

Bishop Tucker - a missionary before, of, or after his time?

Revd Dr Tudor Griffiths

Hawarden, Cheshire.

1. Thanks for the invitation to come and talk with you about Bishop Tucker of Uganda. My interest began when I was invited to go and teach as a Church Missionary Society (as it was) partner in Bishop Tucker Theological College (as it was) in 1989. I took up the subject of Tucker for my PhD thesis with the late great Adrian Hastings and now Paternoster are being commendably patient as I try to find time as a parish priest to write up the thesis for publication. To begin at the end, Bishop Alfred Robert Tucker, who died in 1914 is buried outside the north entrance to Durham Cathedral. My son is a student at St John's in Durham and when I find myself there I like to pay my respects at his grave marked by a large Celtic cross. Visiting there makes me speculate about how he would react to the Church of Uganda nearly 100 years on. I was with a group in Uganda earlier this year, and I think Fred Tucker would be delighted that there are now some 30 diocesan bishops in the Province, all Ugandan with a Ugandan primate, delighted that Uganda is regarded as the mother church of southern Sudan, Rwanda, Burundi and eastern Congo. He would be delighted by the holistic ministry of the church and the millions of baptised Anglicans. He would, I suspect, be less delighted that the theological institution named after him was now headed by an American, less delighted by the level of financial dependence on the West, less delighted by the lack of indigenous theology and liturgy, although pleased with the authentically African spirituality of the *Balokole*, the saved ones.

2. Alfred Robert Tucker was born in 1849. He grew up in the Lake District in north west England in a family of artists, and he became an artist who exhibited at the Royal Academy. He came as a mature student to Oxford in 1879, where he was baptised by Canon Christopher at St Aldate's later that

year. Tucker is one of the very few evangelical missionaries of his period from Oxford. Cambridge was regarded as a much safer bet for evangelicals.

Tucker became involved with CMS through Christopher's contacts and he was ordained in 1882 to serve curacies firstly in Bristol and then in Durham. Two things are significant in Tucker's background - he was from outside the Victorian establishment and from outside the evangelical establishment of his day. I am sure that gave him a certain independence of character and mind. Secondly, his mentors, as we would call them now - Christopher, Hathaway, Fox - were all evangelicals in the mould of Henry Venn, rather traditional in their style.

3. The first CMS missionaries came to Uganda in 1877. The first Protestant baptisms took place within five years in Buganda, the central kingdom bordering the north-west of Lake Victoria, ruled by the Kabaka. Cutting a long and complex story short, by 1890 the small church in Buganda had gained tremendous credibility both within the country and in Britain. It had a missionary heroes in James Hannington, killed in 1885 - CMS missionary and first bishop of Eastern Equatorial Africa. Even more impressive in Uganda was the death of over 30 young men, both Anglican and Catholic at the order of Mwanga the young Kabaka. When CMS looked for a replacement for Hannington they found Parker who was duly consecrated and then died of malaria en route to Uganda. Perhaps unsurprisingly they were having difficulty finding a third and after a number of approaches had proved unsuccessful, they looked again at a letter from Tucker offering himself for service as a missionary to Uganda. The curate was consecrated Bishop in April 1890 and left for east Africa that same night.

4. Until 1897 Tucker was Bishop of Eastern Equatorial Africa, which included all we know as Kenya and Uganda. The exact boundaries were unspecified. This afternoon I would like to concentrate on Uganda. Between 1890 and 1897 Tucker spent three periods in Uganda - one month at the end of 1890, 6 months at the start of 1893 and 11 months from July 1895. In 1897 he became Bishop of Uganda, and he spent more time in the country - nearly three years from 1898, three and a half years from 1902 to 1906. By this time his health was beginning to fail. He returned to Uganda in March 1907 - he

stayed for a year. By the end of 1908 he was back in Uganda for 18 months. He came for a final tour in April 1911. He retired to a Canonry in Durham and died in June 1914 at the Deanery in Westminster, having been taken ill at a meeting in Church House.

5. The great missionary strategist of CMS in the nineteenth century was of course, Henry Venn, with whom we often associate the famous three-self expression - self-extending, self-governing and self-supporting. This was coined in connection with Venn's great overall vision to see indigenous churches planted where CMS worked. I find it helpful to think in terms of three tiers - a vision - indigenous church; secondly, certain values that flow from this vision - self-extending, self-governing and self-supporting - and thirdly, a set of programmes to implement the 3-self values. I think it is important to distinguish this third level in order to see more clearly that the 3-self formula is not itself a programme that can be implemented in any straightforward manner, as indeed Venn found out with - say - the consecration of Crowther. Context - in so many ways - comes into play as a major factor. In his work in Uganda Tucker was without doubt inspired by Venn's three-self formula, but implementing the vision was - testing. Tucker was to find that everyone in CMS acknowledged Venn's formula as received wisdom. But implementing the vision was quite another thing altogether.

6. Having flagged that up, we need to consider the political context of Uganda in this period. One of the reasons behind the martyrdoms in Uganda of the 1880s was that Mwanga the Kabaka was feeling - with some justification - threatened by the encroaching European powers. At one time British, French and German political agents were all making overtures towards him, and the Roman Catholic White Father missionaries clearly favoured the French while CMS missionaries favoured the British working through the Imperial British East Africa Company. Just before Tucker in 1890 there came Frederick Lugard who was the key architect of British rule in Uganda. There had been some conflict - not for the first or last time - in Buganda before Tucker arrived. The new Bishop lacking nothing in self-confident judgement, concluded that i) political stability was necessary for successful church planting and ii) that political stability was best afforded through the establishment of a British

Protectorate. Please note that his main concern was for a context of stability in which evangelism could take place. Tucker had no ideological concern for imperialism as such. A Protectorate was declared in 1893 and the missionaries held a service of thanksgiving. But as time passed the CMS missionary body became increasingly convinced of the value of the Protectorate system of government. Indeed over the 20 years of Tucker's episcopate developed what we could call a Protectorate mentality - the belief that Europeans should take care of the best interests of the Africans until the Africans were ready to take responsibility for themselves. The trouble was that no one was ever sure what was meant by the word *ready*. This made it entirely possible to acknowledge Venn's 3-self formula and deal with it through the simple procedure of postponement.

7. But to return to think more about the political context. Whereas Tucker was quite often a thorn in the side of the British political authorities after 1900, his successors and most, it must be said, of the missionary body were perfectly at ease with the Protectorate mentality. But there were other aspects to the context in which the founding of a church took place. Not least were the indigenous political agenda. Buganda long sought to dominate her neighbours and saw the growth of the church as a -literally - God-sent opportunity to extend the influence not only of the Kingdom of God but also the Kingdom of Buganda. More than one writer has referred to the sub-imperialism of the Baganda. This issue became manifest in one of the great debates in the church over language. Into how many and into which languages should the Bible be translated? This was a crucial question in terms of expense and resourcing translation. The Venn tradition was that it was a missionary priority to translate the Bible into the vernacular. At first Tucker accepted the argument that Luganda was sufficient, but as the church expanded outside Buganda, but then he came round to the counter-argument that the Anglican tradition was that worship should be in the language *understood of the people*. Once the principle was established with the translation of the Bible into Lunyoro, the door was open for translation into all the vernacular languages of Uganda, a task that continues even to the present day.

8. Venn's three-self formula is a useful framework for our discussion. The first value of the indigenous church - self-propagating or self-extending. We can use the term evangelisation. I use here a broader term than evangelism to include medical and educational work, both of crucial significance in the development of the church in Uganda. Between 1890 and 1911, the church in Uganda grew from around 1,000 Protestant Christians based at the capital to nearly 80,000 who were baptised or enrolled as catechumens. 80% of these were in Buganda. The primary agents of this growth were African evangelists, working in conjunction with CMS missionaries and sometimes entirely on their own. In 1891 on his first visit Tucker licensed six men as evangelists, all of whom were Christians of some standing and seniority. The first reference to Baganda evangelists being sent out by the church council was just after Tucker's departure. By June 1891 the Church Council was discussing the possibility of setting up a *native church missionary society*. When Tucker returned at the end of 1892 he was instrumental in setting up two mission stations outside of Mengo - as the capital was called. These were centres headed by CMS missionaries but with a number of satellites where African evangelists worked. Tucker licensed more evangelists, all of whom had been selected by the largely African Church Council. In March 1893 Tucker wrote almost as an observer rather than a participant of a service that was a *valedictory meeting to some two or three missionaries (native) who are going into Busoga. The dismissal was entirely one of the native church. They prayed for the men and are indeed sending them forth. It was like an incident in the Book of Acts*. This pattern of evangelisation was reinforced later in 1893 when George Pilkington systematised the work of evangelists in what he called *synagogues*. This was a scheme whereby evangelists would have charge of four or five outposts around a mission station, attached to which would be some 15-20 *synagogues*, staffed by young men in training to be evangelists. The idea was evangelists would work for 6 months and then return to the capital for six months training. But the demand for evangelists was so high that this never happened. Throughout his episcopate Tucker affirmed the basic value of the African evangelist.

9. In the evangelisation of Uganda before 1911 we can discern three phases. From 1877 to 1893 the dominant concern was for the conversion of individual adult men. This was centred around Mengo. Between 1894 and around 1905 the dominant concern of evangelisation was in church-planting especially but not exclusively through the agency of Baganda evangelists. The key architect of this phase was Pilkington. After 1905 the third phase concentrated on providing education for a new generation of Africans - to enable them to be *ready*. The key architects in this third phase were Willis, who would succeed Tucker as Bishop and Weatherhead who headed up a school for the sons of Protestant chiefs. In identifying these phases there is no suggestion that the activities of one phase were totally lost in subsequent periods. Certainly the work of church-planting continued through Tucker's episcopate and beyond, but the greater energy of the mission that had been devoted to church planting was directed after 1905 to the development of schools for a new elite. Behind these changing phases was a complex dynamic of changing missionary motivation and priorities and changing African demands and initiatives. Tucker's role in each phase was not as the most significant initiator. But as the Bishop and Director of the mission, his was the responsibility for the development of the second and third phases. In terms of the tradition drawn from Venn the development from an emphasis on the conversion of adult males to that of church planting, including of course, women and children, was both a natural and an essential step. But after 1905 the concentration on the work of education might provide an example of how easily what Venn called *secularity* can slip in and subvert a holistic strategy of evangelisation. We may want to hold Tucker to account for his determination to hold on to the missionary monopoly on education, because of his desire to shape a Christian elite. This concentration represented a move away from the Venn tradition inasmuch as Venn held that the evangelisation of a people should take place *from below*, meaning that it was the whole body of Christian people are responsible for evangelisation. The role of the missionary body was to equip them for their task. The post-1905 concentration on education was a clear movement away from the principle of evangelisation *from below*. We can also see a dynamism of evangelisation during Tucker's episcopate. In

1890 the initiative of evangelisation was clearly in the hands of African Christians with whom the missionaries worked in partnership. The ordination in 1893 of six men was Tucker's acknowledgement of this and spur to greater commitment. But by 1911 this situation had completely changed, so that the dynamic of evangelisation was in missionary hands. Theirs were the specialist skills of (Western) education and medicine and increasingly they became the pioneers of church planting, assisted by African clergy and evangelists whose role was subordinate and supportive.

10. The second value of the indigenous church is that it should be self-governing. In Venn's own thinking this was closely allied with the development of an indigenous ordained ministry, culminating with an indigenous Bishop. Tucker determined from the outset to establish an African ministry and ordained the first deacons in 1893, priests two years later. The establishment of a separate diocese in 1897 gave Tucker the opportunity to devolve considerable responsibility to African Christians that resulted in a long, convoluted and sorry story of wrangling between Tucker and his missionary colleagues both in Uganda and in London. Tucker looked for a constitution that put African and European Christians on an equal footing. Prior to 1897 there were two loci of authority in the church in Uganda. There was the Church Council in Mengo, where Africans were in the majority, and there was the so-called Finance Committee, later called the Executive Committee, that dealt with missionary affairs. The missionary body was answerable in the first instance to Tucker but was always ready to appeal to London, where Tucker was regarded as not quite reliable. The CMS office in London was suspicious of any moves towards independence on the part of Tucker. This reflected a long tradition of suspicion towards bishops and missionary bishops in particular who were considered to be autocratic. Tucker himself added to the confusion at times, such as when he appointed the missionary Robert Walker as Archdeacon in Uganda in 1893 and when Walker asked for a job description Tucker replied with more wit than clarity that he was *entrusted with powers to discharge all archidiaconal functions*. By 1897 it was clear that some steps had to be taken to tidy the administrative structure, and Tucker had the grand idea of a unified constitution. For years he tried to persuade his

missionary colleagues of this. In 1909 rather wearily a constitution came into being and it was to a large extent a unified constitution. Africans and Europeans sat together on this body. But - and this is key - in order to get it passed, Tucker had to concede to other missionaries the existence of a Missionary Committee to oversee missionary affairs. Any power analysis of the church at this point and thereafter reveals with sad clarity that effective power remained firmly in European hands. The constitution of 1909 assuredly provided a structure in which the African church could exercise genuine responsibility, but it required trust on the part of the missionary body to ensure this was the case. It was precisely at this point there was failure.

11. Tucker's thinking about ministry began with the fundamental theological insight that ministry itself belongs to the whole people of God to be exercised by all Christians. In his Lambeth Conference speech of 1908 Tucker pointed out that one in five communicants in Uganda worked at one time or another as a licensed evangelist - a remarkable statistic. Tucker regarded this ministry as the basis for ordination, a pattern he established in 1893 with the ordination of licensed evangelists as deacons. He insisted that all African clerics had to be fully supported by the indigenous church, and he argued that the African cleric should not be separated culturally from his people. Food, accommodation, dress and church customs should be indigenous and not modelled on the non-essentials of imported Anglicanism. When he left Uganda in 1911 there were 11 African deacons and 27 priests. In spite of Tucker's repeated insistence on promoting African ministry there was a clear slowing-down of the rate of ordination in the second half of his episcopate. There were a number of reasons for this. Many of the most able evangelists saw their way forward in secular employment rather than in ordained ministry with the growth of the Protectorate and commercial interests in Uganda. Government employment provided a salary over 12 times that of ordination. Additionally Tucker did not secure the necessary resources for theological education. Until 1910 theological and ministerial education was provided informally by missionaries who had other and demanding duties.

12. The third value of Venn's indigenous church was self-support. Here Tucker was very much in the Venn - and New Testament - tradition that money

always carries agenda of control - invariably and inevitably. He was consistently aware that European financial support for the work of the African church created an unhealthy dependence on the part of indigenous Christians. In his Charge to the new diocese in 1897 he said, *It must always be remembered that where European money is used, there will sooner or later follow European control. The power of the purse in hindering the development of Native Churches is truly appalling... From the moment of the conversion of a soul there should be the setting forth before that one of the duty and privilege of giving... The missionary does not realise oftentimes as fully as he ought that in using European money for purposes for which the Native Church should be responsible, he is guilty of inflicting an injury upon that Church.* This opinion did not strike a chord with many of his fellow missionaries, many of whom believed the church was capable of self-support - almost, but in the exceptional circumstances in the meantime could accept subsidy from Europe. But this was only half the story. The African workers were less concerned about the source of their pay and more concerned about its relatively low level. In 1905 some evangelists threatened to go on strike for more pay. Tucker's consistent line was to encourage all clergy and evangelists to teach people that it was their Christian duty to give and to challenge the commonly held view that this giving was only the responsibility of the chiefs. The development of medical and educational work within the diocese of Uganda gave rise to another challenge to self-support. Tucker had in his firm control a diocesan fund and this fund accepted money from Britain. He recognised that medical and educational work related to the country as a whole and not only to the Anglican community. He was willing to allow support from Europe towards institutions like Mengo hospital and King's School in Budo, but he insisted that any funds should be channelled through his fund and that there should be no free-for-all among the missionaries to raise money for their pet projects. Tucker was not entirely inflexible in his insistence on self-support. When there was a famine in Bunyoro he authorised some funds from Europe to go towards the support of evangelists. Just as a footnote to this discussion, Tucker's emphasis on self-support was always

highly regarded in London, because it corresponded well with the constant struggle within the CMS Secretariat to maintain its budget.

13. Tucker was not a man greatly troubled by theological questions and showed little interest in abstract theologising. However, in his Lambeth address of 1908, addressing the question of what had most hindered the development and growth of the church in Africa, he pointed to the *deep-rooted tendency in the Anglo-Saxon character to anglicise everything with which it comes into contact. He continued, we are pretty convinced in our mind that we have everything to give and nothing to receive; everything to teach and nothing to learn; moreover we find it very difficult to believe that there is anything good in the pagan races of Africa.* He went on to argue that the church needed to identify and preserve what was good in the national characteristics of African societies. Against Bishop Weston of Zanzibar he argued for the usage of *native elements* in communion. He encouraged Pilkington's work in collecting proverbs. But nonetheless the classes for evangelists and catechists followed a syllabus drawn from theological training in Britain. Nevertheless two Baganda Christians Ham Mukasa and Nuwa Nakiwafu produced booklets that were printed and distributed by the mission. Archdeacon Walker was dismissive of Mukasa's work which he described as a mixture of the notes he had received and vague ramblings of his own. But in fact the book was immensely significant as the first indigenous theological exploration. Once again we find a divergence between Tucker's ideas and the realities in Uganda.

14. We come now to some concluding remarks about Tucker and the foundation of the church in Uganda. Over a number of issues I have highlighted Tucker's controversies with others in the missionary body. It was unfortunate for his credibility that he was only in Uganda for two of his first seven years as Bishop. He also spoke little Luganda (although more than some thought), although he was regarded warmly by Africans. There were some tensions in his work. On the one hand he argued vehemently for the development of an indigenous ministry and on the other hand training was constantly under-resourced. He argued for the autonomy of the African church and yet he returned frequently to Britain to recruit more missionaries.

Whereas Venn worked on the notion that the indigenous church would assume increasing responsibility for its own affairs as the missionary element withdrew, Tucker attempted both to increase the responsibility of the indigenous church and to increase the missionary force. This might have worked had the missionaries seen themselves as working under the authority of the indigenous church but patently they did not. Any withdrawal of the missionaries was a withdrawing into a higher category in the administrative hierarchy. We may also discern a tension between structure and spirituality. Arguably in the tedious debate over the constitution Tucker concentrated on structure, whereas in the New Testament we see Paul less interested in such matters and considerably more interested in issues relating to humility and Christ-likeness of character.

15. In a final conclusion it should be said that no period was less favourably disposed to the idea of a self-propagating, self-governing, and self-supporting church than the 20 years 1890-1910 - years of high imperialism. Nonetheless the church in Uganda developed under Tucker a strong impulse of evangelisation that still beats today. The degree of autonomy enjoyed by the church of Uganda after the constitution of 1909 was remarkable by the standards of the day. Without faltering in principle Tucker stood for the equality of all workers in the church regardless of their origin. J V Taylor rightly commented that the greatest service which Bishop Tucker rendered *the Uganda Church was to believe in it*. And in answer to the question posed by the title of this seminar, Tucker was not really a man of his time - by the end of his episcopate there are hints that other missionaries considered him something of a venerable dinosaur. I think he was more behind than ahead of his time - but in the good company of Henry Venn. Looking back to Venn for inspiration was however from our perspective far more creative than looking ahead to the dull colonial decades of the 20s and 30s. And that is to provoke you into discussion...

Alfred Robert Tucker - background:

- Lake district
- Oxford
- outside the Victorian establishment and from outside the evangelical establishment of his day..

The first CMS missionaries came to Uganda in 1877. Early history.

Tucker's arrival in Uganda

Summary of Tucker's stay and ministry in Uganda

Death in 1911.

The Venn tradition of Three-Self - vision, values and programme.

The political context of Uganda

The questions of language

The first value of the indigenous church - self-propagating or self-extending. We can use the term evangelisation

In the evangelisation of Uganda before 1911 we can discern three phases:

- · the conversion of individual adult men.
- · Churchplanting
- · After 1905 the third phase concentrated on providing education for a new generation of Africans - to enable them to be ready.

The second value of the indigenous church is that it should be self-governing -

- · the development of an indigenous ordained ministry,
- · a unified constitution.

The third value of Venn' indigenous church was self-support. In his Charge to the new diocese in 1897 he said, *It must always be remembered that where European money is used, there will sooner or later follow European control. The power of the purse in hindering the development of Native Churches is truly appalling... From the moment of the conversion of a soul there should be the setting forth before that one of the duty and privilege of giving... The missionary does not realise oftentimes as fully as he ought that in using European money for purposes for which the Native Church should be responsible, he is guilty of inflicting an injury upon that Church.*

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