

# *Evangelical Review of Theology*

**EDITOR: DAVID PARKER**

**Volume 25 • Number 4 • October 2001**

*Articles and book reviews original and  
selected from publications worldwide for  
an international readership for the purpose  
of discerning the obedience of faith*



Published by  
**PATERNOSTER PERIODICALS**



for  
**WORLD EVANGELICAL  
FELLOWSHIP**  
Theological Commission

# The Doctrine of Holiness and Missions: A Pietistic Foundation of African Evangelical Christianity

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**Keywords:** African religion; faith missions; Wesleyanism; Quakerism; holiness, revivals

## I Introduction

When President Daniel Arap Moi of Kenya came to power in 1978, he elevated evangelical Christianity to a level not before paralleled in Kenyan history. He abolished traditional beer 'clubs' in all market places of Kenya and championed a crusade against female circumcision. It is easy to attribute these actions to his altruistic political philosophy of *Nyayoism*.<sup>1</sup> However, as hinted by his biogra-

pher, Andrew Morton, these political decisions can perhaps be better explained by Moi's evangelical upbringing in the church of the Africa Inland Mission, the Africa Inland Church.

This was a life which involved 'rigorous self-discipline', was 'puritanical', and was a 'devout Christian

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<sup>1</sup> 'Nyayo' is a swahili word for 'footsteps.' As a political slogan, the second president of Kenya popularized 'Nyayo' as an indication of following in the nationalistic footsteps of the first president. It was, however, a synthesis of religious overtones and political ideology as a philosophical basis of nationhood. Thus *Nyayoism* entails threefold virtues of peace, love and unity. In praxis, President Moi calls this being mindful of other people's welfare as typified by the many social projects initiated during his tenure. These tenets are clearly espoused in his book *Kenya African Nationalism: Nyayo Philosophy and Principles* (Nairobi: Macmillan, 1986). A close study of this political philosophy shows striking similarities to the biblical golden rule and what John Wesley often explained as the essence of holiness: loving the Lord with all the heart, mind, and strength and loving the neighbour as one's self.

faith'.<sup>2</sup> Many within the Africa Inland Church (AIC) today call this '*Ukristo Wa AIC*' (unique AIC Christianity). For an astute historian of the holiness movement and pietism, these are definite marks of a revivalist, holiness, missionary legacy. It is a legacy that, though largely uninformed by its original western theoretical foundation, continues to manifest itself in the ethos of African evangelicalism. Sample any evangelical church in Africa and the same pietistic trends are observable. To understand both African spirituality and church renewal, then, it is imperative to pay close attention to the revival roots of Christianity in the African continent.

While it is true that the revival movement played a key role in world missions, holiness as the theological content of these revivals has scarcely been studied. Given that most, if not all, of the North Atlantic hemisphere evangelical mission agencies that sent missionaries to Africa before the 1930s were fully embedded in the revival sub-culture, it is also true that the doctrine of holiness played a crucial role in shaping the nature of African Christianity. The task of explicating this phenomenon has not yet been fully explored. No historical account of Christianity in Africa to date fully examines the role holiness played in the spiritual, theological, and theological formation of the missionaries who went there. Furthermore, how the perception of this doctrine affected their view of

missions and their specific objectives as they ministered in Africa also awaits full analysis.

There is also the challenge of studying the process of cross-cultural establishment of a holiness constituency in Africa. What holiness meant to Africans living within cultural and linguistic contexts different from those of the western missionaries needs some investigation. More importantly, how the national church leadership has continued the vision of propagating the heritage once delivered is yet to be accounted for. The purpose of this article is to give a brief historical overview of the doctrine of holiness as it relates to African missions with a view to stimulating further research and discussions along the same lines.

## II. Pre-missionary African Concepts of Holiness

Whether Africans had a concept of holiness prior to the advent of western missionary Christianity is a contested issue. Thus part of the process of understanding how Africans appropriated the doctrine involves a thorough study of the African traditional view of sanctification. It requires a study of African understanding of soteriology as mediated through cleansing rituals. Postulating the absence of the idea of holiness in Islamic and Bantu literature before the advent of European missionaries, P. J. L. Frankl and Yahya Ali Omar have noted that 'the available evidence suggests that in the mid-nineteenth century at the second coming of European-Christians to the East African coast, there was no

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<sup>2</sup> Andrew Morton, *Moi: The Making of an African Statesman* (London: Michael O'Mara, 1998), p. 36.

lexical equivalent for [the term] "holy" or its near synonym in the spoken language of the Swahili people'.<sup>3</sup> Though the absence of a lexical equivalent neither invalidates the necessity of holiness nor suggests the Africans could not process holiness through their thought patterns, it does suggest that there is a sense in which the total implication of holiness theology is novel to African spirituality.

John S. Mbiti, in his study of African philosophy and religions, argues that there is no direct reference to the holiness of God in Africa and that though the 'concept of holiness' is present in ritual, moral matters and linguistically in (many) African languages, 'the word "holiness" or "holy" in its theological usage do not seem to exist'.<sup>4</sup> Of course much depends on what Mbiti meant by the difference between 'concept' and 'theological usage'. If Mbiti's assertions are correct, they raise questions about how much the African languages and rituals 'prepared them' for the reception of biblical holiness. They also lead one to wonder how the missionaries succeeded, using these 'inadequate' media, if at all they did, as they were often more critical of the 'profanity' that prevailed in the African religious practices. More research is required to ascertain whether the African concept of holiness had an ontological transformative nature, where one

would be thought to be like a god, or if the concept was merely ceremonial, providing positional cleansing.

### III Methodism-Holiness and Missions

The best place to begin a discussion on holiness and missions is with Methodism. For brevity's sake, this article will give an overview of theological developments within Methodism that link holiness and missions. It is quite easy to see someone like John Wesley, who spent almost all his life in the British Isles after his failed missionary trip to the colony of Georgia, as a non-starter in missions. Indeed, just as it is difficult to find a sizable text that studies the contributions of John Wesley to family life, it is difficult to find one that interprets his theology missiologically. Much credit is usually given to his colleague, Thomas Coke, as the 'Father of Methodist World Missions'. However, Wesley learnt a lesson from his American experience—Europe without 'real Christianity' would not be able to convert the world. After his Aldersgate experience of 1738, Wesley spent the rest of his life trying to build the Methodists as a leaven of 'pure Christianity' that would spread to the rest of the world. In the process of doing so he established a missionary ideology that would spark the birth of generations of missionary societies out of the evangelical revivals of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. John Wesley understood holiness as a mark of 'real Christianity'.

In his 1783 sermon, *The General Spread of the Gospel*, John Wesley

<sup>3</sup> P. J. L. Frank and Yahya Ali Omar, 'The Idea of the 'Holy' in Swahili', *Journal of Religion in Africa*, (1999), XXIX, p. 1.

<sup>4</sup> John S. Mbiti, *Concepts of God in Africa* (London: SPCK, 1970), pp. 41-42.

saw the rise of Methodism in England as a providential leaven to spread scriptural holiness throughout the world. He foresaw a time when the 'leaven of pure and undefiled religion...of inward and outward holiness would spread to the remotest parts not only of Europe but of Asia, Africa and America.'<sup>5</sup> The greatest boost to this holiness world vision was given by the post-American civil war holiness revivals. By the beginning of the twentieth century holiness was no longer a mere incentive or justification of world evangelization but an organizational strategy, the very basis and object of missions. The National Holiness Association for the Promotion of Holiness, organized earlier in 1867, thought the time had come 'for the holiness people, to use their holiness money, through holiness channels, to support holiness missionaries, who will do holiness work in the foreign fields'.<sup>6</sup> This perception had profound consequences with regard to the role of the doctrine of holiness in world evangelization.<sup>7</sup> Certain events, however, were pre-  
ludes to this larger organizational endeavour for the course of holiness overseas. Most of these efforts were individual and though respected, were often deemed by the holiness people as 'unorganized'.

Amanda Berry Smith and William Taylor are two individuals mentioned in the history of the National Holiness Missionary Society (NHMS)<sup>8</sup> who could not be confined to one country because of their 'holiness world vision'.<sup>9</sup> Though the two came at the time of ecclesiological and missiological tensions in mainline Methodism, they did not belong to the tradition of 'the come-outer' but the group that sought to use camp meetings, literature, foreign missions and other means to promote the doctrine of entire sanctification. When William Taylor organized revivals in South Africa in 1866, before Keswick Conventions started (1875), he introduced Andrew Murray, of the Dutch Reformed Church, to the doctrine of sanctification.<sup>10</sup> Murray turned out to be a prolific writer on holiness and closely allied himself to Keswick Conventions in South Africa in the latter part of his life.<sup>11</sup> Murray's holiness legacy is difficult to ascertain. Though perhaps an unusual candidate for holiness

<sup>8</sup> This was the official missionary society inaugurated in 1910 by the Methodists aligned to the National Camp Meeting Association for the Promotion of Holiness. It is the current *World Gospel Mission*. When it first started the missionaries were sent to China. Kenya is at present the largest field of this Wesleyan mission agency.

<sup>9</sup> W. W. Cary, *Story of the National Holiness Missionary Society: The Whole Gospel for the Whole World* (Chicago, IL: National Holiness Missionary Society, 1940), p. 293.

<sup>10</sup> William Taylor, *The Flaming Torch in the Darkest of Africa* (New York: Eaton, 1898), p. 365.

<sup>11</sup> Andrew Murray, in a clear divergence from his Reformed theological heritage, wrote over two hundred books, most of them on the subject of holiness and the Holy Spirit. See the reproductions by Bethany House Publishers which include: Andrew Murray, *The Believer's Full Blessing of Pentecost* (Minneapolis: Bethany, 1984) and *Revival* (Minneapolis: Bethany, 1990).

<sup>5</sup> John Wesley, 'The General Spread of the Gospel,' *Sermons* Vol. 6 (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), pp. 277-288.

<sup>6</sup> C. W. Ruth, 'Some Reasons for the New Missionary Society', *Christian Witness and Advocate of Bible Holiness* (September 1, 1910), p. 9.

<sup>7</sup> The interrelationship between holiness and world missions is a subject that has not been fully explored. This paper is limited to the African context.

promotion, his theological contributions do not seem to have made significant impact on interracial equity and against growing apartheid tendencies in the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC).

On the other hand, Amanda B. Smith helped William Taylor in Africa 'turn the Methodist mission there into a holiness crusade'.<sup>12</sup> Taylor produced a mix of Methodist doctrines, self-supporting missions strategy and holiness theology.<sup>13</sup> Holiness had not been the central theme of the Liberian revival and its impact had waned by the time Smith arrived in 1882.<sup>14</sup> In Clay-Ashland, Liberia, she wrote that 'for a long time there has been a good deal of interest manifested among a number of Christians on the subject of personal holiness'.<sup>15</sup> In a language reminiscent of that used in America, she stated that she had begun a 'meeting once a month, for the promotion of holiness'.<sup>16</sup> Out of these arose an association called

'Clay-Ashland Holiness Association'.<sup>17</sup> A holiness camp meeting was held at Cape Palmas, Liberia in 1886. This brought together Christians from Presbyterian, Baptist, Congregational and Methodist churches.<sup>18</sup> This testifies to the fact that the Wesleyan doctrine of sanctification influenced Reformed theology within contexts beyond North America. In this case, a revivalist ecumenicity emerged in West Africa as a result of Taylor/Smith holiness revivals. By the advent of the twentieth century, William Taylor and Amanda B. Smith had retired from active missionary service. The duo represented a generation of maverick holiness missionaries that operated with a loose attachment to their denominations.<sup>19</sup>

#### IV Faith Missions and Holiness

In the rise of what are generally referred to as 'faith missions' and distinctively holiness missions, the doctrine of holiness became an important force in missions. Peniel Mission<sup>20</sup> stood as a transitional influence for a number of missionaries

<sup>12</sup> Timothy L. Smith, *Called Unto Holiness: The Story of the Nazarenes* (Kansas City: Nazarene, 1962), p. 41.

<sup>13</sup> See *Report of Bishop Taylor's Self-Supporting Missions*, July 1, 1884-March 24, 1888, pp. 24, 26; Bishop Taylor's committee listed holiness and self-supporting policy as part of the covenants to be subscribed to by the missionary candidates. In addition to the Methodist Episcopal Church's questions on going into perfection, Taylor included being entirely consecrated to God and cleansed from all sin as qualifications for the missionaries. In addition they were to indicate freedom from use of liquor, tobacco and other narcotics.

<sup>14</sup> Adrienne M. Israel, *Amanda Berry Smith: From Washerwoman to Evangelist* (Lanham: Scarecrow, 1998), p. 76.

<sup>15</sup> Amanda B. Smith, *An Autobiography*, p. 380.

<sup>16</sup> Smith, *An Autobiography*, p. 381.

<sup>17</sup> Smith, *An Autobiography*, p. 381.

<sup>18</sup> Smith, *An Autobiography*, pp. 472-473.

<sup>19</sup> Nathan O. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1989), p. 214.

<sup>20</sup> Peniel Mission was founded in Los Angeles in 1886 by Manie Payne Ferguson and Theodore Pollock Ferguson as an answer for the need for mid-week fellowship ministry and rescue missions for the burgeoning population of Los Angeles. The Fergusons established the *Peniel Hall* as a meeting place, *Peniel Herald* as the mission's publication, and *Peniel Missionary Institute* to train its staff. It soon developed into a series of rescue missions in the Western coast of the United States. Peniel Mission expanded its 'Home Missions' work to incorporate

who went to Africa under the faith principle. The role of Peniel Mission in world missions has not been fully appreciated. Its formation was a culmination of holiness revivals gaining momentum in the American western frontiers. Manie Payne Ferguson and Theodore Pollock Ferguson were behind the inception of Peniel Mission in 1886. Pollock Ferguson, a Presbyterian, was introduced to the experience of sanctification in Wesleyan terms during a holiness meeting under Lucius B. Fuller at Oberlin College.<sup>21</sup> Ferguson eventually 'got sanctified' at Santa Barbara, California in 1880 under Harden Wallace

and Henry Ashcraft.<sup>22</sup> He attended and participated in several Methodist camp meetings across the United States.<sup>23</sup> There is no doubt that one of those who inspired Ferguson was Bishop William Taylor whom he heard and 'bought all his books' at the Round Lake Camp Meeting, New Jersey in 1882.<sup>24</sup>

Peniel Mission and the World Gospel Mission merged in 1957.<sup>25</sup> Before the above event became a reality, Peniel Missions played a vital role in the 'pre-history' of the World Gospel Mission (WGM) and other 'faith missions'. A missionary couple, Burnette and Gerald Fish, mentioned in their book three 'full-circles' in relation to the development of WGM in Kenya.<sup>26</sup> These 'full circles' point to the way the Africa Inland Church (1895) and the Kenya Yearly Meeting of Friends (1902) were related to the Africa Gospel Church (1932). What needs to be emphasized is the fact that the three denom-

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world missions and sent missionaries to Mexico, India and Egypt. Apart from its own direct missionary involvement, Peniel Mission became a transition place from mainline ecclesiastical structures to more independent overseas missionaries, holiness denominations, and mission agencies mentioned in the text (See Carl Bangs, *Phineas F. Bresee: His Life in Methodism, the Holiness Movement and the Church of the Nazarene*, [Kansas City: Beacon Hill, 1995]; Laura Trachsel, *Kindled Fires in Africa* [Marion, IN: World Gospel Mission, 1960]; and Burnette C. Fish and Gerald W. Fish, *The Place of Songs: A History of the World Gospel Mission and the Africa Gospel Mission in Kenya* [Kericho, Kenya: World Gospel Mission, 1989]). Peniel Mission merged its ministries with the World Gospel Mission in 1957.

<sup>21</sup> Manie Payne Ferguson, *T. P. Ferguson: the Love Slave of Jesus Christ and His People and Founder of Peniel Missions* (Los Angeles: np, nd), p. 21. The title of the book is suggestive of the two Wesleyan motifs: love for God and humanity. This also motivated the Salvation Army missiological approach and was used by other Wesleyan bodies to justify the connection between holiness and missions; (see Editorial of *The Christian Witness and Advocate of Bible Holiness*, January 12, 1911, p. 8) - 'Jesus forever settled the question of holiness and foreign missions [when he affirmed the lawyer's respond that] thou shall love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy strength and with all thy mind, and thy neighbour as thyself.'

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<sup>22</sup> Ferguson, *The Love Slave*, p. 23.

<sup>23</sup> Ashcraft has been identified as representing the more radical 'come-outism' movement within the Methodist Episcopal Church and that part of the move to establish Peniel Mission was meant to be a middle ground between staying in the denominations and forming new ones, a move that provided the holiness people a 'third way' that would lead to formation of independent missions and consequently gave 'the Holiness Movement institutional form without conflicting with the Churches'. See Carl Bangs, *Phineas F. Bresee: His Life in Methodism, the Holiness Movement and the Church of the Nazarene* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill, 1995), p. 185.

<sup>24</sup> Ferguson, *The Love Slave*, pp. 101-102.

<sup>25</sup> Laura Trachsel, *Kindled Fires in Africa* (Marion, IN: World Gospel Mission, 1960), pp. 109-11.

<sup>26</sup> Burnette C. Fish and Gerald W. Fish, *The Place of Songs: A History of the World Gospel Mission and the Africa Gospel Mission in Kenya* (Kericho, Kenya: World Gospel Mission, 1989), p. 527.

inations trace their theological history to the influence of holiness revivals on their missionaries, particularly through Peniel Mission.

### V Holiness Missions

It is important to note that most if not all faith missions were born out of holiness revivals. Albert. B. Simpson, a Presbyterian and founder of Christian & Missionary Alliance Church and associated with Peniel Mission during the 1890s, was instrumental in the training, ordination, and commissioning of Peter Cameroon Scott for African missions in the 1890s. Available sources do not indicate how early Scott and Simpson met. However, Scott, a Presbyterian from Scotland, trained at New York Missionary Training College (now Nyack College), first went to Africa under the aegis of International Missionary Alliance in 1890. Due to health reasons, he soon resigned. In 1895, however, Scott returned to Africa with a team that included Willis R. Hotchkiss, a Quaker Wesleyan/holiness evangelist, to start the work of Africa Inland Mission.<sup>27</sup>

Andrew M. Andersen, who became a key leader in the Africa Inland Mission (AIM) in Kenya, was sanctified in 1903 at Peniel Mission. Andersen attended Cleveland Bible College and met Hotchkiss. Andersen decided to join Hotchkiss in Kenya in 1907 under Africa Inland Mission. When the World Gospel

Mission (WGM), whose forerunner was Peniel Mission, was searching for a field in Kenya in the late 1920s, Andersen in 'gratitude for his conversion through Peniel Missions, a holiness work', assisted in the early years of the mission in Kenya.<sup>28</sup>

The work of Friends Africa Industrial Mission (FAIM) in Kenya is part of the larger influence of the doctrine of holiness in missions. Willis R. Hotchkiss, who had earlier resigned from AIM, took Arthur Chilson and Edgar Hole to start this mission in 1901. It is fascinating to note that en route to Africa the trio paid a courtesy call on Bishop William Taylor while in London. Taylor, who had become 'a patron saint' for the holiness missionaries, prayed for them and used his knowledge of Africa to direct them to work near Lake Victoria.<sup>29</sup> Thus the Quaker 'Inward Look' continued to be replaced by 'World Vision' as a result of the Methodist connection. Thomas D. Hamm summarizes the extent of American Methodism's impact on Quakerism:

Late in the summer of 1875 a Methodist Minister decided to indulge his professional curiosity by attending the annual gathering of Yearly Meeting of Friends in Richmond. Unlike his military brother fourteen years earlier, the Methodist minister felt completely at home. The devotional meeting opened with the singing of a familiar hymn. Then the presiding preacher called for testimonies... then an altar call was issued, and soon seekers after conversion and sanctification crowded

<sup>27</sup> Kenneth Richardson, *Garden of Miracles: The Story of the Africa Inland Mission* (London: Africa Inland Mission, 1976), pp. 20-36.

<sup>28</sup> Fish, *The Place of Songs*, p. 527.

<sup>29</sup> Edna H. Chilson, *Ambassador of the King* (Wichita, KS: Esther Chilson Choate and Rachel E. Chilson, 1943), p. 14.

around several mourners' benches.<sup>30</sup>

This period has been depicted not only as a time of Wesleyanization of Quakerism but also of the American religious landscape and the larger world. Douglas and Dorothy Steere at the Friends World Committee in 1954 noted that it was not until 1868 that Friends Foreign Missions Association was formed:

The Society of Friends was far from being a leader in the cause of missions. Had it not been for the strong influence of the Wesleyan Evangelical Movement upon Society both in England and America, arousing it to witness to Christ who spoke to its condition and setting a powerful example to it in the wave of missionary enthusiasm that swept the church in the nineteenth century, there is little to indicate that English Quakers would have ventured on these undertakings.<sup>31</sup>

Rasmussen has noted that 'international revivalism was dominated by Holiness Methodism' that stressed sanctification as a second definite experience after conversion.<sup>32</sup> She also correctly recognizes that 'the evangelical influence which led to the great revival among Friends also aroused in them an interest in foreign mission work'.<sup>33</sup>

## VI Faith Missions and Denominations

There are two kinds of distinctively

Wesleyan/Holiness Missions that began to take root in Africa during the 'institutional' phase of the revivals: denominational and inter-denominational. James R. Bishop, the Executive Director of the World Gospel Mission in the 1960s, wrote that 'though keen missionary interest existed and scattered support was given to various missionaries and missionary projects through the National [Holiness Association] prior to June 1910... the leaders of the National [Holiness Association] were not satisfied with the haphazard expression of the organization's missionary zeal'.<sup>34</sup> A number of their missionaries who were involved with mainline Methodism and other missions were not finding what the holiness people called 'an unhindered field for the aggressive pushing of holiness'.<sup>35</sup> Those missionaries operating independently had no system of accountability. Many had gone out that had not been examined on doctrinal matters such as speaking in tongues and 'third blessing' holiness. There was also concern about preaching a general advancement of grace rather than the type of holiness that the supporters at home wanted communicated to the uttermost parts of the earth.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Thomas D. Hamm, *The Transformation of American Quakerism* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana UP, 1988), p. 74.

<sup>31</sup> Douglas and Dorothy Steere, *Friends Work in Africa* (London: Friends World Committee, 1954), pp. 6-7.

<sup>32</sup> Ann Marie Bak Rasmussen, *The Quaker Movement in Africa* (London: British Academic Press, 1995), p. 16.

<sup>33</sup> Rasmussen, *The Quaker Movement in Africa*, p. 19.

<sup>34</sup> James R. Bishop, (Unpublished Manuscript) 'The Birth of the National Holiness Missionary Society', Delbert Rose Collection, Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore, Ky.

<sup>35</sup> Iva Durham Vennard, 'Is the National Association for the Promotion of Holiness Justifiable in Organizing a Department of Foreign Missions?' *The Christian Witness and Advocate of Bible Holiness*, 31:23, (June 15, 1911).

<sup>36</sup> The NHMS was in part a reaction to Keswick holiness espoused by most of the 'Faith Missions'; see C. B. Ward, *Christian Witness and Advocate of Bible Holiness* (September 26, 1907), p. 9.

Even the concept of faith missions was not taught well enough to encourage holiness in foreign lands. A clear example is in the situation surrounding the immediate circumstances leading to the founding of the National Holiness Missionary Society, where Woodford Taylor and Cecil Troxel, the original missionaries, broke from the Chihli Mission because of what was perceived as unclear Wesleyan interpretation of scripture and lack of unity in policy. They wanted 'unity in doctrine and experience of holiness' which was not available in faith missions.<sup>37</sup>

Clara Ford was the first missionary sent to Africa under the auspices of the National Holiness Missionary Society. She marks a connection between the inauguration of the NHMS and the beginning of holiness work among the Kipsigis people of Kenya. Ford arrived in Africa in 1929. This missionary woman represents the wide acceptance by a number of holiness mission agencies of women in ministry. The East Africa Holiness Association was organized with Ford as secretary and for months she edited and published a holiness magazine, the only interdenominational religious magazine published in East Africa in the 1930s.<sup>38</sup> The magazine was called *Matangazo Ya Injili*, Swahili for 'Gospel Herald'. By 1935 it had a circulation of 1,300 throughout East

Africa.<sup>39</sup> It appears the efforts to develop an interdenominational outreach with an objective of spreading scriptural holiness prominently occupied the minds of the early WGM, Quaker and AIM missionaries. Virgil Kirkpatrick said of one of their meetings, 'please pray that this beginning will develop into a great annual holiness convention'.<sup>40</sup>

### VII 'Holiness' for National Pastors and Converts

To some of the holiness mission agencies, the matter of understanding the teaching and possession of the experience of entire cleansing as a second definite work of grace was imperative. On the field it was to be depended upon and nobody was to be sent without the experience.<sup>41</sup> What was demanded of the missionaries also became their mandate for reaching Africa. Some of the missionaries thus said: 'We go then looking to Him, determined by His grace to pierce Africa's darkness with the pure light of "Holiness unto the Lord": trusting that its glow may constantly radiate from our own lives until those to whom we minister will catch and carry over, even until the utmost part.'<sup>42</sup> There is a sense in which Africa's 'darkness' was in itself a justification for the 'deeper' cleans-

<sup>37</sup> Mrs Cecil Troxel and John J. Trachsel, *Cecil Troxel: The Man and the Work* (Chicago: National Holiness Missionary Society, 1948), p. 88.

<sup>38</sup> Cary, *Story of the National Holiness Missionary Society*, p. 342.

<sup>39</sup> Cary, *Story of the National Holiness Missionary Society*, p. 342.

<sup>40</sup> Virgil Kirkpatrick, 'Meetings', *Call to Prayer* (August 1935), p. 13.

<sup>41</sup> Burnis H. Bushong, *Reaching the Unreached Now: a brief history of the World Gospel Mission* (Marion Ind.: WGM, 1995), p. 13.

<sup>42</sup> Virgil Kirkpatrick, 'Why We Go to Africa', *Call to Prayer* (July 1932), p. 9.

ing power. African adherents were expected to break away from traditional ceremonies, a superstitious past, witchcraft, and polygamy as well as embrace a lifestyle of abstinence from alcohol, tobacco, dancing (including traditional dancing), and sexual promiscuity.

The missionaries sought to ensure national pastors attained and shared the experience of holiness. One of the missionaries wrote that 'our hope for speedy ministry does not lie in our personal ministry among the masses but in a sanctified native ministry'.<sup>43</sup> Therefore, efforts were made to pass on the theological heritage to a group of native evangelists. Missionary Faye Kirkpatrick anticipated that 'the greatest missionary accomplishment in these latter days shall be through the sanctified native church'.<sup>44</sup> Orville Leonard reported that 'much of the real missionary work away from the main station is carried on by native ministers'.<sup>45</sup> Early Africa Gospel Church pastors were not only required to be sanctified but it was part of their monthly report to register those who sought sanctification experiences.<sup>46</sup> A speedy and most convenient way to spread the good news was perceived as facilitated when the natives attained the holiness experience. They would effectively articulate and make a strong argument for Christianity among their people. It was

also seen as the best way of ensuring permanence of evangelistic results. Robert K. Smith hoped the church would become 'a permanent structure, definitely converted, wholly sanctified, constantly spirit-led and filled with joy awaiting His coming'.<sup>47</sup>

### VIII The Effect of 'Holiness'

A review of available literature on holiness in Africa reveals that the missionaries had to grapple with the appropriateness of the doctrine of sanctification in African Christianity. Early Methodist missionaries and preachers gave 'much attention to Christian Perfection [and] personal journals and letters witness to their having been very conscious of this teaching as part of Methodist heritage. The ministers were regularly asked, during synods and conferences, if they continued to preach the doctrine'.<sup>48</sup> However, Kwesi Dickson also notes that in Africa 'the edge of this teaching has been blunted by the fact that the church has tried to separate its members from life as they knew it from the particularity of their circumstances' and therefore, in his judgment this doctrine has not constituted a potential for change in Africa.<sup>49</sup> Dickson's theological analysis borders on a rejection of holiness as irrelevant for Africa. This position is difficult to sustain in the light of the history of revivalism and its potential for social change. It is not easy to

<sup>43</sup> Fish, *The Place of Songs*, p. 268.

<sup>44</sup> Faye Kirkpatrick, 'God is Still on the Throne', *Call to Prayer* (December 1935), p. 8.

<sup>45</sup> Orville E. Leonard, *Pioneering* (privately printed, nd), p. 8.

<sup>46</sup> Leonard, *Pioneering*, p. 20.

<sup>47</sup> Robert K. Smith, 'Building Christian Character in Africa', *Call to Prayer* (June 1935), p. 9.

<sup>48</sup> Theodore Runyon (ed.), *Sanctification & Liberation* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1981), p. 198.

<sup>49</sup> Runyon, *Sanctification & Liberation*, p. 198.

understand why a doctrine based on perfectionist love for God and humanity, supported by a strong connectional system and whose prime exponent, John Wesley, had vehemently fought the enslavement of the African race would not have a potential for change in Africa.<sup>50</sup>

It has been argued that despite most of the leaders of the church in Kenya being influenced for forty years by the East African Revival,<sup>51</sup> much of Kenyan Christianity is full of bitter divisions, nominalism, tribalism and differences of personalities and customs. John Martin stated that in Rwanda eight out of ten people claim to be Christian and yet the country was penetrated by ethnic purification. He blamed the massacres on the shortcomings of the East African Revival and missionary legacies for having lacked social engagement, limited stress on human rights, failed to give systematic instructions, and for having retreated to 'apolitical' pietism, substituted testimonies for biblical instruction and emphasized private morality over structural evil or corporate sin.<sup>52</sup> This study hits holiness revivalism at the core of its strength. It calls for a re-investigation

of the doctrine of holiness in the light of the African situation because, as indicated earlier, these findings are also based on a superficial understanding of holiness.

Perhaps the most curious of all the statements on holiness in Africa is that made by a researcher on faith missions, Klaus Fiedler. He sees holiness as a revival phenomenon that suited the 'people [in the missionary's homeland] who had long been converted and yearned for deeper Christian life'. For him such a situation did not exist in the mission field where the missionary had first to establish the church. This process of establishing the church, according to Fiedler, was 'done not by means of preaching holiness, but by preaching conversion'. Therefore, Fiedler concludes, missionaries 'did not try to build holiness structures they were used to, such as conferences, camp meetings, and fellowship groups ... did not translate holiness literature into African languages, nor did they write their own holiness literature in those languages'. To him the slow process of conversion left little energy and time for preaching holiness.<sup>53</sup> Though he does not want to conclude that holiness did not take root in Africa, he sees little success achieved even by missions like the World Gospel Mission which defined its primary mission as based on the doctrine of entire sanctification.<sup>54</sup>

Fiedler's work is perhaps the most

<sup>50</sup> See Wesley's letter to William Wilberforce urging him to fight slavery: Letters, *The Works of John Wesley*, XIII, (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), p. 153.

<sup>51</sup> The East African Revival was strongly influenced by the American holiness revivalism and most of the early revivalists were from the Free Methodist Church, the Friends Africa Industrial Mission, the National Holiness Missionary Society and the Africa Inland Mission. Unfortunately, history has presented this movement as mainly Anglican-Keswick revivalism (see J. E. Church, *Quest for the Highest: An Autobiographical Account of the East African Revival* (Exeter: Paternoster Press, p. 1981).

<sup>52</sup> John Martin, 'Revivalism and Ethnic Conflict', *Transformation: an international dialogue on mission and ethics* (April/June 1995), pp. 1-2.

<sup>53</sup> Klaus Fiedler, *The story of Faith Missions: From Hudson Taylor to Present Day Africa* (Oxford: Regnum, 1994) p. 247.

<sup>54</sup> Fiedler, *The Story of Faith Missions*, p. 248 (The World Gospel Mission was previously the National Holiness Missionary Society)

definitive study of holiness in Africa. His faith missions lens and limited holiness corpus, from which the research is drawn, led him to miss crucial theological developments on the doctrine of sanctification as understood within missionary circles. His interpretation separates holiness from the soteriology of the African missionaries. Though his purpose was to describe the theology of faith missions in the African context, he overlooked the study of major cultural issues with the assumption that this had been done by others. The above study shows that missionaries did seek to communicate the doctrine of holiness. Marie Bak Rasmussen concurred that the gospel that the FAIM missionaries brought to Kenya was a revival gospel which meant that the Africans could find forgiveness for their sins, and also had the opportunity to experience sanctification as in America.<sup>55</sup> The structures similar to those in America including conferences, camp meetings, and fellowships were also available to the African people for the purpose of leading them to sanctification.<sup>56</sup> This challenges Fiedler's assumptions. In summary, there are a number of historical, theological, cultural, sociological and missiological hurdles that are crucial for interpreting the development of the doctrine of holiness in Africa.

### IX. Conclusion

The doctrine of holiness played a major role in the inception of evangelical Christianity in Africa. This role included spiritual and theological foundations of missions that would be considered outside the Wesleyan family. In the nineteenth century it also became the rallying point for most of the evangelical missions. This teaching and experience was embodied in the lives and practices of the missionaries. It defined their objectives in reaching Africa with the gospel. The missionaries perceived that the message of holiness was understood and received in Africa as the essence of the deepest relationship with Christ. They relied on this for the permanency of their results. They also saw holy living as an alternative to what they thought of as 'heathen' traditional practices of the African people. Though documentation is lacking, it is clear that pietistic Christianity, when applied carefully, was spiritually edifying for the African Christians but when misapplied it became counter-productive. This research is based almost entirely on secondary materials published in the west. More work needs to be done, using all possible research apparatus to ascertain the historical, theological, and contextual underpinnings of the experience of holiness in Africa.

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<sup>55</sup> Rasmussen, *The Quaker Movement in Africa*, pp. 43-44.

<sup>56</sup> Rasmussen, *The Quaker Movement in Africa*, pp. 59-60.