

# THE AFRICA INLAND MISSION: ASPECTS OF ITS EARLY HISTORY

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## MISSIONS IN KENYA PRIOR TO 1895

### **Portuguese Roman Catholics**

Christianity first came to the Kenyan coast through the Portuguese Roman Catholics. Beginning in 1498 when Vasco da Gama dropped anchor at Malindi, the Portuguese made sporadic visits to the Kenyan coast, attempting many times to Christianize the coastal peoples. By 1890 the only remnants of these efforts were some 50 Goan Roman Catholics and the ruins of the historic Fort Jesus in the city of Mombasa.<sup>1</sup>

### **Anglican Church Missionary Society**

During the modern missionary era the first pioneer missionary to Kenya was Johann Ludwig Krapf who arrived in Mombasa in May 1844. He was a German in the service of the Anglican Church Missionary Society. Krapf's vision was to reach the Galla people living in Ethiopia, numbering some eight million, whom Krapf hoped would be the key to the reaching of the rest of East Africa. Since he was expelled by the Roman Catholics from Ethiopia, into which he first entered in 1837, he hoped to reach the Galla people from Kenya's side.

Soon after Krapf settled on the north mainland of Kenya, opposite Mombasa, his wife and new born child died. Krapf himself became incapacitated by malaria. But this intrepid pioneer wrote home to his supporting church: "As the victories of the Church are gained by stepping over the graves of her members, you may be more convinced that the hour is at hand when you are summoned to the conversion of Africa from its eastern shore."<sup>2</sup>

Krapf soon discovered that the peoples among whom he had settled, the Mijikenda (also called the Wanyika), were resistant to the Christian gospel,

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even though he had succeeded in translating parts of the New Testament into Kiswahili. The climate was also unhealthy. Some Akamba, who had migrated from their country because of famine and had settled near Rabai, told him of their homeland in the highlands.

Krapf wrote in his journal: "From the first establishment of our missionary station at Rabbai Mpia it had been our wish to visit in the interior those Wakamba tribes who, traversing as they do for trading purposes a large section of E. Africa, may well claim the most serious attention of a missionary."<sup>3</sup>

Several safaris were made into the interior, probing and investigating the possibility of reaching the Galla. On his first missionary journey to Ukambani in November 1849, a small band of Akamba joined him. Traveling into the interior was a dangerous enterprise, crossing two hundred miles of waterless wasteland and ever threatened by Masai warriors and marauders who attacked the caravans.

During his first years in Mombasa, Krapf began dreaming of a chain of mission stations from the east coast of Africa to West Africa. He calculated that if one mission station were established at intervals of three-hundred miles, it would take nine such stations with a total of thirty-six missionaries, four at each station. This he thought could be accomplished in four to five years.<sup>4</sup>

This vision of a chain of mission stations fashioned his thinking throughout his explorations. His second missionary journey into Ukambani was made in July 1850 with the decision by the Church Missionary Society (CMS) to found a mission station about 330 miles from Rabai on high ground of the Yatta Plateau, 'and thus actually commence the chain of missions through Africa formerly spoken of.'<sup>5</sup>

But this safari ended in tragedy. A band of robbers attacked his caravan and his Mukamba friend who accompanied him, Chief Kivoi, was killed. Krapf fled into the bush, hiding from the marauders by day and seeking shelter from the wild beasts at night. Wandering without water for days, Krapf finally came to the Tana River.

The Akamba had thought Krapf was a sorcerer because of his English New Testament which he read frequently, and because of his paper, pencil and telescope. Because Krapf had not prevented the murder of Kivoi, the Akamba became suspicious of him. Fearing for his life among those 'capricious and uncertain Wakamba', Krapf felt it best to return to the coast without accomplishing his mission.

With pain in his heart, Krapf recommended to the CMS that they 'put off the Mission to Ukambani for three or four years more, and first possess a nearer station'.<sup>6</sup> Yearning for the Akamba, Krapf wrote:

No doubt, a journey to Ukambani and still more a residence in it, would involve painful and trying self-denial on the part of a missionary; but let us bear in mind the great daring of the Wakamba, and the dangers to which they expose themselves on their journeys and hunting expeditions, merely for the sake of earthly gain. Shall their love of lucre be allowed to put to shame the zeal of a missionary who has the highest of all objects at heart – the greatest of all gain – the regeneration of the heathen.<sup>7</sup>

After the death of his co-labourers he wrote home to his supporters:

And yet I keep to my course. Africa must be conquered by Missions: a chain of Missions must be effected between the east and west though a thousand warriors should fall to the left, and ten thousand to the right...The idea of a chain of missions between East and West Africa will yet be taken up in succeeding generations carried out; for the idea is always conceived ten years before the deed comes to pass. This idea I bequeath to every Missionary coming to East Africa.<sup>8</sup>

Indeed, it was this vision of a chain of mission stations, built upon faith and an exploratory knowledge of the eastern fringe of Kenya, that Krapf bequeathed to the Church of Jesus Christ. Two missionary settlements for freed slaves, Rabai and Freretown, had been established by the C.M.S. near Mombasa. The task of evangelism began in this way of converting the slaves who ran away from their Arab masters. By 1880 there were 430 residents at Freretown and 250 at Rabai. But the primary contribution which Krapf made to the evangelization of Kenya was the vision he placed before the church constituency back in Britain and continental Europe. His ministry and experiences, printed in the book, *Travels, Researches, and Missionary Labours in East Africa*, exercised a great influence abroad. Included in that vision was explicit reference to the Akamba. He regarded the Akamba 'as an important element in the relation to the future missionary designs in Eastern Africa'.<sup>9</sup>

In the mean time, the colonizing process was underway. In May 1886 William Mackinnon received from the Sultan of Zanzibar for his Association which later became the Imperial British East Africa Company, the authority to administer the territory between the Uмба and Tana rivers. A year later there was an Anglo-German agreement granting a 'British sphere of influence' up to the shores of Lake Victoria, though excluding the coastal strip, ten miles wide, which remained the possession of the Sultan of Zanzibar. Treaties were made with the Nyika, Taita and Akamba and

preparations were made for 'effective occupation' of the interior.

The British trading company saw little prosperity flowing from the Taru desert or the scanty population in most of Kenya. Instead, they looked westward to Uganda, 'the pearl of Africa'. To reach this distant point they conceived the idea of a railroad stretching from Mombasa to Uganda. But the Company faced many problems in their attempt to fulfill their dreams.

Due to their financial difficulties, the British Government took control of the administration of the territory July 1, 1895, calling the possession, the British East Africa Protectorate. No doubt a major reason for Britain's agreement was the scramble for Africa, the fear that the French or Germans would fill in the vacuum left by the trading Company, if Britain did not.

### **Other Missions**

For fifty years after Krapf first arrived in Mombasa in 1844, Christian missionary work was concentrated at the coast. In response to Krapf's influential book, *Travels, Researches and Missionary Labours*, the British United Methodists entered Kenya in 1862. Though their vision was likewise to reach the Galla, they were unable to penetrate the interior and experienced many disasters. After the first year only one Methodist missionary was still alive. A Holy Ghost priest of the Roman Catholic Church in 1879 first founded a station on the Tana river, but within one year moved back to Mombasa. In 1893 the Bavaria Evangelical Lutheran Mission opened up stations in Ukambani. Independent missionary, Stuart Watt, with his wife and family, walked up from the Coast to Ukambani in 1893 and settled at Ngelani, near Machakos.<sup>10</sup>

## **FORMATIVE YEARS OF THE A.I.M.**

### **Peter Cameron Scott**

**Missionary preparation:** It was during this period that God was preparing a young man by the name of Peter Cameron Scott to provide the vision and leadership for the Africa Inland Mission.

Scott was born near Glasgow, Scotland, on March 7, 1867. When he was twelve years old, Peter and his family immigrated to Philadelphia in the United States of America. During his teen age years he experienced an inner struggle. On the one hand, his musical talent attracted him to the concert stage where he was invited to sing professionally. On the other hand, his parents refused him permission because of Christian convictions. Through this spiritual struggle over the question of a musical career, Peter Cameron Scott eventually made a complete dedication of himself to God.<sup>11</sup>

In November 1890 Peter sailed to the Congo where he and his brother, John, served with the International Missionary Alliance for two years. During that time he buried John and he himself became deathly sick from malaria, necessitating his return. He was 'carried out of the country...unconscious'.<sup>12</sup>

**Vision for the A.I.M.:** During his recovery he visited England and while there made a pilgrimage to Westminster Abbey.

Kneeling beside the tomb of David Livingston in Westminster Abbey, he was gripped by the inscription, 'Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold, them also I must bring.' In that moment his plans for East Africa became crystallized. Previous study on his part had led to the conclusion that there was a thickly populated region in what was then British East Africa which was largely unreached with the Christian message. In that moment by Livingston's tomb Scott envisioned a chain of mission stations stretching westward from Mombasa on the east coast to Lake Chad in the heart of Africa. The Africa Inland Mission was thus conceived.<sup>13</sup>

Whether this vision of a chain of mission stations came independently or whether he was influenced by the reading of Krapf's book, no one can say. We do know that Alexander Mackay in 1889, a great missionary pioneer in Uganda with the Church Missionary Society, also referred to a chain of stations.<sup>14</sup> But the fact remains that the Africa Inland Mission was born with the passion to reach *inland*, planting mission stations through the heart of Africa. It is no wonder, then, that the A.I.M. jumped over the first 250 miles of Kenya's coastal area, and began planting churches in the interior. Not until seventy years later did the A.I.M. turn back to the Kenyan coast to evangelize there.

**Formation of the A.I.M.:** When Peter Scott returned to Philadelphia, he expressed his missionary calling to several interested friends who formed themselves into the Philadelphia Missionary Council on May 6, 1895, an interdenominational group seeking to assist in world evangelization. "Its function was to spread the knowledge of mission work and to forward means and workers to different fields as God supplied them in answer to prayer. None of the members of the Council were to draw any salary so that the home work of the Mission was to be carried on without expense to the mission concerned."<sup>15</sup>

With the encouragement of Dr. A.T. Pierson, Scott recruited a band of six other missionary candidates to accompany him to Kenya. Prior to his departure, Rev. A.B. Simpson conducted the service of ordination, committing Scott to the ministry. A farewell was given to the first A.I.M.

missionaries at the Pennsylvania Bible Institute, closely associated with the A.I.M. in the early years and founded about the same time as the A.I.M. and the Philadelphia Missionary Council. In 1895 the Institute was dedicated as the Headquarters for the Africa Inland Mission.<sup>16</sup> The Philadelphia Missionary Council had no organic relationship to the A.I.M., but only served as an agency of 'forwarding to the field workers and means as God might furnish them'.<sup>17</sup>

The aim of the Africa Inland Mission was narrowly conceived, namely, evangelism and church planting. The purpose of the Mission was not '...to supplant existing organizations, but to join heart and hand with them in a work of such stupendous difficulty,' namely, 'evangelizing the darkest spot in Africa's continent of darkness'.<sup>18</sup> As we shall see later, this vision of evangelism and establishing a chain of mission stations across Africa had a determinative effect on the ministry of the A.I.M.

**Voyage to Kenya:** On August 17, 1895 Peter Cameron Scott and the first part of the A.I.M. missionaries left New York harbour for Mombasa. Prior to sailing, the missionaries chose officers from among themselves, for the Philadelphia Missionary Council believed the men and women on the field would know better how to meet emergencies and how to plan than those living in the homeland. "So the mission was made a field mission, self-regulating, self-perpetuating, responsible to God alone, for its work and having no organic unity with any board at home."<sup>19</sup>

Their ship reached Mombasa in October, two months later. Though warmly welcomed by the Anglican missionaries, they discovered alarm 'as the Masai seemed to be roaming over a large section of the country, murdering and thieving wherever they went'.<sup>20</sup>

**Safari into the interior:** Because of the dangerous trip inland from Mombasa, the women were compelled to remain behind while Scott and his four fellow male missionaries, accompanied by a caravan of 300 men and 42 camels, trekked inland to Nzau peak, 'The Gateway to East Africa'. Traveling across the grassy plains, filled with herds of wild animals, the Nzau peak juts out with commanding majesty, announcing the beginnings of the Eastern Highlands. At 4,000 feet this location among the Akamba appeared to promise better health for the missionaries. Captain Lugard called Nzau (or Nzawi), 'The massive granite sentinel that guards the gate to the heart of Africa'.<sup>21</sup> The trip from Mombasa to Nzau took one month on foot, arriving at Nzau on December 12, 1895. Having planted the first A.I.M. station at Nzau, Scott wrote home: "Now the first stepping stone has been laid inside the gate."<sup>22</sup>

**Establishing the first A.I.M. stations:** During the following year, Peter Cameron Scott walked 2,600 miles: he established three more A.I.M. stations in Ukambani at Kikai, Kilungu and Kangundo, and welcomed a second missionary party of eight, including his parents and younger sister.

Hotchkiss was posted at Sakai on March 18, 1896, Krieger at Kilungu on April 18 and Severen at Kangundo on October 10, 1896, the latter station being rented for \$1.50 annually from the British government which had erected a building to house soldiers who were used to suppress a rebellion among the Akamba. Within ten months four stations were established, six buildings erected made of brick and six other 'good grass dwelling houses'.

In Scott's First Annual Report to the Philadelphia Missionary Council, he made these observations of the Akamba:

My heart is filled with wonder, love and praise, as I sit down and review the past year of our labours in this land, to which God, by His grace, hath called us. We went out 'not knowing', but our God led us forth by a 'right way', and brought us to a 'city of habitation'.

And now a word might be said about the people. The Wakamba occupy the territory known as Ukamba, which extends from Tsaro River [meaning Tsavo River], to Kikuyu. The population is estimated to be between four and five hundred thousand. The men (and a great many of them) are naked, with the exception of the brass wire, which is freely worn about their necks, arms, waists and legs. They also make very fine chains out of fine brass wire, and great bunches of these are worn in the ears. They are generally well built fellows, tall, thin, but muscular. As a rule, they have straight-cut features, are high in the forehead, and rather intelligent in appearance.

The custom of women is rather picturesque. In front they wear a small apron of cloth, or goat skin, about five inches long by seven in breadth. Behind they wear a long V-shaped piece of hide, which reaches to the knees, being split up the centre; they also wear an oval hide fastened over the shoulder reaching to the hips. The women do not wear so much brass wire but the quantity of beads some of them carry around their waists and necks is really wonderful. They are an agricultural people, possessing large herds of cattle and goats. Their manner of cultivation is decidedly crude, as their only implement is a long stick sharpened at the end, with which they turn over the soil, clear the ground, and plant the seed. It is remarkable how much ground they can dig up in a day with one of these sticks. Some few have short-handled hoes, but these are not native. Their tool chest is made up of a very few things and not hard to carry around: a small axe with blade from one-and-a-half to two inches broad, and handle

two feet long; then comes a small axe, blade one inch long and handle two feet long; a pair of pinchers and a knife. Their weapons of defense are chiefly the bow and arrow, and a long sword. Their houses are small conical grass huts, with a door so small that it is with difficulty you can crawl in when on all fours.<sup>23</sup>

### **Near Extinction of A.I.M.**

With a flare of dedication and enthusiasm the A.I.M. was launched. But the ensuing five years nearly destroyed the fledgling mission. The Akamba were not friendly toward the missionaries at first. In September 1896 Willis Hotchkiss wrote home from Sakai:

Opposition of the people was very bitter for the first few months, and I saw many trying experiences...Several times I was threatened with death if I did not leave 'at once'; they threatened to tear down my house, and finally as a last resort tried to starve me out by withholding all food supplies for nearly a month, but through it all His tender compassion failed not.<sup>24</sup>

But this resistance was neither uniform nor continuous. In December that year F.W. Krieger reported from Nzaui that ten heads of family brought him large presents of beans, flour and milk. They also requested that they become his children and he would be their father to whom they could bring all their difficulties. "Consequently, someone comes every morning to enquire if I need anything, either men to help or food."<sup>25</sup>

**Death of Peter Cameron Scott and others:** Contrary to former opinions, Nzaui along with the other stations proved to be unhealthy. Within a year after arrival, Peter Cameron Scott died of blackwater fever, going into the presence of the Lord on December 4, 1896. Two other missionaries died, some returned home and still others resigned. By May 1898 only Willis Hotchkiss remained. He writes of the trying circumstances he faced.

Between incessant bouts of fever and the hostility of the natives, I had an interesting time. Food was exceedingly scarce, and for the entire time of my residence there it was difficult, and at times impossible to buy anything from the people. For two months at one time I had nothing to eat but beans and sour milk, and there came a morning when there wasn't a bean left. Even such a common place item as salt was missing entirely for weeks at a time.<sup>26</sup>

Writing to the Philadelphia Missionary Council after the death of Thomas Allen, Hotchkiss exclaimed:

I feel as though I were treading upon holy ground. I look out upon those two mounds of earth in plain sight, one made a year ago, the other fresh

heaped, and think of the other one away yonder beside Tsavo's torrent., only two months old, and do you wonder there comes as from the opened heavens a voice saying, 'Occupy till I come!' Brethren, God has laid Ukambani at our feet. At our hands he requires these other lost sheep. Shall we turn back? Shall we falter because the ranks are thinned? No, no; a thousand times no. Rather let us go on our faces before God and claim fresh labourers for the waiting harvest field. These sad events presage coming victory.<sup>27</sup>

**Famine and disease:** Increasing the distress, a severe famine devastated Ukambani in 1898 and 1899 in which the population was decimated. Following the famine came a smallpox epidemic. Some estimate that half or even three-quarters of the Akamba died of starvation and disease. Writing while all alone from Kangundo in 1899 William Bangert lamented:

It is getting so awful that I really dread to leave the station, even for the plain. The drawn, agonized look on these faces plainly speak of the horrors of a death of starvation. The natives with few exceptions are existing entirely on a little root berry about the size of a pea, which they dig out of the sand, and grows under a kind of weed. Where there are to be found, you will daily see hundreds of the most pitiable specimens imaginable, poor, thin, bony men, women and children with mouths besmeared with dirt, squatting about digging out these roots and eating them as fast as found. Thus, they manage to keep body and soul together for a time, but eventually are obliged to give up the struggle and die. You will notice them growing thinner and thinner and finally miss them entirely, and you say to yourself, 'another soul passed into eternity.'<sup>28</sup>

This lonely missionary sought to feed the hungry through funds coming from America. Many letters were written describing the desperate need of the dying in Ukambani 'with absolutely no prospect or possible way of getting food, save what comes from the well stocked storehouses of Christendom, for a long time to come'.<sup>29</sup>

On one occasion he sent men to Machakos to purchase rice, but they found none available, meaning 'that the country is practically destitute of food'. To pay the men who went for the food, Bangert shot a rhino so they could have some food. Bangert wrote: "I have heard of famine and read of famine, but never had the remotest dream of the awfulness of famine – that word is laden with horrors so hastily that the pen refuses to describe them." By 1898 there were 1,100 Akamba being fed in the famine camp near Kangundo.

Because of the lonely harrowing experiences of Bangert, living all alone at Kangundo station during the famine, C.F. Johnston reported that when he arrived in Kenya, "I was almost frightened at his appearance; he looked so

pale and haggard.” Bangert wrote in November 1899:

Less than one fourth of the Wakamba tribe remains to tell the story of their awful suffering within the past year and a half, and before the crops come, a much smaller percentage will remain...About a score are dying daily out of the seventeen or eighteen hundred in the famine camp at Machakos, and just think of the twenty-four parentless, homeless children found dead together in a hut a Kiu a little south and jackals have not been able to dispose of them as before, so they die and rot by the wayside, and in places the stench is horrible.<sup>30</sup>

In 1900 L.R. Severen presented the “Annual Report of the Field Superintendent” from Kangundo.<sup>31</sup> He noted that added to the famine there had been a small pox ‘so that the country was near desolate’. Following the famine the A.I.M. began schools for the orphan children, C.F. Johnston conducting the one in Kangundo.

Much time was spent in building permanent dwellings and language learning. Considerable work had been done to reduce Kikamba to writing so that new missionaries could study Kikamba ‘without puzzling, as we have done, for days and weeks over some simple word with every possible chance that after getting some definition, will afterward find it incorrect’. Eight hymns had been translated into Kikamba. Commenting on the peoples, Severen observed: “The Wakamba are probably the most peaceable, susceptible to religious impressions and trustworthy of any of the tribes in East Africa, so can most easily be evangelized and trained to do gospel work.”<sup>32</sup>

The observation of the older A.I.M. missionaries is that the hostility of the Akamba prior to the famine was transformed into friendliness after the famine, as they saw the love and kindness of the missionaries toward them in their distress. Suspicion was changed into confidence that these white missionaries were there to help them.

### **Signs of Progress**

The first six years of the A.I.M. marked the pioneer stage of her history, with real hardship and uncertainty. By 1901 significant changes were taking place so that by hindsight we may say that after 1900 the A.I.M. was launched into an era of expansion and development.

The language was partially understood, though not mastered. More permanent buildings had been erected, so that Severen could write in 1901: “There is so little of hardship connected with the work, that it is difficult for one to realize that so much sickness and suffering obtained in the old pioneer days of the mission, when we were so often in very sore straits

for even the simplest necessities of life.”<sup>33</sup>

**Charles Hurlburt:** The Philadelphia Missionary Council originally had only been a service organization, to spread information about the work in Africa, approve candidates and channel funds for their support and work. The A.I.M. was organized on the field and governed from the field, with no organic relationship with the Council. But soon after Scott’s death, the Philadelphia Missionary Council took direction of the work in Africa and eventually appointed Rev. Charles E. Hurlburt to be the Director. Hurlburt was the Chairman of the Philadelphia Missionary Council and the Founder and President of the Pennsylvania Bible Institute, now the Philadelphia University of Bible. In October 1898 Hurlburt first visited Africa. In October 1901 he and his family of five children sailed for Africa. He served as Director with distinction for twenty-five years.

Soon after Hurlburt reached Kenya, he moved the Headquarters of the A.I.M. from Kangundo to Kijabe among the Gikuyu, situated on the escarpment of the Great Rift Valley. Kangundo had been bypassed by the Uganda Railroad some 35 miles across the ‘excessively hot Athi plains’. Feeling a need to be closer to telegraph and mail service, they relocated to a site next to the railroad and at an elevation of 7,200 feet, free from malaria.

Charles Hurlburt became a missionary statesman of great distinction who led the A.I.M. from near extinction at the turn of the century to a task force of 200 missionaries in East and Central Africa twenty-five years later. He became a close friend of the former President of the United States, Theodore Roosevelt, who ‘considered Hurlburt to be the greatest man he had met in Africa’.<sup>34</sup>

**Influential missionary pioneers:** During those formative years missionaries came to Kenya who together with their children played a significant part in the establishment of the Church of Jesus Christ. In the same missionary party with Charles Hurlbur came Pastor Lee H. Downing and his wife, a close friend of Charles Hurlburt and former teacher in the Pennsylvania Bible Institute. He did much to carry on what the Director had begun, serving as Field Director and in many other capacities. His descendants to the fourth generation still serve with the A.I.M.

John Stauffacher arrived in Kenya in 1903. He was “a rare soul indeed – a real student, musician, an astronomer and a lover of homely wit. His masterpiece was the translation of the entire Bible into the Masai language and he worked among that tribe for the greater part of his life.”<sup>35</sup> John Stauffacher shared with Charles Hurlburt much of the pioneering exploration in the early days. Stauffacher’s descendants to the fourth

generation are continuing to serve in Africa.

C.F. Johnston had come earlier in 1898 and served with the A.I.M. for thirty-six years.<sup>36</sup> On May 2, 1902 Johnston established the A.I.M. station at Machakos and became well known for his itinerant ministry around the area, laying the foundation of the Africa Inland Church in Machakos. Today he is still affectionately known as 'Bwana Nthanzi' and a Secondary School in recent years has been named after him.

Albert Barnett landed in Mombasa in 1907. He together with his sons succeeding him, laboured among the Kalenjin at Eldama Ravine for so many years. The Barnetts are now remembered with a town having been named after them, known as 'Kabarnet.' His descendants to the fourth generation are still serving in Africa.

The A.I.M. has been known as a 'family mission'. This began in 1896 when Peter Cameron Scott was joined by his father, mother and sister, his older parents coming to work with him 'without any thought of ever returning to the mother country again'.<sup>37</sup> By 1970 there were 67 children of the A.I.M. workers serving as missionaries with the A.I.M.<sup>38</sup> John Stauffacher, Lee Downing, Albert Barnett and Earl Anderson not only had many of their sons and daughters return to Africa with the A.I.M., but have had the privilege of having many of their grandchildren, and now even their great grandchildren, serving in the continent as missionaries with the A.I.M.

**Church growth:** A few years after the famine, there was the first real breakthrough in evangelism. In 1902 an old chief from Kilungu walked 70 miles to Kangundo, requesting missionaries to come and tell them the words of God. He offered to give gardens, a goat and to help build a house. Hostility and suspicion had been transformed into eager interest in the work of the missionaries.<sup>39</sup>

Shortly after Hurlburt moved the A.I.M. Headquarters from Kangundo to Kijabe, there was a tremendous response by the Gikuyu.

At the Sunday meeting twenty men and women beside Kikuvu, in all three times seven (note the two numbers) came forward from the company of people one at a time, and solemnly declared their belief in Jesus Christ and their determination with His help to abandon all known sin, to have nothing to do with making or drinking *tembo*, the greatest curse we have to fight here, to abandon all needless work on the Lord's Day, and to attend regularly all the religious services of the Mission. You would have to be here a year to understand what such a step meant to each individual...It is the first marked manifested fruit of the Mission in its history.<sup>40</sup>

We conclude therefore, that the first six years of missionary work by the A.I.M were tenuous in nature, securing a foothold in Africa. They were confronted by many problems which threatened the very existence of the Mission. Very few conversions occurred. But a gradual change began to take place by the turn of the century.

## ASPECTS OF THE MINISTRY OF THE A.I.M.

### Evangelism

**Object of A.I.M.:** As we have seen previously, the sole purpose of the mission was evangelism. The first constitution of the A.I.M. stated, "The object shall be evangelization in Inland Africa, as God shall direct."<sup>41</sup>

There has always been a certain tension in the A.I.M. between the goal of evangelism and other accompanying activities which either complement the gospel or are the full expression of the gospel. Thus we find that initially the A.I.M. was confronted with famine. Their response was famine relief and schools for the orphans which God used initially for the conversion of the lost.

Hotchkiss, who was the last A.I.M. missionary remaining in 1897, later left the mission in 1899 and founded the Friends' African Industrial Mission at Kaimosi in Western Kenya. Perhaps he disagreed with other A.I.M missionaries who like Thomas Allen wrote, 'the effort to combine industrial with evangelistic work in the climate of Central Africa appears to be a mistake'.<sup>42</sup> Perhaps Hotchkiss was more in agreement with David Livingston who stressed the need for civilizing by imparting to the Africans the fruits of Christianity.

Yet even Hotchkiss acknowledged the priority of evangelism in his own missionary work. Writing later, Hotchkiss comments:

Now before we reach our objective it may be as well to ask ourselves a few pertinent questions. Just why have we come on this enterprise? Is it merely to get the African to exchange his religion for ours, even though ours is admittedly better than his? Or is it to civilize him, to get him to wear clothes, to build better houses, to produce more and better crops? All these are desirable things, and they are things that have bulked large in my own service for Christ during these forty years. But they are not the things which justify missionary enterprise.

No, the thing goes deeper than that. Jesus indicated it when the paralyzed man was brought to him to be healed. He needed healing of the body and needed it badly, but he needed something else which was far more fundamental. 'Son, thy sins be forgiven thee' is the first word. **That word**

touches the need which lies back of, and is responsible for every other need. The sin question must be settled before we can cope with the multiplied problems of social and economic need.<sup>43</sup>

**Pressing to the 'regions beyond':** Throughout the early years of the A.I.M. there was a deep seated yearning to expand and to preach Christ where He was not known. Until 1903 the A.I.M. was restricted to the Akamba people. Expansion proceeded that year to include the Gikuyu. Within another decade the stations were opened at Laikipia among the Masai, at Eldama Ravine among the Tugen, at Kapsabet among the Nandi, and by 1914 Nyakach was opened among the Luo above Lake Victoria.

One might describe the A.I.M. missionaries as having a 'wander-lust', an intense craving to go to the 'regions beyond' where Christ was not named. On August 2, 1911 John Stauffacher wrote a letter to Hurlburt, saying that he wanted to go to Lake Albert and begin a work there. If the A.I.M. denied him his request, Stauffacher replied, he would resign and go independently. This was discussed by the Council which then denied Stauffacher his request. Stauffacher concluded, that if any further extension work was undertaken in Ukamba, Kikuyu or Masailand, he would resign from the mission, for he was convinced that A.I.M. should be pressing beyond its present borders.<sup>44</sup>

We see herein the tension between building up the work already established and moving on to new, unreached fields. The accounts of the lives of John Stauffacher<sup>45</sup> and Tom Collins<sup>46</sup> illustrate the pioneering, venturing spirit of numerous A.I.M. missionaries, yearning to penetrate the 'regions beyond'.

Charles Hurlburt, the Director of the A.I.M. for twenty-five formative years, contributed enormously to the spread and extension of the A.I.M. throughout East and Central Africa, and thereby fulfilling the vision of Peter Cameron Scott of a chain of missions across Africa.<sup>47</sup>

In 1909 the A.I.M. was invited by the Church Missionary Society (CMS) to occupy her former stations near Lake Victoria in German East Africa, now known as Tanzania. In 1912 Theodore Roosevelt, former President of the United States, interceded on behalf of his friend, Charles Hurlburt, in persuading the Belgian Government to permit the A.I.M. to establish stations in north-eastern Belgian Congo, now known as the Democratic Republic of Congo. In 1918 the A.I.M. entered the West Nile District of Uganda with an agreement to work in cooperation with the C.M.S. in establishing the Anglican Church there. In 1924 the A.I.M. entered French Equatorial Africa, now known as the Central African

Republic. More recently the A.I.M. has entered the Sudan, Namibia, Mozambique, Angola, Madagascar and elsewhere.

**Prayer for the lost:** This primary spiritual concern is evidenced in the many prayer requests in the early days. From Mbooni in 1912 came this request: 'For native Christians that they may come to realize more of the power of the Holy Spirit in their lives so that they may have victory over sin; that God may definitely call and fit some of these Christians for evangelistic work, so that they shall be consumed with a desire to give the Gospel to their own peoples.' C.F. Johnston in his own handwriting, wrote: "Pray for all of us – missionary and native Christians – that we may have a real hatred for sin and a genuine love for the sinner."<sup>48</sup>

**Language learning:** In order to evangelize, the A.I.M. placed top priority on language learning. The importance of acquiring communication skills can be demonstrated by the fact that the members of the Gikuyu language committee, which included the Kenya Field Director, Lee Downing, were 'reprimanded for neglecting their duties' when they had nothing to report concerning the preparing of missionaries for language examination. They were 'strongly urged' by the General Council to see that 'candidates be prepared for examination in May'.<sup>49</sup>

**Bible translation:** Evangelism required Bible translation. In some areas progress was slow, due to the difficulty of reducing the language to writing. But by 1926 the New Testament was translated into Luo, Kikuyu, Kikamba and the whole Bible was translated into Nandi, the first East African language to have a complete Bible translation.<sup>50</sup>

**Itinerant evangelism:** Besides the regular services held daily at the stations, and the lessons they had for the orphan children, the missionaries went out to the villages on itinerant work. But the initial response in Ukambani was slim. Bartholomew reported from Kangundo in 1903:

I am out nearly every day in the villages working, with seemingly few results; nevertheless, we toil on, feeling confident that in spite of all the darkness, God will gather out many 'jewels' for his own...A few have taken a definite stand but they are like new-born lambs in the midst of treacherous wolves and surely need your prayers. The village work is like personal work at home. I have always loved such work; it is mostly dealing with individuals.<sup>51</sup>

At first the missionaries tended to spread the Word of God far and wide. But they discovered that little impact was made. Instead, they began to concentrate on those few who believed or seemed responsive. Bartholomew observed:

I believe it to be far more profitable to devote nearly all my time to those who have confessed Christ and to those who seem to be anxious to know him...I believe it is far wiser to have only one man and develop that man, than to try to develop too many, and then not develop any. What I long to see is native Christians, or leaders, who shall have such a hunger for the Word and be so burdened with the lost condition of their fellowmen, that they cannot be content unless they proclaim the message of life to those who know it not.<sup>52</sup>

**Mission station strategy:** With the need to teach line upon line, precept upon precept, in order to build a solid Christian after his conversion, and because of the strong pull of the family and clan, drawing the convert back into his traditional life style, the missionaries devoted their attention to the peoples living in close proximity of the station. This enabled the missionaries to help the converts during times of testing.

The Mission Station in fact became a vital means of establishing the Church of Jesus Christ in Africa.<sup>53</sup> Christians came to live on or near the station, employed by the Mission, taught and supervised by the missionaries. Most of the early converts were employees of the A.I.M. who lived on the station. The daily Bible studies and prayer meetings conducted by the early missionaries were intended for the believers on the station. Since the lives of those living on the station were under the authority of the missionary in charge, they were able to enforce ethical norms by the threat of ejection from the station. This would also mean the loss of his job. Thus the early Christians, fed and nourished on the Mission Station, 'were regarded by their kinsmen as outcasts'.<sup>54</sup>

Bartholomew in Ukambani urged the Christians not to return to their people because of the temptation of drink in the villages. Some Christians declared they would not return to their villages.<sup>55</sup> Baeta thus calls the Mission Station 'a pocket of this new invading civilization', 'a gathered colony'.<sup>56</sup>

Rev. Timothy Kendagor, however, believes that the mission approach in starting schools and establishing mission stations was appropriate, because the traditions were so strong, the community so tightly knit, that it was virtually impossible to penetrate with the gospel.<sup>57</sup> Thus we find that with all the accompanying problems associated with the Mission Compound, there may have been no other way for the initial penetration of the gospel among the African peoples.

**Evangelism through schooling:** As a matter of historical fact, the most successful avenue of evangelism was the school. The colonial government

did not sponsor many schools for the Africans, for they depended almost entirely on the missions. The church building, used on Sunday for divine worship, became the school building during week days. Christians were called 'readers', since it was primarily the Christians who learned how to read. "From the elementary schools came fully 95% of the early church members and the Deputy General Director wrote of the little chapel schools in 1924 as 'irreplaceable as a recruiting agency for the A.I.M.'"<sup>58</sup> Of the 3,000 local congregations of the Africa Inland Church in 1980, fully 1,000 grew out of the Primary Schools.<sup>59</sup> The teacher during the weekdays became the evangelist on Sunday.

In many ways the A.I.M. demonstrated a concern for more than the spiritual needs of the people. In 1906 Hurlburt spoke of the need of an industrial school, a need placed on his heart in 1898. Though he was at first critical of the idea, he became convinced of the need after observing the situation for seven years.

If it would be a crime to take helpless orphans at home and put them in a school, then be contented with holding evangelistic services, with never an effort to teach the children how to work nor to care for themselves, - much more is it a great wrong to take this child-people, who, unless we teach them some trade, must live in physical, mental and moral uncleanness of their home surroundings, and simply tell them the story of redemption without teaching them how to live.<sup>60</sup>

For this purpose the colonial government granted 2,500 acres at Kijabe to begin a trade school to train masters of a trade, Africans being able to make their own living as shoe-making, printing, stone cutting, blacksmithing, tailoring, carpentry and tanning.

**Evangelism through medicine:** Extensive work was done in the medical sphere. The first medical doctor to serve with the A.I.M. was Dr. John E. Henderson who came in 1901. In addition to the dispensaries on the mission stations, there were clinics visited by missionary nurses, and three major hospitals where bodily needs were cared for. Evangelistic services were also held at these dispensaries and hospitals, introducing the people to the claims of Christ.

**African evangelists and teachers:** Undoubtedly, the most important agent in evangelism was the African Christian who served as evangelist and school teacher. From the earliest days of the mission there was the recognition that 'evangelization must be done by the Africans themselves', as Peter Cameron Scott wrote in his diary.<sup>61</sup> The vision was to train the Africans to be pastors so that they could staff the stations in a few years and

the missionaries be freed to move on to unreached territory.<sup>62</sup>

John Stauffacher, the Extension Director of the A.I.M., gave an address to the A.I.M. Missionary Conference in 1912 in which he affirmed: "All we can hope for is to train those who shall do the work while we spread from tribe to tribe... Unless we hold continually before the native that the work is theirs, and we have come simply to show them how to do it, we shall never make much progress."<sup>63</sup> Thus the number of evangelists, employed by the A.I.M., continued to grow. In 1922 there were 200 African evangelists, and by the late 1930's a reported 1,600 'native evangelists' working among twenty-five tribes in East and Central Africa.

The A.I.M. planned to open a Bible School in 1918. But flu and a smallpox epidemic broke out and within six days Mr. White, the man designated to open the Bible School, had died with dysentery.

In 1928 the A.I.M. founded the first Bible School in Machakos for the Akamba. Mr. Guilding, the first teacher for the Ukamba Bible School, taught all the students in Kikamba until he retired in 1953. In 1929 Moffat Bible School was opened at Kijabe with Mr. Charles Teasdale the first teacher. This Bible School was intended for a number of tribes, including the Gikuyu, Masai, and Kalenjin, and therefore, from the beginning they used Kiswahili as the medium of instruction. A Bible School at Ogada, overlooking Lake Victoria, intended for the Luo, opened for a number of years, but eventually was closed down. Over the years more Bible Schools have opened until by 2000 there were more than 1,000 students studying for ministry in twenty-one Bible training institutions in the Africa Inland Church, Kenya.

### **Distinctives of the A.I.M.**

**A.I.M. with reputation as 'American Mission':** Among the missions entering Kenya in the early days, the A.I.M. was quite distinctive. Though from the beginning there were non-Americans serving with the mission, the A.I.M. became known as 'the American Mission', no doubt due to the predominance of Americans in the A.I.M. and the fact that the American Home Council governed the missionary policy on the field for a period of time. The 'American Mission' was in contrast to the Church of Scotland Mission, Church Missionary Society and the United Methodist Church Mission, all coming from the British Isles and thus more closely associated with the colonial government.

Though the A.I.M. was known as the 'American Mission' in Kenya, she quickly became an International Mission with the British Home Council

formed in 1906, the Australian Home Council in 1916, the South African Home Council in 1919 and the Canadian Home Council in 1936. Today A.I.M. missionaries come from twelve different nations in five continents.

**A.I.M. as an interdenominational mission:** The A.I.M. was also distinctive in that she was not a denominational mission. As an inter-denomination and non-denominational mission, the A.I.M. missionaries have come from many different church backgrounds.

This inter-denominational distinctive led to various problems. In the 1912 A.I.M. constitution, it was stated that 'when it is deemed wise by the Field Council to organize a church, the missionary in charge may elect the form of church government.'<sup>64</sup> Church government had to evolve. These problems were resolved through meetings of missionaries and church leaders, the latter being in the majority. The present church government of the Africa Inland Church reflects the models of the Presbyterian and Episcopalian forms of church government. This no doubt is due in part to the sister Protestant missions in Kenya (Anglican, Presbyterian and Methodist) with which A.I.M. missionaries felt a kindred spirit due to the evangelical spirit among them arising out of the Great Awakenings of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Because of these kindred feelings there was serious discussion of forming one single Protestant Church in Kenya and so church government and worship liturgy were developed so as to be compatible among the four missions.

When the question arose in 1929 of ordaining African men to the ministry, one discerning missionary asked the question: "To ordain native ministers, surely they will have to be recognized as ordained men of something...either A.I.M. or the African Church. And when we ordain native ministers of the A.I.M. does not that make the A.I.M. a denomination with certain Church rules (and) orders ect (sic)?"<sup>65</sup> In effect he was asking whether the A.I.M. could act like a denomination by ordaining men and yet remain a non-denominational mission. Such unique problems had to be resolved by the A.I.M.

**A.I.M. with doctrinal differences:** Though inter-denominational, the A.I.M. Home Council in America was greatly influenced by Dispensational Theology from the beginning. Prominent American leaders and missionaries of the A.I.M. have had strong dispensational convictions and backgrounds. Dr. A.T. Person was not only 'the chief adviser in the organization of the mission in the early days but through the years up to the time of his death he continued a warm friend and most valued adviser in the emergencies that arose'.<sup>66</sup> Presidents of the American Home Council included Dr. Reuben A.

Torrey, 1911-1928; and Dr. Harry Ironside, 1942-1947. A large number of missionaries were trained at Philadelphia Bible Institute and Moody Bible Institute.

In contrast to the dispensational, premillennial orientation of the American Home Council, the British, Australian and South African Home Councils were not thus oriented. They were largely Amillennial in eschatology. This has led to some conflicts on the field. For example, in order to accommodate the non-dispensationalists, the A.I.M. constitution does not contain any statement concerning the Millennium. But through missionary leadership in Kenya, pre-millennialism has been included in the constitution of the Africa Inland Church, sometimes creating problems for those missionaries who are not pre-millennial.

**A.I.M. as 'Faith mission':** Unlike the other Christian missionaries entering Kenya, the A.I.M. was considered a Faith' Mission. John Stauffacher stated that missionaries did not go to Africa 'unless they had a clear call from God to that field and then they were to trust Him alone for the supply of their needs either through honest labor or by gifts direct from others'.<sup>67</sup> As the A.I.M. frequently stated: "As to needs, full information; as to funds, non-solicitation." The founding fathers stated: "The A.I.M. would rather receive prayerful, free will offering of a dime than the prayerless, solicited gift of a dollar."<sup>68</sup>

This 'faith' policy was patterned after J. Hudson Taylor and the China Inland Mission. It was also the policy by which Charles Hurlburt had established the Pennsylvania Bible Institute, not sending students home if they had insufficient funds, but trusting the Lord together in prayer, without solicitation. The mission contributions were pooled and all missionaries supported equally through the pool system.

Without denominational backing and operating on the 'faith' basis led inevitably to a shortage of funds for education, expansion and development. This will be seen later on.

Throughout the years there has been disagreement over the meaning of the Faith Basis, beginning from the first decade. Stauffacher reported that the original phrase, 'As to needs, full information', was changed within ten years to read, 'As to the work, full information', because "[I]t never intended that individual or specific needs of the mission were to be presented to the public but that such requests should be made known to God alone and only the WORK in general should be brought before the public."<sup>69</sup> The 'Faith Basis' has been modified through the course of time, though not without tensions and disagreements.<sup>70</sup>

## Education

We have seen that the school and mission were inseparable parts throughout the course of church history in Kenya. With regard to the A.I.M., Gratton states: “[A] history of the Mission’s educational program is in a real sense a history of the growth of the Church. The Church grew out of the school room; in fact, this is where it was born. For better or worse, Church and school in the early days were practically synonymous.”<sup>71</sup>

**Education – a means of evangelism:** During the first twenty-five years the A.I.M. developed and supported the schools as a means of evangelism. Education was always conceived by the A.I.M. as a means toward evangelism, an auxiliary in helping them to produce a literate church which could read the Bible. Higher education was never their contemplated goal. At the First Council of the A.I.M., they agreed upon an article which stated: “In view of the many untouched millions, we feel called to do a thorough evangelistic work, rather than to build up strong educational centers.”<sup>72</sup>

**Ambivalent attitude toward education:** When the church began to expand vigorously in the 1920’s, and when the Africans began to clamour for more and more schools, the A.I.M. entered a period of ambivalence toward education, dating from 1920-1945. Oliver remarks: “As the Christian community increased, education began to outgrow its avowedly evangelistic beginnings.”<sup>73</sup> And this fact bothered many A.I.M. missionaries.

In those early days Lee Downing, George Rhoad and McKenrick were the prime movers, supporting education. But John Stauffacher disagreed. He wrote:

If we are to simply drift with many other missions into educational work, then I feel very strongly that the A.I.M. will wholly miss the purpose for which it was called into being. I would rather hope that we may turn strongly toward evangelistic effort, and still hope for a real spiritual Revival, that many of the poor natives may yet be won, and many cleansed and purified before our Lord comes.<sup>74</sup>

Several other factors led the A.I.M. toward an ambivalent attitude toward education. When the colonial government began offering educational grants in 1925, the A.I.M. hesitated, fearing that this would entail government control. Many also believed that such grants were contrary to the ‘faith’ basis of the mission. From the inauguration of the A.I.M., there was agreement that the mission would not present any specific financial needs to anyone nor ask men for money needed in the work. ‘As to funds, non-solicitation.’ Missionaries alleged that receiving grants from the

government, because that entailed requesting assistance, amounted to a violation of the 'faith' basis.

But Harmon Nixon entered the fray with the observation that missionaries ASK for concessions for reduced rates when traveling. No A.I.M. missionary has been accused of violating the faith basis because he applies for discounts from business houses and steamship companies. He argued that when the A.I.M. applied for educational grants, they were only asking that funds be released from the taxes which the African had already paid.

A factor contributing toward the A.I.M.'s ambivalence toward education, overlooked many times, was the absence of adequate funds to carry on extensive educational work. Because the A.I.M. was not backed financially by a mission board or church denomination in the homeland, and because of their 'faith' policy, they frequently ran short of funds. This 'American Mission' was recognized as poorer than her counterparts which were backed by denominational mission boards. Their conviction that the financial needs could not be made known to supporters meant a frequent shortage. A letter from Nixon is representative of many others. "Owing to the shortage in the N.E. and I. fund, and the unwillingness of our people to assume the support of their own teachers and evangelists, we have had to close our school."<sup>75</sup>

With limited resources, the growing number of schools detracted from those funds needed to carry forth the evangelistic goal. This was even felt by other missions engaged more heavily with educational work. In 1938 Canon Hillard of the Church Missionary Society lamented that they had been concerned 'to build upwards and not outwards.' By 1935 the C.M.S. passed a Minute that the C.M.S. should not undertake any more Primary Education because the evangelistic work was suffering due to the many demands made on the missionary by Primary and Secondary Education."<sup>76</sup>

Another factor undoubtedly contributed toward the A.I.M. attitude toward education was the educational background of many of the earlier missionaries.

Those who founded the Mission felt that the mission boards then existing were so hard pressed in their work in other fields that large portions of Africa were being neglected and that there was need of special effort apart from existing boards. They also felt that there was a large number of consecrated men and women, who did not have means nor the time, for a long period of education, yet who were eager to take up Christian work and who possessed the qualities of head, heart and hand that often make

the best kind of workers even in the mission field. They believed that in Africa existed only sin, darkness, ignorance and barbarianism and that the men needed to meet these had no special need for specific scholastic and theological knowledge but that they needed that wisdom, energy, zeal, devotion and close walk with God which makes great a man that is no scholar, and makes greater the man that is. They believed that such men sent out as laymen under strong leadership would help much toward meeting the great need of Africa.<sup>77</sup>

They believed that the conditions in Africa were "utterly different from those that call for the learning and culture of a Paul or an Apollos, but do call for the devotion and zeal of both. Here there is no Mars Hill with its philosophers, no Ephesus with its learning." Under these conditions the A.I.M. believed that education was not a priority in the preparation to be a missionary.<sup>78</sup>

Referring to the growing use of laymen in the United States, the founding fathers of the A.I.M. declared: "We believe the day is here when the humbler rank and file of God's army must be recruited for the mission field."<sup>79</sup> Believing that the Mission could not recruit sufficient numbers of missionaries with a full theological education, they accepted those with only one or two years of Bible School.

Consequently, these missionaries lacked a vision for the need of higher education. In contrast to the A.I.M., the denominational missionaries were generally trained in seminaries with graduate level theological education. They prized higher education for the African in ways that the A.I.M. never could because of the missionaries' background.

**Tension with A.I.M. over education policy:** Because the A.I.M. was reluctant to engage heavily in educational work between 1920 and 1945, tensions began to grow between the Mission and the Church, and between the Mission and the Colonial Government. The government became increasingly distressed with the A.I.M., threatening to take over the schools. Members of the Africa Inland Church (A.I.C.) became increasingly restless. They saw their neighbours who belonged to other churches benefiting from advanced education, while the A.I.M. dragged her feet. Despite the growing pleas from the Kenyan A.I.M. Field Council, the American Home Council persisted in holding to their position taken in 1924, that Grants-in-Aid should not be accepted.

This situation led to a glaring educational deficiency in the A.I.M. spheres of mission influence. The Machakos schools were known to be backward. Since the Mission did not provide enough schools, the

government stepped in to establish some. Although the A.I.M. was a member of the Alliance which began the Alliance High School in Kenya in 1926, the first high school in Kenya, no Akamba attended for the first three years. In 1929 when scholarships were given to six Akamba, most of them came from the Machakos School which was taught in Kiswahili and therefore poorly prepared to study in English at the Alliance High School. The Principal of Alliance reported: "The Akamba are more backward on arrival at the Alliance High School than any other tribe."<sup>80</sup> This was due in part to the poorly trained A.I.M. missionaries unable to teach in and administer quality schools. In 1919 none of the A.I.M. missionaries in Kenya 'had completed the normal course at home'.<sup>81</sup>

The situation reached a crisis point by 1945 when Dr. Howard Ferrin, the President of Barrington College in Rhode Island, U.S.A., became a member of the American Home Council. Through his leadership as President of the American Home Council from 1947 onwards, the A.I.M. policy toward education changed.

Dr. Ferrin with Ralph Davis visited Kenya in 1948 to assess the situation. A meeting took place in Mbooni with various African church elders. The minutes are graphic indications of the depths of feeling.

Sakayo Nguku implored the Americans to be patient if hard questions were asked. He asked Ralph Davis if he had children. 'Yes,' came the reply. 'Can you break your child's leg?' 'Yes,' came the reply, 'but I would not.' Sakayo retorted: "Our church is your child...You have broken one leg of your child even though you have worked for fifty years. We have no preacher who can preach to foreigners. We have no teachers who can help their brothers...None can help the church by playing an organ."

Samson complained that the A.I.M. had discontinued sending money to the church in 1927. Whereas the government sends Africans to Makerere College, the A.I.M. has never sent an African to America. "You differentiate between your children and ours. We grow up with your children. Yours are given a good education and come back to Africa as leaders and we have to call them *bwana*. Ours are much behind yours though born in the same family." Philip continued:

I was a pupil and Mr. Nixon was my teacher. I was born in heathenism. From childhood, I have been instructed by the missionaries – just like Carol Weppler and Linnell Davis. Now Linnell is the Principal of Kangundo School...In 1927 Mr. Nixon came home from a Field Council meeting and told us that the well has dried up and the school had to be closed. I am your child in the Gospel now and forever. Why did the

stream dry up for me and not for the missionaries' children?<sup>82</sup>

With intense pressure from the Africa Inland Church, estimated to number 65,000 in 1945, and with permission from the A.I.M. Council in America, Eric Barnett, serving as Kenyan Field Director and the Mission's Education Secretary, relentlessly pursued a crash programme of opening a minimum of twenty Secondary Schools in four years. The period from 1948 to 1963 was marked by a significant emphasis on education, with accompanying church growth enjoyed through this.<sup>83</sup>

By the time of Kenyan independence, the A.I.M. with the A.I.C. had 800 Primary Schools, 100 Secondary Schools and 3 Teacher Training Colleges, possibly more schools than all other missions/churches put together. This was made possible because of the large recruitment of teachers through the A.I.M. In 1948 the A.I.M. had only 38 missionaries in Kenya with four of them in education. By 1963 there were 350 A.I.M. missionaries in Kenya with 300 of them engaged in education. Thus through the leadership of Eric Barnett the A.I.M. surged ahead in promoting education, with evangelism taking front and centre in the whole process.<sup>84</sup>

## CONCLUSION

By God's grace the A.I.M. has been instrumental through evangelism in planting large, flourishing churches in Eastern and Central Africa. From the earliest days of the A.I.M., the Mission envisioned the planting of an indigenous church. In the A.I.M. Constitution of 1912, we read: "It shall be the policy of the Mission to establish a self-supporting, self-extending and self-governing, native Church."<sup>85</sup> But the route was long and tortuous.

Thirty years after the arrival of the A.I.M. in Kenya, the first Bible School was opened in 1928 in Machakos and a second in 1929 at Kijabe. From these schools went forth trained pastors and evangelists, no doubt helping to launch enormous expansion in the 1920's and 1930's. Some of these became licensed for the ministry in the 1930's. But the A.I.M. waited nearly fifty years to ordain the first African to the ministry, an event which took place on April 19, 1945.<sup>86</sup>

In the mean time consideration was being given to the establishing of an autonomous church. Discussion took place in 1929 at the Annual Conference of missionaries at Kijabe. The differences in church organizations between the various A.I.M. stations had to be resolved. By 1942 the churches established by the A.I.M. became organized as a new denomination and in 1943 the Church's Constitution was ratified and its Rules and Regulations formulated.<sup>87</sup> At first the church was known as the

Africa Inland Mission Church. But in 1943 'Mission' was dropped from the title. By 1947 the A.I.C. became registered with the government.<sup>88</sup>

Although the A.I.C. was now autonomous, they always felt like a junior partner, overpowered by the senior. The former relationship was hard to break. Describing the former authoritarian and paternalistic approach of the missionaries, Harry Thuku said many years before: "[P]eople said that the A.I.M. would not discuss any matter or policy with Africans; instead they made their own rules at Kijabe, and then would call the African Christians and tell them what had been decided."<sup>89</sup> Such patterns of behaviour were hard to break. Furthermore, the large number of missionaries with their relatively higher level of education, and their access to financial resources overseas, undoubtedly contributed to the feeling by the Africans that they were the junior partners.

As Kenya lurched toward political independence, the A.I.C. likewise wanted to be liberated from the smothering relationship with the A.I.M. The A.I.M. Annual Kenya Field Conference in 1960 recognized that 'with the coming of self-government in Kenya, some changes will undoubtedly need to be made in the Mission organization.' Consequently, in 1961 a Special Study Committee was set up with the Executive of the A.I.M. Field Council and the A.I.C. Advisory Committee to draw up an 'agreement between the Church and Mission on future working relationships'.<sup>90</sup>

But nothing substantial was decided in the following decade. The A.I.M. did not want to 'squench' the question raised by the African Church leaders. But they were reluctant to make radical changes. In 1969 the Field Secretary for the A.I.M., Eric Barnett, wrote to Sid Langford of the American Home Council, assuring him: "As far as the A.I.C. is concerned, we can truthfully say that ALL the leadership is 'Africanized.'"<sup>91</sup> But this did not include the various Bible Schools and Colleges, the various departments such as medical and literature for they were not 'Africanized' at that time.

After much reluctance and heart searching, and with a change of A.I.M. field leadership, the A.I.M. Field Council under the direction of Frank Frew, agreed to a new relationship. On October 16, 1971, the A.I.M. became a 'Department' of the A.I.C. All station properties were handed over to the Africa Inland Church. The A.I.M. missionaries now became members of the Africa Inland Church and subordinate to the church leaders.<sup>92</sup>

However, the relationship did not satisfy the church leaders for long. Some how the dichotomous relationship of the A.I.M./A.I.C. seemed to

persist in the minds of the Africans. The A.I.M. retained her own name, office, treasury, and officers. Through the A.I.C. leadership of the late Bishop Wellington Mulwa, a new relationship was established in 1979 with the role of the A.I.M. limited to the recruiting and seconding of missionaries to work with and under the Africa Inland Church, Kenya.

With the national churches firmly established in the older countries of A.I.M. ministry (Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Congo, C.A.E., Sudan), the A.I.M. in recent years has branched out to other countries, twelve altogether, working with already established churches to evangelize the unreached people groups and train church leaders in fulfillment of her mission purpose.

### END NOTES

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- <sup>1</sup> David B. Barrett, *Kenya Churches Handbook* (Kisumu: Evangel Pub. House, 1972), 30.
  - <sup>2</sup> W.B. Anderson, *The Church in East Africa* (Nairobi: Uzima Press Ltd., 1981), 1.
  - <sup>3</sup> J. Lewis Krapf, *Travels, Researches, and Missionary Labours During an Eighteen Year's Residence in Eastern Africa* (London: Frank Case & Co., 1968. First published in 1860), 283.
  - <sup>4</sup> Charles P. Groves, *The Planting of Christianity in Africa* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1958),  
II, 109.
  - <sup>5</sup> Krapf, *Travels, Researches and Missionary Labours*, 300.
  - <sup>6</sup> Groves, *The Planting of Christianity in Africa*, II, 107.
  - <sup>7</sup> Krapf, *Travels, Researches and Missionary Labours*, 351.
  - <sup>8</sup> Groves, *The Planting of Christianity in Africa*, II, 107.
  - <sup>9</sup> Krapf, *Travels, Researches and Missionary Labours*, 118.
  - <sup>10</sup> Barrett, *Kenya Churches Handbook*, 22.
  - <sup>11</sup> Catherine S. Miller, *Peter Cameron Scott* (London: Parry Jackman, n.d.), 15-19.
  - <sup>12</sup> John Stauffacher, "History of the Africa Inland Mission." (B) 1914. A slightly different version from c. 1915. Unprocessed, Accession No. 82-150. Archives of the Billy Graham Center, Wheaton, Ill.
  - <sup>13</sup> John A. Gratton, *The Relationship of the A.I.M. and its National Church in Kenya Between 1895-1971* (Ph.D. Dissertation, New York University, 1974), 17.
  - <sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.
  - <sup>15</sup> Stauffacher, "History of the Africa Inland Mission." 1914, 1.
  - <sup>16</sup> Kenneth Richardson, *Garden of Miracles: A History of the Africa Inland Mission* (London: Victory Press, 1968), 27.
  - <sup>17</sup> *Hearing and Doing* (Volumes I-XXI, 1898-1916. Mission Periodical of Africa Inland Mission), I, 1, 1896:3, 4.
  - <sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 1, 1896:3,4.

- <sup>19</sup> Stauffacher, "History of the Africa Inland Mission." 1914, 3.
- <sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.
- <sup>21</sup> *Hearing and Doing*, II, 1, 1897:8
- <sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 3, 1897:5
- <sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 1, 1897:11ff.
- <sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 9, 1896
- <sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 12, 1896
- <sup>26</sup> Willis R. Hotchkiss, *Then and Now in Kenya Colony* (NY: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1937), 51.
- <sup>27</sup> *Hearing and Doing*, III, 5 1898:5,6.
- <sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, III, 11, 1899:5
- <sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, III, 11, 1899:5.
- <sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, IV, 1, 1900:5.
- <sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, V, 1, 2 1901: 5-10.
- <sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, V, 1,2, 1901:8
- <sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, V, 6, 1901
- <sup>34</sup> T. H. Cope, "The Africa Inland Mission in Kenya – Aspects of its History (1895-1945)." M. Phil. Dissertation, London University, 1979.
- <sup>35</sup> *East African Standard*, 'Africa Inland Mission Celebrates its Jubilee.' 23 March 1946.
- <sup>36</sup> Kenneth Richardson, *Garden of Miracles*, 41.
- <sup>37</sup> *Hearing and Doing*, II, 1, 1897:5,6.
- <sup>38</sup> Gratton, *The Relationship of the A.I.M. and its National Church In Kenya*, 25.
- <sup>39</sup> *Hearing and Doing*, VI, 7,8, 1902:3
- <sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, Oct. 1903:19.
- <sup>41</sup> Africa Inland Mission, "Constitution and Rules of Government," 1902. Archives of A.I.M., Nairobi, Kenya.
- <sup>42</sup> *Hearing and Doing*, II, 10, 1897:3.
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- <sup>44</sup> Africa Inland Mission, "General Council Meeting of the Africa Inland Mission at Kijabe, Sept. 7, 1911." Archives of the A.I.M., Nairobi, Kenya.
- <sup>45</sup> Gladys Stauffacher, *Faster Beats the Drum* (Pearl River, NY: Africa Inland Mission, 1978)
- <sup>46</sup> K.N. Phillips, *Tom Collins of Kenya* (London: Africa Inland Mission, 1965)
- <sup>47</sup> Cope, *The Africa Inland Mission in Kenya – Aspects of its History*, 68-74.
- <sup>48</sup> These and other prayer requests are found in the A.I.M. Archives, Nairobi.
- <sup>49</sup> Cope, "The Africa Inland Mission in Kenya – Aspects of its History", 22.
- <sup>50</sup> Barrett, *Kenya Churches Handbook*, 24;  
Stuart Bryson, *Light in Darkness: The Story of the Nandi Bible* (London: Parry Jackman Scripture Illustrations Ltd., 1959).
- <sup>51</sup> *Hearing and Doing*, VII, 5, 1903:11.
- <sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, VI, 2, 1902:5.
- <sup>53</sup> Gratton, *The Relationship of the A.I.M. and its National Church in Kenya*, 122-

125.

<sup>54</sup> Roland Oliver, *The Missionary Factor in East Africa* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1966), 178.

<sup>55</sup> *Hearing and Doing*, X, 3, 1905:12,13.

<sup>56</sup> C.G. Baeta, *Christianity in Tropical Africa* (London: Oxford University Press, 1976), 15,16.

<sup>57</sup> Timothy Kendagor, A.I.C. Principal of Kapsabet Bible College. Personal Interview, 1982.

<sup>58</sup> Cope, *The Africa Inland Mission in Kenya – Aspects of its History*, 31.

<sup>59</sup> Frank Frew, A.I.M. missionary, former Kenya Field Director. Lecture in 1980.

<sup>60</sup> *Hearing and Doing*, XI, 2, 1906:8.

<sup>61</sup> Miller, *Peter Cameron Scott*, 43.

<sup>62</sup> *Hearing and Doing*, VII, 5, 1903:12,13.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, Oct-Dec. 1912.

<sup>64</sup> "Africa Inland Mission, Constitution and Policy." Philadelphia: Africa Inland Mission, 1912.

<sup>65</sup> Gratton, *The Relationship of the A.I.M. and its National Church in Kenya*, 233.

<sup>66</sup> John Stauffacher, "History of the Africa Inland Mission." (A) File 16, Box 24, Collection 81, Archives of the Billy Graham Center, Wheaton, Illinois.

<sup>67</sup> Cope, *The Africa Inland Mission in Kenya*, 16.

<sup>68</sup> Stauffacher, "History of the Africa Inland Mission." (B), 5.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>70</sup> Cope, *The Africa Inland Mission in Kenya*, 74-90.

<sup>71</sup> Gratton, *The Relationship of the A.I.M. and its National Church in Kenya*, 156.

<sup>72</sup> Africa Inland Mission, "Memo of Information received from Dr. Hurlburt under date of June 29<sup>th</sup>, regarding Properties held by the A.I.M." File 17, Box 15, Collection 81, Archives of the Billy Graham Center, Wheaton, Illinois.

<sup>73</sup> Roland Oliver, *The Missionary Factor in East Africa* (London: Longmans, Green & Co.), 212.

<sup>74</sup> John Stauffacher, Letter to Henry D. Campbell, Feb. 23, 1927. File 10, Box 13, Collection 81. Archives of the Billy Graham Center, Wheaton, Illinois.

<sup>75</sup> Harmon Nixon, Letter to Ralph Davis, 27 Feb. 1939. File 14, Box 23. Collection 81. Archives of the Billy Graham Center, Wheaton, Illinois.

<sup>76</sup> Cope, *The Africa Inland Mission in Kenya*, 33.

<sup>77</sup> Stauffacher, "History of the Africa Inland Mission." (B) 1914, 2.

<sup>78</sup> *Hearing and Doing*, I, 1896:3.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>80</sup> J. Forbes Munro, *Colonial Rule and the Kamba: Social Change in the Kenya Highlands 1889-1939*. (London: Oxford University Press, 1975), 160.

<sup>81</sup> Taken from Munro 1975:160. He derived his information from the Report of the Education Commission which received this information from L.H. Downing, Field Director of the A.I.M.

<sup>82</sup> G. Weppler, Minutes of Meeting with Africans at Mbooni, 19 June 1948. File 10,

Box 12, Collection 81. Archives of the Billy Graham Center, Wheaton, Illinois.

<sup>83</sup> This brief summation is derived from Gration 1974:156-197; Cope 1979:43-62; 118-151; Anderson 1970.

<sup>84</sup> Eric Barnett, Personal Interview, June 11, 2004.

<sup>85</sup> Africa Inland Mission, Constitution and Policy." (Philadelphia: Africa Inland Mission, 1912).

<sup>86</sup> Africa Inland Church, *First Anniversary of the Africa Inland Church, 15<sup>th</sup> October 1972*. Kijabe, Kenya: A.I.C. Publications, 1972.

<sup>87</sup> Gration, *The Relationship of the A.I.M. and its National Church in Kenya*, 241.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 241.

<sup>89</sup> Harry Thuku, *An Autobiography* (Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1970), 9.

<sup>90</sup> Africa Inland Mission, Minutes of the Committees for "Kenya: A.I.C. and A.I.M. Relationships." Box 65, Box 5, Collection 81. Archives of the Billy Graham Center, Wheaton, Illinois.

<sup>91</sup> Eric Barnett, Letter to Sid Langford, 25 Feb. 1969. File 86, Box 5, Collection 81. Archives of Billy Graham Center, Wheaton, Illinois.

<sup>92</sup> Gration, *The Relationship of the A.I.M. and its National Church in Kenya*, 336.