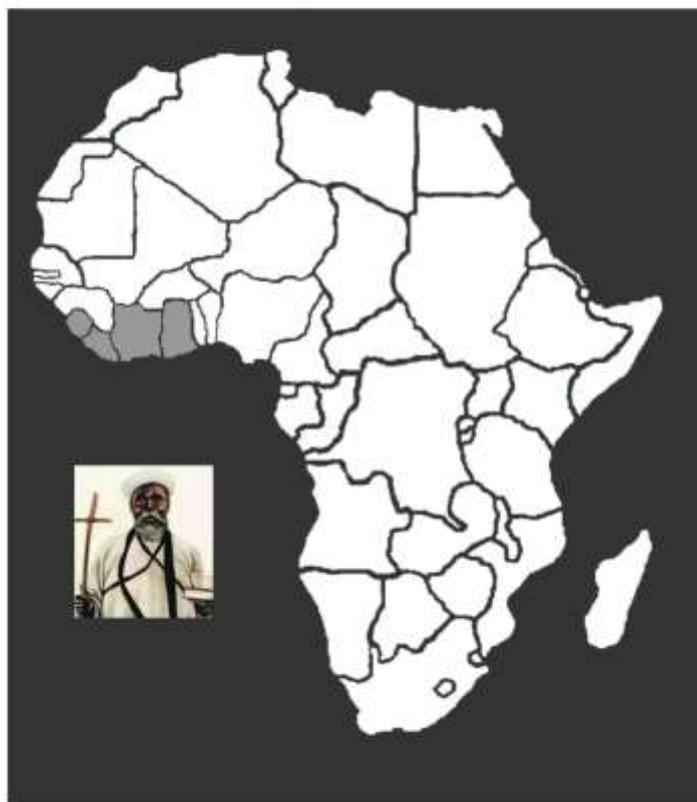


WILLIAM WADÉ HARRIS

PROPHET-ÉVANGELIST OF WEST AFRICA



JOURNAL OF AFRICAN CHRISTIAN BIOGRAPHY  
VOLUME 1, NUMBER 5, OCT. 2016

William Wadé Harris

Prophet-Evangelist of West Africa

An Original Biography from the *Dictionary of African  
Christian Biography* by Gabriel Leonard Allen,  
DACB Advisory Council Member, with preface by the  
author

*Journal of African Christian Biography*  
Volume 1, Number 5 (Oct. 2016)

The *Journal of African Christian Biography* was launched in 2016 to complement and make stories from the on-line *Dictionary of African Christian Biography* ([www.DACB.org](http://www.DACB.org)) more readily accessible and immediately useful in African congregations and classrooms.

Published in monthly installments with an annual cumulative volume available on line, the *JACB* is intended to promote the research, publication, and use of African Christian biography within Africa by serving as an academically credible but publically accessible source of information on Christianity across the continent.

All editorial correspondence should be directed to: [jjbonk@bu.edu](mailto:jjbonk@bu.edu) and [joacb@bu.edu](mailto:joacb@bu.edu).

Editor: Jonathan Bonk

Associate Editors: Dana Robert, Lamin Sanneh

Managing Editor: Michele Sigg

Book Notes Editor: Beth Restruck

Contributing Editors:

Gabriel Leonard Allen

James N. Amanze

Deji Isaac Ayegboyin

Priscille Djomhoue

Edison Muhindo Kalengyo

Jean-Claude Loba Mkole

Madipoane Masenya

Jesse Mugambi

Philomena Njeri Mwaura

Paul Nchoji Nkwi

Thomas Oduro

Evangelos E. M. Thiani

**William Wadé Harris, Prophet-Evangelist of West Africa:  
His Life, Message, Praxis, Heritage, and Legacy**

***Dictionary of African Christian Biography* (www.DACB.org)  
*Journal of African Christian Biography*  
Volume 1, Number 5 (Oct. 2016)**

This issue of the *Journal of African Christian Biography* focuses on William Wadé Harris (c. 1860 to 1929), a tireless evangelist who walked barefoot and preached Jesus Christ in the streets, churches, and sacred groves of numerous littoral settlements in Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, the Gold Coast (now Ghana), and Sierra Leone.

Accompanied by female choral singers—Helen Valentine and Mary Pioka, initially, and later Grace Tani (Thannie) and others—Harris declared the *kerygma* or the proclamation of the message of Jesus Christ to nonbelievers throughout West Africa, reaching perhaps as many as 200,000 people. The extraordinary success of his successive evangelization journeys can at least partially be explained by his locally-contextualized methods (using song, rhythm, and dance, healing, exorcism, and demonstrations of power) and his message, which boiled down the gospel to a few simple elements that were easy to remember, to teach, and to practice. He sealed and marked thousands with Trinitarian baptism. Harris considered the voice of the Angel Gabriel his constant companion for guidance and a personification of the Holy Spirit.

On Sunday, July 27, 1913, Harris embarked on an inaugural evangelical missionary journey that took him from Liberia to Ghana. If we were to trace his route on a modern map of Africa, his journey would have led him, on foot, through the present southern coastlands of the administrative regions of Côte d'Ivoire: Bas Sassandra, Sud Bandama, Lagunes, Agneby and Sud Comoe, and the western region of Ghana. Three more evangelical missionary journeys followed (1917-1918, 1919, and 1921) taking him from Liberia to Sierra Leone and back. Within Harris' operational zone, defined as the 1,000-km littoral corridor of the four nations mentioned above, he planted Christian communities everywhere—more densely located in Côte d'Ivoire and the Gold Coast, and sparsely distributed within Sierra Leone and his home country of Liberia.

Harris preached his message and non-conventional praxis in a pluralistic religious context composed of dominant manifestations

of African Traditional Religions (ATR), peaceful folk Islam occasionally displaced by sometimes violent reformist Islam, and a sparse but significant mix of competitive denominational Christianity.

By the start of World War I (1914 to 1918), Harris had made his reputation and was pulling in huge crowds day and night. ATR priests and priestesses were being defeated in spiritual contests held within their home shrines. Roman Catholic priests and Wesleyan Methodist ministers were expressing foreboding. More ominously, the French colonial authorities were plotting and nervously following his every move. Lieutenant Governor Gabriel Angoulvant of the colony of Côte d'Ivoire, under the direct authority of the overall administrator of French West Africa, William Ponty of Sénégal, agreed to stop Harris. Between December 1914 and July 1915, the authorities pounced: Harris and his women singers were arrested in Côte d'Ivoire, imprisoned, and severely beaten before being expelled to Liberia.

In 1926, a decade after Harris' expulsion, in an International Missionary Council that met in Le Zoute, Belgium, Edwin Smith recognized Harris as "Africa's most successful evangelist." This acknowledgment heightened global interest in the importance and impact of this new movement. It was soon discovered that there was none other like it. In the absence of external monetary assistance, evangelism had flourished in West Africa. In their report titled *Religion and Civilization in West Africa: A Missionary Survey of French, Spanish and Portuguese West Africa and Liberia (1931)*, authors J. J. Cooksey and Alexander McLeish, two of the earliest foreign researchers on the scene, affirmed that Harris' mission was indeed "different from the conventional work of Christian missions," and that the man Harris "stood before the people, not as one sent by any society or backed by European prestige, but as 'a man sent from God' with a message for his people; and his people listened and obeyed" (p.65). It also became evident to many that Harris had broadcast a universal and ecumenical brand of Christianity which encouraged his converts to join any nearby Traditional Western Mission Church (TWMC). His generosity resulted in a huge windfall of catechumens in Roman Catholic churches, Methodist churches, Anglican churches, and many other Protestant churches. Those who were unwilling to join these TWMCs, or who were perhaps refused access to them, flocked to Harrist churches, Twelve Apostles Churches, and their several self-propagated daughter

churches. The edifices of the Harris movement were do-it-yourself mud-blocks with thatched-roofed *abatons* (local huts). Gradually, these were continually upgraded into modern structures through member-led community projects. Invariably, the edifices were located within domestic compounds and built purposely for community worship and catechesis. A vast number of churches resulted. Church leadership was ensured by a locally-appointed body of twelve apostles and one preacher for the Sunday service.

The success of the Harris movement to operate and self-propagate, independently and with amazing efficacy, attracted envy in some quarters. Soon, an unholy alliance developed between the French authorities and TWMCs, all bent on frustrating the progress of the Harris movement. Many *abaton* communities were subjected to persecution, dismemberment, and TWMC “grabbing” activities. Some *abatons* were indeed pulled down completely while others were burned to the ground. In his book, *Harris et la Chrétienté en Côte d’Ivoire* (1989), E. Amos Djoro, has provided sample data about the situation among the Ebrie ethnic group around Abidjan in 1925. Out of 19 Harrist congregations, eleven (55%) became Methodist, seven (35%) turned Roman Catholic, and only two (10%) remained Harrist (p.55). Cooksey and McLeish reported that by 1931, at least 160 Harrist churches in Côte d’Ivoire and the Gold Coast alone had opted to or were forced to join the Wesleyan Mission (p. 66). Nevertheless, it is impossible to comprehend the full scale of the Harris movement in those early years, we can only speculate.

The following biography is based on a 2007-2008 research project that sought to retrace the footsteps of Harris and his ministry team, taking note of what he said and did (Life, Message and Praxis). The work has attempted to identify relics of his mission (Heritage and Legacy) in the form of liturgy, preaching, symbols, sacraments, and testimonies of deliverance and healing. The study also proposes to construct a systematic Harrist theology from its findings.

Some Harrist communities mark July 27 as an annual Feast Day – *la Fête du Déluge* (Feast of the Flood). It was just over a century ago, on Sunday July 27, 1913, that Harris set out on that epic inaugural evangelical missionary journey (1913-1915). It was a definitive response to the three-year-old “trance-visitation experience” of May-June 1910 in a cell at Grafton Prison, Liberia. In that jail, Harris experienced a call, a conversion, an anointing, a commissioning, and a personalized imperative *lek-leka* (“you go”) to

preach Jesus Christ and to baptize anywhere the Angel Gabriel led him. God gave Harris a rich harvest of abundant lives in Jesus Christ. It is this celebration of new life in Jesus Christ, and not the death of Harris, which is celebrated on July 27 each year. Someday, perhaps, July 27 will be included in the festivals of the *depositum fidei* in the calendar of world Christianity. This would be an appropriate global Christian response in recognition of the works of this enigmatic man of God who has been called the Black Elijah, Prophet Harris, Apostle Harris, and even Saint Harris!

**Gabriel Leonard Allen**  
**Banjul, the Gambia**

## **William Wadé Harris**

**c. 1860 to 1929**

**Harrist Churches / Twelve Apostle Churches / African  
Independent Churches  
Côte d'Ivoire / Ghana / Liberia / Sierra Leone**

William Wadé Harris [1], also known as the Black Elijah, Prophet Harris, or simply the Prophet, was a trailblazer and a new kind of religious personage on the African scene, the first independent African Christian prophet.

Harris was born around 1860 in the village of Half-Graway or Glogbale, in the Glebo Territory of Maryland County of the then-Commonwealth of Liberia. He was born into an interfaith family. His mother, Youde Sie, was a Methodist and his father, Poede Wadé, a follower of the African Traditional Religion (ATR) of the Glebo ethnic group. As a child, Harris was introduced early into his father's religion and culture. When civil war threatened between the G'debo United Kingdom and the colonist settlers, in Maryland County in 1873, Harris' maternal uncle and Methodist minister, the Reverend John C. Lowrie, took Harris and his elder brother away to Nimo Country of the Sinoe District where they were rigorously groomed and transformed at home, school, and church. They were taught to read and write in both English and G'debo, taught Christian faith doctrines, and grounded in the catechetical formations of Methodist life and practice. Harris also trained to become a stone mason.

Upon returning to the Cape Palmas area, however, Poede Wadé withdrew Harris from this Christian setting and re-introduced him into Glebo ATR practice and culture, including the tradition of going to sea. Harris reported that he went to sea as a common laborer on four occasions. Upon his final return in 1882, Harris received a call to preach on the occasion of a sermon by the Reverend E. W. Thompson of the Methodist Episcopal Church (MEC) at Cape Palmas. Harris admitted that it was the first time he converted. Shortly thereafter, he was lured by brighter financial prospects at a neighboring Protestant Episcopal Church (PEC) under settler Bishop Samuel Ferguson (1885-1912). There Harris received the sacrament of confirmation and became a full member. Three years later (c.1885 to 1886) he married Rose Bedo Wlede Farr in a church solemnized matrimony.

As a young man, Harris sought new religious identities. First, he studied Russelite or Jehovah's Witness tracts which

emphasized millennialism and Christian eschatology. Second, Harris was attracted to the anti-colonialist position of his Glebo family member, the Reverend S. W. Seton. He was a Russelite ordained minister of the PEC, who became a politician, an education commissioner, and a judge. Seton founded an Independent African Church called The African Evangelical Church of Christ (AECC) which allowed polygamy. Third, Harris was interested in a West-Indian born Presbyterian minister, writer, and academic by the name of Rev. Dr. Edward Blyden. Blyden became a politician and a diplomat who advocated that African Christianity show respect for the polygamous family and felt that faith ought to be preached based on the model of Islam with African culture serving as a background.

Trained by the PEC to be a schoolmaster, a catechist, an evangelist, and an ecclesiastical “knight in armor,” Harris fought several battles for both tribe and church, including that of the decisive Battle of Cavalla (1893 to 1896). By the end of 1907, Harris was at the zenith of a golden period. He was, simultaneously, the master of the boarding school, a PEC appointed lay reader, a Glebo court interpreter, and the secretary of the Glebo peoples. He earned at least \$400 per year. However, he was implicated in the 1908 national unrest, and by June 1908, he had lost his two lucrative jobs as schoolmaster and court interpreter. Immediately afterwards, his license as a lay reader was also revoked.

Fuming, Harris replaced a Liberian flag with a Union Jack flag on a flagpole at Puduk Beach on February 13, 1909, causing him to be accused of taking part in an abortive *coup d'état*. Harris was then arrested and tried for treason. Being found guilty, he received a two-year suspended sentence with fines. When civil war broke out again in the Cape Palmas area in January 1910 between the Nyomowe–Glebo and the American-Liberian settlers, Harris was re-arrested and imprisoned at Gratton Prison. Here, in May and June of 1910, he had a supernatural spiritual experience in the form of an almost indescribable “trance-visitation.” It had a powerful effect on Harris. He broke-free, irrevocably, from Glebo ATR demon worship. A Christian interpretation of this “trance-visitation” is that Harris received the spiritual light of prevenient grace; he was divinely operated upon and this gave him the experience of feeling right with God by receiving justifying grace. He was anointed, commissioned, and tasked with the cooperative sanctifying grace to spread the message of salvation in Jesus Christ through the preventive act of baptism.

On a Sunday July 27, 1913, three years after the “trance-visitation” experience, Harris embarked on his first evangelical missionary journey (1913-1915). Leaving Cape Palmas on foot, accompanied by two women chorus singers, Helen Valentine and Mary Pioka, he walked eastwards to the littoral lands of the Lagoons, through the Zana Kingdom up to the Ankobra River in Appolonia. At Assinie in the Zana Kingdom, former Tano priestess and converted Grace Tanie or Thannie joined the choral group. This mission had a powerful impact on the lives of some 200,000 people who converted. A new vibrant faith sprang up that created bonds of unity among people of different tribes and across colonial borders.

By August 1914, Harris and his expanded team retraced their steps to Côte d’Ivoire. At some point between January and April 1915, French colonial authorities resolved that as a precautionary measure they would arrest and deport Harris. They quietly escorted him back to his native Liberia, nearly three hundred miles (approximately five hundred kilometers) away, traveling over land and on river. He was forbidden to return to French soil. Within seventeen months, from 1913 to 1915, hundreds of Christian communities sprang up. Groups of men and women seeking God earnestly asked for Christian instruction. His principal effect was among the Kwa group of peoples in West Africa. [2] This inaugurated Harris’ public international ministry (c. 1913 to 1921). Three other international missionary journeys followed (1916, 1917, and 1921). However, the first of these journeys will suffice to give insight into Harris’ unique message, praxis, heritage, and legacy.

## **Harris’ Message: Torahic, Analogical and Christo-Eschatological**

### **Torahic**

A torahic message refers to matters pertaining to the Hebrew *Torah* either directly to the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-17) or indirectly to the six-hundred-plus Jewish Laws found within the *Torah*, or loosely to the whole Jewish Scriptures, a near-equivalent of the Christian Old Testament (OT). One Roman Catholic priest, the Reverend Fr. Joseph Gorju of Bingerville and missionary reporters Cooksey and McLeish have reported that Harris called for the abandonment of fetishes and idols (Exodus 20:3) and for belief in one unique God (Exodus 20:4).

Within Harris' operational zone, recent research has unearthed some additional teachings. Mathieu Sedji, a 20<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> century history teacher and choirmaster from Breffedon, relayed by memory an oral pronouncement which Harris first proclaimed at Louzoua around August-October of 1913:

*Brûlez les fétiches;  
Chassez les démoniennes, les sorceries et les génies;  
Allez à l'église les dimanches et ne partez pas aux champs!*

(Burn the fetishes;  
Drive out from your midst demons, sorceries and genies;  
Go to church on Sundays and do not go to (your) farms!)

In this torahic oral declaration, Harris urges the spiritual purification of the community and obedience to Sunday Sabbath-keeping for worship, learning Scriptures, hymns, songs, and prayers. Converts were to emulate and honor the Creator God who “blessed the Seventh Day (Sabbath) and made it holy” (Genesis 2:3).

## **Analogical**

Harris' message was also said to be analogous (*ἀναλογος*) or “analogical in faith” (*analogia fidei*) to that of 9<sup>th</sup> c. B.C. prophet Elijah. These claims were tested in two real-life encounters. Marc Nga was an eyewitness of the Harris campaign through the Yaou-Bonoua Forest of the Aboures in December 1913. Harris challenged the priests and priestesses of the twin shrines, of the *Gbamanin du Yaou* (The Dwarf of Yaou Forest) and *Le Serpent à Bonoua qui vomit l'argent* (The Serpent in Bonoua which vomits money). Nga reported that Harris defeated the priests and priestesses on their own home-turfs, convincing many that Harris' God was greater. Another eyewitness to these events was Jean Ekra de Bonoua, who with Marc Nga, were both baptized by Harris and became his disciples. Harris' preaching in the forests was analogous (*ἀναλογος*) to the Prophet Elijah's challenge posed to the 450 priests of Baal, the 400 priestesses of Asherah and the crowds: “How long will you waver between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him” (1 Kings 18:21). Harris also invited decision-making at the shrines. Just as God gave victory to Elijah, so he did to Harris over the priests and priestesses of the twin shrines (1 Kings 18:46).

Abaka Ernest Foli narrated a modern variant of an established Harris tradition concerning the burning of a ship at the port of Grand Bassam on a Sunday when people ignored his warnings. According to Abaka:

*Le deuxième miracle de Grand Bassam:  
Un dimanche, les blancs travaillaient les noirs au bateau à (Grand)  
Bassam.  
Il n'était pas d'accord.  
Il a prié sur le bateau,  
Le bateau a brûlé.*

(The second miracle in Grand Bassam:  
One Sunday, the whites recruited blacks to work a ship in  
(Grand) Bassam.  
He (Harris) did not agree.  
He prayed on the ship,  
The ship caught fire).

Disobedience led Harris to rain fire on the ship. In a case which was “analogical in faith” (*analogia fidei*). Prophet Elijah had ordered that fire to rain, twice, on the King Ahaziah’s attacking troops (1 Kings 1:9-12) following a reprimand from Elijah.

### **Christo-eschatological**

This is some evidence that, from time to time, Harris did broadcast a Christo-eschatological message. In October and November of 1914, after Harris’ return from the Gold Coast, he settled at Kraffy, making it his headquarters. Thousands flocked to Kraffy from all directions, quietly, for fear of the colonial authorities. The traditional elders of Kraffy were stunned by Harris’ charisma and therefore enquired: “Are you the great spirit of whom they speak?” To which Harris pointedly responded in the negative, and then responded with clarity, “I am the man coming in the name of God, and I am going to baptize you in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and you will be a people of God.” Harris repeated the universal baptismal formula (Matthew 28:18-20), where the “Son” refers to Christ himself.

A distinguished African Christian scholar, J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, has recently submitted that wherever Pentecostalism emerges the message of the *parousia* is preached. Asamoah-Gyadu further substantiated that Harris “promised deliverance, from a future judgment of fire and a time of peace,

concord, brotherhood and well-being which was to come with the impending return of Jesus Christ to establish his kingdom.” Several other Christo-eschatological messages have been reported during Harris’ travels which affirmed the supremacy of Christ and conveyed apocalyptic warnings against disobedience.

### **Harris’ Praxis: Evangelical, Situational–Dispensational, and Ecumenical-Participatory**

Harris’ first evangelical missionary journey (1913-1915) enabled three distinct and contingent components of his praxis to be systematized: the evangelical, the situational-dispensational, and the ecumenical-participatory. Shank’s brilliant scenic narrative is an eye-opener to these habits:

They would enter a village playing their calabash rattles and singing, dressed in white, and would go to the chief of the village to explain their intent. Harris would then preach to the whole village, usually through an interpreter. He would invite them to abandon their “idols” and “fetishes”, and worship the one true God who had brought salvation through his Son Jesus Christ. To those who destroyed their “fetishes” and were baptized, he promised deliverance from future judgment of fire and a time of peace, concord, brotherhood and well-being which has to come with the impending return of Jesus Christ to establish his kingdom. He taught the Ten Commandments of the Old Testament and the “Our Father” which Christ taught his disciples. He instructed them about keeping the Sabbath for worship, not work, and encouraged them to pray in their own tongues, to praise God with their own music, changing the words. He often chose leaders, sometimes naming “twelve apostles”, who were to supervise the building of “chapels” from local materials. Sometimes they were told to await white men who would come with the Bible to teach them more. If there were missions in the area the people were told to go to those churches, whether Catholic or Protestant.

### **Evangelical Praxis**

Upon entering a village, the chief was greeted first. The team’s mode of greeting was evangelical (gospel-related) in that Jesus Christ enjoins us to this habit as clearly spelled out in the Matthean text: “Whatever town or village you enter, search for some worthy person there and stay at his house until you leave. As you enter the home, give it your greeting” (Matthew 10:11-12; NIV).

Harris' team expressed Christo-African greetings which endeared them to their hosts. Together with female choristers and the locally recruited male interpreter(s), they accompanied his preaching with singing, dancing, and the playing of calabashes. Harris declared the *kerygma* (κηρυγμα) in the mother-tongue of their hosts and never accepted any form of payment except for their hospitality. Harris always preceded his evangelism with moments of deliverance and healing. Local healers who became converted through Harris were taught to acknowledge Christ as the true source and giver of their medicinal, psychological, and pneumatological *charismata* (cf. 1 Corinthians 12:8). His evangelical style included *en masse* village repentance and baptisms, and evangelical conversions of priests and priestesses at their respective shrines. Harris' evangelical praxis encouraged self-propagation. Many converts were allowed freedom to found new congregations or independent churches, as did Grace Tani of Assinie of Twelve Apostles Churches; and John Swatson of Aboisso of Christ Church Beyin churches.

### **Situational-Dispensational Praxis**

Attire and marriage were situational-dispensational praxis items to Harris. The Harris team was always clad in white. White was, and is, the color of the cassock of Christian priests. White was, and is, the color of the Mahomedan or Islamic sheikh. White was, and is, also the color of the African Traditional *Deyabo* priest in Greboland. And white was, and is, the color of the *Adjokuru* priests and priestesses of the Tano shrine of the Lagoons.

Marriage is the second component of interest. Harris entered into a monogamous solemnized matrimony with Rose Bodede Farr at the Protestant Episcopal Church (1885) in Liberia. This union produced six children and was only separated by death in May-June of 1910.

During his first evangelical missionary journey, he was accompanied by female choristers. Rumor had it that Harris had several wives. In an interview in 1926, Harris admitted that at Axim, he had six wives. Harris supported his polygamous situation with Scripture (Isaiah 4:1). His polygamy began with Helen Valentine and Mary Pioka; next there was Madame Harris Grace Thannie; third, there were three more unidentified wives at Apollonia; and finally, there was Letitia Williams of Freetown whom he married in about

1921. Harris viewed polygamy as an imperfect marriage dispensation which attracts neither a binding legalism nor an illegalism in Christianity (cf. Romans 2:1). On his return journey to Grand Lahou Kpanda, Abaka Ernest Foli reported that Harris released a marriage maxim there: “*Soyez juste, soyez equitable*” (“Be just. Be fair”). That is to say, with respect to either a monogamous or polygamous marriage, one should be guided by ethical righteousness.

### **Ecumenical-Participatory Praxis**

One Sunday morning at Jacquville in about December 1913, Harris attended Mass at a Roman Catholic Church. It was the Reverend Father Moly, the celebrant, who told his story: “I saw him at Jacquville where he attended the parish mass with all his wives, accompanied by almost all the population. It is useless to say that the church was too small. Also at the end of the mass, he came to see me accompanied by the elders of the village, in order to decide to construct a more spacious church.”

Harris had acquired proven skills as a master-builder. He built his own single-story family house at Spring Hill Station in Liberia in c. 1890 and the Wolfe Memorial Chapel at Half-Graway in 1897. At Jacquville, Harris invited an ecumenical family of worshippers to build a center of worship. Members of the Harrist movement volunteered to help construct or to enlarge church buildings.

Citing a spiritual habit, Adolphe Yotio Ndrin reported that at Kraffy, Harris ordered the implementation of mother-tongue liturgy and hermeneutics. Harris exhorted the crowds: “*Priez dans votre langue et chantez dans votre langue. Dieu va comprendre*” (“Pray in your language and sing in your language. God will understand.”). Harris reduced the Ten Commandments, the Lord’s Prayer, and some basic liturgy into the local dialect. The liturgy utilized indigenous tunes arranged to “castagnette” rhythm accompaniment and were made simple but “rich in prayer and interspersed with impromptu lyrics in their native tongue or in pidgin English (Creole/Krio/Aku) – the language in which they heard Harris preach and sing” according to Cooksey and McLeish.

Educational practices were reported by Cooksey and McLeish. As the little bamboo “do-it-yourself” churches (*abatons*) sprang up in the villages, Harris taught the new converts to choose twelve “apostles” to serve as leaders and manage the church affairs

and a thirteen preacher who would lead worship services. Having choristers and a formidable network of selected translator-interpreters / clerks, they spread Harris' message each in their own way. Since most were illiterate anyway, Harris advised that, wherever possible, they should be enrolled in the few schools around being set up by the Traditional Western Mission Churches (TWMCs) and the colonial authorities. At Jacqueville in Alladian territory, around December 1913, Harris released a popular educational maxim which Abaka Ernest Foli recollected by heart:

*Mettez vos enfants à l'école! Ils viendront. Ils vous diront la vérité.  
(...)  
Je vous dirai la vérité qui est dans la Bible pour que  
l'homme blanc et l'homme noir mangent à une même assiette, égal à égal*

(Send your children to school! They will come. They will tell you the truth. (...)  
I tell you the truth which is contained in the Bible so that the black man and the white man will eat in the same plate, as equals...)

Harris prepared the minds of his followers to welcome Christian missionaries, whatever their denominations, as teachers in their midst. Followers must learn to self-discover, and test the veracity of his claims in the Bible. Harris firmly believed that education would bring about equality between the white and black races.

## **Harris' Heritage**

### **Liturgy**

At the Temple de Gethsemane de la Mission Biblique Harriste No.1 Côte d'Ivoire de Grand Lahou Kpanda (hereafter referred to as the Temple de Gethsemane), the service liturgy represented an ecumenical composite of a rich ecclesiastical traditions compiled by Harris. The liturgist demonstrated Episcopalian precision in catechetical rubrics and order while the preaching had a Wesleyan vibrancy. There was a single lesson and a biblical exposition followed immediately thereafter. The choir emphasized the lessons learned through informal punctuations during the preaching. Hymns and the anthem were sung from memory in the home dialect of Avikam and under disciplined choirmaster control. The Psalm

(Canticle) was sung in French. During the offertory, the elders, the choir and the congregation, in that order, recessed and processed with Avikam songs of thanksgiving, accompanied with choreographed dances. At the Temple de Gethsemane, one observed that the Harris' legacies of catechism, charismatic prayer, and singing habits have been retained.

At l'Eglise du Christ-Mission Harriste du Yaou (hereafter referred to as l'Eglise du Christ-Yaou), close to worship time, metal gongs were struck to call the faithful to worship. The choir, the congregation, and the "apostles" were all clad in white. The ladies wore white head gear as well. The *prédicateur-chef* (senior-preacher) and *prédicateur-auxiliaire* (assistant preacher) were each robed in a white kaftan-cassock with a low cross chain. Both were adorned with: "*carlotte blanche, britelle noire et voile noire*" (white turban, black stole and black cross bands). Their attire replicated that for which Harris was renowned. The service liturgy was rich in prayer, catechetical affirmations, and hymn-singing, with menu change, punctuated by the ringing of the hand bell. Traditional songs were rendered by the choir and congregation throughout the service. Song and dance was accompanied by the infectious rhythm of the *castagnette*. Here, the charismatic chorale tradition of Helen Valentine, Mary Pioka and Grace Tani is alive and flourishing!

Worship at both the Temple de Gethsemane and at l'Eglise du Christ-Yaou were relatively brief, ranging from thirty minutes to about an hour. Both services were orderly, but not identical in form. Worship at the Temple de Gethsemane was found to be evangelical in emphasis while that of l'Eglise du Christ-Yaou could be described as neo-Pentecostal / charismatic. Despite their contrasting worship expressions, both had an almost identical order of service. The order of service of l'Eglise du Christ- Yaou is available. [3] In this typical order of service, four prayer registrations were noted: benediction (1), intercessory (4), the Lord's Prayer (5) and a closing prayer (11), in that order. There were also four types of songs: an opening (adoration) hymn (2), a sermon hymn (6), an anthem (9) and a recessional hymn (12). The reading of Scripture by the *prédicateur* (preacher) always preceded the sermon.

Unlike the regular liturgy of the two Harris churches mentioned above, the order of service within the three sister Twelve Apostles churches in Western Ghana varied significantly. Worship patterns differed from one church to the other. Generally, however, worship services were longer in the latter with between three to four

hours being typical. The liturgy of Twelve Apostles Church-Upper Axim is available. [4] Notwithstanding the expressed variances, it is called a typical *Inkabomsom* (get-together) Service. This service has retained the habits of worship of its founder, Grace Tani, a Harris disciple. A number of points deserve attention. First, although three prayer registrations have been listed (1), (2) and (3), yet they tended to merge into each other. The opening prayer (3) never actually ends until the conclusion of the service. Second, the opening song (4) also continues up to the end of the service. Third, the healing session (5) occurs concurrently with the opening prayer (3) and opening song (4). An *Inkabomsom* is a spiritual journey which could last up to three hours or more.

## **Preaching**

Preaching was always reduced to the language of the hearers, into Avikam in Grand Lahou Kpanda and into Aboure in Yaou. Preaching at these Harris churches was found to be Scripture-centered. The choir led the congregation in acknowledged parts of the message with groans and voiced responses.

In the Twelve Apostles churches, worship was shared between preachers and healers. The highpoint of Twelve Apostles liturgy is the healing session which is normally officiated by healers. Preaching, healing, and divination seem to happen simultaneously. The service stops only when the participants are exhausted. For both Harrist churches and Twelve Apostles churches, the common response to preaching is normally dramatized in acts of singing and dancing, recessing from and processing towards the sanctuary, and always in their home dialect. Each worshipper responds to preaching as he or she presents his or her physical gift offering at the sanctuary. The song or dance rises to a crescendo at presentation.

## **Deliverance and Healing**

In his interaction with the men of Trefedji, one crucial point made about his exorcism is that Harris always led and directed the deliverance and healing process.

In most Twelve Apostles churches (“gardens”), deliverance and healing were the dominant activities of worship. However, as far as countering fetishism was concerned, the calabash was required at both spiritual and water healing. At the Twelve Apostles Church-

Iyisakrom “garden,” the leading healer and prophetess Hagar Yarlley was questioned about the source of her medicinal power. She declared that with “the help of Jesus Christ and by prayer, I am a healer of barren women, of impotent men, of the paralyzed and of psychiatric patients.” Prophetess Hagar Yarlley was trained by her grandmother, Prophetess Hagar Efuah Ntsimah (Antwi) of Upper Axim. The latter was ordained by Grace Tani in Ankobra on March 6, 1949. As she conducted healing, Hagar Yarlley said that she received “visions which reveal, through the Spirit, the herbs which are to be selected in the treatment of my patients.” It will be recalled that Harris gave a similar response to the healers at Louzoua in October-November 1913.

At the Twelve Apostles Church–Half-Assini, the leader and healer in charge, Apostle Abraham Kaku, declared that he specialized in “psychiatric and mental cases, including the curing of drug addiction.” Apostle Kaku, like Harris, attributes his healing power to Christ Jesus.

At the Harriste Biblique No.1 Côte d’Ivoire (HBCI) of Grand Lahou Kpanda, Adolphe Yotio Ndrin declared that the use of the big calabash at routine church services was forbidden. Adolphe Yotio explained that the uses of “both the ‘big calabash’ and the ‘*castagnette*’ (small calabash gourd with net of beads) have no place at Temple de Gethsemane.” Exorcism, according to Adolphe Yotio, was a holy rite that should not be routinely abused. For him, in particular, the *castagnette*, invokes sad memories of a once demon-filled community which have since been cleansed by Harris and his assistants.

## Symbolism

Four dominant liturgical symbols are associated with the Harris ministry: the Cup, the Bible, the Calabash and the Cane Cross. These symbols have assumed varying significance within the Harris churches studied.

At Twelve Apostles Church–Half-Assini, all four sacred symbols have pride of place. With regards to the Cup, Apostle Kaku asserted that as their prophet, he would gaze on the water. In so doing, he meditated and invoked mediation for the person or the assembly, as the case may be. The water in the Cup assumed a state of sanctification. The sanctified water was normally sprinkled on worshippers or consumed by select persons.

The second symbol of worship, the Bible, was normally held opened throughout worship and healing ministry. It is either read to the audience or tapped on the head of baptismal candidates. It is a revered source of power. The very utterance of the words of the Bible provided healing to the sick and to hearers.

The third liturgical symbol is the Calabash. Apostle Kaku says that he still uses the Calabash in the Harris tradition, which is mainly to exorcise evil spirits.

Fourthly, there is the imposing Cane Cross. This symbol has dual functions at Twelve Apostles Church–Half-Assini. While it may be gazed upon by believers for inspiration and strength, it could also be thrust upon agents of the devil or Satan in order to rebuke evil spirits.

## Sacraments

Mission Biblique Harriste No.1 Côte d'Ivoire de Grand Lahou Kpanda recognizes three ordinances, not sacraments, in its published constitution. These are the sacred rites of baptism, Eucharist, and marriage whose rubrics are, respectively, quite similar to that of the Methodist Service Book of the Methodist Church Great Britain.

Relatively new and unique sacred rites of the Harrist Movement have been described elsewhere.

- Sacrament of Baptism: [5]  
This is a dominical sacred rite. There were deficiencies with respect to the original Harris tradition where cleansing, penance and washing (by water and spirit) were emphasized. In the current rites, neither is exorcisms practiced, nor is repentance insisted upon.
- Sacrament of Agape Meal at Incarnation:  
The Incarnation or Christmas is recalled on the nominal birthday of Jesus Christ on December 25 at 2 pm. A grand meal is consumed using the Eucharistic rubrics (Matthew 26:26-28).
- Sacrament of Agape Meal on July 27<sup>th</sup> - *la Fête du Déluge*:  
The start of Harris' first evangelical missionary journey (1913-1915) is commemorated at 2 pm. A grand meal is consumed using the Eucharistic rubrics (Matthew 26:26-28).
- Sacrament of Sacrifice:

This service is held on Good-Friday only. This sacrament is meant to symbolize the significance of the passion, death, and living sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

The Sacrament of Baptism, the Sacrament of Agape Meal at Incarnation, and the Sacrament of Sacrifice are viewed as dominical sacred rites by the Harris movement. That of the Sacrament of Agape Meal at the *Fête du Déluge* is an ecclesiastical feast dedicated to the works of the founder.

## **Harris' Legacy**

### **In the Methodist Church**

Just over a century ago, hundreds of Harris communities were founded within Harris' operational zone. It has been documented that some of the Harris communities in the Yaou-Bonoua forests became part of the Wesleyan Methodist Church. One of these is the distinguished Temple de St. Esprit de Bonoua of l'Eglise Méthodiste Unie Côte d'Ivoire (EMUCI) (Methodist Church of Côte d'Ivoire) which was rebuilt into a huge cathedral, almost of basilica proportions, and consecrated in 2005. Written high on the front wall of the sanctuary, embossed in bold red letters, is an apocalyptic message: "Je Regardai, et Voici, Une Porte Etait Ouverte Dans le Ciel' (Apoc. 4:1) ("I looked, and lo, in heaven an open door" -- Revelation 4:1, RSV). This text-sign falls within the typical Christo-eschatological genre of Harris' message. The text sign represents the echo of a dominant Harris preaching.

### **In Catholic Churches and other Protestant Churches**

Harris' legacy was measured through his impact on numerical membership of Christians and the influence of his mother-tongue initiatives. From 1893 on, the residing French Protestant Governor Louis Gustav Binger of the colony of Côte d'Ivoire sent special invitations to many Christian missions, with assurances of financial support and collaboration to establish schools, clinics and churches within at least six identified growth centers: (Grand) Bassam, Moossou, Dabou, Memni, Bonoua, and Assinie and later extended to Jacquerville (1898), Bingerville (1904), Abidjan (1905), and Abiosso (1905). E. Amos Djoro observes that just before the start of World

War I (1914 to 1918) the Roman Catholic Mission then had 23 missionaries, and had registered barely 1,100 full members and 400 catechumens in the whole of Côte d'Ivoire. However, the writer noted that by 1917, the population of Roman Catholic catechumens had increased to 800; and five years later in 1922, catechumens had risen, exponentially, to almost 20,000. In Apollonia, in the Western Gold Coast, it was equally dramatic: "There were only already in 1920, 3,240 members and 15,400 catechumens where there had been no baptized Catholics in 1914." It will be recalled that Harris launched his first evangelical missionary journey in 1913-1915 through the same areas where the centers of evangelization had been established in Côte d'Ivoire and in Apollonia. Only one rational reason could explain these spiked numerical increases in membership over the 1914 to 1922 period – a definite attribute of Harris' legacy.

Since the end of Harris' first evangelical missionary journey (1913-15), the smaller TWMCs at the time have now become the greater and the Harris communities that were greater are now the smaller. In Côte d'Ivoire alone, 11.6% (0.2 million) of the population was registered within the Harris movement out of a total population estimate of 1.6 million in 1926. By the year 2001, however, there were major reversals. The Harris movement accounted for barely 1.6% (0.2 million) of the 11.4 million classified Ivoirians. [6] Besides bearing the brunt of injustice, the internecine and extended litigations since the 1930s, between the leaderships of Mission Biblique Harriste No.1 Côte d'Ivoire headquartered at Grand Lahou Kpanda and those of l'Eglise du Christ- Mission Harriste whose seat is at Bingerville, have further complicated the situation and undermined growth of the Harris Movement. It would seem that the leaders of Harris churches need to regain the ecumenical and reconciling spirit of their founder.

In a second thesis legacy, one asks: How did Harris' initiatives in mother-tongue liturgy and hermeneutics penetrate Roman Catholic and other TWMCs? It was standard practice that up to the early 1960s, worship services in Roman Catholic churches, globally, were held strictly according to the rites and rubrics of the Latin Gregorian Mass. This was also the case of the Catholic churches of the Lagoons, the Zana Kingdom and Apollonia. When the Catholic Church convened in Rome the Second Vatican Council (1962-65), this was its 21<sup>st</sup> International Ecumenical Council which belatedly addressed relationships between the Roman Catholic Church and the modern world. Among its several reconciliation

resolutions was a crucial decision to encourage the “widespread use of the vernacular in the Mass instead of Latin.” It will be recalled that Harris, at his evangelical capital of Kraffy, had exhorted his audiences to pray in their own languages. Kraffy is located in the Lagoons. The Harris mother-tongue liturgy and hermeneutics influence had already penetrated the Roman Catholic Churches and other TWMCs well before the Second Vatican Council (1962-65) publicly and officially acknowledged it as most appropriate mode of propagating the Gospel.

## **Conclusion**

Harris’ message and praxis have been implanted, incubated, fertilized, and cross-fertilized through the hundreds of house churches or *abatons*, which were founded and which eventually metamorphosed into Harrist churches, Twelve Apostles Churches, Christ Church Beyin, and many others. In addition, the catechumens sent to the Traditional Western Mission Churches (TWMCs) introduced African songs, shouts, dances, and pneumatological experientialism into an otherwise rigid TWMC life and liturgy. The Harris heritage remains strong within the ambit of the Kwa group of peoples distributed in Côte d’Ivoire, the Gold Coast (Ghana), Liberia, Sierra Leone, and beyond. Indirectly, Harris’ legacy in its fluid African worship patterns is global. The worship expressions of several charismatic and Pentecostal churches betray traces of the Harris style. Harris’ message and praxis have permeated large swaths of Christianity.

Some Harris churches of Côte d’Ivoire recognize July 27 as the Feast of the Flood (*Fête du Déluge*) to mark the beginning of that epic first evangelical missionary journey (1913-15). Besides the few women chorus singers and the interpreters/ translators who actively participated in his ministry, William Wadé Harris received little or nothing from churches, governments, societies or bankers. Harris pursued a *missio dei* which bore abundant fruit of eternal life in Christ Jesus. He planted Christian communities where previous governments, armies and churches had failed. Perhaps someday, the Christian calendar will reflect this amazing grace of God wrought through a man of God called the Black Elijah, Prophet Harris, Apostle Harris, and Saint Harris!

**Gabriel Leonard Allen**

## Endnotes:

1. This biography is an abridged and adapted version of the author's B.D. Honors dissertation: Allen, Gabriel Leonard. "William Wade Harris (c. 1860-1929): A Life, Message, Praxis and Heritage." B.D. diss., Trinity Theological Seminary, 2008.
2. The *Kwa* comprises the Kru dialects of Sierra Leone, Liberia & La Cote d'Ivoire; the Lagoon Languages of La Cote d'Ivoire; and the Akan languages of the Western Gold Coast. Cooksey and McLeish, 244.
3. The order of service of l'Eglise du Christ-Mission Harrist of Yaou:
  - 1) BENEDICTION (The Most Senior Preacher rings the Bell to commence the service)
  - 2) OPENING PRAYER  
An Invocation:
    - i. Eternal,
    - ii. We give you grace and say thank you for this moment that you allow.
    - iii. You have said in your word that where two or three meet in your name,
    - iv. You are in their midst.
    - v. Come and guide this moment in the name of Jesus Christ.
  - 3) OPENING HYMN
  - 4) PRAYER OF INTERCESSION (All on their knees. Ends with an Amen Song)
  - 5) THE LORD'S PRAYER
  - 6) SERMON HYMN
  - 7) THE GOSPEL
  - 8) THE SERMON (Preaching interspersed with shouts)
  - 9) AN ANTHEM - by the Choir
  - 10) ANNOUNCEMENTS BY AN ELDER (Collection on Sundays only)
  - 11) CLOSING PRAYER
  - 12) RECESSIONAL HYMNSource: Liturgy: Ordinary Service at *L'Eglise du Christ – Mission Harriste du Yaou*, District of Grand Bassam, cited in Allen, 52 & Appendix iii.
4. The liturgy of Twelve Apostles Church-Upper Axim:

## 1.0 CALL TO WORSHIP

An Invocation:

We begin this service in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit .

## 2.0 THE LORD'S PRAYER

3.0 OPENING PRAYER – by a Prophet or Prophetess

4.0 OPENING SONG –singing, praying and dancing

Kru Songs/ Hausa Songs/ Akan songs with Calabash accompaniment

5.0 HEALING SESSION –held in a special Room for Counselling

(Clients bring : packet of candles; 1 yard calico; 1 gallon water; Incense)

Water Divination - viewing 15-20 gallon water drums

Spirit Descends

Invitation for Consultation

Each worshipper arrives with containers of water

Raise the water up and told the future

Drink some of the water

Spiritual Messages received

Sick persons healed

Options: A Goat or Sheep is sacrificed

Source: Liturgy: Ordinary Service at *Twelve Apostles Church – Upper Axim*, Western Ghana, cited in Allen, 53-54.

## 5. Sacrament of Baptism:

- a. An Elder of the church must be told about the intention.
- b. The Elder shall inform either the *Prédicateur Suprême* (Supreme Head of the Harrist Church), the *Prédicateur Supérieur* (Superintendent Preacher of District equivalent) , the *Prédicateur Chef* (Senior Preacher of the Church equivalent) , a *Prédicateur* (Preacher of the Church equivalent) or a *Prédicateur Auxiliaire* (Assistant Preacher of the Church equivalent).
- c. The Baptismal ceremony could take place before, or after, any worship service.
- d. The parent or guardian bearing the child to be baptized in his/her arms, or the individual to be baptized, approaches the Preacher and kneels down.

- e. If the preacher is either the *Prédicateur Suprême* or the *Prédicateur Supérieur*, the individual concerned holds his cross of cane.
- f. If the preacher is either the *Prédicateur Chef* or the *Prédicateur* or the *Prédicateur Auxiliaire*, the individual concerned holds his kaftan.
- g. The Preacher, with the Bible in the one hand and the cup of water in the other, responds with a Baptismal Prayer

*Dieu, Nous te demandons de laver ton serviteur  
comme ton fils Jésus a été baptisé par Jean Baptiste dans  
le Jourdain.  
Que ton esprit saint demeure en lui et chasse tout ce qui ne  
l'honore pas en lui  
afin qu'il soit véritablement ton fils/ fille.*

(Gracious God. We are asking you to wash your  
servant  
as your Son Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist  
in the Jordan.  
May your Holy Spirit dwell in him /her and drive  
away all which does not honor you  
Until he truly becomes your son/ daughter) (*My  
Translation*)

- h. The Preacher pours water on the head of the baptized, three times.
  - i. The Preacher traces the sign of the cross with his finger on the forehead of the baptized.
  - j. The Preacher taps the Bible, three times, on the head of the Baptized
  - k. The Choir rounds up with a hymn.
  - l. The Preacher empties the rest of the water in the cup on the ground, reverently, during one continuous pour.
- Source: *Liturgie du Baptême (Liturgy of Baptism)*, cited in Allen, Appendix iv, 1 of 1
6. In data released in 2001 on all who were resident in Côte d'Ivoire, the religious demography was:
    - Catholic (20.7%);
    - Protestant (8.2%);
    - Harriste (1.6%)
    - Other Christian (3.4%)
    - Total Christian (33.9%);

- Muslim (27.4%);
- Animist (15.3%);
- Other Religions (2.0%);
- Atheists (20.7%) and
- (*Not Declared*) (0.7%).

Source: Esso Badou, “RGPH 98, Tome 1: Etat et Structure de la population, INS. 2001: Table 3.5: Répartition (en pourcentage) de la population résidente par région administrative selon la nationalité,” in Joachim Kigbafory-Silue, *Côte d’Ivoire, Nation Chrysalide* (Abidjan: PUCI, 2005), 157.

### Select Bibliography:

- Allen, Gabriel Leonard. “William Wade Harris (c. 1860-1929): A Life, Message, Praxis and Heritage.” B.D. diss., Trinity Theological Seminary, 2008.
- Asamoah-Gyadu, J. Kwabena. *African Charismatics: Current Developments within Independent Indigenous Pentecostalism in Ghana*. Leiden: Koninklijke Brill, 2005.
- Bediako, Kwame. *Christianity in Africa: The Renewal of Non-Western Religion*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995.
- Cooksey J. J., and Alexander McLeish. *Religion and Civilization in West Africa: A Missionary Survey of French, Spanish and Portuguese West Africa and Liberia*. London: World Dominion Press, 1931.
- Djoro, E. Amos. *Harris et la Chrétienté en Côte D’Ivoire*. Abidjan: Les Nouvelles Editions Africaines C.I., 1989.
- McGrath, Alister E. *Christian Theology: An Introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1999.
- Methodist Church Great Britain. *The Methodist Service Book*. London: Methodist Publishing House, 1975.
- Mission Biblique Harriste No.1 Côte D’Ivoire. *MBH1CI Association Culturelle: Statuts et Règlement Intérieur*. Abidjan: MBH1CI, 2005.
- Omenyo, Cephas N. *Pentecost Outside Pentecostalism: A Study of the Development of Charismatic Renewal in the Mainline*

*Churches of Ghana*. Zoetermeer: Boekencentrum Publishing House, 2006.

- Parrinder, Geoffrey. *West African Religion: A Study of the Beliefs and Practices of Akan, Ewe, Yoruba, Ibo and Kindred Peoples*. London: Epworth Press, 1978.
- Sanneh, Lamin. *West African Christianity: The Religious Impact*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1983.
- Schaff, Philip. *History of the Christian Church: Christianus sum: Christiani nihil alienum puto. Vol. III Part 2: Nicene and Post-Nicene Christianity: From Constantine the Great to Gregory the Great AD311-600*. Grand Rapids: WM B Eerdmans Pub. Cp., 1953.
- Schlosser, Katesa. "Propheten in Africa." Cited in Christian G. Baeta, *Prophetism in Ghana: A Study of Some 'Spiritual Churches.'* Achimota: African Christian Press, 1962.
- Shank, David A., abridged by Jocelyn Murray. *Prophet Harris, the "Black Elijah" of West Africa*. Leiden: Brill, 1994.
- Smith, Edwin W. S. "The Christian Mission in Africa." London and New York: International Missionary Council, 1926, 42
- Wesley, J. "Sermons." Vol. 5, 106-7. Cited in *Exploring Methodism: The Making of Methodism*. Barrie Tabraham, 32. Peterborough: Epworth Press, 2000.
- World Council of Churches. *Baptism Eucharist and Ministry (BEM) Document*. Faith and Order Paper No. 111. Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1982.



## Recent Print and Digital Resources Related to Christianity in Africa

**Catron, John W., *Embracing Protestantism: Black Identities in the Atlantic World*. University Press of Florida, 2016. \$74.95. ISBN-13: 978-0813061634**

“In *Embracing Protestantism*, John Catron argues that people of African descent in America who adopted Protestant Christianity during the eighteenth century did not become African Americans but instead assumed more fluid Atlantic-African identities. America was then the land of slavery and white supremacy, where citizenship and economic mobility were off-limits to most people of color. In contrast, the Atlantic World offered access to the growing abolitionist movement in Europe.

Catron examines how the wider Atlantic World allowed membership in transatlantic evangelical churches that gave people of color unprecedented power in their local congregations and contact with black Christians in West and Central Africa. It also channeled inspiration from the large black churches then developing in the Caribbean and from black missionaries. Unlike deracinated creoles who attempted to merge with white culture, people of color who became Protestants were “Atlantic Africans,” who used multiple religious traditions to restore cultural and ethnic connections. And this religious heterogeneity was a critically important way black Anglophone Christians resisted slavery.” (Amazon)

**Decret, François. *Early Christianity in North Africa*. Cambridge James Clarke & Co., 2014. \$7.36. ISBN-13: 978-0227173565**

“Martyrs, exegetes, catechumens, and councils enlarge this study of North African Christianity, a region often reduced to its dominant patristic personalities. Smither provides English readers a quality translation of an important book that captures the unique spirit of an invaluable chapter of church history. Along with the churches located in large Greek cities of the East, the church of Carthage was particularly significant in the early centuries of Christian history. Initially, the Carthaginian church became known for its martyrs. Later, the North African church became further established and unified through the regular councils of its bishops. Finally, the church gained a reputation for its outstanding leaders, Tertullian of Carthage (c. 140-220), Cyprian of Carthage (195-258),

and Augustine of Hippo (354-430), African leaders who continue to be celebrated and remembered today.” (Amazon)

**Levine, Roger S. *A Living Man from Africa: Jan Tzatzoe, Xhosa Chief and Missionary, and the Making of Nineteenth-century South Africa*. [Series: New Directions in Narrative History]. New Haven [Conn.]: Yale University Press, 2011. \$30.00 ISBN-13: 978-0300198294**

“Born into a Xhosa royal family around 1792 in South Africa, Jan Tzatzoe was destined to live in an era of profound change - one that witnessed the arrival and entrenchment of European colonialism. This title reclaims Tzatzoe's lost story and analyzes his contributions to, and experiences with, the turbulent colonial world.” (Amazon)

**Mwenda, Ntarangwi. *The Street Is My Pulpit Hip Hop and Christianity in Kenya*. Urbana; Chicago; Springfield: University of Illinois Press, 2016. \$25.00. ISBN-13: 978-0252081552**

“To some, Christianity and hip hop seem antithetical. Not so in Kenya. There, the music of Julius Owino, aka Juliani, blends faith and beats into a potent hip hop gospel aimed at a youth culture hungry for answers spiritual, material, and otherwise. Mwenda Ntarangwi explores the Kenyan hip hop scene through the lens of Juliani's life and career. A born-again Christian, Juliani produces work highlighting the tensions between hip hop's forceful self-expression and a pious approach to public life, even while contesting the basic presumptions of both. In *The Street Is My Pulpit*, Ntarangwi forges an uncommon collaboration with his subject that offers insights into Juliani's art and goals even as Ntarangwi explores his own religious experience and subjective identity as an ethnographer. What emerges is an original contribution to the scholarship on hip hop's global impact and a passionate study of the music's role in shaping new ways of being Christian in Africa.” (Amazon)

**Ngong, David (editor). *A New History of African Christian Thought: From Cape to Cairo*. New York, NY: Routledge. (Forthcoming 2017) ISBN-13: 9780415857567**

“David Ngong offers a comprehensive view of African Christian thought that includes North Africa in antiquity as well as Sub-Saharan Africa from the period of colonial missionary activity to

the present. Challenging conventional, colonial divisions of Africa, *A New History of African Christian Thought* demonstrates that important continuities exist across the continent. Chapters written by specialists in African Christian thought reflect the issues—both ancient and modern—in which Christian Africa has impacted the shape of Christian belief from the beginning of the movement up to the present day." (Barnes & Noble)

**Noll, Mark A. and Carolyn Nystrom. *Clouds of witnesses: Christian voices from Africa and Asia*. Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Books, 2011. \$18.75 ISBN-13: 978-0830838349**

"In seventeen narratives Mark Noll and Carolyn Nystrom introduce Christian leaders in Africa and Asia who had tenacious faith in the midst of deprivation, suffering and conflict. Spanning a century, from the 1880s to the 1980s, their stories demonstrate the vitality of the Christian faith in a diversity of contexts..." (Amazon)

## **Doctoral Theses**

**Francophone Churches in the Cities of Johannesburg and Pretoria (Tshwane) : A Missiological Perspective. By Athas Cibangu Mpinga. University of South Africa (UNISA), 2014.**

Abstract: This thesis is a missiological study of the francophone churches in the cities of Johannesburg and Pretoria. Francophone churches may be classified as African Initiated Churches (AIC) that have been planted by migrants from the French speaking countries of central Africa. They are characterized by the use of French and English as languages of worship and communication. The planting and the presence of these churches have become a more visible and remarkable mission phenomenon drawing scientific attention and is worthy of studying.

The main issue of this study is the missionality of the Francophone churches. The investigation concerns the ways in which Francophone churches understand the mission of God, known as *missio Dei*, and the ways in which they express it in the community. In practice, the exploration of the missionality of the Francophone churches discloses their nature, *raison d'être*, and their purpose, as well as their ministries, and allows us to determine the relevancy of these churches in the community.

**Available full-text: <http://hdl.handle.net/10500/18901>**

**The Contribution and Influence of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church in the Development of Post-secondary Education in South Nyanza, 1971-2000. by Eric Nyankanga Maangi. University of South Africa (UNISA), 2014.**

Abstract: This study discusses the contribution and influence of the Seventh-Day Adventist (SDA) Church to the development of post- secondary education in South Nyanza, Kenya. This has been done by focusing on the establishment and development of Kamagambo and Nyanchwa Adventist colleges whose history from 1971 to 2000 has been documented. This is a historical study which has utilized both the primary and secondary source of data.

For better and clear insights into this topic, the study starts by discussing the coming of Christian missionaries to Africa. The missionaries who came to Africa introduced western education. The origin of the SDA church to Africa has also been documented. The SDA church was formed as a result of the Christian evangelical revivals in Europe. This called for the Christians to base their faith on the Bible. As people read various prophecies in the Bible, they thought that what they read was to be fulfilled in their lifetime. From the 1830s to the 1840s preachers and lay people from widely different denominations United States of America around William Miller (1782-1849). This led to the establishment of the SDA Church in 1844.

The study focuses on the coming of the SDA Missionaries to South-Nyanza. The efforts of the SDA missionaries to introduce Western education in the said area, an endeavor which started at Gendia in 1906 has been discussed. From Gendia they established Wire mission and Kenyadoto mission in 1909. In 1912 Kamagambo and Nyanchwa, the subject of this study became mission and educational centers. As was the case with other missionaries who evangelized South Nyanza, the SDA mission took the education of Africans as one of the most important goals for the process of African evangelization. The Adventist message penetrated the people of South Nyanza through their educational work. The first conversions can be ascribed to the desire for the education which accompanied the new religion.

Kamagambo Adventist College became the first college in South Nyanza. Equally, Nyanchwa became the first college in the Gusii part of South Nyanza. The two colleges exercised a great influence on the local community especially in the socio-economic and educational fields. At the same time the colleges have also

contributed enormously to the community's development through the roles played by its alumni in society. Besides this, the study has also recommended some other pertinent areas for further study and research.

**Full-text available:** <http://hdl.handle.net/10500/20035>