

'Missionaries and Muslims in East Africa before the Great War'

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This paper will examine how missionary perceptions towards Islam were first conceived and then adapted over the initial half-century of contact in the region. I argue that there was a major shift in both the thought and attitude towards Islam by the missionaries of East Africa that took place in the years between the foundation of the first major mission stations on the coast and the outbreak of the First World War. Missionaries came to East Africa equipped with a book knowledge of Islam that was dismissive and confident of its collapse in the face of modernity. Over the fifty year period, however, missionaries in East Africa came to see Islam as a vibrant, growing and intellectually-formidable tradition that was seen as a competitor for the religious adherence of Africans.

These changes in attitude were not sparked by major shifts in thinking back in Europe, but were primarily due to interaction on the ground with east African Muslims. The first section will discuss the preliminary goals of the various mission organizations and explore their initial lack of interest in Islam, while the second will show how the inland advance of the missionaries stirred a desire to reach Muslims back on the coast, as well as serving as a catalyst for changes in missionary attitudes and strategies towards Islam. This section will also uncover the origins of the rhetorical theme of a 'race with Islam for the soul of Africa' which was a motif later used by missionaries all over the continent as well as in Christian circles throughout the West. Following from here the focus will then move to Europe to demonstrate how East African missionaries' message about Islam in East Africa made a significant impact on policy decisions in both the political and religious realms.

Missionary Beginnings in East Africa

Starting with Temple Gairdner in 1909 several scholars have assumed that the missions started on the east African coast in the 1860s, 1870s and 1880s were established with the aim of checking the advance of Islam.¹ A careful look at the preliminary goals of the missions, however, reveals that the aim of converting Muslims, or averting an Islamic takeover of the interior, was simply not on the agenda for any of the missionary agencies that started work in East Africa during the second half of the nineteenth century.² After exploring the foundations of the East African missions, this section will suggest some reasons for their apparent lack of interest in Islam and illustrate how their first impressions confirmed these views.

The primary aim of all Christian missions that began work in East Africa during the second half of the nineteenth century was to reach the ‘pagan’ peoples of the interior, but, due to geographical constraints, almost all started work on or near the coast which was almost wholly Muslim. One of the first British missionary societies to establish work on the East African coast was the Universities’ Mission to Central Africa (UMCA). The society was founded by scholars from the Universities’ of Oxford and Cambridge in the wake of David Livingstone’s moving Senate House speech on 4 December 1857. At the conference where the mission was established a decision was made that one or two stations would be opened in Central Africa to ‘serve as centres of Christianity and civilisation, for the promotion of the spread of true religion, agriculture,

¹ Temple Gairdner, *The Reproach of Islam* (London: Church Missionary Society, 1909), 248-249; George Herbert Wilson, *The History of the Universities’ Mission to Central Africa* (London: Universities’ Mission to Central Africa, 1936), 22; Robert W. Strayer *The Making of Mission Communities in East Africa* (London: Heinemann, 1978), 3; Lawrence E. Y. Mbogoni, *The Cross versus the Crescent: Religion and Politics in Tanzania from the 1880s to the 1990s* (Dar es Salaam: Mkuki na Nyota Publishers, 2005), 6. Lissi Rasmussen, *Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa: The Cases of Northern Nigeria and Tanzania Compared* (London: British Academic Press, 1993), 31.

² The near exception would be the ‘Moslem Mission Society’ who advertised a mission to the Muslims of Central and Eastern Africa in 1873, but there is no evidence that the society received any interest and the mission was never started. *A Plea for 75 members of the Church of England Missionary Brotherhood, to be sent to India, Central Africa & Syria, in Connection with the Moslem Mission Society* (London: W. Wells Gardner, 1873), 35-42.

and lawful commerce, and the ultimate extirpation of the slave trade'. There was no discussion of Islam at this conference.³

The UMCA's first attempt at establishing a station in the Central African interior was disastrous. The leader, Bishop Mackenzie, and three other members of the small group died. The newly elected bishop, William Tozer, and the group moved to Cape Town while a spot for relocation was determined. After considering five potential locations, Bishop Tozer decided to move the mission to Zanzibar.⁴ The move was not to 'launch a new attack on . . . Islam in East Africa', as one early historian of the UMCA has suggested.⁵ While this statement may have encapsulated the sentiments of the mission during the first part of the twentieth century when the author was writing, the intention of 'attacking Islam' was not held by Tozer during the summer of 1864. In Tozer's mind Zanzibar was the best place to reach the interior people groups and he made it clear that it was the inhabitants of *Central* Africa which were the primary concern. Zanzibar for him was just 'the best starting place'.⁶ He admitted that there would be work to be done on the island, but he reassured his General Committee that he was looking 'beyond' Zanzibar for the mission's 'proper and legitimate work'.⁷ He continued to say that he thought the job of the Bishop was to be 'always absent' from the base just as soon as the interior stations were started.⁸ The aggressive evangelistic intent was clearly towards the people of the interior and not the Muslims of the coast.

A second British group to start work during this period was the Church Missionary Society (CMS). While the CMS had sponsored a station outside of Mombasa for several decades, a sole German missionary had manned the post from 1855 to 1874. After successfully securing a treaty with the Sultan of Zanzibar to end the slave trade in his lands, Sir Bartle Frere convinced the CMS of the need to re-establish the work and

³ *Oxford and Cambridge Mission to Central Africa. Being a Report of the Meeting held in the Senate House, Cambridge, on All Saints' Day, 1859* (London, 1859), 31.

⁴ Tozer to J. W. Festing, 1 June 1864, in Gertrude Ward ed., *Letters of Bishop Tozer and his Sister together with some other records of the Universities' Mission from 1863-1873* (London: Universities' Mission to Central Africa, 1902), 55-59; Tozer to the Bishop of Cape Town, 14 June 1864, in *ibid.*, 60-66.

⁵ Wilson, *History of the UMCA*, 22.

⁶ Tozer to the Bishop of Cape Town, 14 June 1864, in Ward ed., *Letters of Bishop Tozer*, 65-66.

⁷ Tozer to J. W. Festing, 18 June 1864, in Ward ed., *Letters of Bishop Tozer*, 68.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 68.

open a state for returned slaves to live and be taught the message of the Bible. By November of 1874 the CMS mission group reached the East African Coast where they were to ‘form a base not only for extension among the tribes to the west and south . . . but for carrying on a large and important work among the unfortunate victims of the East African Slave Trade’.⁹ At the annual CMS valedictory dismissal, the newly elected leader, Salter Price, was given three clear objectives for the East African mission. First, they were to establish an industrial city near Mombasa for freed slaves. Second, with the help of Christian missionaries from India, they were to develop the town of Rabai into a Christian village. Lastly, they were to try and open a work on the slopes of Mount Kilimanjaro ‘with a view to a chain of stations towards the interior’.¹⁰ By the following spring the first two objectives were completed. Freretown was opened northeast of Mombasa in May 1875 and by September it had received over three hundred freed slaves.¹¹

It is clear that the objective of the CMS in East Africa did not include an attempt to reach the Muslims of the coast although they were ideally located to do so. The CMS missionaries in East Africa were focused on helping freed slaves and reaching the ‘tribes’ of the interior.¹² It is also clear from Price’s third objective that the direction of the mission was heading away from the coast. Rabai itself had been established several miles north of Mombasa in Wanyika territory where ‘pure Natives’ dwelled. Even though Mombasa was within sight of the CMS stations, no proper work was established in the city itself leaving the Swahilis and Arabs alone except for interactions of necessity.¹³ It would be over a decade before the CMS would make any attempt to work among the Muslims of Mombasa¹⁴.

A final English-speaking mission to arrive on the East African coast was the Africa Inland Mission (AIM) largely run by Americans and led by Peter Cameron Scott

⁹ *CMI* 10 [9] (September 1873), 262.

¹⁰ *CMI* 10 (September 1874), 261.

¹¹ Stock, *History of the CMS*, vol.3, 83-85.

¹² *CMI* 10 (September 1874), 261.

¹³ Stock, *History of the CMS*, vol 3, 83-84.

¹⁴ Robert W. Strayer, *The Making of Mission Communities in East Africa: Anglicans and Africans in Colonial Kenya, 1875-1935* (London: Heinemann, 1978), 61; See below.

who was inspired to start the mission after a visit to see Livingstone's grave in Westminster Abbey. Not surprisingly, this group emphasised the need to 'carry the gospel on to the interior tribes' who had not received any contact from Christian missionaries.¹⁵ This conviction influenced their decision to bypass the coast. Scott commented, 'we will leave this field to our brethren and press forward towards the interior'.¹⁶ With this strategy in place the group quickly headed inland after they landed in Mombasa in October 1895.¹⁷

The only French mission to start work on the coast at this time, the Holy Ghost Fathers or Spiritans, also saw its establishment in Zanzibar in 1862 as never more than a stopping off point to the interior. The Spiritans strategy was to reach out to slave children, either returned or purchased, in order to raise them up in Christian faith and then sent them to start Christian villages in the interior. Islam did not serve as a motivating factor and, in fact, the Catholics were only given permission to work in Zanzibar by the Sultan under the condition that they not preach among Muslim people and try to help meet the physical needs of Zanzibaris. For many years the Spiritans honoured this commitment avoiding proselytising among Muslims.¹⁸

The German missions of the mid 1880s and early 1890s differed from the earlier English and French missions in that they were the direct by-product of imperialism and went propelled in part to serve the interests of the Fatherland.¹⁹ One instance of this is seen in the founding of the Evangelical Mission Society for German East Africa (EMS) who started work in Dar es Salaam in 1887. Influential in its organisation was Countess

¹⁵ *HD*, 6:1-2, (Jan-Feb 1901), 9.

¹⁶ Scott quoted in Anderson, *We felt like Grasshoppers*, 19.

¹⁷ Anderson, *We felt like Grasshoppers*, 19-20; Richardson, *Garden of Miracles* 27-31.

¹⁸ Paul V. Kollman, *The Evangelization of Slaves and Catholic Origins in Eastern Africa* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2005), xvii-xviii, 4-5, 37, 83, 87; John Anthony Patrick Kieran, 'The Holy Ghost Fathers in East Africa, 1863 to 1914' (PhD diss. University of London, 1966), 357, 366.

¹⁹ Oliver, *The Missionary Factor in East Africa*, (1952; repr., London: Longmans, 1966), 94.

Sigvard von Sicard, *The Lutheran Church on the Coast of Tanzania 1887-1914 with Special Reference to the Evangelical Church in Tanzania, Synod of Uzaramo-Uluguru* (Upasala, Gleerup, 1970), 28-30; Thomas Pakenham, *The Scramble for Africa: 1876-1912* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1991), 284-285, 290-292; Paul Fleisch, *Lutheran Beginnings around Mt. Kilimanjaro: The First 40 Years*, Ernst Jaeschke ed. (Arusha, TZ: Erlangen Makumira Publications, 1998), 13-15; Joseph Wilson Parsalaw, *A History of the Lutheran Church, Diocese in the Arusha Region from 1904 to 1958* (Arusha, TZ: Erlangen Makumira Publications, 1999), 12-13.

Martha Pfeil, a relative of Carl Peters the leader of the Society for German Colonisation, who announced that she believed 'it was the duty of the German Evangelical Motherland, as soon as possible, to begin with the building up of an Evangelical church in the newly acquired colony'.²⁰ Although the EMS started on the coast, they avoided working near Muslims and planned to move inland as soon as possible.²¹

One of the reasons for missionaries' early lack of interest in working among east African Muslims was that they perceived Islam in East Africa to be in decline. Like many people in Europe and America at the time, the missionaries believed that Islam was waning and was going to die out naturally with the potential aid of Western modernity. This view was held during the initial stages by the Spiritans,²² the UMCA and the CMS. In route to Zanzibar the UMCA expedition stopped at Johanna Island where Bishop Tozer spoke with the British consul about Islam in Zanzibar. Tozer wrote to his sister and explained that the consul believed 'the influence of the Mohammedan faith is much on the decline' and that even though the people maintained an outward connection to the religion, they 'do not believe in it as they used to'. Tozer thought this boded well for their mission work.²³ Similarly, Sir Bartle Frere, the catalyst for the CMS's work, wrote in his 1874 book *Eastern Africa as a Field for Missionary Labour* that, 'whatever may be the case with regard to the West Coast, there can, I think, be no doubt that on the East Coast . . . the Muhammedan religion bears all the marks of a decaying creed, which has no chance of success in propagating itself. . . .'²⁴ The *Church Missionary Intelligencer* reported Frere's comments and noted that the first reports from Price's team in East Africa confirmed the abolitionist's opinions. As evidence, they explained that the area just inland from the coast where the mission worked was once largely inhabited by Muslims but that the 'heathen' had converted the

²⁰ von Sicard, *The Lutheran Church on the Coast of Tanzania*, 53.

²¹ Ibid., 58-66, 85-89, 100. See also, Ethan R. Sanders, 'Missionary Perceptions of Islam in East Africa, 1864-1911' (MPhil diss. University of Cambridge, 2008), 23-24.

²² Paul V. Kollman, *The Evangelization of Slaves and Catholic Origins in Eastern Africa* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2005), 95.

²³ Tozer to his sister. Pomony, Johanna Island 26 August 1864, held in the Universities' Mission to Central Africa Archives, Rhodes House Library, University of Oxford. UMCA A1 (I) A.

²⁴ Frere, *Eastern Africa as a Field for Missionary Labour*, 19.

‘Mohammedans’ from their faith.²⁵ They also believed that the people of the interior would never accept the creed of the slave dealers who committed ‘the most horrible atrocities on them’. They concluded that, ‘Islam, therefore, is not on the Eastern Coast to be accounted a serious difficulty.’²⁶

There was also a strong belief by missionaries in the early years that Islam had not spread into the interior. This view stemmed from the fact that there was still a great deal of ignorance about the interior of East Africa in the 1860s and 1870s, especially when compared to the inner regions of West Africa. Although both the Spiritans and the UMCA started work on the coast in the early 1860s, neither of the two groups established inland stations until the mid 1870s. The knowledge they had of the interior was extremely limited and led Bishop Tozer to write in his pastoral letter of 1870 that even though the Arabs had traded with the interior peoples ‘from times before the beginning of history,’ they had ‘never made any permanent settlement or left any traces of their blood or religion beyond the immediate limits of the coast villages.’²⁷ Similarly, when the CMS restarted its mission work in the 1870s, the one mission station they had that was just inland from Mombasa, showed no signs that Islam had spread and for several years it appears that the CMS continued to believe that it had not penetrated inland.

The missionaries’ lack of information on the Muslim advance upcountry also stemmed from the fact that there were few explorers’ accounts that yielded any reason for concern. This was buttressed by the writings of Richard Burton and David Livingstone (which I don’t have time to go into) but the point is that the missionaries who went to East Africa during the 1860s and 1870s had very little accurate information about the nature of Islam in East Africa. Therefore, they would have to make up their minds once they reached their new missionary fields.

²⁵ *CMI* 10 (November 1874), 324-325.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 325.

²⁷ ‘Missionary Pastoral Letter from Bishop Tozer. 28 July 1870’ held in the Universities’ Mission to Central Africa Archives, Rhodes House Library, University of Oxford. *UMCA* A1 (I) B.

Changing Strategies and New Encounters

Relying on the accounts of geographers and other travellers as well as other European scholarship of the region, missionaries were prepared to encounter Islam of a certain kind at the coast, but they had not expected to find the religion in the interior. As missionaries moved further inland they began to see that the faith was growing and winning the allegiance of upcountry peoples. As their perceptions of the nature of Islam changed, so did their strategies.

The first course of action regarding Islam during the first years of mission work in East Africa was to do nothing at all. The UMCA, CMS, EMS and Spiritans all avoided trying to convert Muslims. One example of this is when Salter Price, the first leader of the CMS at Freretown scolded a mission worker from Bombay for preaching directly to Swahili Muslims who happened to wander into a CMS assembly.²⁸ This began to change when in the late 1870s and 1880s the missionary organizations started to expand inland. The Spiritans opened stations at Mhonda in 1877, Mandera in 1880, Morogoro in 1882, Tunungu in 1884 and Kondoa in 1885. Under the leadership of Bishop Steere the UMCA finally started to establish the inland mission stations which had avowedly been their initial targets. The first stations were at Magila in 1875 and Masasi soon thereafter. The CMS also spread inland to the central part of what is now Tanzania as well as opening up a mission to the Kamba in 1883 in line with their ‘view to a chain of stations towards the interior’.²⁹

As missionary stations began to be set up in the interior and as missionaries went on scouting expeditions to find new lands for further development, numerous reports of the presence of Islam came streaming in to the head stations at the coast. Starting in the late 1870s and early 1880s, and then increasing from the late 1880s through to the first decade of the twentieth century—as the numbers of missionaries in

²⁸ Kollman, *The Evangelization of Slaves and Catholic Origins in Eastern Africa* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2005), 95; Bishop Tozer to Miss Tozer, 14 September 1864, in Gertrude Ward ed., *Letters of Bishop Tozer and his Sister together with some other records of the Universities' Mission from 1863-1873*. (London: Universities' Mission to Central Africa, 1902), 79-80; Bishop Tozer to Mrs. Jackson, 24 September 1864, in *Ibid.*, 86; *CMI* 12 (October 1875), 313; von Sicard, *The Lutheran Church on the Coast of Tanzania 1887-1914 with Special Reference to the Evangelical Church in Tanzania, Synod of Uzaramo-Uluguru* (Upasala, Gleerup, 1970), 52-73

²⁹ *CMI* 10 (September 1874), 261.

the interior multiplied and as the spread of Islam increased—there were numerous reports of how Muslim influence had already reached the villages and towns of the interior.³⁰

As the UMCA spread, it encountered Islam in ways it had not expected. Writing about the region around the Usambara Mountains in 1876, J. P. Farler reported that ‘all the towns have a Mohammedan Mission, that is a little mosque, and a *mlimu* [mwalimu-teacher]’.³¹ During a trip to the Yao region of the Rovuma River valley in the same year Edward Steere remarked that many of the young men had embraced Islam.³² In the 1880s when the mission opened its first station in the Lake Nyasa region the missionaries encountered an ‘intelligent Mohammedan teacher’.³³ Throughout the 1890s as the missions expanded to new villages they continued to report the presence of

³⁰ For reports from the UMCA see, Edward Steere, *A Walk to Nyassa Country* (London: R. Clay, Sons and Taylor, 1876), 21, 31-32; J. P. Farler to the Organizing Secretary 12 October 1876, in appendix to Edward Steere, ‘First Freed Slave Settlement in Central Africa’, 21, bound in *Central African Mission Occasional Papers*, held in the Royal Commonwealth Society Collection, University Library, University of Cambridge; J. P. Farler, ‘An Introduction to Mr. Yorke’s Letter’, 6, bound in *Central African Mission Occasional Papers*, held in the Royal Commonwealth Society Collection, University Library, University of Cambridge; ‘Mr. Yorke’s Letter to Bishop Steere’, 15 July 1878, 8, bound in *Central African Mission Occasional Papers*, held in the Royal Commonwealth Society Collection, University Library, University of Cambridge; J. P. Farler *The Work of Christ In Central Africa: A Letter to the Rev. H. P. Liddon D.D., D.C.L. Canon of St Paul’s and Ireland Professor of exegesis at the University of Oxford* (London: Rivingtons, 1878), 4-5; *CA* 1 (March 1883), 42; *CA* 2 (February 1884), 23; *CA* 2 (April 1884), 57; *CA* 5 (October 1887), 144; *CA* 5 (December 1888), 176; *CA* 9 (January 1891), 4; *CA* 9 (April 1891), 48; *CA* 9 (July 1891), 111-113; *CA* 11 (1893), 39; *CA* 12 (1894), 5; *CA* 12 (1894), 26; *CA* 12 (1894), 130; Gertrude Ward and Edward Francis Russell eds. *The Life of Charles Alan Smythies Bishop of the Universities’ Mission to Central Africa* (London: Universities’ Mission to Central Africa, 1898), 102 and 203; A. F. Sim to my dear _____, 18 August 1894, in *The Life and Letters of Arthur Fraser Sim: Priest of the Universities’ Mission to Central Africa* (London: Universities’ Mission to Central Africa, 1897), 101; *CA* 13 (1895), 21; *CA* 13 (1895), 154; *CA* 15 (December 1897), 195 & 197; several in *CA* 16 (March 1898), 44-45; *CA* 18 (October 1900), 172; *CA* 19 (April 1901), 10; *CA* 20 (July 1902), 125; *CA* 21 (April 1903), 66; *CA* 22 (August 1904), 161; *CA* 22 (October 1904), 205; *CA* 24 (January 1906), 11; *CA* 24 (February 1906), 34; *CA* 24 (July 1906), 188-189; *CA* 25 (January 1907), 5; *CA* 25 (February 1906), 33 and 37; *CA* 25 (April 1907), 116; *CA* 25 (September 1907), 232 and 262; Arthur Douglas to ‘a sister’ 9 December 1908, in *Arthur Douglas: Missionary on Lake Nyasa, The Story of his Life* compiled by B.W. Randolph (London: Universities Mission to Central Africa, 1912), 197; Frank Weston to the Chairman of the UMCA, 24 August [1908], held in Universities’ Mission to Central Africa Archives, Rhodes House Library, Oxford University, *UMCA* A1 (XVII) B; For reports from the CMS see *CMIR* 4 (November 1879), 662; *CMIR* 13 (April 1888), 237-239; *CMIR* 13 (November 1888), 715; *CMIR* 44 (April 1893), 274; *MDM* 2 (October 1905); German East Africa Executive Committee meeting minutes 30 January 1907 *CMS* G3 A8/O; *CMR* 62 (March 1911), 164; *CMR* 63 (March 1912), 157; James D. Holway ‘CMS Contact with Islam in East Africa before 1914,’ *Journal of Religion in Africa* 4 (1971-1972), 208.

³¹ J. P. Farler to the Organizing Secretary, 21.

³² Edward Steere, *A Walk to Nyassa Country*, 31-32.

³³ *CA* 2 (April 1884), 57.

Islam.³⁴ To the missionaries' surprise, many of these towns were 'wholly or almost wholly Mohammedan',³⁵ or were places where 'Mohammedan influence was very strong',³⁶ certainly most had at least a mosque or a teacher of the Qur'an.

The CMS had a similar experience when it advanced into the interior. On a trip to the Wanguru in 1879 a missionary worker was surprised to find that they had built a mosque and that 'the Natives who wish it are taught to read the Koran.'³⁷ When Bishop Parker made a trip to the interior in the 1880s he met several groups 'under Arab influence'; W.E. Taylor similarly came across Muslims in Chagga territory (Kilimanjaro region) during the same period.³⁸ Even in British East Africa a CMS missionary reported in 1892 that the presence of Islam was even visible in the Kavirondo region in the far western part of the colony.³⁹ Other groups were also surprised to find Muslims in the interior. When the EMS pushed inland from the coast they found a mosque and a few Muslims in Uzaramo country due west of Dar es Salaam.⁴⁰ Similarly, the AIM were surprised to find in 1902 that they had been preceded by Muslims to Machakos in Central British East Africa.⁴¹

The first indication that UMCA strategies towards Islam were beginning to change in light of their realization about its spread came during the reign of Bishop Tozer's successor Edward Steere. Writing of the region around the proposed mission station of Magila in 1875 he warned, 'Mohammedanism is nibbling a little at the edge of

³⁴ This is in partial contradiction to Felicitas Becker's claim that Anglican and Catholic Missionaries who worked in Southeast Tanzania from 1876 to 1896 did not observe Islam in the interior. While that might have been the case for the Benedictines, there were certainly several UMCA reports from the region that say otherwise. Felicitas Becker, *Becoming Muslim in Mainland Tanzania, 1890-2000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 1.

³⁵ *CA* 16 (March 1898), 45.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 44.

³⁷ *CMIR* 4 (November 1879), 662.

³⁸ *CMIR* 13 (April 1888), 237-239; *CMIR* 13 (November 1888), 715.

³⁹ *CMIR* 44 (April 1893), 274.

⁴⁰ von Sicard, *The Lutheran Church on the Coast of Tanzania*, 105; For several other reports of Muslim expansion in the different parts of German East Africa see Carl Heinrich Becker, 'Materialien zur Kenntnis des Islam in Deutsch-Ostafrika,' *Der Islam* 2 (1911), 1-48, edited and translated by B. G. Martin as 'Materials for the Understanding of Islam in German East Africa' in *Tanzania Notes and Records* 68 (February 1968), 37-43.

⁴¹ HD 6 [7] (September/October 1902), 6.

it, as if to warn us to lose no time in our work'.⁴² Over the next couple of years the UMCA developed two plans for the interior: one was to find areas where Islam had not yet been established and get there first; the other was to place stations in calculated locations to 'counteract the Muhammadaniying influence which comes from the coast',⁴³ to use Bishop Steere's phrase.

The first strategy, the idea of reaching the 'heathen' before Muslim propagators did, developed into the broader theme of a perceived ideological race with Islam for the soul of Africa. This motif of missionary propaganda gained wide usage among the UMCA and other missionary groups in Africa as well as in Europe. J. P. Farler, who was the head of the UMCA station at Magila, first coined the idea in an 1878 letter to the influential Henry Parry Liddon, canon of St. Paul's Cathedral in London. This letter was published as *The Work of Christ in Central Africa* that same year. Farler argued that everywhere else in the world missionaries were either fighting against 'heathenism and barbarism' which would surely give way to civilization, or against the established religions of the East which were not aggressive. However, in east-central Africa he emphasized, '*we are fighting against time*' for Islam was an aggressive religion in the region.⁴⁴ He continued in an emotive passage:

The whole future of Central Africa is now trembling in the Balance. The Africans will not remain as they are; they are seeking of a religion, and they will have one. They are calling to England for teachers, even begging for men to teach them the faith of Christ. The false faith of Islam is at their door, they have not yet accepted it; but if through lack of men with the Apostolic spirit, the English Church is unable to answer their appeal for missionaries, they have no alternative, they must accept Islam. Once let the nations of Central Africa become Mohammedan, and in all probability they will be lost to Christianity, civilisation, and freedom for ever. It is now for England's Church and England's

⁴² 'First Quarterly Statement of Bishop Steere' 29 August 1875, held in the Universities' Mission to Central Africa Archives, Rhodes House Library, University of Oxford, *UMCA A1 (III) A*.

⁴³ Edward Steere to [CMS Committee?] 4 February 1879, held in the Church Missionary Society Archives, in the Special Collections of the University of Birmingham Library, *CMS C A5/O/1/43*.

⁴⁴ J. P. Farler, *The Work of Christ in Central Africa*, (London : Rivingtons, 1878), 3-4, emphasis in the original.

Universities to decide, whether Central Africa shall be Christian, free, progressive, and civilised; or Mohammedan, enslaved, stagnant, and barbarous.⁴⁵ The major points of Farler's letter to Canon Liddon were also repackaged in a more succinct letter to the editor of *The Times* of London in which Farler reemphasized, 'We are fighting against time. While we are looking on, the false religion of Islam is working hard and trying to occupy ground which, if once lost to Christianity, will in all probability never be regained'.⁴⁶ In *The Work of Christ in Central Africa* there are several themes which would be picked up by later missionaries and a more general European public. The first is the belief that all Africans would convert to either Islam or Christianity but that they would not hold to their traditional beliefs about spirituality. This either/or framework reached a frenzied height in East Africa during the first decade of the twentieth century and was also exported and used in the West African context.⁴⁷

Under Bishop Smythies, two new approaches to Islam were undertaken by the UMCA in the 1880s and 1890s. The first was to give instruction to native converts about the Muslim faith. Soon after Smythies arrived in Zanzibar a meeting of the Synod was held in Christ's Church Cathedral on 5-7 May 1884. At this meeting a resolution was passed that, 'definite instructions as to Mohammedanism be given to all catechumens'.⁴⁸ The mission seems to have implemented this resolution because in a report on the Kiungani Theological College of Zanzibar in 1887 it notes that the Africans receiving teacher training were taught about the life and teaching of Mohammed. Some of the questions on the half-yearly exam included, 'What do you

⁴⁵ Ibid., 8.

⁴⁶ *The Times* (London) 9 August 1878.

⁴⁷ In its West African context see Charles Henry Robinson, *Nigeria our Latest Protectorate* (London: Horace Marshall and Son, 1900). Robinson, a lecturer of Hausa at the University of Cambridge wrote, 'There can be little doubt that before the close of the coming century heathenism will be practically extinct in the continent of Africa. The whole population will be either nominally Christian or nominally Mohammedan'. Robinson, *Nigeria*, 190. See also Bengt Sundkler and Christopher Steed, *A History of the Church in Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 257; Barbara M. Cooper, *Evangelical Christians in the Muslim Sabel* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2006), 29; For East Africa see below.

⁴⁸ 'Acts of the Synod of 1884', held in the Universities' Mission to Central Archives, Rhodes House Library, University of Oxford, UMCA A1 (V) A.

know of the Kaba, Ohod, Black Stone?’ and ‘What great differences are there between our religion, and that of Mahommed?’⁴⁹

The second strategy introduced during the Smythies years was to start a concerted effort to minister and convert the Muslims on the coast, particularly in Zanzibar. Believing the expansion of Islam came from the coast and coastal influences, the UMCA desired to slow its spread in the interior by mitigating its influence at its base. During the 1890s there was a growing feeling, expressed tellingly by J. P. Farler, that Zanzibar had so far been ‘a sort of halting-place at which priests stop for a few months before going upcountry to mainland stations,’ and Farler believed that this had to change.⁵⁰ Several new initiatives were implemented to refocus the work on Zanzibar including opening a school for Muslim children of Arab, Indian and Swahili backgrounds as well as initiating short, non-confrontational evangelistic tours through the native quarters of Zanzibar.⁵¹ The growing feeling, however, was that in order to reach the Muslims of Zanzibar workers were needed who had serious training in the religious doctrines of Islam and a firm grasp of Arabic. These workers also had to be committed to sustained work among Muslims and not be easily deterred if there was a lack of immediate results. In the Synod meeting of 1893 Smythies lamented that so little had been done amongst the inhabitants of Zanzibar and he proposed that a clergy house be built where priests and lay people could stay to learn more about Islam and exclusively train to work amongst Muslims.⁵²

After a dozen years of work just outside Mombasa and the start of a few inland stations, the CMS too began to feel that they had neglected the peoples of the coast. The new bishop, W. E. Parker, had visited Zanzibar in 1886 and was impressed with UMCA efforts to reach Muslims on the Island and wondered ‘what might be done at Mombasa?’⁵³ A couple of months later Bishop Parker took an advertisement out in the *Church Missionary Intelligencer and Record* for three ladies to work with Muslims in

⁴⁹ *CA* 5 (October 1887), 144, 159.

⁵⁰ *CA* 14 (1896), 167.

⁵¹ *CA* 15 (April 1897), 51.

⁵² Ward and Russell, *The Life of Charles Alan Smythies*, 251-252.

⁵³ *CMIR* 12 (March 1887), 701.

Mombasa as well as a medical team.⁵⁴ By 1888 the CMS was sending medical doctors into Mombasa from Freretown on two days a week as well as a native evangelist on Saturdays to reach the inhabitants of Mombasa. Writing of this missionary effort, Parker stated, ‘This is a distinct extension of the Mission. As no systematic evangelistic work has ever yet been carried out in Mombasa town among the Mohammedans’.⁵⁵ It was during this same time that Parker made a journey into the interior and reported on the alarming growth of Islam.⁵⁶

With the death of Bishop Parker in 1888 this new interest in Muslim work was put on hold for a couple of years while Salter Price, who had never had much interest in reaching coastal Swahilis or Arabs, was reinstated on a temporary basis.⁵⁷ However, the newly appointed Bishop of Eastern Equatorial Africa, Alfred Tucker, shared Parker’s vision of reaching the Muslims of Mombasa. There was no doubt in Tucker’s mind that ‘Mombasa must be occupied’ because he saw that it, rather than Freretown, was the future hub of the CMS efforts on the coast. He admitted that he was glad that the proposed church in memory of the two previous bishops had not yet been constructed at Freretown for he felt that a ‘substantial building to be the mother-church of the diocese’ should be built in Mombasa instead. Not only would the proposed railway make Mombasa a vital city on the East African coast but a church there would ‘be the centre of evangelistic work among the Mohammedan population’. He continued by saying, ‘A Mission, indeed, to the Mohammedans of Mombasa is one of the most important now before us’.⁵⁸

Tucker proposed that the medical work be expanded, that the woman’s work proposed by Parker be started, and that ‘a good Christian school for Moslem boys’ be built. The Home Committee agreed to Tucker’s requests and by the end of September 1892 a hospital building had been nearly completed, and four houses had been purchased and occupied by the doctors and their families as well as the four single

⁵⁴ *CMIR* 12 (May 1887), 309.

⁵⁵ *CMIR* 14 (March 1889), 173; *CMIR* 13 (February 1888), 83.

⁵⁶ *CMIR* 13 (April 1888), 237-239.

⁵⁷ Price was especially interested in 1889 with refocusing on the interior and not the coast, under the encouragement of the newly established Imperial British East Africa Company. *CMIR* 14 (February 1889), 114-115.

⁵⁸ *CMI* 42 (March 1891), 201; *CMI* 42 (July 1891), 540.

women who were to carry out work among the Muslims.⁵⁹ It was clear to those going out to Mombasa that their work was specifically directed towards the Muslim population and in 1894 the CMS began a special campaign to reach the Muslims through open preaching in the streets.⁶⁰ There had been a clear change in policy since 1875 when Salter Price scolded the missionary worker for directly addressing Muslims and not just letting 'fall here and there a few crumbs'.⁶¹

During the 1880s and 1890s the German and French groups also experienced a change in attitude towards Islam. Writing on the Spiritans, Paul Kollman has argued that during this period there was a growing vilification of Islam and an increasing view of Muslims as a hindrance to their mission work. After 1885 the Spiritans began to see Islam as an advancing force. In their first inland station of Mhonda they complained that during the 1890s the numbers of converts had begun to slump due to the growth of Islam. Worse still, by 1896 there was a growing concern at the numbers of African Catholics converting to Islam.⁶² Similarly the EMS who had come primarily to start medical work in the 1880s started to realize that they could no longer ignore Islam in their coastal missions. Although in the early 1890s they still viewed Islam as only having a superficial hold among the inhabitants of the coast, in 1892 the decision was made to implement a strategy to stop Islam before it became more firmly entrenched.⁶³

From the turn of the century until the outbreak of the First World War in 1914 the concern over Islam reached a fever pitch among east African mission societies. For a group such as the UMCA, 'the Mohammedan Problem' was seen as the most important problem facing the Church in East Africa. During this period all of the major agencies shifted their focus to coming up with new strategies for dealing with the growth of Islam and the either/or framework introduced by J.P. Farler in 1878 became a common refrain. The newly elected Bishop of Zanzibar, Frank Weston, predicted that

⁵⁹ *CMI* 42 (July 1891), 540; *CMI* 42 (August 1891), 629; *CMI* 43 (November 1893), 844.

⁶⁰ *CMI* 42 (August 1891), 606; 'Instructions delivered to Dr. C.S. and Mrs. Edwards returning to the Eastern Equatorial Africa Mission, 20 November 1894', held in the Church Missionary Society Archives, in the Special Collections of the University of Birmingham Library, *CMS* G3/A5/L7.

⁶¹ Above, p. 38.

⁶² Kollman, *The Evangelization of Slaves*, 53, 199; Kieran, 'The Holy Ghost Fathers in East Africa', 174-175, 358, 360

⁶³ von Sicard, *The Lutheran Church on the Coast of Tanzania*, 164.

the religion that held Zanzibar would be the religion that took the entire region. He increased the UMCA's efforts to train their African teachers and clergy making sure every reader had a copy of *the Life of Mohammed* and giving priests-in-training the latest material on Islam from writers like Samuel Zwemmer and Godfrey Dale. In 1909 Bishop Weston even changed the public prayers of the litany to include a petition for Islam in Swahili as well as instituting special prayers on Fridays for the conversion of Muslims.⁶⁴ The home committee of the UMCA also backed Weston's plans for Zanzibar. In 1908 Cannon Scott Holland preached in an anniversary sermon that, 'In old days long ago we used to wonder whether Zanzibar was the right place for us to find ourselves in; but now that the question is with Mohamed, . . . it is exactly at Zanzibar where the centre of the conflict lies'.⁶⁵ For the first time the UMCA was beginning to acknowledge openly a shift in their missionary strategy.

New leadership in the Catholic and Lutheran societies also turned their attentions to Islam. During the years of Father Vogt, the Spiritans became preoccupied with the advancing threat of Islam. Vogt took the view that districts where Islam secured a foothold would be lost and therefore he determined to send out missionaries and start new stations in localities where Islam had not yet spread.⁶⁶ From 1900 to 1914 it was also the Leipzig Society's strategy to expand to places not yet influenced by Islam.⁶⁷ In 1902 the Berlin Mission Society took over the work of the EMS on the coast because it was felt the small EMS could not adequately deal with the challenges of working among a Muslim population. The Berliners, who were a much larger society, had been working in several other parts of German East Africa and became concerned over the growth of Islam in the south-western and north-eastern parts of the country. They were keen to take on the work in Dar es Salaam and its environs as they feared it would fall completely into the hands of Islam if it was not reached. This in turn would have grave repercussions because of the large number of inland people coming to the colonial

⁶⁴ *A Pastoral Letter to the Clergy of his diocese from the Right Reverend Father in God Frank Lord Bishop of Zanzibar* (Zanzibar: Universities' Mission to Central Africa, 1909), 18, held in the Universities' Mission to Central Africa Archives, Rhodes House Library, University of Oxford, UMCA A1 (XVIII) A.

⁶⁵ CA 26 (July 1908), 191.

⁶⁶ Kieran, 368-369.

⁶⁷ Fleisch, 79-80.

capital in seek of work. A strong Christian presence was needed in the burgeoning city.⁶⁸ The new Missions Inspector for the Berliners in German East Africa, Karl Axenfeld firmly believed that Africans would embrace either Christianity or Islam and he became devoted to solving the 'Islamic question in East Africa'.⁶⁹

Even the Africa Inland Mission, for whom Islam was never even considered before they left for Africa, (ironically their first convert was a Muslim⁷⁰) was also stirred by the threat of an expanding Islam at this time. Although the numbers of Muslims were relatively small in the areas where the AIM worked, their unexpected presence elicited some of the most pronounced and colourful reactions to Islam. The need to get to the unspoilt heathen before Islam became a major priority as the mission believed that 'Mohammedanism' was even more difficult 'to overcome than the darkness of paganism'.⁷¹ The alarm was first sounded by the AIM's second director, Charles E. Hurlburt, in 1899 and fear over the growth of Islam continued to act as a motivator for the mission over the next decade. In 1903 Hurlburt warned that Islam went wherever the government went, and thus the AIM needed more men to get there first.⁷² The following year he warned that the mission should not slow down in its expansion to the interior because 'Mohammedanism is not waiting'.⁷³ A delay of two years for Hurlburt meant the introduction of Islam and he warned that, 'there will never be a time of greater strategic importance than *now*'.⁷⁴ When the AIM proposed moving into the Congo Free State in 1907, the justification of getting there before Islam was at the ready. One writer noted, 'Mohammedanism, tiger that preys upon human souls, is crouching in the Soudan for a southward spring upon the [Congo]'.⁷⁵ The urgency in

⁶⁸ von Sicard, *The Lutheran Church on the Coast of Tanzania*, 163-166, 198-200; Mbogoni, *The Cross versus the Crescent*, 46.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 41; Marcia Wright, *German Missions in Tanganyika, 1891-1941: Lutherans and Moravians in the Southern Highlands* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), 122.

⁷⁰ HD 3 (June 1898), 6.

⁷¹ HD 17 (October-December 1912), 13.

⁷² HD 7 [8] (May-June 1903), 10.

⁷³ HD 9 (March-May 1904), 5.

⁷⁴ Emphasis in the original. HD 9 (June-July 1904), 7.

⁷⁵ HD 12 (Jan-Mar 1907), 21. No author was given but this is most definitely Hurlburt's dramatic style. The 'Eight Tribes' were eight people groups identified on a scouting trip as having never received the gospel. For other references on the need of reaching the Belgian Congo before Muslims see, HD 14 (April-June 1909), 10; HD 17 (July-September 1912), 14.

these calls for more workers makes it understandable why a new recruit to AIM in 1913 would think that the Muslim advance in East Central Africa qualified the work as ‘the most strategic part of the world-wide mission field’.⁷⁶

Beyond strategically placing new mission stations to get to unreached peoples before Muslims did, the mission societies also felt the need to better understand Islam and the intellectual challenges it posed. It was no longer believed that Islam would easily wither in the face of modernity and Christianity and thus needed serious engagement. Along these lines the CMS sought to have missionaries of ‘intellectual capacity’ who would be willing to deal solely with the Muslims of Mombasa.⁷⁷ In 1905 the German Lutherans were successful in obtaining an Islamic specialist by the name of Johannes Kupfernagel. Kupfernagel spoke Arabic and some Hindi and was sent to Dar es Salaam in line with their belief in its importance as a gateway to the entire country.⁷⁸ That same year Godfrey Dale of the UMCA took up Bishop Smythies call—which had gone unanswered for eleven years—for a clergyman in Zanzibar who would devote himself to learning Arabic and Islamic theology.

European Awareness of East African Islam

The alarm about Islam in East Africa by missionaries in the field reached European audiences by the first decade of the twentieth and it was discussed in almost every major missionary conference in Europe in the decade before the outbreak of World War One, as well as in governmental congresses in Germany. This section will show how the speeches by members of the east African mission societies at these gatherings raised a general awareness of the spread of East African Islam, which previously had been little known, and how it affected changes in governmental policy in East Africa as well as global mission strategies. The growing concern over Islam in East Africa also caused

⁷⁶ HD 18 (October-December 1913), 6.

⁷⁷ Strayer, 62.

⁷⁸ von Sicard, *The Lutheran Church on the Coast of Tanzania*, 163-166, 198-200; Mbogoni, *The Cross versus the Crescent*, 46.

cooperation on the part of the various mission agencies and attention will be given to the forging of these interdenominational and international links.

At the German Colonial Congress of 1905 it was decried that the German government had favoured Islam in German East Africa by having taught it in indigenous schools and by solely appointing Muslims to junior posts in the civil administration and the military. Dr. Julius Richter, a member of the home committee of the Berlin Missionary Society, delivered a scathing attack claiming that everywhere in Africa Islam was anti-European and therefore a hindrance to the German civilizing mission. He feared that East Africa was the scene of the worst danger.⁷⁹

This issue was discussed at further length during the Colonial Congress of 1910, when an entire afternoon session was devoted to the problem of Islam in the German Colonies of Africa.⁸⁰ Two of the three presenters were members of missions societies. The first was Karl Axenfeld, the mission inspector of the Berlin Mission Society in East Africa, and the second was P. Hubert Hansen, a Catholic priest who also worked in the region.

Axenfeld warned the Congress that even though Islam was not being extended by the sword, they should not discount the power of Muslim propaganda in spreading the faith. He also reiterated the comments made at the previous Colonial Congress that the German Government was partially to blame for aiding in the growth of Islam in East Africa. Axenfeld also gave Farler's either/or dictum informing the Congress that, 'it will soon be decided whether Christianity or Islam will be paramount in Africa'.⁸¹ And he warned that 'a victory for Islam would be disastrous for German culture' because Muslims would always be hostile to Christian rulers and they would fail to have the German industrialist spirit. He made it clear that he did not think the German government should favour Christianity over Islam, but he felt that as things stood there were many in East Africa, including the Africans, who felt that Islam was the German

⁷⁹ *The Times* (London), 11 October 1905; *CMI* 56 (December 1905), 941-2; Wright, *German Missions in Tanganyika 1891-1941: Lutherans and Moravians in the Southern Highlands* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), 113.

⁸⁰ Julius Richter, 'The German National Colonial Conference and Islam', *The Moslem World* 1 (January 1911), 54.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 54-55.

colonial government's religion of choice due to their preference for hiring coastal Muslims.⁸² The Roman Catholic priest, P. Hubert Hanson, reaffirmed Axenfeld's sentiments that Christianity and Islam were fighting for predominance in East Africa. In suggesting practical ways the missions could win the race with Islam, he offered two of the strategies discussed in the previous section—starting mission work specifically targeting the Muslims of the region and by first reaching 'the pagan tribes not yet attacked by Islam'.⁸³

After a long debate over the merits of the talks, the Colonial Congress passed a resolution as a type of policy towards Islam in the region. It began, 'As the propagation of Islam is an imminent danger to the development of our colonies, the Colonial Conference deems it important that this movement should be carefully observed and thoroughly studied.'⁸⁴ The resolution continued with a caveat showing that it wanted to maintain religious freedom by saying that, 'though acknowledging that the administration must be neutral where religion is concerned, the Conference regards it as imperative that all those who share in the opening up of our colonies should conscientiously avoid in any way fostering the extension of Islam and hampering Christianity'.⁸⁵ It went on to thank the missions for their benevolent and civilizing efforts and especially their willingness to help the colonial government in matters such as education and medical care. It concluded by acknowledging, 'that the spirit of Islam is a strong call to the Christian churches of Germany to take in hand without delay all those regions of German Central Africa endangered, but not yet taken possession of, by Islam.'⁸⁶

The resolution passed by the Colonial Congress of 1910 shows that the missionaries were successful in drawing the attention of the German Government to their concerns over Islam in East Africa. Practically, their efforts had effected change on the ground as by 1912 the new governor of German East Africa, Heinrich Schnee,

⁸² Ibid., 55; *CMR* 62 (March 1911), 139-140; *The Times* (London) 8 October 1910; Wright, *German Missions in Tanganyika*, 124; Oliver, *The Missionary Factor in East Africa*, 206.

⁸³ Richter, 'The German National Colonial Conference and Islam', 56-7.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 58.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.; *The Times* (London), 8 October 1910.

instituted a policy of religious neutralization in which government workers were not allowed to simultaneously hold religious positions and governmental posts—undoubtedly seen as disqualifying several Muslim clerics from teaching and leadership positions. He also had a strong desire to draw recruits from mission schools and not solely coastal Muslims.⁸⁷

While the Germans had been successful in getting their voices heard by the colonial administrators, the British missionaries had affectively put Islam in East Africa on the docket of every major missions conference in the United Kingdom between 1907 and 1910. On 4 December 1907 there was a large gathering at the Senate House in Cambridge to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of David Livingstone's speech that had inspired the men of Cambridge and Oxford to start the Universities' Mission to Central Africa. While Islam was absent from the Senate House Meetings of 1857 and 1859 it took centre stage in 1907. The Bishop of Southwark, a member of the UMCA home committee, talked of the need to repel Islam and when the Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge University introduced Chancellor Frank Weston of St. Mark's Theological College of Zanzibar, he noted that Weston had come 'from the thick of the fight [with Islam]'.⁸⁸ Weston reported to the group that work against 'Mohammedanism in Zanzibar' had finally been started; after years of trying to reach the slaves of Arabs, they were now trying to reach the Arab himself. He continued by noting that wherever the mission went they found Muslims moving side by side with them and he warned that, 'All over the Mission the Mohammedans are stretching out, they are extending on every side, and we cannot keep pace with them'.⁸⁹ He then told the story about how the work at the Theological College of Zanzibar had to be abandoned for want of men, and that the chapel was falling into ruins as the newly built mosque across the street which had been built in opposition to the college was filled with worshipers. According to Weston this was 'all because Cambridge and Oxford had forgotten'.⁹⁰ The difference in the

⁸⁷ Wright, *German Mission in Tanganyika*, 128.

⁸⁸ *David Livingstone and Cambridge: a record of three meetings in the Senate House, 1857, 1859, 1907* (London: Universities' Mission to Central Africa, 1908), 66, 74.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 74, 76.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 75-6.

content and tone of the meetings shows that over the fifty-year period there was a clear change in priorities as Islam had moved to the top of the UMCA's agenda.

Several months after the Senate House meeting, the 1908 Pan-Anglican Congress was held on 14-24 June. This meeting, described as 'the greatest Parliament of Churches the world has ever seen' by one attendee, was a meeting of five thousand delegates of the Anglican Communion from all parts of the globe.⁹¹ Members of the CMS and UMCA gave several papers that dealt with Islam in East Africa at the daily sessions as well as the large nightly gatherings.

One of the major stand outs of the Pan-Anglican Congress of 1908 was Frank Weston who had addressed the Cambridge Senate House gathering the preceding winter. Weston's prominence was waxing and he became a distinguished figure at the conference.⁹² Weston addressed both a smaller sectional meeting and two mass meetings.⁹³ Weston's speech to a crowded Royal Albert Hall on the evening of 17 June may have been the most memorable speech given at the entire Congress. The meeting was presided over by the Archbishop of Canterbury who introduced Weston by announcing that he had just been elected to be Dr. Hine's successor as the Bishop of Zanzibar. Bishop-designate Weston's speech was directed towards the duty of the Church in England and he began by rebuking the callousness of English churchmen—especially junior clergy—for hearing so many appeals by missionaries but continuing to think that it was someone else's business to respond. He hammered away at the idea of 'a call' noting that Christ had called for workers for Africa fifty years earlier when there was a 'free field' in the continent. 'Now to-day Christ still called' Weston continued,

⁹¹ Aubrey Baskerville Mynors, 'The Pan-Anglican Conference' in *Sermons on the Pan-Anglican Congress* ed. W.H. Hunt (London: Skeffington and Son, 1908), 11-12; W.H.T. Gairdner, "Edinburgh 1910": *An Account and Interpretation of the World Missionary Conference* (Edinburgh and London: Oliphant, Anderson and Ferrier, 1910), 17.

⁹² On Weston's views of Islam more generally see H. Maynard Smith, *Frank: Bishop of Zanzibar, Life of Frank Weston, D. D. 1871-1924* (London: SPCK, 1926), 98-109.

⁹³ Pan Anglican Congress, 1908, vol. 6, *Section E The Church's Mission in Christendom: Speeches and Discussions together with the Papers published for the Consideration of the Congress* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1908), 132-4; *The Pan-Anglican Congress, 1908. Special Report of Proceedings: Reprinted from the Times* (London: George Edward Wright, n.d. [1908]), 146.

‘not from a free field, but from the battle field, where the forces of Christianity were ranged against Islamism’.⁹⁴ Weston fervently lamented,

Christ was waiting fifty years ago for the answer of the Anglican Communion, but so poor was the answer and support that to-day the Arab and the Coast African had made friends with the people they formerly oppressed, and the black man’s religion was largely becoming Mohammedan. People at home knew this and failed to respond to the call of Christ.⁹⁵

He told the capacity crowd at Royal Albert Hall that he knew many of them had come that night to revel in the triumphs of the English Church but that instead they should ‘come before God to take their share of the shame’.⁹⁶

After his emotive reprimand Weston gave a plea for more men, money and prayers for East Africa, hoping this call would not fall on deaf ears. He wanted workers for every part of the world-wide Anglican Communion but he especially called for labourers for Zanzibar. He noted that he had left just one English clergyman in the ‘great centre of Mohammedan power in tropical Africa’ who had been ‘told to hold back the Mohammedan advance’ single-handedly.⁹⁷ Weston complained that this was an inadequate effort by the Anglican Church and that they did not grasp the importance of the need to send out more people to the mission field. He closed by saying he wished he could ‘get into every family in the English and American Church the idea that in the day of the warfare of the Cross it was a noble thing to have a son or daughter at the front’.⁹⁸ As Weston sat down to a silenced audience the Archbishop of Canterbury rose and said, ‘This is a solemn moment. Let us have a few moments of silent prayer’.⁹⁹ For the next several minutes the entire audience of the packed Royal Albert Hall stood in quiet reverence until the next speaker took the podium. It was reported that this was ‘a very moving incident’ for all those who took part.¹⁰⁰

The English Church took the message of Weston and others to heart over the urgency of what to do about Islam in Africa. At the annual Lambeth Conference for

⁹⁴ Ibid., 275.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 276.

⁹⁷ Weston was speaking of Godfrey Dale. Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., xxiv.

Anglican bishops held about one month after the Pan-Anglican Congress, the Report on Foreign Missions had announced that the dioceses of the CMS and UMCA were 'declared to be the immediate battlefield'.¹⁰¹ The Conference announced that within the next few years either Islam or Christianity would win the African people and if the Church did not make an adequate response immediately, 'Islam [would] conquer Christ in Equatorial Africa'.¹⁰² The report on the 1908 Lambeth Conference noted that the bishops were also going to put their financial, and not just verbal, support behind the spiritual 'war with Islam', by allocating £16,000 to the diocese of East and Central Africa.¹⁰³

Islam in East Africa also took a prominent place at the Edinburgh World Missionary Conference of 1910 which was the most significant interdenominational and international meeting of its kinds during this period.¹⁰⁴ The Edinburgh Conference also facilitated two meetings between German and English missionaries from East Africa. Karl Axenfeld of the Berliner society met with D.J. Rees, head of the CMS mission in German East Africa, to discuss 'common work against Islam'.¹⁰⁵ Axenfeld and Rees discussed practical ways the societies could work together like informing each other when a convert moved from one sphere to the other so they would not slip through the cracks and turn to Islam. The usefulness of literature was also discussed and the CMS was invited to have an editor for the Swahili publication *Pwani na Bara*, a new Berliner newspaper meant to attract both Christian and Muslim readers.¹⁰⁶ Axenfeld also met with Bishop Henning of Moravian Church and F. Baylis the Africa Secretary of the CMS about opening a joint training school near Morogoro. The school was opened in

¹⁰¹ CA 26 (October 1908), 261.

¹⁰² Ibid., 259.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 259. This phrase was undoubtedly Canon Weston's, who wrote the article, and probably not that of the official report.

¹⁰⁴ Sanders, 'Missionary Perceptions of Islam', 80-84.

¹⁰⁵ Karl Axenfeld to D. J. Rees, 15 October 1909, held in the Church Missionary Society Archives in the Special Collections of the University of Birmingham Library, CMS G3 A8/01; Also quoted in Wright, *Missions to Tanganyika*, 124.

¹⁰⁶ 'Notes by the Rev. D. J. Rees, of interview with Pastor Axenfeld, of the Berlin Evangelical Society June 26th 1910', held in the Church Missionary Society Archives in the Special Collections of the University of Birmingham Library, CMS G3 A8/0 1910; 'Pwani na Bara' means 'coast and interior' in Swahili. This title was to be neutral so that any East African would be willing to read it, no matter where they were from.

1913 built largely from Berliner funding, and under the direction of Carl Nauhaus of the Berlin society, but it included participants from both the Moravians and the CMS.¹⁰⁷

The connections Axenfeld made at Edinburgh also seem to have been the catalyst for the first ecumenical conference in East Africa. The Berlin Mission invited every Protestant body working in German East Africa for a week-long conference in Dar es Salaam in January 1911.¹⁰⁸ Although there had been many intra-agency mission conferences in East Africa before, and several had discussed the topic of Islam,¹⁰⁹ the Dar es Salaam conference was unique in that it brought together five agencies with the aim of working together to find solutions to the common problems faced by East African missionaries.¹¹⁰ At this time Islam was considered one of the largest problems facing all mission societies in German East Africa and one full day was devoted to it.¹¹¹ The day on Islam ended with two resolutions. The first resolution argued that there should be 'a strengthening of the work along the coast' which called for more and better qualified staff. Secondly, the conference passed that 'each mission was to have at least one missionary trained in Islamics and Arabic'.¹¹² This scholar/missionary was to be able to follow the developments within the Muslim communities of German East Africa and keep an eye on Islamic literature that encouraged the spread of the faith or attacked the missions.¹¹³

Concern over the growth of Islam was so great that tentative bridges were even starting to be built across the Protestant Catholic divide as well. After the success of the 1911 all-Protestant conference, German Lutherans approached the Spiritans. A Catholic meeting held in Dar es Salaam in 1912 declared that it was possible and desirable to work with the Protestant missionary societies over matters such as education, as they

¹⁰⁷ Sigvard von Sicard, 'The first ecumenical conference in Tanzania, 1911' *The Bulletin of the Society for African Church History* 2 (1968), 323, 331 n.2; Wright, *German Missions in Tanganyika*, 128.

¹⁰⁸ von Sicard, 'The first ecumenical conference in Tanzania', 325.

¹⁰⁹ See for instance the CMS Ussagara-Ugogo Conference of 1909 in *The Mombasa Diocesan Magazine* 7 (January 1910), 16-17, held in the Church Missionary Society Archives in the Special Collections of the University of Birmingham Library.

¹¹⁰ The five societies included the Berlin Mission, the Bethel Mission, the CMS, the Leipzig Mission and the Moravian Mission. The CMS delegate was also to represent the UMCA. von Sicard, 'The First Ecumenical Conference in Tanzania', 324-325.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 327.

¹¹² von Sicard, 'The First Ecumenical Conference in Tanzania', 328.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

and the Catholics faced similar opposition from Islam. According to John Kieran, both Vicars Apostolic in German East Africa had come to agree with this by 1914, with Father 'Munsch remarking that he was able to live in relative peace with the "freres separees" because they had the same enemies to fight'.¹¹⁴

East African Missionaries and Orientalism

This paper has shown that at the outset of the missionary movement in East Africa the missionaries believed Islam to be in decay and that it would not pose a challenge to their work. However, their rhetoric began to change after they spent time inland where they came into contact with a growing Muslim population. It was through this interaction that they began to see Islam no longer in decay but as 'a rival missionary force' full of 'energy' and 'zeal', 'very vigorous', a 'strong power', 'aggressive' and 'confident'.¹¹⁵ This initiated an ideological race with Islam, and while much of the rhetoric may have been unhelpful from a present-day perspective, it does give some insight into the way in which missionaries working on the ground in cross-cultural situations can affect the religious views of Christians back in the sending area.

¹¹⁴ Kieran, 341-342.

¹¹⁵ *CA* 22 (June 1904), 113; *CA* 20 (July 1902), 116; *CA* 22 (May 1904), 88; *CA* 23 (May 1905), 122; *CA* 23 (July 1905), 181.

