



The Palgrave Handbook of Christianity in Africa from Apostolic Times to the Present

Edited by
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CONTENTS

1 Introduction	1
Andrew Eugene Barnes	
Part I Mentors	15
2 The Writings and Influence of Edward W. Blyden	17
Moses Moore	
3 The Writings and Legacy of John Mbiti	37
Harvey Kwiyani	
4 The Writings and Legacy of Adrian Hastings	53
Kevin Ward	
5 Elizabeth Isichei's Contributions to the Study of Christianity	67
Toyin Falola	
6 The Writings and Legacy of Andrew Walls	83
Jonathan Bonk	
7 The Writings and Legacy of Lamin Sanneh	97
Joel Carpenter	
8 The Writings and Legacy of John Peel	107
Toyin Falola	

9	The Legacy of Terrence Ranger for Historians of African Christianity	127
	David Maxwell	
10	The Writings and Legacy of J. F. Ade Ajayi	143
	Femi J. Kolapo	
11	The Writings and Legacy of Ogbu Kalu	161
	Toyin Falola	
Part II Trans-Atlantic Christianity in Africa		177
12	Missionaries and African Christians	179
	Emma Wild-Wood	
13	Catholic Missions and African Responses I: 1450–1800	193
	Paul Kollman	
14	African Initiatives and Agency Within British Protestant Missions in Africa, c.1792–c.1914	207
	Brian Stanley	
15	Abolitionism and the Evangelization of Africa	221
	David Killingray	
16	Continental Protestant Missions and the Evangelization of Africa (1800–1880)	239
	Paul Glen Grant	
17	European Settlers and Christianity in Africa	255
	Norman Etherington	
18	Catholic Missions and African Responses II: 1800–1885	269
	Paul Kollman	
19	European Christianity and European Imperialism in Africa	289
	David Lindenfeld	
20	New World Ethiopianism and the Evangelization of Africa	303
	Kimberly Hill	

21	Catholic Missions and Colonial States	321
	Elizabeth Foster	
22	Protestant Missions and Colonial States	333
	Andrew Eugene Barnes	
23	Women Missionaries and the Evangelization of Women in Africa	349
	Rebecca C. Hughes	
24	Christian Africans, Muslim Africans, and the European Colonial Project	361
	Shobana Shankar	
Part III	The Rooting of Christianity in Africa I: Christian Life from Ancient Times to the Independence Era	375
25	Christian Communities and Religious Movements in Roman Africa	377
	Eric Fournier and Mark Lewis Tizzoni	
26	Christian Communities and Religious Movements in Ethiopia and Nubia	399
	Vince Bantu	
27	Mission Station Christianity in the Nineteenth Century: A Spatial Lens	413
	Ingie Hovland	
28	Christianity, Witchcraft, Magic, and Healing in Africa	429
	Kalle Kananoja and Markku Hokkanen	
29	African Women Christians	445
	Toyin Falola	
30	Ethiopianism in Africa	463
	Ethan R. Sanders	
31	Garveyism and Christianity in Colonial Africa	485
	Ciprian Burlăcioiu	

32	The East African Revival Jason Bruner	503
33	The Transfer of Protestant Mission Churches to African Christians Musa Gaiya	519
Part IV The Rooting of Christianity in Africa II: Christian Life in Contemporary Africa		533
34	Christian Devotional Practice in Contemporary Africa Katharina Wilkens	535
35	Catholic Church Growth in Independent Africa J. J. Carney	549
36	Christian Femininity in Independent Africa Dorothy Tembo	565
37	Change and Continuity in AIC Church Life and Their Scholarship: A Question of Maturation? Retief Müller	579
38	Significant Trends in Contemporary African Pentecostalism Paul Gifford	593
39	African Pentecostalism from an African Perspective Paul Mwangi and Kyama Mugambi	607
40	Missions and Contemporary African Rulers Charles Prempeh	625
41	<i>African Christianity Rising: Lessons from a Documentary Film Project</i> James M. Ault, Jr.	645
42	African Christians Outside of Africa Enoch Olujide Gbadegesin	667
	Index	683



Mission Station Christianity in the Nineteenth Century: A Spatial Lens

Ingie Hovland

The height of what we might call “the mission station era” in Africa occurred during the nineteenth century. At this time, the majority of missionaries who arrived on sailing ships from Europe and North America did not choose to live as the local populations lived. Instead, they decided to establish a type of distinct residential-religious site that they referred to as “mission stations.” The site typically encompassed a number of buildings constructed in a European style, including houses for missionaries and for converts, a school, a church, dormitories for residential students and servants, sometimes a clinic, as well as gardens, fields for crops, workshops, stables, and enclosures for farm animals.¹

In this chapter I wish to show that one way to gain an understanding of the complex dynamics surrounding the mission stations is to view them through a spatial lens. I argue that the mission station space was not fully controlled by any single group and did not advance a single project, such as Christianity or colonialism. Rather, the stations intersected with the projects and desires of several historical actors. I will explore this argument by offering glimpses from one mission station in southeastern Africa, the Norwegian Lutheran station Umphumulo in the British Colony of Natal. Of course, this station cannot stand as a representative of all the stations. There were many differences across stations, prompted not only by the differences among Christian traditions and between the mission societies, but also between the political and social contexts around them. Nevertheless, I think that seeing some of the details of everyday

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413

A. E. Barnes, T. Falola (eds.), *The Palgrave Handbook of Christianity in Africa from Apostolic Times to the Present*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-48270-0_27

interactions on one station can help to illuminate larger patterns that were repeated, in different forms, on stations across Africa. The chapter is divided into four sections. In each section I will consider the space of the mission station using a different spatial framework: a moral geography, a heterotopia, a third space, and an imagined center. Through this, I hope to demonstrate my argument that the stations did not just embody one meaning. As we turn from one spatial framework to the next, new aspects of the place are revealed.

SETTING UP A STATION: A MORAL GEOGRAPHY

The British formally colonized Natal, on the coast of southeastern Africa, in 1843. They wrested rule of the land from Boer settlers, who had trekked there from the Cape and taken land from the Zulu monarchs Dingane and then Mpande, half-brothers of the late Shaka Zulu. King Mpande held on to an independent Zulu Kingdom north of the Thukela river.

The small, new British colonial administration in Natal, south of the Thukela, began granting plots of land to Christian mission societies who wished to work in the area. The resident British agent Theophilus Shepstone (who was later given the formal title Secretary of Native Affairs) appreciated how missionaries could help the administration introduce European ways of life into parts of the colony that the officials otherwise had little control over (Keto 1976; McClendon 2004). Both Dutch and English settlers in the area protested against this practice, as they were afraid that the reading classes that missionaries offered to local African children might threaten the idea of an unskilled and subordinate African labor force. We see here some of the many desires that pushed for or against mission stations in this phase of early colonization, whether those desires were to “civilize,” to convert, to educate, or to employ.

Hans Schreuder, the first missionary sent out by the Norwegian Mission Society, waited impatiently for his turn to be favored by the Natal administration. In 1850 he was finally granted 500 acres in the hinterland of northern Natal, not far from the border to the Zulu Kingdom, and Schreuder set to work to establish a mission station. He named it Umphumulo, “place of rest.” The ambitious Schreuder was not restful, however, as he wished to set up a station inside Zululand as well, and his chance came soon afterward when he was summoned to the Zulu king to treat the king’s pain using medicinal cream. Schreuder was then granted the right to use a plot of land within Zululand as a station in 1851. Here we see some further desires that facilitated the establishment of stations: local African authorities may have discerned the usefulness of keeping select Europeans close to their courts so as to have access, for example, to specific medicines, particular knowledge, or a line of communication with other whites.

What did these new spaces look like? Let us consider Schreuder’s first station, Umphumulo. He arrived in the area together with a young Zulu man, Mbiyana Ngidi, who had been baptized on an American mission station in Natal and had sought employment with Schreuder as a wagon driver. A local

woman later recalled that when she first saw Ngidi she had been surprised by his European clothing: trousers, a shirt, a handkerchief tied around his head, and a hat.² The sight of a Black man dressed as a white man was still puzzling in this area, but soon became more commonplace. Ngidi stayed to help set up the station. Schreuder soon moved on to his new station in Zululand, but left three Norwegian missionaries at Umphumulo, including Lars Larsen and his wife Martha.

At Umphumulo, the men cut down trees from the forest and built a rectangular, one-room wooden house, with a thatched roof, for the Norwegians' living quarters.³ This was markedly different from the Zulu homesteads that were dotted across the hillsides around the station, each of which was set up as a circle of rounded beehive dwellings. The missionaries then erected a schoolhouse and a stable for their horses. They invited children in the neighboring homesteads to come to reading lessons, and sometimes some children came.⁴ The children learned to decipher printed letters that made up Zulu words, as the wholly oral Zulu language had been turned into a written one by the missionaries (Schreuder 1848, 1850). The inhabitants at Umphumulo also kept cattle, sheep, and chickens, and grew sweet potatoes and corn. While the surrounding Zulus usually considered it women's work to maintain the fields, the missionaries thought of it as male labor, and they paid young boys from nearby homesteads to work their fields in the European manner, with an ox-drawn plow. They built a "boys' house" for the young boys to stay in and encouraged them to wear European-style shirts and trousers. The missionaries invited everyone on the station to a daily morning devotion, in which they read aloud from the Bible and knelt in prayer. During the mid-1850s, Ngidi was given responsibility for leading the daily evening prayer.⁵ In the late 1850s, they rejoiced when they were finally able to build a small station church in which to hold their Sunday services. They also began making bricks from mud for further building work. And they laid out gardens.⁶

Over time, the missionaries noted with approval that they had managed to change the place. As one of the Norwegians at Umphumulo wrote in 1858: "The station is expanding and even the natives remark, not infrequently, on how this place has changed in a few years. Where before there were neither homes, trees nor fields, are now both brick houses and other houses, trees and fields (or gardens, if you wish)."⁷ These concrete changes bolstered the many other types of changes that the missionaries desired. For example, the missionaries decided to use the Zulu term *uNkulunkulu* to refer to the Christian God and sought to convince the Zulus that this God was not like the ancestors whom the Zulus associated with certain spaces in their homesteads.⁸ The missionaries encouraged new language practices, such as reading, and new gender relations. And in general, as Paul Landau (2010, 435) has observed, the missionaries gravitated toward the structuring principle of rectilinearity, emphasizing straight and "upright" buildings, straight rows of corn, straight hemlines, and straight lines of print, not to mention the straightness of bearing and gaze.

As we use a spatial lens to consider the mission stations, it is instructive to move across the landscape and notice the stations as one type of space among many. The Zulu homestead, for example, was a domestic microcosm with local authority, shot through with larger political concerns (Kuper 1993). The manor house of the British settlers sustained social distance between manordwellers and “others” (Crais 1992, 136–138). The mission station too began to form its own domestic world with impacts that extended beyond the place itself. A station, such as Umphumulo, tied Christianity to a physical site. This site sought to stand out as visibly different from its surroundings. It sought to craft a particular connection between materiality and morality. This is what John MacKenzie (2003, 112, 121) has called a new “education of the landscape,” a “moral geography” laid out for all to see. The mission station spaces, as they became “normal,” contributed to the normalization of a broader process of seeing and organizing the African land (and world) in certain ways (Harries 2007, 97).

ENGAGING WITH THE STATION: A HETEROTOPIA

One of the events that shaped the mission stations was the second-wave Protestant evangelical revivals or the Second Great Awakening that occurred in Europe and North America in the first half of the nineteenth century. The evangelicals were concerned with conversion—their own experience of it, as well as others’ need for it. They believed that those who remained unconverted to Christianity would be damned to hell for eternity, rather than enter heaven. In their view, the stakes were high, and the need to send missionaries to Africa became urgent. They established numerous new Protestant mission societies in the nineteenth century, and the number of mission stations in Africa grew fast. In the Colony of Natal there were already 28 Protestant mission stations by 1860—run by Lutherans from Norway, Germany, and Sweden; Anglicans from England; Presbyterians from Scotland; and Congregationalists from the United States—as well as one French Catholic station (Etherington 1978). The Zulu king had given permission for five further stations to be established within his kingdom after granting the first to Schreuder. While a range of Protestant denominations were involved, as well as the Catholics, mission station Christianity in nineteenth-century Africa largely exhibited the characteristics prized by the evangelical revivals. This form of outgoing Christianity was intensely focused on “spreading” the gospel by sharing the Bible (including through translations), by preaching that Jesus died for everyone’s sins so that everyone could be “saved,” and by encouraging personal conversions (Bebbington 1989).

However, despite their evangelical efforts, the mission stations of the mid-nineteenth century did not have notable success in converting Africans to Christianity. Instead, the stations were busy places for other reasons. At Umphumulo, for example, local people came to the station to attend reading classes, to have wounds treated, or to have teeth pulled out. Many stopped by

to trade or to see if they could sell straw mats and furs in exchange for British pound sterling. The missionaries at Umphumulo repeatedly reported their frustration that some Zulus attended their Sunday services because they believed this would bring rain. The missionaries expressed greater approval when they were instead asked to pray for rain, a request to which they consented on their own biblical grounds, even though it also threatened to enmesh them in local understandings of the political and sacred power associated with rainmaking.

At this point, we can see that the stations and their various layers of meanings were not completely under the control of the missionaries and their project of conversion. Instead, the stations were shaped by the ongoing social engagement on and around them, as the missionaries were drawn into roles such as teachers, traders, healers, and rainmakers. We could think of this space as a “heterotopia.” This term, suggested by Michel Foucault (1986) and later picked up by Edward Soja (1995), refers to places in which several incompatible spaces may coexist. Some of the examples mentioned by Foucault, such as Puritan settlements in North America and Jesuit missions in South America, are reminiscent of the nineteenth-century mission stations in Africa insofar as they are all types of “counter-sites” that seek to enact “utopia” (Foucault 1986, 24), yet do so ambiguously and in the midst of knotty relations with other sites. As J.D.Y. Peel (2000) has argued in his study of the encounter between missionaries and the Yoruba in West Africa, we might think of these sites as pulling both with and against each other at the same time:

If a metaphor is needed, [this] history in concrete terms is less like a chain or a ladder, whose links or steps represent phases of economic, cultural, and political change which all correspond, than a multi-colored woolen cord, with component fibers of different lengths—Yoruba, colonial, Christian, and other—that give it structure by pulling both together and against one another. (9)

But Peel’s metaphor can be nuanced further, since “Yoruba culture” or “Zulu culture” was not one thing. For example, some Zulus used the stations to question existing relations in their society. At Umphumulo, as at many other stations, several young African women moved to the station to gain greater control of their own marriage prospects. The missionaries advocated individually chosen monogamous marriages, and it soon became apparent that this threatened the power base of the Zulu homesteads, which were arranged under a male homestead head who had the authority to make marriage arrangements (Gaitskell 2003). As Amanda Porterfield (1997, 73) puts it, both the missionaries and the Zulus “respected patriarchal authority and invested it with religious meaning,” but those meanings sometimes ran at cross-purposes. Young women could threaten to destabilize either of these patriarchal systems as they moved between the homestead and the station.

The mission sources have to be read carefully to capture these types of dynamics, which signal the presence of a heterotopia. For example, close

reading of the Norwegian sources reveals that one young woman, Mathenjwaze, likely moved to Umphumulo because she and the wagon driver, Mbiyana Ngidi, wished to get married.⁹ She worked for Martha Larsen for several years before being baptized as Umphumulo's first convert in 1858. The next day, she and Mbiyana were married on the station.¹⁰ They built "an upright house" for themselves on the station land.¹¹ The Norwegian sources, written by the male missionaries, reported joyfully on Mathenjwaze's conversion. But they did not mention that her baptism was brought about through Mathenjwaze's interactions with a Black man, Mbiyana, and a white woman, Martha Larsen, as well as the long-term commitment and perhaps even careful planning of Mathenjwaze herself. Therefore, sources about life on the mission stations have to be read "against the grain" to recapture some of the experiences of Africans who engaged with the stations in various ways (Brock 2005; Griffiths 2005), as well as the experiences of those European missionaries who did not send letters back to Europe, such as most of the female missionaries (Bowie et al. 1993; Grimshaw and Sherlock 2005).

We might also note—although we cannot know for certain—that there were perhaps several layers of meaning that played a role in Mathenjwaze's conversion. The mission sources usually imply that African conversions on the stations were replications of the ideal-type evangelical conversion: an intensely emotional, interior event that had to do with changes in personal belief. However, African conversions may have incorporated a range of meanings, desires, and effects. At Umphumulo, conversions may have expressed emotional and spiritual discovery, intellectual curiosity or entrepreneurialism, or a change in political allegiance—or several of these at once.¹² Incompatible aims may have coexisted in the heterotopic mission station space.

CHANGING MEANINGS ON THE STATION: A THIRD SPACE

Mathenjwaze chose to retain her Zulu name when she was baptized. But in the decades following her baptism, a small group of converts was baptized by the Norwegian mission each year and many of them decided to take on European or biblical names in baptism. For example, a Norwegian missionary reported in 1871 that eight converts had been baptized and that they had all chosen a "foreign" baptismal name: Andrea Tomine, Christian, Abrahamu Salomone, Martin Luther, Umatande Arone, Upaulu, Umarta, and Uberta. The missionary added an excuse in his report, explaining that he and his missionary colleagues had encouraged the converts to choose names "that have their origin in their own language," but that if the converts insisted on "foreign ones" they were allowed to proceed.¹³

Here we see another form of complex agency that was unfolding on the stations. From the viewpoint of the converts, perhaps the new names marked their own wish to assert the importance of this event in their lives. At the same time, it may also have been an expression of a longer process of coming to identify

with certain aspects of Europeaness on the colonial frontier or with its perceived power.

The Norwegian missionaries, on the other hand, wanted the converts to retain Zulu names, perhaps because they wanted the Zulus to display a certain patriotism that could eventually lead, in the missionaries' view, to a Christian Zulu nation. Or perhaps they favored Zulu names because these more clearly denoted certain categories of authority. At this time, only white male missionaries were formally in charge of the Norwegian stations. Therefore, having a Zulu male convert take a name such as Martin Luther, for example, might subtly raise questions about what type of authority the convert was aspiring to.

Thus when the Norwegian missionaries communicated to the converts that they should take on European Christianity and European forms of life (such as clothes and houses), but should not aspire to take on European identity in their names, this may have seemed somewhat disingenuous to the converts. As Anne Folke Henningsen sums it up in relation to the Moravian mission in the Cape: "the entire Moravian mission endeavour can be seen as one long double bind communication of saying: become like us, but stay as you are/were" (2011, 153–154). Homi Bhabha has described this dynamic as a "flawed colonial mimesis, in which to be Anglicized is *emphatically* not to be English" (1994, 125, orig. emph.). When the converts chose their new baptismal names at Umphumulo, they may have insisted on a more complex form of aspiration and identification with Europeaness, which disturbed the missionaries. This is another example of how the missionaries were not able to fully steer the unfolding social relations on the stations.

This also raises a broader question: Were the stations colonial spaces? Some scholars have argued that they were, such as Nosipho Majeke (1952), the pen-name of Dora Taylor, who saw the missionaries and their network of stations as agents of imperial conquest. In a differently angled interpretation, Jean and John Comaroff (1991) have observed that colonialism was a multifaceted process, and they have suggested that the mission stations became sites that facilitated the "colonization of consciousness," that is, a "long conversation" in which African cognitive categories were gradually drawn into and subsumed by the categories used by the Europeans. Other scholars place more emphasis on Africans' creative appropriations of what the missionaries brought. For example, Dana Robert (2009) has highlighted that several missionaries spoke out against racial determinism, and she has proposed that the mission process can be seen as a process of social change that involved cross-cultural transfer of new knowledge and technologies. And Lamin Sanneh (1989, 53) has argued that the local context had the final say, so that when the missionaries translated the Bible this was akin to releasing a "hurtling bullet" that could not be recalled once the translation had been picked up by new hands.¹⁴

While I have learned much from this conversation, I am wary of conflating the many different projects that were carried out by the actors involved with the mission stations under one rubric, whether that is a malignly shaded colonization or a benevolently shaded transfer of knowledge. I think a spatial lens

better allows us to see some of the unresolved contradictions of the stations. Having already explored the framework of “heterotopia,” which considers how contradictory sites coexisted in the station space, I turn now to “third space,” which considers how some of these contradictions led to unexpected outcomes. Bhabha (1994) uses the term “third space” to describe a space that has emerged out of the dissonance of two or more currents and that has gone beyond them in important ways. The nineteenth-century mission stations were formed in the historical encounter between Christianity, local African populations, and a European colonial context. But these currents shifted as they merged. The Christianity that the missionaries brought with them changed as it was transported from, for example, the windy western coast of Norway to the subtropical hinterland of the Colony of Natal. Africans brought their own desires and types of agencies to their conversions. Both the missionaries’ and the converts’ Christian understandings and practices adjusted to—and in turn continued to create—a hybrid third space on the stations. Or, as James Pritchett (2011, 32) puts it, the mission stations produced “not simply a synthesis [...] but an expanded repertoire of meanings and actions.”

In this context, the African station residents developed a new role that was not just positioned “in-between,” but that rather held multiple identities (Neylan 2003, 130). It is against this background that Etherington (1976) has argued that the mission stations acted as “melting pots,” providing a platform for new African viewpoints to emerge. In southeastern Africa, the converts on the stations were known as *amakholwa* (believers), and in due course many of the members of this new category stepped into influential intellectual and political roles that shaped, for example, Black nationalism (Etherington 1996, 209–210)—an outcome of the station’s “third space” that the missionaries would not have expected.

THE VIEW FROM THE STATION: FORMING A “CENTER”

Although this chapter is about the mission stations, I should note now that a focus on the stations provides us with a particular, partial vantage point that omits other aspects of the picture. On the whole, the European and American mission stations of the mid-nineteenth century were managed by white, male missionaries, and the sources we have from the stations are almost all written by these white men. If a male African convert was considered suitable to manage a station, which was rare, he might be placed in charge of an “outstation,” that is, a smaller satellite station that reported to the main station. As the missionaries reported on events in letters to their home boards, they naturally placed themselves in the center, amplifying their own importance. If they were able to report on conversions, they might frame these narratives in a way that highlighted their own influence. If they were not able to report on conversions, they might frame their story as one of sacrifice. For example, Lars Larsen, in moments of frustration at the lack of Christian interest around him after he had moved from Umphumulo to set up the new station Inhlazatshe, imagined that

“we are working in a spiritually dry land where there is no water of life,” and that the Zulus around him were “ensconced in an infinitely pitch dark night.”¹⁵ Events that took place beyond the missionary’s purview, off the stations, were relegated to the “dark” periphery. This means that much of the communication and transformation related to African adoptions of Christianity, especially toward the end of the nineteenth century, took place “far away from missionary eyes” (Etherington 1996, 217).

We can see one example of this “center/periphery” framework if we follow the story of the wagon driver at Umphumulo, Mbiyana Ngidi. In 1860 he stepped into a new position as a Zulu missionary for the Native Home Missionary Society, founded by the American Zulu Mission. A little later he became responsible for his own outstation, Noodsberg, not far from Umphumulo. His first church members were baptized in 1865, and two years later the congregation had already grown to 25 members. A decade later, his congregation was flourishing (Etherington 1978, 144, 159). His success did not go unnoticed by the American missionaries, and one of them observed that “if all were like him our converts would count thousands.” But, the letter continued, some missionaries were also grumbling about what Ngidi wanted as he was “racing all over the country.”¹⁶ His apparent success was not unequivocally welcomed by the white missionaries. And they hesitated to give him any greater authority, delaying his ordination until 1878.¹⁷ As far as I know, the Norwegian mission sources do not report on his success at all. This is one instance of how indigenous evangelists were largely relegated to the “hidden history of mission and Empire” (Brock 2005, 150).

This leads us to the question: What were the effects of the nineteenth-century stations? Did they drive the subsequent adoption of Christianity in Africa south of the Sahara? Mission sources might answer this question in the affirmative, placing the stations in the center of the story. But, surveying the scale of new African Christian affiliations in the twentieth century, Etherington notes that “there were never enough mission stations to account for the vast scale of twentieth century conversions” (1996, 217; see also Elbourne 2002; Landau 1995). However, this does not mean that the stations had no effects. It seems to me that one of their important effects was their shaping of the missionaries’ Christianity through the missionary experience of ruling over a residential community.

The vast majority of stations had residential communities, with employees and converts living on the station land, in addition to short-term residents. Umphumulo and the other Norwegian stations were relatively modest in size, usually not growing beyond 50 people (Jørgensen 1990, 343), but some stations were much larger, such as the British Methodist station Edendale in Natal, which counted between 800 and 1000 residents (Meintjes 1990, 128). Who joined these communities? Etherington has suggested that the earliest resident converts on the stations were “the unstable, the rebellious, or the rejected” (1978, 67). Indeed, the Norwegian missionaries sometimes reported that they had to employ people on the stations who were otherwise considered

socially marginal, such as those who were disabled, poor, or children. Others came to stay on the stations for shorter periods of time, such as patients or refugees. The majority of those who were baptized were young women and men. They were not, relatively speaking, socially powerful. Around Umphumulo, for example, some of the most influential local actors were the male homestead heads who had several wives. During the first decades of the Umphumulo mission station, not a single polygynous homestead head converted to Christianity (Jørgensen 1990, 155). All of these observations would support the argument that the station communities consisted of people with less social power.

But this argument needs to be nuanced, because we can also observe that the visitors, employees, and converts on the stations were not considered *unimportant* in local Zulu society. The missionaries often reported examples of potential young converts being persuaded to stay home instead, or young girls being fetched from the stations so that they could enter into a customary marriage at home. In this sense, the mission stations were seen as a rival homestead that could entice away dependents. As Elizabeth Elbourne notes of British missions in the Cape, “to accumulate people was to accumulate power and wealth, whether of the spiritual or material variety” (2002, 161). Similarly, Justin Willis (1993) has suggested that British stations in Bonde, East Africa, were perceived to be building up alternative client bases that threatened existing systems of patronage.

Therefore, the white male missionaries who were in charge of the stations also ruled over sizeable residential communities. Even though they could not retain full control of station dynamics, they exercised considerable power through their missionary paternalism, a core feature of “missionary masculinity” (Tjelle 2014). In some ways this paternalism was an extension of the elevated position of the village pastor in Europe. But this paternal power took on different dimensions in Africa, where the missionary governed not just a spiritual flock but a bounded community marked by racial difference (Harries 2007, 81). The missionaries on the stations thus inhabited a racial, gendered, religious hierarchy, day in and day out. The stations became a stage on which increasingly formalized differentiation was enacted. As anthropologists Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson (1997, 43) have observed, there is a close link between the examination of how spaces are produced and the examination of how differences emerge.

It seems to me that this station experience was an important contributor to a gradual shift in the missionaries’ Christianity. This became starkly evident among the Norwegian missionaries when Britain invaded the independent Zulu kingdom in 1879. During the Anglo-Zulu War, as well as the ensuing aftermath of a Zulu civil war and eventual formal British colonization of Zululand, the majority of the Norwegian missionaries turned into theological cheerleaders for Empire. While they initially felt skeptical of British colonization when they first arrived in the 1850s, some decades of living on the stations, in the “center,” had helped to shift their Christianity toward an imperial mode.¹⁸

BEYOND THE STATIONS

Between 1870 and 1891, the number of colonial government employees in the Colony of Natal grew from 99 to 695 (Keto 1976, 615). By 1890, Umphumulo formed the center of a large “mission reserve” with 12,000 acres of land which the Norwegian missionaries supervised on behalf of the British colonial government and where the government “gave the natives permission to live” (Myklebust 1949, 30). In 1887, when Zululand was formally annexed as a British protectorate, all Africans were prohibited from purchasing land in certain areas of the Zulu territory (Keto 1976, 616). However, the British allowed a Boer settlement in northwestern Zululand, the Nieuwe Republiek, to remain autonomous. This area included the Norwegian mission station Inhlazatshe, and the Boers granted the station 3000 acres of land (Stavem 1915, 300). Lars and Martha Larsen both died in their old age at Inhlazatshe in 1890, with their funerals attended by nearby Boers and Zulus.¹⁹ And, also around 1890, Mbiyana Ngidi broke with the American Zulu Mission and declared himself leader of the independent Zulu Mbiyana Congregational Church, not far from Umphumulo. It is the first African Initiated Church that we know of in Natal (Hovland 2023). These brief indications of further political and religious developments hint that while mission stations continued to exist in twentieth-century Africa, the stories of Christianity and of colonialism moved far beyond them.

NOTES

1. For a geographical overview of the distribution of mission stations in Africa south of the Sahara in the nineteenth century, see Johnson (1967).
2. *Norsk Missions-Tidende* 1855/56, 93–94. *Norsk Missions-Tidende* is the mission periodical of the Norwegian Mission Society. It can be found in the Mission and Diakonia Archives, Stavanger.
3. NMS Archive, HA, Box 130/4, Larsen to the NMS Board, 8 May 1854. The Norwegian Mission Society (NMS) Archive is housed in the Mission and Diakonia Archives, Stavanger.
4. *Norsk Missions-Tidende* 1852/53, 108–113.
5. *Norsk Missions-Tidende* 1856/57, 1.
6. This process is explored in greater detail in Hovland (2013).
7. *Norsk Missions-Tidende* 1858, 95. All translations from Norwegian are my own.
8. On the many intended and unintended meanings that accompanied the missionaries’ choice of a Zulu term for God, see Weir (2005) and Worger (2001). This issue was repeated elsewhere, for example, among the Tswana (Landau 2005, 208–212).
9. I have written about the intriguing story of Mbiyana Ngidi and Mathenjwaze Shange in Hovland (2023).

10. *Norsk Missions-Tidende* 1858, 222.
11. *Norsk Missions-Tidende* 1858, 202.
12. For contributions to the question of how to think about African conversions, see, for example, Hovland (2013), Kollman (2010), and Landau (1999).
13. *Norsk Missions-Tidende* 1871, 483–484.
14. For other contributions to the vexed question of the relation between Christianity and colonization in Africa, see, for example, the edited volumes by Christensen and Hutchinson (1982), Etherington (2005), Porter (2003), and Robert (2008).
15. NMS Archive, HA, Box 131/1, Larsen to the NMS Board, 6 April 1864; *Norsk Missions-Tidende* 1866, 154. For discussion of the common mission metaphor of “light/dark” as it was applied to Africa and Africans, see, for example, Skeie (2001).
16. Archives of the American Board of Commissioners, 15.4, VII, Lloyd to Clark, marked “private,” June 1869 (housed in the Houghton Library, Harvard); cited in Etherington (1978, 158–159).
17. The white missionaries often delayed indigenous ordinations; for an overview of this phenomenon in South Africa, see Elphick (2008).
18. This argument is explored further in Hovland (2013). And, as always, it is impossible to generalize about the stations, because a few missionaries were shaped in other ways. Schreuder, who had by this point broken with the Norwegian mission to form his own organization (the Schreuder Mission), acted as a diplomatic link and sought to bring the war to a speedy end (Hernæs 1986). Lars Larsen, who had moved to the more remote station Inhlazatshe, sent critical letters back to the Norwegian Mission’s board in Norway, arguing that because of the war, the Zulus now resented white people, including the missionaries. Larsen’s criticism of the colonization effort was considered so divergent, however, that it was not printed in the Norwegian Mission Society’s magazine, but instead simply and silently tucked away in the organization’s archive (NMS Archive, HA, Box 135A/6, Larsen to the NMS Board, 3 July 1880; Box 135A/13, Larsen to the NMS Board, 6 January 1881; Box 135A/13, Larsen to the NMS Board, 5 July 1881).
19. *Norsk Missions-Tidende* 1890, 186.

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