, to the south a coast-line of seemingly impenetrable forest and swamp. All through the land there was a hot and unhealthy climate unsuited to European constitutions, and a number of insect-borne diseases, the causes of which were not even guessed at fifty years ago. These two factors alone, the climate, and the diseases did much in the hindering of missions. The white man was unable to stand the terrific heat, and this along with the deadly malaria mosquito took terrific toll of the first missionaries to enter that land.

Nigeria is situated on the west coast of Africa. It lies between the parallels of four and fourteen degrees north, is thus entirely within the tropics. The greatest length of Nigeria from east to west, is over 700 miles, and its greatest width, from north to south, over 650 miles; the coast line is over 500 miles in length.

As is natural in a country this size the physical conditions vary considerably. It is divided into four main zones. The first is the Niger River delta. Nigeria lies at the extreme inner corner of the gulf of Guinea, where the River Niger with its great quantities of sand down through the centuries has pushed the sea farther and farther back, forming an immense delta; the sandbanks of which are held

together by the roots of high mangrove trees which flourish in the shallow waters. The land is nowhere of any great elevation making the coast of Nigeria almost entirely swamp. Little solid ground is to be found and practically nothing is produced, but this zone is important inasmuch as it gives access to the interior by an almost unrivaled system of waterways and because the ports and the principal trade depots are located there. The many branches of the Niger delta, the estuaries of other rivers, and the large lagoons which lie between, are all connected one with another by a multitude of creeks, the whole making a continuous navigable waterway of smooth waters from the western to the eastern borders of Nigeria.

Further inland is the zone of tropical forest, from 50 to 100 miles wide. Here are found evergreen trees of all descriptions, mahoganies and other valuable furniture woods, and the principal asset of the country, the oil-palm. In this zone lies the wealth of Nigeria.

North of a line drawn roughly through the towns of Abeokuta, Ondo, Onitsha and Afikpo, the forest begins to get thinner and the country gradually becomes more open and park-like, with little real forest save along the banks of the river.

North of this zone the ground rises to an undulating plateau, with occasional hills of granite and sandstone. The general elevation is about 2,000 feet, but to the south-

west of Yola and in certain parts of the Bauchi plateau there are some areas of considerable height, in some cases from 6,000 to 7,000 feet above sea-level. The southern portion of the plateau is covered with thin forests, but becomes more open and sandy towards the north, until the Sahara is reached. To the east the plateau sinks to the plains of Bornu, which extend to Lake Chad.

The main physical feature of Nigeria is the great river from which it takes its name. The Niger rises in the mountains to the north-east of Sierra Leone, about 150 miles from the sea, and flows in a north-easterly direction until it reaches Timbuktu, an important town in the French Sudan. From this point it flows eastward for about 200 miles, and then flows in a south-easterly direction to Lokoja, about 340 miles from the sea. Here it receives the water of its principal tributary, the Benue, on its left bank, and then flows due south to a point a few miles below Abo, where the delta commences. Thus these two great rivers make a widely spread Y on the map, and it is round this Y that Nigeria lies.

As might be expected, there is very considerable difference in climate between the dry, sandy country in the north of Nigeria and the low-lying, swampy coast. Both parts are hot, but while that of the north is dry, that of the south is damp and enervating. The seasons are not governed by temperature, but by the rainfall, and there are only two seasons, the dry and the rainy. In the north the dry season lasts

from October to April, but it is somewhat shorter toward the south; at the coast it lasts from November to March. One great characteristic of the dry season, is the Hamattan, a north-easterly wind, blowing constantly from the desert to the sea. It is excessively dry, and is so heavily laden with fine sand that it makes the air hazy. At times it resembles a fog. Beginning just when the country is soaked with water, its first effect is to produce enormous evaporation. Everything dries up. The dew ceases to fall. Timber warps and shrinks. The swift evaporation produces a sudden feeling of chill. The morning temperature drops until on the Bauchi Plateau it almost reaches freezing-point; <sup>1</sup> and in the river valley the temperature may even drop to under fifty degrees.

As the dry season wears on the Hamattan dies away and is followed by an intensely hot spell. The temperature climbs to one hundred, one hundred ten, and even one hundred twenty degrees in the shade. It is easy to imagine how difficult it is to work under such conditions. It would sap all the strength out of a man. Not only is the temperature high, but the humidity also. There just are no cool spots to be found. As this temperature rises, heavy clouds can be seen in the evening along the south-eastern sky, their depths lit with lightning. Day by day they approach nearer and nearer, until at last after a short period of uncanny stillness, the first

1. J. Lowry Maxwell, Nigeria The Land, The People and Christian Progress, p. 10.

rainstorms break over the country in a flood. Its approach is heralded by a violent tornado. The wind comes up and rips and tears everything not securely fastened down. Then amid blazing lightning and ear-splitting thunder, the rain descends. The destructive qualities of a heavy downpour carried on a sixty-mile-an-hour wind can be imagined. The rains last until October with a break toward the latter part of July or August.

Naturally, the great heat combined with abundant moisture (except in the extreme north) favors the growth of vegetable life. Along the coast are the many forests, containing much hard timber, some of which is exported to Europe. Inland from these lie great freshwater swamps, also heavily forested, containing some valuable wood. But it is the third series of forests, above the swamp line, yet within the area of heavy rainfall, that the vegetable life of the country reaches its peak. Here is found mahogany of several different kinds, ebony, African walnut, rubber-bearing trees, and vines are all found here, and so is also the greatest economic asset of West Africa, the oil-palm.

The African population of Nigeria, including the British Cameroons, is estimated at 20,500,000. It is divided into a large number of tribes speaking different languages and possessing different characteristics. The northern parts of the country are inhabited mainly by

negroid and Berber peoples, while the southern forest regions and the land around the Bauchi plateau are inhabited by negro races. The most important are the Fausa speaking tribes, generally known as the Hausas, the Yorubas, the Ibos, and the Fulani. The Fulani, perhaps the most important tribe politically, are scattered throughout the northern provinces.<sup>2</sup>

In the lands in the south-east of the angle formed by the Niger and the Benue the greatest density of population is found. There are about 12,000 square miles lying along the east bank of the Niger which has a population of almost three hundred to the square mile, about the same density as Wales.<sup>3</sup>

There are about two hundred and fifty tribes altogether in the country, which means that there are comparatively small tribes, some numbering only in the thousands.

Generally speaking, each tribe has its own mother tongue, so that when doing mission work one meets with a great variety of languages. This makes it very difficult if the missionary wishes to reach his whole district with the Gospel.

The Hausas, located in the north-western part of Nigeria, (See map in rear) are of the negroid type and are for the most part Mohammedan. Their language has been adopted by many tribes as a mother tongue and it has become "the lingua franca of the western Sudan". It has been reduced to writing

2. A. C. Burns, History of Nigeria, pp. 29-33.  
 3. Maxwell, op. cit., p. 16.  
 4. Burns, op. cit., p. 49.

by the natives, and a modification of Arabic characters are used. Mohammedanism was introduced among the Hausas at an early date probably entering during the 13th century and for many centuries they possessed a form of civilization and a well-regulated system of government based on this religion. To this day they are mostly Mohammedan and Christian missions have not been able to break through that wall and bring them to the Gospel. The hardest mission work is that done among these people.

Numerically, the most important tribe are the Yorubas. They number about 4,000,000 persons.<sup>5</sup> The country they now occupy lies between the Lagos lagoon on the south and the Niger on the north, and between the Dahomey frontier to the west and the Bini country to the east. They are the predominant race throughout the province of Abeokuta, Ijebu, Ondo and Oyo. According to Burns, their myths say, that God created both white and black at Ife, and it was here that the first Yoruba settlement was founded. To this day it remains as their spiritual headquarters.<sup>6</sup> Although Mohammedanism and Christianity has made great progress in Yorubaland, the people are still mainly pagan. They believe in the existence of a supreme being whom they term *Olurun* (owner of the sky), but they consider him too remote and important to be much concerned with the affairs of mankind. There are, however, a

5. Ibid., p. 32.

6. Ibid., p. 30.

number of minor deities to whom sacrifices are frequently offered. They believe in a future and also in the transmigration of the souls.

The origin of the Fulani is obscure, but it is an accepted theory that they came originally from Upper Egypt, and gradually migrated westward to the Atlantic coast.<sup>7</sup> It is thought that they entered Hausa land sometime during the 13th century from the west. Great numbers settled in the towns, and their superior intelligence soon put them into prominent positions. They inter-married with the native population and adopted the Mohammedan religion. Early in the 19th century they raised a revolt against the rulers of the Hausa states and overthrew them. For a time they ruled the country with moderation and integrity, but around 1900 they began to sink and they practiced the most inhuman cruelties on their subjects, and became the leading slave traders. It was not until the British stepped in that peace and order arrived.

The last tribe, the Ibos, live in the south-east part of Nigeria chiefly in the province Owerri. Their systems of law and custom are based mainly on their religious beliefs and on superstitions, many of which cannot be incorporated in civilized administration, i.e. murder of twins, and ascription of many ills and misfortunes to witchcraft. The

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7. Ibid., p. 53.

villages are with few exceptions mutually independent and dialects often vary even between neighboring villages.

### The Religion of Nigeria

In Nigeria a threefold division of religion can be made: animistic pagan, Mohammedan, and Christian. The greater number of the pure Negro inhabitants of Nigeria are pagans, while the Negroid and Berber tribes of the north are mostly Mohammedan. Christianity has made very slow progress in the country except in the few communities where missionaries have worked for long periods.

In considering the pagan animism it is important to realize that throughout the country, a belief in the existence of a Supreme Being is held even by the most savage and backward tribes of Nigeria. This Supreme Being, however, is invisible and so remote from the people that he is not likely to interfere much in the petty concerns of the individual, and therefore, though he is not forgotten, more attention is paid to minor deities, good and evil, who are considered to be more interested in human affairs. But even these are held to be spirits, and the images which the people venerate are but representations of the spirits, and not the gods themselves. In most cases there is a tribal god, a lesser god for the village, and a household god for every family of the village, and a personal god for every member of the family. If you will add to this a god or devil for every striking object of nature, for every

river and stream, for every hill and grove, and for every large and remarkable tree, you can understand how complicated is the African mythology.

By far the greater number of these gods is unlovolent, and the person who believes in them is always in a state of fear and is trying in one way or another to appease them by continually offering up sacrifices. Throughout his life the pagan never ceases in his efforts to avert the wrath of the gods. His religion, such as it is, is very real to him, and in his ignorance he allows himself in many instances to be exploited by the "juju" priests. These men, who profess to be on more or less intimate terms with the gods, have a powerful position in the community. They terrify the people by threats of supernatural vengeance unless the wishes of the gods, which coincide in a most remarkable way with their own, are complied with, and even kings and chiefs are wax in their hands. The judgment of the "juju" priest is said to be infallible, and with such a power he can almost become a dictator. All must stay on friendly terms with him if they want to remain alive, for it is a very simple matter for him to accuse an enemy of some crime, and let the tribal courts convict him and carry out the punishment.

In some districts there is a belief in the reincarnation of the soul. For this reason certain animals are not killed because the belief is held that if the animal is killed it will result in the death of the person whose soul is occupying

the body of the animal.

Cannibalism was widely practised in the past, but the British government has stamped out this evil. The evil that confronts the authorities now is the practice of eating only certain parts of the body, such as the heart, tongue, or liver hoping in that way to acquire the traits of the person whose parts they are eating.

Sacrifice is a central feature and essential part of the religion of the pagans, whether it be to the ancestral spirits, the evil gods, or the Supreme God. Especially common are the sacrifices made to the ancestors, which are referred to as the 'feeding of the ancestors', 'giving them drink', and one of the crucial points in the life of a Christian convert is just here, when he refuses to join in making the family sacrifice. Another horrible practice was to sacrifice men and women at the death of a chief so that in the next world he would have servants to wait on him.

This world is preferable to the other, and the people come back from the beyond in reincarnations, it is believed, sometime quite soon after their death. But, whether in the spirit world, or in reincarnation, the person lives on. Death is only an incident, not at all the end of man.

Although the change is slow, paganism is slowly yielding to the influence of Islam and Christianity. But sad to say for every ten that embrace Islam, there is only one that becomes a Christian.<sup>7</sup> For this there are many reasons. To

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7. Burns, op. cit., p. 257.

begin with, although there is little love lost between the different Moslem sects, to the heathen Islam presents a united front, while sectarian differences tend to weaken the Christian force and puzzle the pagan mind. This is a real problem that the Christian Church is facing, and unless the different denominations now working in Nigeria faithfully teach the Gospel of Jesus and help the native instead of polemical disputations, Mohammedanism will gain the greater advantage. Again the doctrines of Mohammed are spread by Africans who can penetrate freely into any part of the country and get into touch with the people, while Christianity is generally preached by European missionaries who have not this advantage. Moreover, every Moslem layman proselytises as a matter of course, while the Christian leaves this to his missionary.

The chief reason for the greater success of Islam is, however, that it is better adapted than Christianity to African life. The native of Nigeria as he advances in knowledge and becomes more civilized ceases to believe in numerous gods of his pagan ancestors and looks around for something better. There is offered to him the choice of the Cross or the Crescent. Both involve strange doctrines which he scarcely understands, but while the one forbids him to possess more than one wife, the other imposes no such restriction. Polygamy is an old established custom throughout Nigeria, and to the average African it appears not only a

reasonable, but almost an essential institution.

Mohammedanism has existed in the north of Nigeria for many centuries, introduced sometime about the 13 century. It was adopted by the town-living Fulani some time after their arrival in Hausaland. It was the Fulani who became fanatical Mohammedans, and began to wage endless war against the pagan tribes to bring them by force under the banner of Mohammedanism.

With the establishment of the British Administration the spread of Islam by force of arms was put to a stop, but it has not ceased to spread by peaceful means. The peace loving Hausa tribes have done more to spread Islam, than the fanatical Fulani. When the British took over, they promised the chiefs in the north that the Mohammedan religion would not be interfered with and that all men would be free to worship God as they chose. The Nigerian Government then refuses Christian missionaries permission to enter territories where Islam is supreme. On the other hand Mohammedans have a free hand to operate any where they please.

The one great weapon that the Christian has besides the Gospel is the fact that Islam of Nigeria is a poor imitation of the religion of the Prophet. It is Islam in name only. Many pagan beliefs are kept by its followers, and about the only demand that it makes on the people is that they pray to the great Prophet and to God. Even this practice is not

carefully followed in some districts. It is only the Christian missionary who in the end can really offer the native real spiritual food. The thing that draws the natives to Islam is not so much the religion, but rather the superior social prestige of the Moslems. Show the native that Christianity can offer the same prestige and Islam has lost most of its power.

... of the Synodical Conference, where it was possible, information was obtained directly from responsible officials of church bodies under whose authority the statistics are wanted. However, it was not always possible to get such information and where this was the case great reliance of statistics and literature put out by various church bodies was used. In some cases only a brief survey will be made, giving the available statistics.

It has been said by many that it is not the job of the missionary to open the doors of pagan lands, but to go in after the doors have been opened. This may have been true in some countries, but not in Nigeria.

When the British government and merchants went in 1802 and the wealth that was to be obtained in Nigeria and began to explore this land, there we find that the British government, the merchants and the missionaries began to enter the land side by side. The British were desirous to open this country for the good of the native and of the world, and the missionaries, not content to stand idly by, were desirous to open this land for the preaching of the Gospel. The British worked along the lines in their

## II. History of Protestant Missions Exclusive of the Synodical Conference

This chapter will give chronologically a short account of the Protestant mission societies working in Nigeria exclusive of the Synodical Conference. Where it was possible, information was obtained directly from responsible officials of church bodies under whose authority the societies are working. However, it was not always possible to get such information and where this was the case short histories of missions and literature put out by various church bodies was used. In some cases only a brief remark will be made, adding the available statistics.

It has been said by many that it is not the job of the missionary to open the doors of pagan lands, but to go in after the doors have been opened. This may have been true in some countries, but not in Nigeria.

When the English government and business men in England saw the wealth that was to be obtained in Nigeria and began to explore this dark land, there we find that the British government, the business men and the missionaries begin to enter the land side by side. The British were desirous to open this country for the good of the Empire and of the world, and the missionary, not content to stand idly by, was desirous to open this land for the preaching of the Gospel. The British worked along two lines in their

attempts to civilize this country. First of all they outlawed all forms of slave trading, and secondly, they began an exploration of the Niger River. It is in connection with these two, that Protestant mission work made its beginning in Nigeria.

The Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society. (1843)

This British Society has the honor of being the first society to begin work in Nigeria. To learn how this beginning was made, we must go back some ten or fifteen years before this society entered the field.

The district in which their beginning was made is called Yorubaland. It lies in the southwest of Nigeria. The tribes living in this section are usually called Yorubas. Until around 1825 peace and prosperity reigned throughout the whole section between Olopara on the west and the Niger on the east; but then, while a number of tribes were engaged in a bitter war in the south, a disastrous change took place. About this time an ambitious chief of Illorin in the south desiring to get more power, turned for help to the Mohammedan Fulani and Fausa, who lived beyond the Niger in the north. These warring and conquering people, enticed by the prospect of slave trade, willingly consented. Through the influence of these strangers, Yorubaland soon suffered from raids, slave hunts and constant strife and war. Large cities were destroyed, and the land was ravaged with pillage and plunder and slaughter.

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1. W. Beiderbecke, Gospel Dawn In Africa, p. 37.

In these troubled times a small group of refugees, which had escaped the merciless bands of the slave hunters, found shelter in the southwest of the country. These scattered remnants of the hunted population gradually gathered together under the high granite blocks on the river Ozun, and called this place Abeokuta, i.e., "Under the Rock".

Meanwhile in England the conscience of the English people had been aroused concerning the cruelty of slavery. After repeated defeats caused by conflicting business interests the people finally succeeded in having Parliament outlaw the slave trade after January 1, 1808. In 1824 it was declared piracy; and on August 1, 1834, the Emancipation Bill set free all slaves in every British colony. England's navy now hunted slave-traders as they did pirates. Thereby thousands of liberated negroes fell into the hands of the English who, of course were unable to return them to their homes. The only solution they could find was to settle them on the peninsula of Sierra Leone.

Here at Sierra Leone the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society had begun work in 1811. Among the slaves who had been liberated and sent ashore at Sierra Leone were a great number of Yorubas. Many of these came in contact with Christianity and were converted, some through the agency of Wesleyan and others through workers of the Anglican church.

The founding of Abeokuta mentioned above drew many of the Yorubas back to their fatherland. These people were

usually skillful and diligent and many had become prosperous. About 300 Yoruba, heathen and Christian, came from Sierra Leone to Abeokuta in the years 1839-1842. The Christians among the newcomers naturally wished for teachers and made an urgent appeal that missionaries be sent from Sierra Leone to Abeokuta. So it came to pass that in 1842 the Rev. T. B. Freeman, a Wesleyan missionary was transferred from the Gold Coast to Badagry and from there to Abeokuta and laid the foundation of a Methodist mission.

When Freeman visited Abeokuta he was very well received. The head chief, Shodoko by name, welcomed him and set apart for his residence a house, "the walls and floor of which were covered with velvet,"<sup>2</sup> The first Christian sermon appears to have been preached on December 26, 1842.<sup>3</sup>

The first European missionary of this society to arrive at Badagry was the Rev. Samuel Annear, who reached Nigeria in 1843. The Wesleyan work was extended from Badagry to Lagos on the coast and then up to Abeokuta. Mr. Gardiner was the first missionary to settle at Lagos on the behalf of the Society in the year 1854.

When the Niger River was opened up, the Rev. John Milum, accompanied by a young native minister, called Sharpe, journeyed up the river past the last outpost of the Wesleyan Society away beyond the confluence of the Niger and

2. Maxwell, op. cit., p. 87.

3. Ibid., p. 88.

Bonue rivers to Egha in the Nupe country. This was directly northeast of Abeokuta and in what is called the northern province of Nigeria. After three or four years' work in the Nupe country Mr. Milum had to return to Lagos because of ill health, and later died there.

Following these two pioneers into this territory, came three more men from the Society. They were Mr. Elliott, Mr. Coppin, and a native minister named Williams. These three made an earnest effort to carry on work in Ibadan, but the distance was too far from the home base and their health failed which necessitated the abandoning of their stations there. In 1885 it was decided by the Society to give up completely any work in the north, and endeavour to form a chain of stations which would reach from the coast to Ogbomoso, a distance of approximately one hundred twenty miles.

In the endeavour to carry out this plan the chairman of the mission who lived at Badagry, together with some African clergy, visited Abeokuta. Work had been done by them here, but it was not as yet a strong station, but what was called an outpost. When this group arrived there they were not well received. Previous to this time, in 1885, the king of Dahomey, a land on the western border of Nigeria, had been making frequent attacks on the city. When this party came into the city it was accused of having a Dahomian in its party. The party was seized, the mission house that

was there was attacked, and all property confiscated. An agreement was reached and the party escaped without any casualties. Finally however, a measure of success was attained, and trained native workers were appointed and sent to a number of places as far as the projected limit, Ogbomosho.

The Wesleyan Mission is composed of nine circuits. There are two at Lagos, the Abeokuta and Egbado mission, the Badagry circuit, the Oyo circuit, the Ilesha and Ekiti mission, the Ibadan, Ijebu and Opobo circuits. In these there are nine principal stations and about two hundred out-stations.<sup>4</sup> Information regarding the staff and the Christian community will be found in the Appendix.

The following quotation from Maxwell gives a report on educational institutions of the Society:

Boys' High School at Lagos, fourteen teachers, sixty-seven in High School classes, two hundred and four in the intermediate and primary classes. Girls' High School at Lagos, eighteen teachers, two hundred and forty-four in intermediate and primary classes. Wesley College, Ibadan, which is a training institution has eight teachers and seventy-one students.<sup>5</sup>

The main center of medical work is the hospital at Ilesha, where there are two Wesleyan doctors and two Wesleyan nurses, all Europeans.

In 1917 a secession took place from the Wesleyan Methodist Church, and a body was formed which took the title of, "The United African Methodist Church." It now has a number of branches in Lagos Colony and Abeokuta Province.<sup>6</sup>

4. Ibid.; p. 89.

5. Ibid.; pp. 89-90.

6. Ibid., p. 84.

### The Church Missionary Society (1844)

Under this heading is grouped the whole work of the Anglican Church in Nigeria. To trace the development of this society it is necessary to trace the life of a man who did more than any other person to spread the Gospel in Nigeria. This man was Samuel Crowther, a native son of Nigeria, and the first negro bishop of Nigeria.

In 1821 an army of Mohammedan natives, the tribe of Fulani came down from the north and attacked the natives of Yoruba country. So swift and powerful was the attack that the tribes fell before the onslaught. They were made captives and sold as slaves. In this group was a small boy named Adjai, who later was to become the first bishop of Nigeria, Samuel Crowther. He was placed on a Portuguese slave ship later to be sold at public auction. But then the hand of God stepped in. Two English men-of-war saw the ship and captured it and released the slaves. These natives were then taken to Sierra Leone where they settled. Here where slavery had hitherto been most prevalent, a colony had been formed under British protection as a rescue home for liberated slaves. But the congregation of so many degraded and lawless displaced men soon produced anarchy and trouble in the colony. The moral conditions of the blacks was disgraceful, and the prospects of the success of the enterprise seemed very remote. However, what man cannot do God will accomplish, and in 1816 missionaries were sent there by the Church Missionary.

Society. Under their direction peace was made out of chaos, and men learned how to live with one another. It was around the year 1822, that the future bishop of the Niger, then a little liberated slave-boy, came to this colony and came under this new influence.

Under the care of the mission schoolmaster Adjai made good progress. In time he became a monitor, and it was here that he came into contact with the Word of God. He was baptized on 11th of December 1825, by the Rev. J. Raban, taking the name of Samuel Crowther.<sup>7</sup>

He was very eager to learn and studied all he could. Some friends seeing how much he wanted to get ahead decided to take him along with them to England. Here he went to a parochial school for two years. In the meantime the Church Missionary Society had established a school for teachers and future clergymen at Sierra Leone. When Crowther returned to his colony in Sierra Leone he enrolled in this school. He received his instruction here and it was not long before he was instructing others.

In 1841, England decided to explore the Niger River, and an expedition was set up to see if the Niger could be opened. The Church Missionary Society saw in this an opportunity to bring the Gospel to many who were yet in darkness. They asked the government for permission to send along some of their men on the expedition and the government agreed to let two representatives go along with them. The Rev. J. F. Schon and Mr. Crowther were chosen. The former man had worked for ten years in Sierra Leone, and was an authority on the African people and their characteristics.

Thus it was that this society made its first contact with Nigeria in 1841. This expedition traveled up the river Niger as far as the confluence of its main tributary, the Benue. Rev. Schon and Crowther were separated at the start of the trip. Each had to go on a different boat. They both

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7. Jesse Faye, Samuel Crowther, p. 82.

preached along the way as the boats stopped at different places along the Niger. The expedition ended in failure however, due to the terrific loss of life from malaria, and they had to turn back. Schon and Crowther while on this trip did not try to open any permanent mission stations anywhere.

Though the expedition ended in failure one good thing had been accomplished, Samuel Crowther proved that he would become a good missionary. Rev. Schon wrote to the Church Missionary Society headquarters in England telling of Crowther's usefulness, after which Crowther was summoned to England. During his trip over he made a translation, and prepared a grammar and vocabulary of the Yoruba tongue.

In 1843, he was ordained, and this was the beginning of a new era in missionary enterprise. Native pastors for the native land!

As soon as possible he returned to Africa and at Sierra Leone preached his first sermon in Africa.

Just about this same time there was a number of Yoruba slaves who had been freed by the British Government and established at Sierra Leone, and numbers of these had become Christians. Some of them, when they heard of the founding of Abeokuta, returned to their native land, and tried to go up-country from Badagri or Lagos. Those who eventually reached Abeokuta wished to have Christian teachers with them in their new home, and appealed to the Church Missionary Society in London to help them. As a result, the Rev. Henry Townsend was sent there to look the situation over. His investigations were favorable, and thus in 1844 the Yoruba Mission was begun and Crowther and Mr. Gollmer, another missionary, went there to establish this work.

Thus the foundations of the society's Nigerian work was laid. Stations were established at Badagri (1845), Abeokuta (1846), and Lagos

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8. Supra, p. 18.

(1852), then at Ibadan (1853) and Oyo (1854).

A second journey up the Niger river revealed to Crowther the readiness of the people there to receive Christian teachers. Returning to Abeokuta a conference was held to map out plans for missionary expansion in Yoruba country and elsewhere.

Soon afterwards Mr. Gollmer, who had aided him in establishing the Church at Abeokuta, returned to Europe, and Crowther was compelled to take his place at Lagos, with the supervision of the mission stations on the coast. Here he worked at his translation of the Bible into Yoruba language, and also prepared a primer, a vocabulary, and several extracts from the Word of God in the Ibo language.

By 1856 a great advance had been made in Nigeria. It was clear that the Niger was navigable. In this year the Church Missionary Society decided to arrange another expedition up the Niger, to establish a Niger Christian Mission. An appeal was made to Lord Palmerston, and in 1857 the ship Daybreak started on her way. Six missions were to be established as a basis for future work, and for this purpose six native ministers were to accompany Crowther. However, three ministers died at Sierra Leone and men could not be spared for this trip. Thus the vessel had to start out with only Crowther, the Rev. Taylor, a native pastor, Simon Jones, a friend of Crowthers, and two youths who had resided with Rev. Schon. Of all the expeditions this was, humanly speaking, the least prepared for such a great task, and yet it was from the ship Dayspring that the first stations were planted of the Niger mission.

They established a strong mission at Abo, where the king was friendly to them. Leaving this place, they traveled 140 miles up the river and established a mission at Onitsha in Ibo country. Here Mr. Taylor was left to prepare the work and start a mission. He was very successful in curbing the practice of human sacrifices.

Crowther moved on to Idda and after much talking he secured ground for mission buildings. This town was located at the Niger-Benus confluence and Crowther saw the value of such a town for future work. Somewhat later trouble broke out locally, and the town was destroyed by fire. The missionaries then transferred the work to the other side of the river at Lokoja (1865).<sup>9</sup>

From Idda they went to Rabbah, and here their ship hit a rock and sank. During their forced stay Crowther labored hard to prepare the foundation for a mission establishment. In this Nupe territory he came to grips with the Mohammedan religion. His solution to this problem was not to try to spend time and strength in fighting the Moslem creed, but to let the sword of the Spirit win the victory for Christ. For he saw any attack upon the Moslem creeds and religion ending only in the expulsion of the missionaries.<sup>10</sup>

From Rabbah Crowther traveled overland to Ogbomoso, and down to Abeokuta. Thus ended the third expedition, but the Church had grown and the light of the Gospel was brought to shine on many.

In 1859 Mr. Taylor who was doing work at Onitsha, went to England and awakened new interest in the Niger work, and returning, he, in conjunction with Crowther, established an important mission at Akassa, the mouth of the Nun river, which is the navigable entrance to the Niger.

In 1864 Crowther went to England to plead his cause, and it was in this year that perhaps the most important event took place in his life. On St. Peter's Day of this year in Canterbury Cathedral he was consecrated as the first bishop of the Niger.

On his return to the Niger, his special attention was given to the Delta region. The first station was at Bonny (1866). From here the

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9. Maxwell, op. cit., p. 91.

10. Jasse Page, op. cit., p. 103.

Influence of the Gospel spread to all the surrounding territory. This preaching was done by native Christians and ministers under the supervision of Crowther. Always he was traveling about preaching and bringing peace to troubled communities. Gradually the years began to tell on him, and his strength failed. On the last day of the year, 1891, at Lagos he passed away.

The last years of Crowther's life were made sorrowful with disciplinary troubles. In 1891 a number of native ministers seceded from European control, and formed what is called the "United Native African Church". They settled at Lagos. In this same year the Niger Delta Pastorate seceded from the Church Missionary Society, though not from the Church of England, for six years. Ten years later a number of people dissatisfied with the existing state of affairs, and of the appointment of Rev. Johnson to the local pastorate, seceded from the Church Missionary Society, and from the Anglican Church as well, and formed the nucleus of a grievous secession. They called themselves the "Native African Church", but are known as the "Bethelites". They use the liturgy of the Church of England, but allow polygamy among their members. It is no trouble at all to become a minister in this body, for men who have been dismissed by other bodies for immorality have been made pastors of these churches. According to Maxwell, "one of their main activities seems to be the seduction of Christians from the orthodox congregations, while their attack on heathenism is secondary. Their members are a thorn in the flesh of every missionary superintendent and pastor."<sup>11</sup>

In 1890 an attempt was made to reach the Moslem people. Two men went to Lokqja for this purpose, but both died in several years and the plan fell through. In 1902 permission was given them to enter Gierku, south of

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11. Maxwell, *op. cit.*, pp. 83-84.

Zaria, and thus a permanent foothold was secured in Hausaland. In 1905 the mission was moved to Zaria.

In 1903 work was begun in Nupe land at Bida city, and a few years later, in 1907, a party of men from Cambridge University carried the Mission eastward in the Bauchi hillcountry, at Fanyan, among the Sura people. All this work has grown so that workers can not be had fast enough to cope with all the work that is and could be done.

In 1919 the territory of Nigeria was divided into two dioceses, that of Lagos, and that of the Niger, with a bishop at the head of each.

The pastoral work in Yoruba-land and the lower Niger country is carried on almost altogether by the African clergy. The Niger Delta Pastorate is manned and financed by Africans.

The educational work is by far the most extensive in Nigeria, including over 700 primary and kindergarten schools, seven high schools, and three training schools for teachers, an industrial school, and five theological training schools. In addition they have a bookshop at Lagos, which has a number of branches, one being at Kano.

A hospital is maintained at Iyi Knu, and outside the city walls at Zaria. Some work is also being done among lepers.

For statistics of the work of this society, see the table in the Appendix.

#### The United Free Church of Scotland (1846)

The beginning of work by this society in Nigeria came as a consequence of the interest and sympathy aroused by the liberation of slaves in Jamaica.

The 1st of August, 1838, was the day of emancipation for the serfs of the West Indian islands. Many whites thought that this would usher in a period of revenge on the cruel white masters by the negroes. However, the great day came with no trouble whatsoever.

That the crisis thus passed over peaceably was largely due to the labor of missionaries over a period of many years. Among others, the

Scottish Missionary Society had begun mission work in Jamaica in 1800.

When the slaves were freed many missionaries got the idea that maybe some of the converted slaves would be willing to take the Gospel back to their own people in Africa.

At the meeting of the Jamaica Mission Presbytery in 1840 all present agreed that a mission should be sent to Africa from the Jamaican congregations. They wrote to the Missionary Society in Scotland of their proposal, but it was frowned upon as premature and displaying more zeal than judgment. This did not stop the Jamaican group, and through a Captain Turner they sent formal proposals to the chiefs of Calabar to settle their mission there. After many months of waiting they received an answer that was very favorable, and which gave them permission to come over and settle in their land.

By coincidence it happened that only a month before the missionaries' proposals had reached Calabar, the British government was there to make a treaty with the chiefs for abandoning the slave trade and receiving missionaries.

At once after receiving the letter the missionaries got into touch with the governor of Fernando Po, the Spanish island lying off the mouth of the Calabar River. His reply was that he had interviewed the chiefs of Calabar, and that they eagerly awaited the coming of the missionaries.

This chain of circumstances convinced them that they must go forward at once. If the society at home was unwilling or unable to indorse their proposals, they would act on their own. Accordingly, the Presbytery met at Hampden, Jamaica in September, 1844, and resolved upon the formation of a missionary society independent of outside aid, and appointed the Rev. Hope Waddell as their first representative both to the Churches at home and to Calabar.

Rev. Waddell obtained a leave of absence for two years and went to

Scotland where he persuaded the United Secession Church to adopt the new mission.

A missionary party left Liverpool on the 6th of January 1846. This party consisted of the Rev. Hope Waddell; Mr. Samuel Edgerley with his wife; Andrew Chisholm; Edward Miller, and an ex-slave boy.

After three months of weary voyaging they dropped anchor off Duke Town, Old Calabar, Nigeria, in 1846.

They started work immediately at three towns, Duke Town, Creek Town, and Old Town. The first African to welcome them was King Eyo of Creek Town. He was a wealthy and powerful man, and did much in aiding the growth of the mission in his town through contributions and a pledge of peace.

Later the same day they met King Eyamba of Duke Town, also a wealthy and powerful man. Land was given for the new mission and the work of building a Church was begun at once.

These two kings were leaders of people known as the Efik, a branch of the Ibibio tribe whose territory stretched from the Cross River inland towards the Niger. The utter disregard for human life by these people which slavery encouraged was perhaps the greatest problem the missionaries had to face. The king was supreme. For months the missionaries had to watch the killing of slaves by chiefs upon the death of a well known person or neighboring chief. Seeing that no solution could be had with the chiefs, Mr. Anderson, a missionary, saw the captains with whom the chiefs were trading, and formed, "A Society for the Suppression of Human Sacrifices in Calabar".<sup>12</sup> Pressure was put on the chiefs by the captains, and in 1850 a law was passed by the various chiefs forbidding such sacrifices.

The chief of Old Town, one of the three original mission stations, stood stubbornly by the ways of his forefathers, and before his death he

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12. Donald M. McFarlan, Calabar, p. 36.

made arrangements for the killing of his wives and slaves. After his death this order was carried out. For such a breach of the law, Old Town was reduced to ruins by the authorities. It was years before this town was built up and work begun again.

In October of 1846 Hope Waddell sailed for Jamaica to report progress and to obtain reinforcements. The Rev. W. Jameson arrived from Jamaica shortly after, and in 1847 Waddell brought with him the Rev. H. Goldie and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Newhall, H. Hamilton (a carpenter) and several other Jamaican assistants. Having such a group, a Mission Committee was formed. Three stations were to be served, Creek Town, Old Town, and Duke Town. With high hopes for the future of their work the little company met for the first communion service in August, 1847.

Shortly after this, W. Jameson worn out by excessive work, and not realizing the danger of the climate, died at the age of thirty-nine. He was the first of many to lay down his life for Calabar.

European commerce had done nothing to raise the moral and spiritual state of the people, but in the children the missionaries saw the hope of future greatness. They were taught to read and write both English and Efik. The Rev. H. Goldie translated portions of the Bible, tracts, a grammar, and a dictionary. McFarlan says that: "To this day his Efik dictionary is the standard work in the language."<sup>13</sup>

In 1847 when the United Secession and Relief Churches merged with the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland the Scottish Missionary Society handed over its work in both the Jamaica and Calabar Missions bringing it under the control of the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland.

In 1853 after seven years of labor, the first convert was baptized, and in 1855, the first medical missionary, Dr. Heman, a Jamaican, arrived.

In 1856 the first of new missions up the Cross river was opened at

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13. Ibid., p. 35.

Ikanetu, through the aid of Eyo, the native chief, to whom they were subject.

Several years later a station was opened at Ikorafiang some twelve miles farther up the river. This was a good stepping stone to the Ibibio country. It was an Efik outpost on Ibibio land.

One of the great difficulties of the early days was to provide adequate building for schools, churches, and homes for the European staff. When new arrivals came they were told that they must bring frame houses with them to insure a roof over their heads. A large part of the missionaries' time was taken up with building operations. In 1857 Waddell had six school-houses, three churches, and three dwelling-houses to his credit.

In 1858 Waddell left Nigeria. When he left the work at Creek Town his station was in a prosperous state. The attendance at church was large, and increasing.

To strengthen the church life it was felt that oversight should be administered through a properly constituted Court of the Church, rather than through a committee. On September 1, 1858, the Presbytery of Biafra was formed.

In 1872, the ordination of a native minister took place. This was Esien Esien Ukpabio, the first baptized convert, and the first teacher of the mission.

After twenty-seven years of work, the mission had five principal stations and fifteen outstations. In addition, there were twelve day-schools and over four hundred pupils.

From the years 1860 to 1890, the mission suffered greatly by the death of many of its missionaries. Name after name could be mentioned. Had it not been for the native workers who were carrying on fully half the work of the mission, the veterans who still remained would have been defeated. Time and again new help was struck down with fever. Many times there

would not be enough help to supply all the mission stations. Native students were sent up stream to do work, but as soon as they got out of their familiar surroundings they became afraid. The natives mistrusted the native workers and work could not be carried on properly.

In 1888 a station was opened at Unwana, one of the most important sites occupied by the mission. It was a gateway to future work among the slave-dealing Arcs and the wild peoples of Edda, Ezza, and Uburu, as well as being a base for still further expansion up-river.

With the pleas that came from the missionaries to the homeland for more men and women, there came an answer from one Mary Slessor who was to become one of the heroines of West Africa.

Mary Slessor came to Africa in 1876 at the age of twenty-eight. She was first stationed at Duke Town. She saw the pitiful life the women had to live and she was determined to do something about it. She begged to go into the interior, because there only, she pointed out, could the tribal barriers be broken down.

In 1888 the mission committee sent her to the district of Okoyang, and she started a mission at Ekenge.

She soon became the champion of the women. Killing of twin babies and the casting out of the mother was fought by her. Always she was on the look-out for twins and it was not long before her compound was full of children who were to be killed. When she was threatened she would threaten back. She gained the respect of all with whom she came into contact, and in 1891 the British Government appointed her Vice-Consul for Okoyang. She accepted it because it gave her more prestige and authority. People traveled far to have her settle disputes and her judgments were never questioned.

However, in spite of her many administrative duties she never forgot the one great task which had attracted her to Africa. She always

testified of Christ amid her labors. In the mission compound she held services; she daily taught the children at school, and visited the homes of the natives to instruct and comfort them.

In 1903 she did work at Itu, and in 1904 it became possible to build a hospital there.

Until the year 1915 she continually traveled up and down the Cross river reaching always more and more pagan natives. Finally in January of 1915 her life slipped quietly away at Usa.

In May, 1891, an industrial institution for the training of natives was begun at Calabar. The location of Government headquarters in Calabar offered opportunities for young men who had an education and for this reason the school was located at Calabar. Named after the founder of the mission, the Hope Waddell Training Institution rapidly became one of the foremost training centers in West Africa.

A Girls' Institute was opened the same year at Creek Town and was filled to overflowing. This type of work was also being done at Duke Town, and at Ikorfiang in Ibibio country. Girls could be numbered in twos and threes where boys came to school by the score, but there were equal opportunities for the training of both.

In 1900 the Calabar mission came under the control of the United Free Church of Scotland, formed by the union of the Free and United Presbyterian Churches.

In 1922 the Mission Council decided that the most fitting memorial to Miss Slessor would be a continuation of her work to which she had given her life. The Slessor Memorial, a home for women and girls, was begun at Ikot Obany. The response there however, was indifferent, and in a short time the Slessor Memorial Home was removed to Arochuku, where the women of Ibo gave it warm-hearted support.

The aim of the Slessor Memorial Home is twofold: to take in and

train young girls in preparation for marriage, and to hold classes for older women who wish to learn to read the Bible and receive further instruction. They look after widows or outcast wives for according to native law and custom they may not marry again being abandoned without any privileges or rights in the community.

The training of female certificated teachers is now centralized at Obaraku, Umashia, where the Church Missionary Society, the Methodist Mission, and the United Free Church of Scotland have a United Training College.

Another hospital was opened at Uburu in 1915 by Dr. Hitchcock. Work became so heavy that it could not all be handled. In 1918 the flu epidemic which followed the World War also affected Nigeria, and laid low many of the European workers. The good doctor had to treat both his fellow-workers and the natives. The overload was too much for him and it brought about his death the next year at the age of thirty-seven. For five years the station was closed except for one six months' period. Then in 1924 Dr. and Mrs. Hastings entered on a period of service at Uburu which has continued, broken only by furloughs, to the present day.<sup>14</sup>

This hospital is one of the best placed mission hospitals in Africa. Situated in the midst of a great population, its fame as a center of healing draws patients from a wide area. The miracle of surgery made a great impression on the natives and did much to remove their prejudice. When Dr. Hastings cured the disease called yaws<sup>15</sup> this firmly established the success of the medical work in south Nigeria. This cure spread like wild fire through-out the land, and the hospital was besieged by sufferers. At times the doctor would have twelve hundred people waiting to be treated.

In 1928 a piece of land for a leper camp was acquired about a mile from the hospital, and by the end of the first year there were about seventy lepers there.

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14. The latest date to be found was 1946.

15. These are sores that cover the body, and almost every native has them. They can become very painful if infected.

The Uburu hospital and leper camp were enlarged and improved in 1931 and in 1946 Dr. Hastings visited leper centers every week in five widely separated places in addition to the camp near the mission station. At every center except one, treatment is given under the doctor's supervision by trained assistants who themselves at one time were lepers. McFarlen reports that at the end of 1944 there were 1,111 lepers on the roll, that the out-patients at Uburu hospital numbered 10,401, who came a total of 74,040 times, that there were 576 inpatients, and that 714 operations were performed.<sup>16</sup> The hospital is entirely self-supporting.

For latest available statistics see the Appendix.

The Southern Baptist Convention Foreign Mission Board (1850)  
(American)

The foreign mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention began work in Nigeria in the year 1850. The Rev. J. T. Bowen, his wife, and Mr. Goodale were the first appointed for this job. They arrived in Nigeria in the year 1850, and in less than a month Mr. Goodale died, the first of a long list of Baptist missionaries to lay down their lives in Nigeria.

The first twenty-five years of Southern Baptist work in Nigeria was a period of experiment. The climate was both treacherous and unknown. Tribal warfare made it difficult for the missionaries to travel. Facilities for transportation and communication were thoroughly inadequate and the possibility of doing an expansive work was thought almost out of the question.

After traveling over the interior Bowen settled in Abeokuta where the Church Missionary Society, and the Wesleyans had stations. There he enjoyed the company of the members of these societies as he studied the language, gathered important data about the country, and prepared the foundation for his Yoruba grammar, which has served missionaries to this present day.

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16. Ibid., pp. 152-153.

After eighteen months in Abeokuta, Bowen settled in the large Yoruba town, Ijoiye. After a visit to the United States Bowen brought back five new missionaries. A mission house and chapel were built at Ijoiye, and the first converts were baptized in 1851. When the new missionaries arrived, Bowen moved on into the interior, going to Ogbomoso, and Ilorin, a stronghold of Mohammedanism. This was the second mission station started by Rev. Bowen. During this time other mission stations were opened up by the new men and women at Lagos and Oyo. Grants were given by the tribal government and mission buildings erected. The period of service for Rev. Bowen and his wife was quite short, and because of ill health they were required to return to this country in 1856.

In 1862 Ijoiye fell victim to an inter-tribal war, and many refugees went to Abeokuta. Later conditions became so severe here that the missionaries had to flee to Lagos. At Lagos they found safety in the house of Mrs. J.M. Harden, the widow of the first Baptist African pastor of Lagos. Death and sickness continued until in 1868 there was not one Southern Baptist missionary left on the field.

At the close of the first twenty-five years of work in Nigeria, conditions were not very encouraging. Most of the missionaries either had died or were forced to go back to the States because of their health. The missions in the four towns had to be abandoned by 1869 because of the Civil War in America. The Board had no money to support them. It was not until six years later that the Board was able to re-open work. Twenty-one missionaries worked in Nigeria during this first era. The foundations they laid made possible the work that came later. The principal work of these missionaries in those early days was that of preaching, teaching, and building. It was largely a task of building good will, with as much preaching and teaching as possible in addition.<sup>17</sup>

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17. C. Sylvester Green, New Nigeria, pp. 68-69.

With the arrival of W. T. David the year 1875 marked the resumption of Southern Baptist work in Nigeria. For six years there had been no white missionaries and the responsibility for the work started there had been in the hands of native Baptists. It was Mrs. J. Harden who directed, encouraged, and carried on the Baptist work, not only in Lagos, but also throughout the countryside. So successful was the work of these natives, that when the white missionaries moved in, they found many converts at the larger cities like Lagos, Abeokuta, and Ogomosho, waiting to be baptized, and likewise small houses of worship had been erected.

Evangelism had been the great emphasis of the work of the natives during the six years absence of the missionaries. With this spirit of evangelism the new missionaries entered the great period of growth and permanency that marked the efforts of Southern Baptists during the second quarter century in Nigeria.

The period of service in the first quarter century in Nigeria had been approximately two years, but in the second quarter and thereafter some terms ran as high as twenty and thirty years.

With the turn of the century, new hope, new vision, and new prospects arose. In a period marked by organization and expansion, several major developments were noted in the missionary program. Missionary C.E. Smith had inaugurated the nucleus of what was to become the theological seminary. He believed one of the principal aims of foreign missions was to train a native ministry.<sup>18</sup>

This training institution for native workers has proved itself a vital factor in the development of mission work in Nigeria. Out of this has grown the Southern Baptist College and Seminary at Ogbomosho. At the same time rudiments of an elementary and a secondary school system were in process of forming. The instructions were given both in the vernacular

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<sup>18</sup>. Ibid., p. 73

and in English, and in every instance it was accompanied by the preaching of the Gospel.

In Abeokuta is found the Baptist Boys' High School. Boys graduating from this school are permitted to matriculate without examination at London University. Many have received the coveted Cambridge Certificate. Also in Abeokuta is a girls' school, the graduates of which are developing into remarkably efficient teachers throughout Nigeria. Another girls' school is located at Lagos.

Industrial schools are located at Iwo and Shaki, the latter practically making all the furniture for the missionaries' homes.

In 1907 the first medical missionary came to Nigeria from their Church. Their hospital is located at Ogbomoso.

In 1910 a constitution and by-laws were adopted, which brought into one body all the workers in the field, both white and native. This organization was given the official name of The Nigerian Baptist Conference. Under their auspices a newspaper, the Nigeria Baptist, was printed both in Yoruba and English.

After more than three-quarters of a century of work for Christ in Nigeria, there are more than two hundred churches and congregations, with a total baptized membership in excess of 18,000 members; one hundred fourteen Sunday-schools, and there were more than 1,500 baptisms every year. The total gifts contributed by the churches in Nigeria for the support of their pastors and teachers, for missions, and for the upkeep of their church buildings, is approximately \$22,000 a year.<sup>19</sup>

Latest available statistics are found in the Appendix.

#### Qua Iboe Mission (1887)

The Qua Iboe Mission was begun in 1887, in response to an appeal from some members of the Ibuno, a clan of the Ibibio tribe, located in south-east Nigeria. They lived along the Qua Iboe river, and hence the name.

19. Ibid., pp. 80-81.

These people carried on a trade with Calabar and in doing so came into contact with native Christians there. About this time also a white trader, who had settled among them, gave them instructions and on Sundays assembled some of them to tell them about his God. Receiving this little bit of instruction the natives wanted more. An appeal for a missionary was made by letter in the name of a member of the clan. This letter was taken to Duke Town in Nigeria where it finally came into the hands of the Scottish Presbyterian Mission there. From here it finally found its way to the late Dr. Grattan Guinness, of Harley College, London. He in turn read the letter to his students, and in response, one of them, Mr. S.A. Bill, offered himself for the task.

In the course of time, however, the mission field in the Ibibio country became too large for the Scottish Presbyterian Church and so it allocated this territory to an interdenominational Irish Protestant Mission Society with headquarters at Belfast, Ireland. The Mission under their direction was then called the Qua Iboe Mission.<sup>20</sup>

Mr. Bill arrived at the Qua Iboe river at the end of 1887, and work soon began to show fruit at Ibuno the first mission station. Mr. Baillie joined Mr. Bill in 1888. By the work of these two, a small church grew up, and in 1890, the first communion service was held, with eleven Christian natives participating. The work grew rapidly, the number of communicants reaching 300 by the end of 1898, when the first native pastor was appointed (David Ekong).<sup>21</sup>

The Society consists in the main of laymen and provides for only the barest kind of missionary help, depending on the natives themselves to take up the work after the most superficial instruction, and laying no

20. Dr. J. T. Mueller, "Africa's Plea To Our Church," The Waltham League Messenger, (July, 1938), 702.

21. Maxwell, op. cit., p. 97.

stress whatever on indoctrination. Making the native mission so independent of foreign support has done one thing anyway, it has trained the native to give to the work.

A doctor is located at Etinan one of the stations.

For statistics on this society see the Appendix.

Primitive Methodist Missionary Society (1893)  
(British)

Missionaries of this Society first did work in Fernando Po, island at the mouth of the Calabar river, but they felt that their work at this place was too limited and they decided to move up into Nigeria. Accordingly, in 1893, new ground was broken and an opening made on the mainland near Calabar at Archibong Town on the Akwa-Yafe river. The Rev. R. Fairley and the Rev. J.M. Brown were the first to come to this place. The first two converts from heathenism were baptized in 1895.

Upon the settlement of the Cameroon Boundary before the first World War, the Mission found itself included on the German side of the frontier, and so the Mission and a number of their people were moved over the line into British territory. The new settlement was made at Oron.

Advance was made from the coast in the south-east up country north-west through the Efik-speaking peoples right into Ibo country. This was reached by 1911.

The advance of the Port Harcourt railway beyond Enugu in Onitsha country led the Mission still farther north, and at length, in 1924, they crossed the border into the Northern Provinces and opened work among the Okpotos in Munshi Province. This was the first extension made from the Calabar coast straight up through the Benue region.

There are nine stations in all. At two of these there are training institutes for boys, one at Oron (opened in 1905) and one at Uzuskoli. At the latter of these two centers students are trained as teachers. Near the school at Uzuskoli there is a large leper colony. At Jamastown

Institute (opened 1909) a training is given to girls.<sup>22</sup>

### Sudan Interior Mission (1893)

This Society, whose headquarters are in Canada, sent its first workers to Nigeria in 1893, and under the leadership of the Rev. R.V. Bingham tried to make a beginning in the interior of northern Nigeria. Later a second attempt was made and this also failed.

It was not until 1902, after the British Protectorate over Northern Nigeria had been inaugurated, that it became possible for this Society to make a beginning, and accordingly a station was opened at Patigi, in Ilorin province. This, with the exception of Lokoja Station (Church Missionary Society), is the oldest mission station in Northern Nigeria.

In 1904, an advance was made farther north to Washishi, in Nune province, and through the years the work has spread so that it reaches to the borders of Bornu Province to the east, and has entered the French territory to the north of Kano.

This Mission serves many of the Societies in Nigeria by its press at Minna in northwest Nigeria. This press is so equipped and staffed that it is able to take care of all normal demands for printed matter.

This Society is under no particular Church body. It is made up of men and women from various denominations who realized the need of mission work in Nigeria, and volunteered their services. In general the Sudan Interior Mission places strong emphasis on individual conversions, and concerns itself little with the organization of the native church.<sup>13</sup>

At Miango they have a rest camp for missionaries both for members of their own society and also for those of others in Nigeria. Also in this town they operate a school for missionaries' children, and children

22. Ibid., pp. 97-98.

23. Report of the Delegation of the Christian Reformed Church to Nigeria, p. 12.

of all societies may attend this school. It is operated by Mr. and Mrs. Craig. Mr. Craig was a missionary's son and seeing the need of a school for children of the missionaries devoted his life to this cause. The Kiango Rest Camp is also used as a sanitorium, and there are three qualified physicians on the staff.

At Mimba they have a language school that is open to all missionaries.

For available statistics see the Appendix.

#### Sudan United Mission (1904)

The Sudan United Mission was organized in London, and its chief purpose then, and still is now, to establish a chain of Mission stations across the entire Sudan to combat the southward push of the Mohammedans. The great leader behind this movement was Dr. H. K. Kuntz. He saw the danger of Mohammedanism sweeping down on Nigeria and not only absorbing the pagans, but driving out the Christians. He with his wife were one of the first pioneers to begin this task in Nigeria.

At the beginning the Sudan United Mission was a non-denominational missionary organization, that is, no one denomination dominated its work in an official way. It was a voluntary association of Christians from various denominations who undertook to do a piece of work which they thought the organized church had neglected to do. Supporters and missionaries of the Sudan United Mission came from Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist, Evangelical, Lutheran (none from the Synodical Conference), and Episcopalian churches. The bond of union was an evangelical declaration of faith which was taken over from the World's Evangelical Alliance. Subject only to that declaration, each missionary was given freedom to preach the truth of God as he saw fit, and each station was permitted to develop its work along the lines dear to the group by which it was named. In the course of time the Sudan United Mission attained inter-denominational features also; that is, several denominations such as the Evangelical Church of North America, and the Danish Lutheran Church, took over part

of the work, but they continued to consider themselves a part of the Sudan United Mission.<sup>24</sup>

The Sudan United Mission began work in Nigeria in 1904, when a station was open in Muri Province in the north. From here they went into Yola and Nasarawa Provinces.

For many years they provided a home for slaves that had been liberated by the British government. This was at Wukari, and was called the Lucy Memorial Freed Home (named after the first Mrs. Kuma).

Ibi, in the Muri Province was opened in 1908, and for years was the headquarters of the Sudan United Mission. The Government District Offices were located there which made it a city of importance, but when these were moved, the city lost its importance and the Sudan United Mission moved its central field office to Jos.

They have a hospital at Vom in Bauchi Province which is under the direction of a medical missionary. Another doctor is stationed at Randa in the Nasarawa Province.

Available statistics are found in the Appendix.

The United Missionary Society of the Hannonite Brethern in Christ. (1905)

Work by this society was begun by the Rev. A. W. Banfield. He first came to Nigeria under the authority of the Sudan Interior Mission. In 1905 he was enabled to open work for his own Board at Shonga in Ilorin province in the north. An advance was made in 1909 to Jebba, where the western railway line crosses the Niger, a most important point.

For many years one of the most important features of work of this society was the printing done at Shonga for the various Societies. This work was later transferred to the Sudan Interior Mission presses at Minna.

The Mission's operations are all conducted in the region of the north-westerly bend of the Niger above the confluence, mainly among the Nupe people. In 1923 work was started in Salka in the Kontagora

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24. Ibid.

province.<sup>25</sup>

### The Seventh-Day Adventists (1913)

The Seventh-Day Adventists entered the field in 1913.

The location of their mission headquarters is at Ibadan, Nigeria, West Africa. This is in the province of Yoruba.

The reason that prompted their society to enter the field was the call of the Lord to preach the message in every land.

The first missionary of their society to enter the field was Mr. D. C. Babcock, in West Nigeria, near Ibadan.

The location of their present mission stations are as follows:

West Nigerian Mission Station, Ibadan.

East Nigerian Mission Station, Aba, Nigeria.

Astun Station, via Ilorin, Nigeria.

Elele Station, Elele, Ahoada, via Fort Harcourt.

Ibibio Station, Aba, Nigeria.

North Nigeria, Jengre Railway Station, via Jos, N. Nigeria.

They have a training school at Ibadan and at Aba and have a hospital at Ilo-Ifo. There is a publishing house at Ibadan and dispensaries are located at Jengre, North Nigeria, and Aba in East Nigeria.

As a denomination they do not affiliate with other denominations so they are not members of any mission councils in Nigeria.

Following are the statistics: East Nigeria, 6,695; North Nigeria, 156; West Nigeria, 1,198 souls.<sup>26</sup>

### Danish Lutheran Church Denmark and U.S.A.

In 1913 three missionaries were sent out from Denmark to Nigeria,

<sup>25</sup> Maxwell, *op. cit.*, pp. 101-102.

<sup>26</sup> J. I. Robison, Letter from the General Conference of Seventh-Day Adventists, Takoma Park, Washington 12, D.C., March 4, 1948.

Africa to establish a mission there. These three were Dr. Niels Bronnum and his wife, and Miss Dagmar Rose, a graduate nurse.

The early beginnings of these missionaries was filled with sorrow. They wanted to settle in the Yola province about 200 miles up the Benue River. But the small group never reached their destination. On the first trip up the Benue Bronnum's wife died soon after the birth of a son. Miss Rose then returned to Europe with the child, and Bronnum was left alone.

He returned to a British mission in Ibi on the Benue to refresh his spirit in the fellowship of other missionaries.

In 1913 he with three hired natives sailed up the Benue river to try to reach the place of his hopes, the Yola province. He came as far as Human in the Yola province, and there he discovered that he had trespassed regulations by entering the province without the special permission from the highest British official in the district.

He now had to travel farther east to the city of Yola to see the official. There he got temporary permission to work in Human; but when he got to Human he was informed that the permission limited him to the Mohammedan section of the city.

More restrictions came. He must not work outside the city of Human, and he must add no feminine missionaries to his staff.

Back home in Denmark the wheels were beginning to turn and in 1914 friends of the Sudan Mission sent missionaries to Nigeria. They were the Rev. and Mrs. Thompson, from the American Church, Miss Kjar, Miss A. Thielisch, a teacher, and Miss Erickson a nurse. But as they stood at the door of the Yola province, the door was still locked. No permission could be gotten to let the new missionaries enter.

Tropical fever laid hold of Dr. Bronnum. His distressing illness together with the utter loneliness and his failures made him send for two missionaries to come in regardless of a lack of permission. A month later

permission came for the entrance of men, but still no such permission for the women.

Work did not progress the way they wished. It was an act of God that gave them the break they needed. A drought had stricken the village and a famine was eminent. One day the chief came to Bronnum asking him to pray with him. The next day the chief, two of his tribe, Dr. Bronnum and Rev. Thomson knelt and prayed for rain. That evening the rain came. When this happened the gates were thrown wide open for the Gospel's entrance into Human, and to Imburn, a city across the river. At the end of this year Bronnum translated the Gospel of St. John into the language of the people.<sup>27</sup>

In 1913 there were three missionaries. By 1916 there were nine present at one time. During the fall of 1916 the first missionary conference took place.

After thirty years of work by the Danish Lutheran Church they have eight mission stations and two boarding schools, besides eighty outstations.

Their policy of accepting Church members is that after one has confessed Christ he still must go to a Bible class for at least two and one half years before he can be baptized.

In 1921, a boys' school at Human was started, one of the first boarding schools in Northern Nigeria. From this school have come many evangelists and teachers.

The girls' school was begun in 1925. They are taught grade school subjects, how to knit, sew, farm, and cook, and general hygiene. It is located at Nunan.

For the connection of the American Church with the Danish Lutheran Church of Denmark a paragraph from a letter from Rev. N. B. Hansen, chairman of the American Board of the Danish United Sudan Mission is

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27. K. M. Judvigsen Into Sudan and God Went With Them pp. 21-22.

quoted:

Our synod had not officially adopted the mission until 1946, when we became co-sponsors with the Sudan Mission Society in Denmark. Mission friends had supported this mission for many years. Two of our church members, Pastor and Mrs. Thompson have been on the field since its origin, although members of the Sudan Mission Society of Denmark.<sup>28</sup>

#### The Salvation Army (1920)

Work was begun by the Salvation Army at Lagos in 1920, by a party of officers under Lieutenant Colonel and Mrs. George Souter. Cadets are trained locally, and a number of them have been commissioned as officers and have gone out and taught in their mission fields.

An industrial school is operated at Lagos for boys.

#### Christian Missions in Many Lands (1920)

The first workers affiliated with this Society<sup>29</sup> spent several months in 1919 at the Sudan United Mission's station at Donga, before they found a location that situated them. In 1920 they were able to open at Abajikolo in Munshi province in the north. Later extensions were made to Akbatcha and Aiyangba in 1922 in the same province. The tribe they reached was the Igara, one of the larger tribes of Nigeria. In 1922 workers went to Kano where the Church Missionary Society had a station.<sup>30</sup>

#### Church of the Brethren (1922)

The Foreign Mission of the Church of the Brethren entered Nigeria in 1922. Their work is located east of Jos about 400 miles, and they are working among the Bura, Margi, Higi, and Fulani tribes in the north.

This society went into this field because of the lack of Protestant

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28. Rev. H. B. Hansen, Letter from the American Board of the Danish United Sudan Mission, Hutchinson, Minnesota, December 26, 1947.

29. In a letter to Prof. E. C. Zimmermann dated April 17, 1946, from Bath, England, headquarters of the "Christian Missions in Many Lands" a statement is made "That we are not a Missionary Society, that we do not exercise control over the missionaries with whom we correspond..."

30. Maxwell, op. cit., p. 103.

work in the area, and also because of a desire of the Foreign Mission Board to expand their mission work.

The first missionaries to enter the field were Rev. A. D. Helsar and the Rev. H. Stever Kulp. A year later their wives joined them, and two years later the Board began to send in additional personnel. They entered the field at Lagos, traveling by train 300 miles to Jos, and then trakked 400 miles in to Garkida in the Bura territory.

Their present mission stations are located, in the order of their foundation at Garkida, Lassa, Marasa, Chibuk, and Wandali. They are in the process of opening new stations at Gulak, Gwaza, Mubi, and other places.

They have some primary schools, a training school (for village evangelists), short-term courses on evangelism, Bible training schools and numerous special courses. They conduct two main hospitals, two large dispensaries, a large number of village dispensaries, and training schools for public health. Special emphasis is given the problems facing Christian living in our present day. At present they have a staff of 42 people, and their yearly budget approaches \$100,000. This society is firmly established in Nigeria, and the next years look bright for them.<sup>31</sup>

The Evangelical Church (1926)  
(Formerly The Evangelical Association, also called "sons of Albright".)

When speaking about the history of the Evangelical Church in Nigeria, we must first look at works done by Evangelicals, and not the Evangelical Church, for it was not until 1926 that the Evangelical Church officially adopted a mission.

The first Evangelical to serve in Nigeria was Miss Rose Boehning, who for a while had served as a Deaconess for the Illinois Conference.

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31. From a letter sent to the writer by Ieland S. Brubaker Secretary of the Commission on Foreign Mission, Church of the Brethren, February 26, 1948.

In 1905, she accepted the call to an African Industrial Mission in Nigeria.<sup>32</sup> One year later the Rev. C. W. Guinter arrived. He was the founder and first superintendent of Evangelical Missions in Nigeria. He labored for twenty-three years in Nigeria, and accomplished much in laying foundations. He went to school at the Albright College, Myerstown, Pennsylvania, and it was here that he decided that his calling was to Africa. While at school, Dr. H. Kari Kumm of the Sudan United Mission, who had gone to Africa first in 1899, gave a talk before the students on the need of men and missions, and so impressed Guinter that in a moment he knew that Africa was his calling.

In the fall of 1906 Guinter sailed for Africa single to serve under the Sudan United Mission. He joined the American party which was working among the populous Jukun and Chamba tribes, whose language as yet had not been reduced to writing. During most of the time Wukari was the headquarters for his pioneering work.

In 1915, a Training School for African evangelists was opened with a student body of thirteen men and one woman in attendance, representing six tribes. Mrs. Guinter, who went out with Guinter as a bride in 1909, established a day-school, and supervised women's work. Two years later Mr. Guinter was made superintendent of the Wukari mission. He now saw the great need for missionaries. Many tribes were at the crossroads, one road leading to Christianity, and the other to Islam.

On each furlough Guinter would preach of the need of funds and men in Nigeria. In 1910, a plea to support Guinter as an official denominational missionary was refused by the Board of Missions, though it did authorize its secretary "to receive funds for Guinter who labors in Africa under the Sudan United Mission."<sup>33</sup> In 1911, the General Conference took further steps when it voted to cover any part of Guinter's salary not covered by contributions.

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32. Paul Himmel, Eller, History of Evangelical Missions, p. 269.

33. Ibid., p. 272.

The African Mission of the Evangelical Church is attributable to the indefatigable determination of the Women's Mission Society. Seeing that the General Conference would not support him, The Women's Missionary Society in every conference were contributing toward the African Fund, and in 1918, they were permitted to assume the support for Ginter and his station.

In 1922 the Women's Mission Society had on hand \$12,744. for the founding of an African mission. Also two consecrated young people, Rev. and Mrs. Ira D. McBride, volunteered to go to Africa with Ginter if they would be appointed by the Board of Missions. The latter told of the great need of workers, and of his willingness to go along if necessary. These factors taken together impelled the Women's Mission Society to ask the Board for permission to "make itself responsible for one tribe in Africa, as our part of the Sudan United Mission."<sup>34</sup> The Board approved the petition, and thereby the Evangelical Church served notice of her intention to place her name among the Christian agencies which have given themselves to the healing of the "open sore of the world."

While the initial decision in 1922 had been to support a mission in Africa, it was not until four years later, that the final step in the establishment of a denominational work was taken. So in 1926, the General Conference ratified and approved the resolution to do work in Nigeria and thereby their Sudan Mission became an official denominational mission.

Consultation with the Sudan United Mission, after the action of 1922, led to the establishment of a mission among the Furkum tribes.

From the very beginning there was a great need for medical work and a knowledge of medicine by the missionaries. Epidemics and serious diseases were too much of a match for them. To attempt to meet the needs of the

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34. Ibid, p. 273.

natives a small dispensary was built in 1932. Today there are medical huts at all the stations.

While intellectual enlightenment is one of the things most needed in Nigeria, it is little wanted. As soon as a missionaries residence was erected in Bombur a day-school was opened. In 1925 there were twenty-three pupils in the school, receiving instruction in the Bible, reading, writing, and arithmetic. Because enrollment in the school is taken to signify an open break with their old religion, most of the Africans disliked education and avoided it. In many cases social ostracism, and in some cases, ejection from home, were the lot of the youths. In seven years forty-three had learned to read with some degree of exactness.

In 1929, a primary school was opened at Pero. In 1932 permission was granted by the British Government to build a school at Kerum. In the following year two new schools were opened at Ghensere, and Banyan.

While every valley in Wukumland has its own dialect the common language indispensable in trading or traveling is the Hausa, and in 1936 it was added to the curriculum.

The Evangelical missionaries on the field all contributed a bit to translating books to be used by the natives. Dictionaries, hymnbooks, catechisms, and sections of the Bible have been made available for the literate. The Evangelical Mission sponsored the publication of the Hausa Grammar.

The section of Nigeria allocated to the Evangelical Church is located in the eastern part of Nigeria, and is rectangular in shape, extending seventy miles in one direction, and thirty-five in the other. In this area there are 60,000 people, speaking twelve languages and four dialects. At the present time there are seven missionaries at work in Nigeria. After eighteen years of earnest effort the African Mission consists of four organized congregations and sixty-seven members. It is the desire

of the Evangelical Church to establish a native African Church, not an African Conference of the Evangelical Church.

#### Christian Reformed Church (1939)

The information on this Church and its work in Nigeria, was received directly from the Rev. J. Beebe, of Grand Rapids, Michigan, secretary of Christian Reformed Missions. He personally answered by mail many questions about their work in Nigeria, and also gave to this writer a printed report made by a delegation to Nigeria in 1946 and 1947.

The work of the Christian Reformed Church in Nigeria dates back officially only to 1939, when in June of that year the Synod of that Church officially adopted the resolution to be responsible for work in Nigeria. But for work of Christian Reformed people, we go back to 1915. It was in that year that Dr. Kumm of the Sudan United Mission spoke at a missionary conference held at Lake Geneva, Wisconsin. In his audience was a young lady, Johanna Veenstra, daughter of a Christian Reformed preacher who had died early in his ministry.

Johanna Veenstra was born April 19, 1894, at Paterson, New Jersey, and was converted at the age of sixteen. She felt a kind of call to work in the Kingdom and enrolled as a student at a training school in New York. This school, the Union Missionary Training School, delegated Miss Veenstra to attend the Geneva Conference mentioned, and it was at that conference that Miss Veenstra was given a definite call to a field of work in the heart of Africa.

When she received her call to work in Nigeria, she did not go out under the auspices of the Christian Reformed Church, because they were unable officially to send her out. This did not discourage her, however, for she was able to obtain an appointment with the Sudan United Mission already working in Nigeria<sup>35</sup> and on the last day of 1919, she boarded a

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35. They began work in 1904.

steamer at Liverpool, England, that was to take her to Nigeria under the auspices of the Sudan United Mission.

She was the first member of the Christian Reformed Church to go to Nigeria. She first did work at Ibi, a station of the Sudan United Mission in the province of Muri, Northern Nigeria. She then left Ibi and established a mission at Lupwe. It was to this place that Rev. and Mrs. E.H. Smith, Miss Jonnie Stielstra, Miss Tena Huizenga, and Miss Anita Vissia, all Christian Reformed missionaries, came under the auspices of the Sudan United Mission. They worked under the jurisdiction of the Sudan United Mission until 1939, when after several years of negotiations with the Sudan United Mission the Christian Reformed Church took over the Lupwe station, which today is the principal station of the Christian Reformed Church.

By the terms of the agreement with the Sudan United Mission, approved by their Synod of 1939, they are to continue to be affiliated with the Sudan United Mission, and to send a representative to the Nigerian Field Council, but there is to be no curtailment whatever of their authority to conduct their mission along Reformed lines which they consider essential. Throughout the seven years during which this agreement has been in effect, relations between the missionaries of the Christian Reformed Church and those of the Sudan United Mission have been most amicable. Their missionaries attend the meetings of the Nigerian Field Council, which are only advisory. There has been no effort whatever on the part of the Sudan United Mission authorities to control the policies of the Christian Reformed Church. The facilities of the Sudan United Mission office at Jos (formerly at Gindiri) are always available to them, and the entire staff of the Sudan United Mission has been unflinchingly courteous and helpful to their staff. The relations with the British Government are greatly facilitated by their affiliation with the Sudan United Mission.<sup>36</sup>

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36. Report of the 1946...1947 Delegation to Nigeria, p. 12.

The Lupwe mission compound covers an area of about seven acres. It is located at the foot of large hill called Mount Veenstra. The entire area in which Lupwe is located is called the Benue Valley, and has an elevation of about four hundred feet above sea level. The hills surrounding Lupwe are known as the foothills of the Cameroons, thus it is made clear that Lupwe is located in the extreme eastern portion of Nigeria.

The type of work being carried on by the missionary at Lupwe station may be classified as evangelistic, educational, and medical although all three branches of the work are closely integrated.

The evangelistic work is in the foreground and is under the direction of the Rev. E. H. Smith, mentioned above. Much of his effort is directed to help the churches that are emerging and to further the work of the native evangelists at the outstations which is done by making personal visits to the mission stations, by holding many personal conferences with native workers, by preaching and through the administration of the sacraments, as well as by general supervision of all ecclesiastical matters. In this evangelistic effort the other white workers on the field also take their turns at speaking and preaching.

The educational program is under the supervision of Mrs. Smith, who is principal of the school. There are six school rooms on the Lupwe compound, and there are three native teachers to assist Mrs. Smith. The enrollment in the grammar school is about seventy. The range of education offered compares pretty well with the eight grades in our American grammar schools, but besides the grammar school training there is also a teachers' training class and an evangelist training class. Efforts are always being put forth to train teachers for the classes for religious instruction which are organized in many of the mission stations, and to the training of evangelists who will serve the African Church as missionaries in the

outlying areas still to be reached. All the training aims directly at the glory of God in soul-winning, Christian nurture, and the promotion of the native Church.

The medical work is carried on by two white nurses. Some five hundred patients are cared for each week, and plans are in the making for enlarging the service by the establishment of a leper colony somewhere between Lupwe and Takum. A great deal of maternity work is done by them.

The present size of the staff at Lupwe is numbered at eight. They handle almost all the work at Lupwe and supervise the work at the twenty-four out-stations, which are cared for by native Christians.

Conferences are held regularly with the Sudan United Mission and a spirit of unity is arising among the various churches.

Theoretically the field in which the Christian Reformed Church is working is supposed to be the Wukari Division of Benue Province. From the extreme northern to the extreme southern tip of the field is approximately a hundred miles. Across the northern edge there is a sector about seventy miles wide. Below that there is a slanting corridor less than fifty miles wide. The southern section spreads out to a width of about seventy miles.

The total population of Wukari Division as given by the District Officer is 106,763. Much of the eastern section of this division, however, is inhabited by the Tui or Munchi Tribe which numbers 30,851 in Wukari. By agreement with the Dutch Reformed Church Mission of South Africa they refrain from work among the Tui People. That leaves a total population of almost seventy thousand in their part of the field. The total area of the Wukari Division is 6,000 square miles.

The Wukari division is divided into four sub-divisions with a population reported as follows:

Wukari...12,909  
Takum....36,763

Donga...17,103  
Kentu... 9,980<sup>37</sup>

The Christian Reformed Church is reaching all four of these sub-divisions although their heaviest concentration of work is in the Takum area.

There are 64 separate tribes living in the Wukari Division. Most of their work thus far has been among the Jukun, numbering 10,962; and the Dzampire or Kutev, numbering 19,917. Recently work has begun among the Ndaro and Tegum tribes in the extreme eastern section of the field.

The work carried on at these outstations is very interesting. On their entire Nigerian field, work is being done at 24 outstations. There are preaching services at every one of the outstations. At each outstation the native Christians (or if there are no baptized Christians as yet, the catechumens) have built and maintain a church building entirely at their own expense. The Sunday preaching service is usually followed by a class for catechetical instruction. Personal work is done and it is a fixed feature of church life that the more mature Christians go out on preaching tours of neighboring villages from time to time.

Their education work is completely evangelistic, that is, it aims to present the Gospel and to teach catechumens how to read in order that they may read the Scriptures for themselves. Classes are held two hours a day for five days a week. The adult classes meet six months or more each year, and the children's classes nine months or more. All expenses of these schools, including teacher's salary, are paid by the local Christians.

With the exception of occasional visits by Lupwe nurses or dispensers, no medical work is carried on at the outstations. Sick folks are urged to go to Lupwe for treatment.

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37. Ibid., p. 6.

The Sudan Interior Mission has been very helpful to the Christian Reformed Church in Nigeria. The Christian Reformed Church missionaries use the hymn books of the Sudan Interior Mission and other literature published by the bookshop at Jos. The Sudan Interior Mission rest camp at Miango is also available for the use of the Christian Reformed missionaries at a very low fee. The Sudan Interior Mission Language School at Minna is open to the missionaries of the Christian Reformed Church when space is available.

### III The Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference of North America (1936)

On April 25, 1936, the Rev. and Mrs. H. Nau left the ship Amsterkerk at Port Harcourt to begin their journey inland to establish a Christian Church among the Ibibios under the official direction of the Synodical Conference. The story behind this landing of Rev. and Mrs. Nau is indeed one of the most remarkable our Church had ever known. For its beginning we must go back some forty years and see how the Lord through the person of Jonathan Udo Ekong prepared the way. It is with the story of Ekong that we will trace the history of the founding of the Lutheran Church in Nigeria.

The facts regarding Jonathan Ekong are reliable for they are taken from his autobiography.<sup>1</sup>

Jonathan was the son of a tribal chieftan, one of sixty children born to his father through fifteen wives. Eight of these wives died before Jonathan was born. Seven of them he personally knew; his mother was one of these seven.

His father was chief of the town Afaha in Ibesikpo, and was a man of means. He owned a large tract of land, woodland, palm groves, farmland, and real estate in town. He had to spend no money for hired help because all work was done by his wives and children.

Jonathan was born in Afaha. His father and mother were heathen during his entire youth. Jonathan was a favorite son, and his father being a chief wanted his son to be well acquainted with all heathen practices of the tribe, so that he could be a good leader when he grew up. Up until the age of ten Jonathan enjoyed going to the heathen places

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1. Jonathan Udo Ekong, "Ikpat Ukot Obon, Walther League Messenger, (March, 1934).

of worship with his father. At this age he refused to go, not because he thought them wrong, but because they frightened him.

When Jonathan was young there was neither school nor church in the Ibesikpo country. There were schools and Christian Churches in other parts of Nigeria, at Calabar, Iboe, and Lagos. More important to Jonathan was the Qua Iboe Mission, for it was with this mission that he made his first contact with the white man, and his religions. When a boy the Qua Iboe Mission, a missionary society of Belfast, Ireland, began to evangelize the Ibibio country. About 1909 the mission opened a station at Aka Afot, about two and one half miles from the place where Jonathan was born. A few years later after hearing many stories about the work of the white man, Jonathan persuaded one of his half-brothers to go along with him to the mission. This they did in the strictest secrecy. One of Jonathan's other half-brothers learned of the trip and reported it to his parents, and they in turn threatened the two with killing if they did such a thing again - and they meant it. The spirit that prevailed against Christianity may be seen from this, and also from what happened to Jonathan's father later when he showed a friendly disposition towards Christianity.<sup>2</sup> This threat did not stop Jonathan and two weeks later he returned not with just one half-brother, but seven boys were in the group. The next time there were fifteen. Then the visits to the local church came to an end. The people of the town complained to his father that Jonathan was the ringleader for these visits and was ruining their children. Jonathan was given a frightful thrashing. A half-brother having pity on Jonathan suggested to his father that Jonathan be sent to a friend of his in Calabar to attend school there.

After getting the consent from his father and persuading his mother to let him go, Jonathan accompanied his half-brother Udo Ibon down to

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2. Jonathan's father was poisoned by the members of his tribe.

Calabar, and there was placed in the hands of his friend. This arrangement did not turn out as Jonathan wanted it to. His keeper was a heathen, and made Jonathan worship as he did even against his will. Jonathan also had to act as a slave for him and his wife. In no way did he receive the education he wanted, and at the end of six months when his brother returned he begged to go back. When his brother learned of the situation he took him home again.

When Jonathan returned to his home he quickly got into touch with his old playmates and they together discussed how matters could be arranged so that they could get an education. Their plans failed at first because the parents were opposed to them. As the group began to grow, they went to the missionary in charge of the Qua Iboe mission at Aha, asking him to establish a school in their town. He did not think much of a request which came from a group of small boys, and so he dismissed them without granting the request. The group kept coming again and again, till at last the white missionary told them to bring their fathers and he would discuss the matter further with them. The parents were unwilling to grant the request, and it was only when the older half-brothers offered to help that the missionary consented to come down and talk to the fathers. The fathers were very angry at this but were unable to prevent the coming, and they received him in a civil manner. He held a meeting with the fathers and the chiefs of the town, and all those present promised to help establish a school and church, and even promised to give a small piece of land for the building of a school house. But when the missionary left they changed their minds and did everything possible to hinder the plans. However, some of the chiefs present at the meeting who had promised to help felt guilty because they had broken their word, and after much disputing changed their mind again and gave a small piece of land on which the young people built a school.

When the school was built hostilities broke out anew between the chiefs and some went to the English district officer in Uyo and told him of their objection to the establishment of a mission in their town. The district officer fearing an uprising, advised the missionary for the time being to discontinue his efforts at opening up a mission in Ibesikpo. This was the end of the first effort of the Qua Iboe mission.

Two years after the above event a member of the United Free Church of Scotland in Creek Town, came to Jonathan's father and took him to task for the part he and the other chiefs had played in stopping missionary efforts in Afaha. Six months later Jonathan was invited to meet this man, Mr. Itan, in Creek Town. Together with other boys and young men who were interested in a school, Jonathan went to the plantation of Mr. Itan. Here they met Rev. Epke Nko of the United Free Church congregation in Creek Town, and he promised to send some one to visit Jonathan's town.

In December 1912, he sent Messrs. Esien Oku and Etin Eno to their country. From that day on the Gospel was preached in Jonathan's father's compound. The school that had been built before was now in ruin and the land taken back by the chiefs. Jonathan then consented to give up his share of land for the new school. His parents consented and for this his father was poisoned. Others seeing Jonathan giving his land did so too. A church was built and Mr. Esien Oka of the United Free Church ministered unto them till 1918 when he died.

What prompted Jonathan and the others to desire a church and school? In the words of Rev. Ekong himself: "It was the desire for education, because we saw that an educated man enjoyed more advantages and a greater esteem among his fellows."<sup>3</sup> The Christian congregation in 1918, numbered about 200, counting everybody who in some way wanted to be connected with it. The Christian understanding of the majority of the members was very

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3. Jonathan Udo Ekong, op. cit., p. 400.

meager. Although they were baptized and admitted to communion, the instruction they had received was very superficial. In consequence thereof some backsliding into heathenism took place. A clear understanding of the way of salvation was very rare among the members of this congregation. The congregation from the very beginning contributed to the support of its catechist-teacher. Since economic conditions were good and the congregation young, everybody was willing to contribute.

After the death of the catechist-teacher, Esien Oku, the United Free Church transferred this station without the consent of the people to the Qua Iboe Mission according to an agreement between the two missions. The people were never satisfied with the Qua Iboe Mission because of its wrong practice in refusing to administer baptism to children. Till 1926 the people struggled along as members of the Qua Iboe Mission, always dissatisfied because of the reason just mentioned, and also because of a lack of a trained ministry of their own, the lack of proper school facilities, and insufficient support of mission endeavor.

In June of 1926, Jonathan called all the young men and elders together at Ikot Oduat, to consider building a central school for the whole Ibesikpo country. The new school was to have an improved course of studies according to the Nigerian Code of Education in the town of Afaha. The school was to be supported by the Christians in the Ibesikpo country. This plan was reported to Mr. Westgarth, of the Qua Iboe Mission, and he was displeased because he feared that such a school would break up his central school in Itam, twelve miles away. He promised to lay the matter before the next Field Conference in Itwain.<sup>4</sup>

Returning from the meeting with the Qua Iboe missionary Jonathan called all the chiefs together. In deep humility he showed them the present condition, spiritual and political in Ibesikpo, and pointed out

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4. Ibid, p. 401.

the needs and the ways to meet these needs. The chiefs were very much pleased and promised to grant land for the central school and supply the materials for school and dormitories. After three weeks they made good their promise and in the beginning of 1927 they began to clear the bush in order to build the school.

As the work progressed, the Ibesikpo Christians began to talk about having a trained minister of their own in their midst. They chose Jonathan and wanted to send him to the United Free Church Seminary in Calabar to be trained for the ministry. Here again the hand of God guided Jonathan. Since they were under the Qua Iboe Mission they went to Mr. Westgrath to inform him of their intentions. He was against it and when he presented their request before the Field Conference they decided against Jonathan going to Calabar, and turned down a request of his people to send him to England.

When Jonathan and his friends came back from the conference they called a meeting in which Mr. Okon Edin, a native of Calabar and a teacher in the native school were present. He was pleased with their efforts and encouraged them. It was he who for the first time proposed the idea of sending Jonathan to America. He knew something of Howard University in New York and promised to get into touch with them if Jonathan's people would raise the money to send him there. Three months later Jonathan received a letter from the University, and then after three more months his people sent \$250.00 to Howard University for his support and education.

On May 19, 1928, after much trouble in getting a passport and necessary visas Jonathan boarded a ship for America. In his own words he gives us the reason for this trip:

May 19, 1928, I sailed to America with the good wishes of my people and the request to interest an American church in the work in the Ibesikpo country. The reason for this request was the realization that the Qua Iboe Mission's interests were different

from ours and that under the Qua Iboe Mission success in church and school was not possible, owing to its indifference toward good instruction, infant baptism, and a native trained ministry.<sup>5</sup>

While Howard University played a great part in bringing Jonathan to this country, he never enrolled in it as a student, because he did not have enough education to prepare him for entrance into the university. Dr. Brown of the school of religion was very kind to him, and all tried to make his stay here as pleasant as possible. He enjoyed a private teacher to instruct him. Dr. Brown had meanwhile interested Bishop Matthew of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church and Dr. Battle in his case, and through these gentlemen he came to North Carolina to attend Price Elementary High School in Salisbury. This school was just across the campus from Livingstone College, an institution of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. Hence he boarded in Livingstone College and attended Price School. Thus Jonathan became acquainted with the president, teachers, and students of this college, and he entertained the hope that the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church might in the future become the mother of their mission in Ibesikpo, and this especially so, since Bishop Matthew, who wanted to sail to the Gold Coast of Africa on an inspection tour of the missions of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church in that part of Africa, had promised to pay a visit to Ibesikpo. Bishop Matthew sailed and traveled rather much in Africa but did not visit the people of Jonathan, although he was not far from them. The Lord did not want them there.

In the fall of 1930 the Lord guided Jonathan to the goal he was seeking. At this time he read in the Afro-American, a colored newspaper, that the Lutheran Synodical Conference was thinking of opening up mission work somewhere in Africa. Near where Jonathan was going to school, was a

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5. Ibid, p. 445.

small Lutheran Church and to this he went. He was well received and had many talks with the pastor, the Rev. Vorice. Rev. Vorice told him he should not interest himself merely in any church, but in a church that preached the whole council of God, just as God wanted it to be taught. From this time forth Jonathan made this his goal. Pastor Vorice instructed Jonathan and in time received him into our church. While all this was going on, the elders of the Christians at Ibesikpo sent a letter to the United States, addressed in a general way to the Lutheran Church in the United States. They had heard in a mysterious manner that a large church-body in the United States was conducting successful missionary activities among the negroes of our country. This letter first reached the headquarters of the United Lutheran Church, but was sent by its mission office to the Missionary Department of the Synodical Conference for mission work among the negroes in our country. The late Rev. C. F. Drewes, Executive Secretary of the Missionary Board, became vitally interested in the new mission project, conferred with Mr. Ekong, and finally secured the permission of the Missionary Board to have him enter Immanuel Lutheran College at Greensboro, North Carolina, and there prepare himself for missionary work among his people in Nigeria. Thus through a small boy in Afaha, Nigeria, there came to the Synodical Conference in United States a call to come over to Nigeria and preach the Word of God in all its truth and purity.

From Price High School Jonathan transferred to our Seminary in Greensboro, North Carolina. His first day at Immanuel Lutheran Seminary was one that he did not forget. He was ushered into the office of the president, and at once subjected to a searching cross-examination by the president and the superintendent of the eastern mission field of our Colored Mission. All sorts of questions were fired at him and he was expected to give a good answer. A strange boy in a strange land asking for the Bread of Life, and here were some who doubted his intentions. It

is no wonder that he did not make a good impression, and after this first interview it was doubtful whether they would let him remain at Immanuel. After this interview his case was presented to the Missionary Board of the Synodical Conference for decision.

This first impression of Ekong soon wore off. The man who did more than anyone else to help and really to understand Jonathan was Dr. Henry Nau, president of Immanuel College. He gained the confidence of Jonathan and left the impression with him that he was not only an advisor, and an instructor, but, what is more important, a real friend and elder Christian brother deeply interested in his own welfare, physical and spiritual, as well as in that of all of Jonathan's people.

Jonathan was a quiet and hard working man. He was always ready to help where help was needed, and stayed with his work until it was done. He was severely handicapped in his studies by a poor academic foundation and the necessity of having to pursue his studies in a foreign tongue. He had come over from Africa with a definite purpose, and was gifted with an extraordinary determination to achieve this goal, hence no driving, no admonition on the part of his teachers, was necessary. His support came from his people in Nigeria, and when the depression hit this country in the early thirties his people in Nigeria were hard hit also, and in 1931 his last money order arrived from his people. Realizing that he now had to look out for himself, and that his people were counting on him, he looked for a job. In his circumstances this was no easy task. He then went to the local newspaper office and asked for a job of delivering papers. Recognizing him as the foreign negro, the editor listened to his story and gave him a write-up in the Sunday edition. This smoothed the way on the new paper route. Up early every morning when the rest of the town was still sleeping he delivered his papers and never failed once to pay his bill. This was no gold mine but it did give him a few extra

dollars to spend on himself.

Jonathan studied, he studied hard! Back home his people were asking for help. Already they were calling themselves the United Lutheran Church in Ibesikpo and wanted to be instructed by the Lutheran Church. They had learned from the letters of Jonathan that the Lutheran Church had a Christian message to give them that other missions did not have or had only in a diluted form. They sent a pathetic letter to Jonathan asking for aid, and Jonathan took this to Dr. Nau asking him whether anything could be done, and if nothing else at least that some books be sent over; books of sermons, prayer books, catechisms, Bible Histories, and the like. This request was granted and these became the vanguard of our missionary endeavor.

This call from Jonathan was indeed the work of God, and the authorities investigated the request from every angle. The world was suffering from a depression, and our Church was no exception. Funds were just not to be had. So it was very carefully considered whether or not it was advisable to go into this new field at the time. That a call had come was not denied, but that this call should be answered at once was another story. The fact that no definite action was taken until 1936 shows the care that was exercised in looking into the whole question.

The entire matter was to be decided at the Synodical Conference to be held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, from August 8 to 13, 1934. Many men in the ministry, knowing the importance of the decision that would have to be made at the conference, gathered funds together and sent Rev. E. L. Wilson, secretary of the Missionary Board of the Synodical Conference, to England to get exact and to-the-minute information. He held conferences with the International Missionary Council in London, a clearing house for all the missions of the world; with the World Dominion Movement officials; with the chairman of the Methodist Board; and finally

with the Qua Iboe Mission Society of Belfast, Ireland. This last mentioned society was the one with which Rev. Wilson wanted to establish amicable relations, for it was into their field that we were being called.

Dr. Gibson of the International Missionary Council felt we had a divine call, and all the men interviewed, even the representatives of the Qua Iboe Mission, could not lay any charges against the people of Ibesikpo such as branding them as undesirable, or that they were spurred on by sinful or unworthy motives in their appeal for help.<sup>6</sup>

At the conclusion of the discussions with the Qua Iboe Mission their representatives told Rev. Wilson that they could not help us out, and did not want to keep us out, but what they wanted most was that the Lord's work be done.

The steps of care and caution taken by the officers of the Synodical Conference and the Missionary Board in sending a man over to England to look into the matter were roundly praised as exceptional and outstanding. They were convinced that we did not intend to enter Nigeria without first seeing that all channels were clear, and that proselyting was far from us. This was, indeed, a feather in our cap.

When the convention of the Synodical Convention was opened in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, all the facts were presented at the sessions. Steps that were to be taken were carefully considered, and after deliberations lasting hours, the following resolution was passed:

Resolved, that we answer this strong moving and urgent appeal to come to Africa by sending at least two men to the Ibesikpo to make a thorough survey of the designated field and adjacent territory and then report the result of such survey and the missionary possibilities in Africa to the constituent synods of the Synodical Conference at its next convention; and be it furthermore

Resolved, that the expense incurred by this African survey commission be paid out of the available African Mission Fund.<sup>7</sup>

A committee of three was appointed to go over the Nigeria to survey

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6. Otto C. A. Boecler, "Into Nigeria", Walther League Messenger, (October, 1934) p. 83.

7. Ibid.

the field and report to the conference. The three men were the Rev. I. Albrecht, the Rev. O. C. A. Boecler, and Dr. H. Nau.

Their report was so favorable that the Synodical Conference, through its constituent synods, granted the Missionary Board permission to begin work in Africa. This Board desired a man with missionary experience and as their first missionary called Rev. E. C. Zimmermann of China, then on furlough in St. Louis, who, however, found it necessary to decline. Meanwhile, so that the field would be occupied and not lost, and until the first permanent missionary could be called and sent Dr. Henry Nau, of Emmanuel College, Greensboro, North Carolina, and his wife Mrs. Helen Nau, who had gained valuable experience in missionary work in India, were the first to go. They left New York for Africa on March 4, 1936 and on April 26, 1936, arrived at Fort Harcourt, there to begin their journey inland to begin a Christian Church among the Ibesikpo clan, at Nung Udoe.

The place where Dr. and Mrs. Nau were about to make their temporary home is in the Ibesikpo country in Ibibio land. Ibesikpo is but a small part of this land. The Ibesikpo clan, is but a small division of the Ibibio tribe. The Ibibio tribe<sup>8</sup> is living at present in what is called the Oil River district in South-Eastern Nigeria, i.e., in that part of the coastal plain which is watered by the Ino, Qua Iboe, Cross, and Calabar Rivers. If we look at a map of Nigeria, we find east of the Niger, on both banks of the Cross River, the province of Calabar. This is Ibibio land, for Calabar Province is in the main inhabited by the Ibibios. It is sometimes claimed that they were driven into this territory from the west by the stronger tribe of Ibos.

The original name of the tribe was <sup>2</sup>Uran. Disputes concerning land

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<sup>8</sup>. Facts about the Ibibio tribe have been taken from the essay on the Ibibio Tribe written by Jonathan U. Ekong, a native of Ibesikpo, and of the Ibibio tribe.

caused one of the clans, the Efiks, to pass over the Cross River into what is now Calabar proper. The tribe, having thus been cut into pieces, was not called Ibibio. The Efik clan was the first to come into contact with white traders, who judging them to be a separate tribe of Negroes, gave to the Ibibio language which they spoke the name Efik. This is a mistake. The language is Ibibio as are the people. They are merely separated from the other clans of the same tribe by the Cross River and the delta of the combined Cross and Calabar Rivers. The clans west of the Cross River and on the Bight of Biafra numbering nearly three dozen all speak the same language with slight variations of dialect. They all follow the same occupations and the same customs, and together with the Efiks, there are close to a million souls. This is a great help in our mission work in this territory.

The land belongs to the people, and according to government regulations it cannot be sold to anyone who is not a native. It is distributed among the people by families, and the heads of the families portion out to members of the families their individual share. However, family land can only be sold with the consent of all the rightful owners, though private property can be disposed of in the usual way. Women have no claim to the land unless all the men should die. Land for public purposes, for example, for building of schools and courts, missionary residences and church buildings, can be set aside free of charge by the chiefs of the respective territory in which the property is situated. In this way we received land for our buildings.

The Ibibios do not crowd into the towns, but are scattered over the country, living in the bush. They gather together in families or clans. They can be distinguished from their neighbors, the Ibos, who are, as a rule, much taller and more powerfully built.

There is little mutilation of the body by the Ibibios compared with

the Semi-Bantu. About the only thing that is really done is the filing of the front teeth to a point, a custom practiced by most of the tribes on the west coast, and the general tribal marks on both temples. The Ibibio native is very rarely found naked, but on the contrary every kind of dress imaginable is to be found among the menfolk, from the native loin cloth, to the complete European dress. The women usually wear a Manchester cotton frock without sleeves.

All the Bantu and Semi-Bantu languages are noted for a peculiarity known as the "click." This "click" is not found in the Efik language of the Ibibios, a fact which proves that the people belong not to the Bantu, but to the Sudan Negroes.

The Efik, or Ibibio language has been reduced to writing by the Scottish Presbyterian missionaries and is written in Latin letters though the l is missing since there is no use for it. They have two additional letters to express two sounds not prevalent among English speaking people. The Bible has been completely translated into Efik and have also been many devotional and other religious books.

The chief occupation of the Ibibios is farming. All the tilling of the soil is done by human hands, because cows and horses cannot live in the climate or withstand the tsetse fly. Though the Ibibio uses primitive methods he grows enough for his daily bread because the soil is fertile.

The palm tree is of the utmost importance for the Ibibios for it is from the palm tree that they get their chief article of trade, the palm-oil, and the palm-kernal. The life of the native is bound up with the palm tree. If the oil trade is good the people are prosperous; if it is slack, they suffer. This economy likewise affects our church work. If the people have money they can contribute to the support of the churches and schools and the various salaries of the teachers, but if there is no

trade there is no money to come in and the Church suffers.

The Ibibio home is still a polygamous home. Polygamy is anchored in the old animistic belief of the people; and as long as these animistic beliefs linger in the subconsciousness of the Christians so long will polygamy be the general custom of the Ibibios. Polygamy is not overcome yet in Ibibio land, and in earlier days not even in our own Lutheran congregations.<sup>9</sup>

Before the advent of Christianity mothers of twins were cast out of the society of other people and the twins were killed. Today the British government has stepped in and forbidden it with the threat of punishment. But this has not stopped the killing, for it is done in a more subtle way. The child may be exposed to draught, or nourishment is withheld, and the great growth of bush offers excellent hiding places for such babies. Only Christianity will succeed in rooting out this vicious custom.

The burial of the dead is an important event in the life of the Ibibios. Usually there is great pomp and show when somebody is buried. Often when an important man died his wives and children were buried with him to serve him in the next world. The government has put a stop to this, but the desire to do this is still there.

The Ibibio tribe has no tribal consciousness and no tribal government. No great state ever developed in the Ibibio land. The clan is more important to the Ibibio man than the tribe. The foundation of the Ibibio society is the house or family. One or more families unite to form the Ekpuk, or extended family, usually translated compound. From one to about eight Ekpuks comprise a community or town.

The Ibibio tribe is known as a pagan tribe, although the Christian religion has made great progress in it. It is estimated that at least ten per cent of the whole population is Christian. That baleful influence

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9. Dr. Henry Nau, We Move Into Africa, p. 121.

that is over both pagan and Christian alike, which still discolors the faith of many Christians and stands in the way of a persistent life in agreement with the teaching of the Gospel of Christ, is animism.

The Ibibios know that there is a God. He is called Aqua Abasi. He is thought of as a good God, and is scarcely feared. Of Abasi the Ibibios make no image or statue, but sacrifices are rendered to him at the beginning of the harvest.

Distinctly subordinate to the supreme God (Aqua Abasi) are a host of demons. A worship of these really means the worship of the powers of nature. Demons infest the rain and thunder, the rivers and hills, and so forth. Other demons are identified with animate or inanimate objects such as wild beasts, trees, rocks, and the like. The demons are worshipped in order that they may not hurt the people. Against the powers of the demons the people know no comfort. All heathen therefore live in constant fear of death and damnation.

Perhaps the most important element in the pagan worship of the Ibibios is the worship of spirits. The Ibibios believe that when a man died, his spirit joins the uncountable company of other spirits that roam about in the world. The spirits of the departed are usually regarded as good spirits, helping those who live in the world, provided these are good and worship the ancestors. But there are many evil spirits which must be satisfied by proper sacrifices, while the witch doctor tries to undo by charms and enchantments the damage which the evil spirit has done. They are the cause of crop failures, sickness, misfortune, in short, all the trouble that may befall a person. Living thus in the presence of a multitude of spirits, the people are in constant fear that they may be harassed by an evil spirit.

Furthermore, a main part of animistic religion is the fetish. Surrounded as they are by a multitude of spirits, good and bad, it is

necessary for a man to establish friendly relations with the good spirits and to stop the power of the evil spirits. This is done through the fetish, which may be compared to a talisman or charm. A fetish is a rag, string, hair, nail, or leaf, or anything into which the witch doctor has put magic power.

Another main part of their religion is ancestor worship. The male or female ancestors who have gone into the spirit world are believed to be still powerful for good or bad on behalf of the family.

It is common belief among the people that a man has two souls; one soul dwells in his own body and the other in an animal, a tree, or a rock. When a person dies in due time the soul will return to earth and live again in some other person. What happens to the other soul inhabiting the tree, rock, or animal is not known and no one seems to care.

Many sacrifices are made to the ancestors, the demons, and to the supreme God. These sacrifices are a means of telling if a Christian has really put off all the heathen practices, for refusal to sacrifice with the family means banishment, and the family ties are the strongest in the life of an Ibibio. In every home a corner is set aside for the worship of the ancestors. Here several blocks of wood are piled up to represent the departed members of the family. At this sanctuary the joint family worships once a week. At these weekly devotions palm-wine is poured upon the wooden blocks, after which all the living members of the family drink of the cup. This symbolical act signifies that the whole family, living and dead, here gathers to refresh itself and to consider the weal and woe of the family. Here disputes are settled, and hidden sins brought to light. The ancestors are thus regarded as watching over the family and warding off the evil which is plotted against its members.

Among the people where the spirit-world is so real and close at hand, witchcraft is naturally common. People accused of the practice were

formerly tried by ordeal, one of which was to eat poisonous beans, known as the Calabar bean. If the beans had no ill effects on the supposed sorcerer, he was regarded as innocent of practicing witchcraft; but if he became sick or even died, he was considered guilty. The government has put a stop to this practice, and the natives are forbidden even to plant this bean.

Into this land of the Ibibios to the clan of the Ibesikpo Dr. and Mrs. Nau now came. What did they find when they got to Ibesikpo, April 21, 1936? They found sixteen groups of people, some small, some large, one very large, scattered throughout the whole territory occupied by the Ibesikpo clan, calling themselves churches and expressing their eagerness to receive Christian instruction.

Each of these groups had received from the heathen chiefs of their communities a piece of land on which to build their church. On the same property not far from the church is the school building, much smaller and cheaper. Not far from the school is the teacherage, where the teacher, who is both teacher and preacher, lives.

All of the sixteen congregations together have built at Obot Idin, the geographical center of the Ibesikpo clan, the Central School. The school is a boarding school, in which, however, the students board themselves, the school furnishing only a place to sleep.

These in short were the physical properties that Dr. Nau found. But the spiritual condition in which he found the Ibesikpo United Church was the first great problem that he had to face.

The teacher who delivered the sermons on Sunday mornings could do no more than repeat in his own words the story of the text. No regular instruction meeting had been held for five years, and no instruction for baptism had been given in any church.

The people were taught certain Scriptural axioms like "The blood of

Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin," and another, "Christ is the Son of God." The latter was understood to mean that Christ was not equal with the Father, but lower and less than the Father. Christ was appraised in the light of their own relationship to their own fathers, hence could neither be God nor equal with God. That the true God is a Triune God was unknown to them. There is not even a word in their language to express this thought.

The fact that Christ died for them and cleansed them from their sins was indeed welcomed by them, but not for the same reason as we welcome this comforting thought. It was used by the people to continue in sin, to abound in it more and more. All the heathen sins were still cherished and embraced, and the fashions of grandfather and grandmother went easily along with their professed Christian religion.<sup>10</sup>

Every congregation had a long list of members who were suspended because of some gross sin, though, these people were never admonished, instructed, corrected, or comforted. They were permitted to come to their right senses in their own good time, which in most cases never came.

Only those were permitted to come to Holy Communion who had paid all their dues regularly and were not living in open enmity with one another. Polygamy, killing of twin children, and other open and grievous sins were not regarded as bars against partaking of Holy Communion. Whenever a person wanted to go to Holy Communion he would go to the headmen when they were assembled in the church a day or two before the date, and pay up his dues if necessary. If no accusation was known publicly against the person he was given a ticket with the inscription, "This do in remembrance of me," and with this ticket he was allowed to go to Communion. No special instruction as to what Holy Communion is or what it profits, or how to prepare oneself for it was ever given. To the

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10. Ibid. p. 249.

people gross physical benefits were expected of Holy Communion.

Baptism of children was not practiced. In its place a special ceremony had been introduced by the Qua Iboe Mission, the blessing of children.

Spiritism, polygamy, and twin killing were common among the "members" of the church. Nothing was done by the head men to curb these practices, in fact in some cases the head men themselves were guilty of such acts.

With all the defects pointed out above and with such open and horrible sins still rampant in these congregations, the question was asked, were these churches still Christian churches? Yes, in spite of all, they were Christian congregations, with all the rights and duties of such congregations. In all these churches were men and women and children who were true believers on Christ, and suffering under the horrible conditions, and never ceasing to pray for improvement in their churches. The very fact that they begged for teachers and pastors is proof that they realized the sad state their church was in. It was among these people that Dr. Nau and those that followed him worked to build a strong and growing church, and the one chief weapon they used was the Word of God.

The battle with spiritism, polygamy, twin killing, and other great sins began. It was the Word against the world, and on the part of the missionary patience, and more patience. Slowly, ever so slowly, did this fight have to be carried on. The traditions of centuries could not be overthrown in a day. Our men realized this and did not act too hastily, but they gave no quarter, and sin was sin. This clash with the heathen practices caused the name of the Lutheran Mission to be carried all over Ibibio land, and though it was not always favorable, (especially to the heathen) the better part of the population that had some Christian knowledge and a feeling of what was right and wrong, approved heartily the stand and attitude of the Lutheran Mission.

What, however, made the greatest impression upon the friends and

loss of the Lutheran Mission in the country, was the fact that the Lutheran Mission was a teaching Church. Many who came to our church told later that this was the reason that they had come. They wanted to be taught, and they saw that they could receive instruction only from the Lutheran Mission. Teachers were taught Bible History and Luther's Catechism, and given courses in the chief doctrines of our faith. In a similar manner, but on a smaller scale the people were instructed. Special emphasis was given to instructions regarding Communion and Baptism. Sunday services were held twice, once in the morning, and again in the afternoon. In the evening instruction was given from congregation to congregation.

In short, wherever there was an opportunity to teach it was seized, and well planned instruction was given. The Lutheran Church had emerged as a teaching Church.

When Dr. Nau arrived in Ibesikoo country, he found sixteen congregations, and when he left after eighteen months of service, he left thirty-two in the hands of his successors. He made his home at Nung Udoe and from there directed the mission activities.

The first general convention of all congregations was held at Ikot Obia Odona and constituted the beginning of the Lutheran Church in Nigeria as a corporate body. This was in the year 1937. Officers were elected, a treasury opened, and resolutions were passed concerning the use of the money in the treasury. The mode of representation of the congregations at

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11. Ibid., p. 339.

conventions was fixed.

Dr. Nau and his wife remained in Nigeria for eighteen months and in this time laid the foundation for the building of a Lutheran Church. He then turned over the work to younger successors. The first phase of our work in Ibibio land had been completed, the second phase was to be the work done by his successors.

In the twelve years that our Church has been on the field, it has grown from sixteen churches to one hundred and eleven. There are eighty-nine schools, and two hundred twenty-nine teachers. The number of baptized members is approximately 12,500.

Our churches in Nigeria have formed a Synod known to them as the Aqua Esop (the great assembly) which meets once a year at Obot Idim. The various districts also meet in separate sessions as a circuit once a year. The Aqua Esop has a constitution and under article 1 of this constitution the official name of the Synod is designated as "The Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Nigeria."

The president of the Synodical body is the Rev. William H. Schweppe. Rev. Schweppe and his wife along with Rev. V. W. Kooper and his wife came to Nigeria in 1937, and took over the work begun by Dr. Nau, who left the field in October of that year. Rev. Schweppe enjoys the confidence of all the churches and of his fellow-workers and is respected and honored by all.

The treasurer is Missionary Justus Kretzmann. He came to Nigeria along with his wife in May, 1939, and stayed until January, 1944, one of the longest terms had by any of our missionaries in Nigeria. He and his wife returned to the field again in June, 1945.

The business affairs and other salient issues are duly considered by a board of ten directors which meets monthly at Obot Idim.

All the missionaries under the leadership of Missionary Schweppe try to make the churches realize their financial obligations to the Lord. In sermons and in the instruction periods the emphasis is placed on the duties of the members in the support of their church and school. All workers agree that our Church must be an indigenous Church.

There are at the present time ten American missionaries in Nigeria performing the duties of their office, namely, William Schweppe and his wife Loola Schweppe (Wisconsin Synod), Justus P. Kretzmann and his wife Norma Kretzmann (Missouri Synod), Carl Rusch and his wife Emma Rusch (Missouri Synod), Louis Konz and his wife Helen Konz (Missouri Synod), Robert Stade and his wife Edna Stade (Missouri Synod), Willard Baringer and his wife Geneva Baringer (Missouri Synod), George S. Baer and his wife Mrs. Baer (Wisconsin Synod), Paul G. Anderson and his wife Mrs. Anderson (Norwegian Synod), Horbert Reim and his wife Celeste Reim (Wisconsin Synod), and Harold Puls.

One American teacher is in charge of the school setup, viz., Mr. Walter F. Stahlke (Missouri Synod). He also conducts the Teachers' Training Class and prepares young men for the teaching profession. These men are assigned to our schools upon completion of their one year course. This is only a temporary arrangement. A Secondary School is necessary and essential if our Church would comply with the strict requirements prescribed by the British Government for the certification and recognition of future teachers. From this Secondary School men would enroll in a Normal School which also is to be established.

The Central Girls' School, which has an enrollment of one hundred girls, is located at Hung Udoe. This school was built in 1939 and was opened with an enrollment of eighteen. Miss Christine Rapiet was the first principal and remained at this job until June, 1943. In June, 1944, Mrs. Emma Rusch took over these duties along with all the others that belong to the wife of a missionary. In October, 1946, Miss Quinte Oelschlaeger took over the work from Mrs. Rusch, and she became full time principal of the Girls' School.

The pupils at this school are instructed in all the main subjects that a Christian day-school teaches, and in addition they receive instruction in cooking, sewing, housekeeping, and similar subjects. The school is a boarding-school and enjoys a fine reputation.

This school at the present time is not fulfilling its

purpose due to the fact that only a small percentage of our Lutheran girls constitute its makeup. The Churches are constantly being encouraged to send their girls here to receive an education and to become teachers.

Our first deaconess to be sent to this field was Miss Helen Kluck. She arrived at our station in May, 1937. She conducted dispensary work on the compound at Obot Idim aided by Mrs. Koepor, Mrs. Kretzmann, and Mrs. Jonathan Ekong.

All the workers on the field are doing their best to build up a church that is thoroughly indoctrinated. Much time is spent in the instruction classes which are conducted every morning by the missionaries and teachers of our schools. Every session with the Headmen (Elders), various church groups and teachers' classes, embraces a presentation of fundamental doctrines. Candidates for Baptism and Confirmation receive a thorough course in the six chief parts of Christian doctrine. Every candidate is carefully examined to see if he or she has grasped the significance of the Sacraments Baptism and Lord's Supper. No one is admitted to the Lord's Supper unless he proves that he is able to examine himself according to Biblical prescriptions. At the communion examination the person is questioned in the presence of other about his christian life. Offenders are taken to task and admonished in a brotherly way. Those who have given public offense, and violated God's specific commandments, must publicly confess their faults and ask the congregation for forgiveness. Anyone participating

in heathen practices is not admitted to the Lord's Supper until they signify their willingness to leave their wicked ways. Those who are given to polygamy must first adjust their marital relationships before they are received into communion-fellowship.

Twice a year, together with the interpreters, the missionaries and pastors meet for a pastoral conference. At this conference doctrinal papers and practical topics are presented for consideration and discussion. The conference is in session a full day, and is opened with a divine service and the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

Another meeting held is the Mission Council Session. Here the American workers gather together and discuss their respective fields and the work of the Nigerian Church.

Each Sunday evening an English service is conducted at the Obot Idim Chapel. All the missionaries strive to attend and take turns conducting the service. This tends to bind the workers and their families together and provides a home atmosphere of worship. The service is open to all and is conducted in English. After the service the missionaries gather in the office and discuss the work to be done the next week and also find solutions to any problems that may have arisen. The ladies assemble at the home of one of the missionaries at that compound and later when the men arrive have a little social gathering..

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12. Facts on the history of our Church since the departure of Dr. Hau, were taken from a visitation report on the mission field in Nigeria drawn up by Rev. K. Kurth, and used with the author's permission. Visit was from September 29, to December 10, 1947.

In concluding this history of the Lutheran Church let it be said that the blessings which God has laid upon the work of the Lutheran Church in Nigeria have been indeed great. In the future there lie many obstacles. But as our Church looks to the future we offer this petition with the Psalmist, "Show me thy ways, O Lord; teach me thy paths. Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day." Psalm 25, 4. 5.

### Key to Abbreviations

Name	Sign
Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society . . . . .	W.M.M.S.
Church Missionary Society . . . . .	C.M.S.
United Free Church of Scotland Missionary Society . . . . .	U.F.C.M.S.
Southern Baptist Convention . . . . .	S.B.C.
Qua Iboe Mission . . . . .	Q.I.M.
Primitive Methodist Missionary Society . . . . .	P.M.M.S.
Sudan Interior Mission . . . . .	S.I.M.
Sudan United Mission . . . . .	S.U.M.
United Missionary Society of the Hannonite . . . . .	U.M.S.H.B.
Brethren in Christ	
Seventh-Day Adventists . . . . .	S.D.A.
Salvation Army . . . . .	S.A.
Christian Missions in Many Lands . . . . .	C.M.M.L.
Church of the Brethren . . . . .	C.B.
Evangelical Church Missionary Society . . . . .	E.C.M.S.
Christian Reformed Church . . . . .	C.R.C.H.

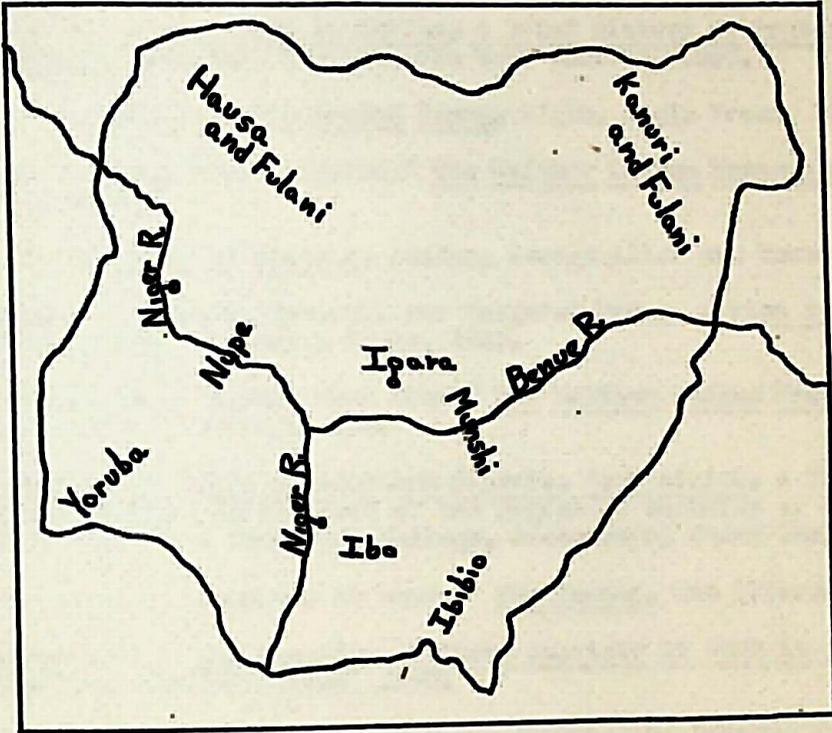
**Appendix. Statistical Report of Missionary Societies in Nigeria**

Missions	Workers		Christian Communi- cants	Community Others	Scholars	
	Euro- pean	Afri- can			Sunday School	Day School
W.H.M.S.	16	758	10,011	21,747	7,923	6,427
C.M.S.	86	2,152	29,720	124,251	43,248	30,259
U.F.C.M.	61	580	11,605	47,753	8,052	16,339
S.B.C.	33	86	*	25,000	5,583	1,373
Q.T.M.	30	600	13,961	24,182	34,134	15,000
P.M.M.S.	30	438	12,821	14,739	27,897	10,525
S.T.M.	94	46	2,764	*	466	620
S.U.M.	68	43	114	280	645	483
U.M.S.M.B.	16	*	*	*	*	70
S.D.A.	5	4	150	8,342	150	48
S.A.	34	69	*	*	531	*
C.M.W.L.	12	*	70	*	*	*
C.H.B.	42	*	*	*	*	*
E.C.W.S.	7	*	*	67	*	*
C.R.C.F.	6	28	751	820	468	144

**Appendix. Statistical Report of the Evangelical Lutheran  
Church of Nigeria 1947**

Districts	Members		Pupils in School	Tehrs.	Baptisms			Confir- mations		Attend. Sunday Service
	Bapt- ized	Commun- icants			Inf.	Ch.	Ad.	Ch.	Ad.	
Ekot	1357	521	914	37	187	317	157	46	194	1582
Ibesikpo	7375	2790	3689	149	690	350	142	79	236	5374
Ibo	429	80	91	6	158	67	38	10	29	259
Otoro	1630	695	477	19	111	54	53	36	41	889
Southern Annang	138	*	198	8	78	49	11	*	*	724
Ukpon	2356	596	832	34	254	131	88	45	105	2239
<b>GRAND TOTALS</b>	<b>13295</b>	<b>4682</b>	<b>6201</b>	<b>253</b>	<b>1478</b>	<b>968</b>	<b>489</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>605</b>	<b>11067</b>

THE CHURCH  
OF  
NIGERIA



THE CHIEF TRIBES  
OF  
NIGERIA

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