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doi: <https://doi.org/10.57709/1059647>

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AFRICANS, CHEROKEES, AND THE ABCFM MISSIONARIES IN THE  
NINETEENTH CENTURY: AN UNUSUAL STORY OF REDEMPTION

By

Gnimbin Albert Ouattara

Under the Direction of Charles G. Steffen

ABSTRACT

My dissertation, “Africans, Cherokees, and the ABCFM Missionaries in the Nineteenth Century: An Unusual Story of Redemption,” assesses the experience of American missionaries in the Cherokee nation and in Western Africa during the nineteenth century. The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM), founded in 1810, was the first successful foreign missionary society in the U.S., and its campaign among the Cherokees served as springboard for its activities in “Western Africa”—Liberia, Ivory Coast, Gabon, and South Africa. Although the Cherokees and the West Africans were two different peoples, the ABCFM used the same method to Christianize them: the Lancasterian method with which the missionaries planned to “civilize” the Cherokees and West Africans before Christianizing them.

Scholars such as William McLoughlin and Theda Purdue studied the missionary perspective and the Cherokee perspective as separate entities and convincingly maintained that the Cherokees embraced the ABCFM’s civilization and Christianization program partly to relieve the pressures on their lands and partly to adapt to the cultural pressures of their times. However, as my dissertation argues, the conversion story of the Cherokees takes a different turn if told simultaneously from the missionary and the Cherokee perspectives. Regarding the West African experience, authors such as Lamin

Sanneh and Richard Gray have recently exposed the missionary and African sides of the stories with new questions that had been waiting to be asked for a long time.

My dissertation, taking a unique comparative perspective, reveals first that West Africans did not face the same pressures as those faced by the Cherokees, yet, they still embraced the ABCFM's civilization and Christianization program, though with a lesser sense of urgency and with more assertiveness than did the Cherokees despite the white missionaries' racism.

More importantly, by way of a method I call parallel agency, my dissertation offers a revisionist interpretation of the history of missions, which has traditionally emphasized the power of the white missionaries by calling into question the very assumption that the white missionaries had significantly more power than did their Cherokee and African converts.

**INDEX WORDS:** Liberia, Gaboon, American Colonization Society, Cherokees, Five Civilized Tribes, Brainerd, American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM), Rev. John Leighton Wilson, Jane Bayard Wilson, Rev. Cyrus Kingsbury, Sarah Bowdoin Varnum.

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A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

2007

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by

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Electronic Version Approved:

Office of Graduate Studies  
College of Arts and Sciences  
Georgia State University  
August 2007

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

More people deserve thanks than I can mention here. I would like to thank my parents and grandparents for raising me with dignity. My brother Ouattara Klinnan Paul was my support during these five years in the United States away from home.

I am grateful to the U.S. government and Georgia State University for allowing me to study Africa and democracy under the prestigious Fulbright scholarship.

Much of the credit for this manuscript goes to my advisor, Professor Charles G. Steffen, who made the writing of this dissertation a joyful and intellectually inspiring process. I can now call myself a historian in his image. My teaching mentor and committee member, Dr. Mohammad H. Ali, has guided and inspired my passion for African history. My work in the United States would never have taken the educative turn it took without my encounter in 2001 of Professor Wayne J. Urban (University of Alabama), who at the time was teaching History of American Education at Georgia State University. Dr. Duane J. Corpis, now professor of Early Modern Europe at Cornell University, was my teaching mentor and the committee member who guided and inspired my investigation of the complicated intersection of religion, politics and culture when he was at Georgia State University. To all of them, I express my utmost admiration and respect.

Words are not enough to translate my gratitude to Dr. Hugh D. Hudson, Jr., chair of the History Department, for his diligent efforts to rehabilitate me legally, emotionally and financially during my immigration trouble. Related to this matter, I must thank all the members of the History Department who lent me their financial and emotional support

including Ms. Paula Sorrell, Business Manager of the Department, and Mrs. Carolyn Whiter, Administrative Coordinator of the Department. My appreciation also goes to Dr. Douglas Podoll, Ms. Sandra Grimes, and Mrs. Heather Housley for their assistance in this matter and other immigration issues.

I have to thank my fellow graduate students, particularly Dr. Robert Woodrum without whose assistance both on and off-campus I would have given up on Lichtenstein's *Walter Reuther* and many more challenges in the U.S.

I express my appreciation to my Ivorian community in general for providing much-needed emotional support and to my fellow Ivorians and Fulbrighters Diarrassouba Sidiki, Abou Bamba, and Konate Siendou in particular for cheering me up during these turbulent years.

Finally, I express my sincere gratitude to Ms. Nancy Condon, my editor, and to all those persons whose names cannot appear here but whose help was invaluable during the process of writing this dissertation.

I hope you all take pride in seeing this dissertation finally come to completion. I trust you will always stand by me in my career as a historian.



Nam Myoho Rengue Kyo. To my father, mother, grandfather and grandmother that did not live to see me grow. Na tolo, na nienlen, ye fangui! To my little Phammon.

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## INTRODUCTION

### Native Christianization: Three Independent Powers?

The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) was the first foreign missionary society in the new republic of the United States.<sup>1</sup> Joseph Tracy, a contemporary of the board, was its first historian.<sup>2</sup> Rev. Cyrus Kingsbury founded the

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<sup>1</sup> According to Joseph Tracy's *History of American Missions to the Heaven: From their Commencement to the Present Time* (Worcester: Spooner and Howland, 1840), the ABCFM was not the first missionary society in America but the first *foreign* missionary society. He wrote that although "[t]he first settlement of New England was a missionary enterprise ...[a]t the commencement of the present century ... the current of missionary enterprise was about to make for itself new channels, broader and deeper than those in which it was then flowing." Ibid., 11, 27. He continued, "Every great and effectual movement in human society begins in secret and in silence.... As the movement draws towards its full development, it produces the leading minds which it needs; the men who first understand, and cause others to understand, what the movement is to be, and under whose guidance the multitude labor purposely for its accomplishment." Ibid., 28. Thus "on the 25<sup>th</sup> of June, 1810 ... the first idea of the "American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions" was suggested...." thereby making the ABCFM the first foreign missionary board in the new republic of the United States. Ibid., 30

<sup>2</sup> I deduced that Tracy was the first from two facts. First, the first line of the "Advertisement" of the book states, "The want of a complete History of American Missions has been felt for some time. The principal facts connected with their operations were indeed before the public; but were scattered through many volumes, such as the periodicals of the several societies, memoirs of individual missionaries, and accounts of single missions. Probably no private or public library contained all the printed works necessary to a full examination of the subject. It is the object of this work, to bring the substance of all these publications within the compass of one volume of convenient size and moderate expense; supplying their deficiencies, reconciling their discrepancies, and correcting their errors by reference to the original documents of the several missionary societies. For this purpose, several authors were engaged, each having the confidence of the Board whose history he was to prepare, and favored with access to the archives. The time expended on this work amounts to more than two entire years. The result of their labors is here submitted to the friends of missions and of general information, in the full belief that it will meet all reasonable expectations." Ibid., "Advertisement." Second, the first item in the table of contents is "History of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, compiled chiefly from the published and unpublished Documents of the Board, by Rev. Joseph Tracy." Ibid., 1. As the board's first historian, Tracy's *History of American Missions* has been an excellent primary source for my study. The book reproduces verbatim most original documents of the board. In addition, he was both a board contemporary and a missionary. I also use as a primary source William E Strong's *The Story of American Board: An Account of the First Hundred Years of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions* (Boston: The Pilgrim Press, 1910) as primary source. William Strong was also a contemporary of the board, though his book was published in 1910. In addition, he was a classmate of Rev. John Wyncoop, who accompanied Rev. John Leighton Wilson on the West African mission (ibid., 124) and was the ABCFM's "Editorial Secretary" at the time his book was published. See title page.

first ABCFM missionary station among the Cherokees in 1817.<sup>3</sup> In 1834, Rev. John Leighton Wilson founded the first ABCFM missionary station in Cape Palmas, Liberia.<sup>4</sup> The ABCFM was not the first time the Cherokees had encountered whites. As early as 1715, there was “an early commissioner of Indian affairs—Maj. John Herbert who made a map of the Cherokee Country in 1715.”<sup>5</sup>

In fact, by the time the ABCFM built their missionary station in 1817, the Cherokees, who lived in their territory “within the chartered limits of the states of Georgia, Tennessee, and Alabama,”<sup>6</sup> had already had more than a century of interactions with whites of all walks of life. James Adair, one of the pioneer traders with the Native Americans,<sup>7</sup> described interactions between a spectrum of whites and the Native Americans:

While the Indians were simple in manners, and uncorrupt in morals, the traders could not be reckoned unhappy; for they were kindly treated, and watchfully guarded, by a society of friendly and sagacious people, and possessed all the

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<sup>3</sup> Samuel Worcester to John Calhoun, November 3, 1819, in National Archives, RG 75, Letters Received by the Office of the Secretary of War Relating to Indian Affairs, 1817-1819, M-271, Roll 2 (Washington, DC: National Archives Microfilm Publications, 1959), Frame 1605.

<sup>4</sup> Gerald H. Anderson, ed. *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions* (New York: Simon & Schuster Macmillan, 1998). Details about these missionaries and their operations are reserved for Chapter One.

<sup>5</sup> Samuel Cole Williams, ed. *Adair's History of the American Indians* (New York: Promontory Press, 1930), 243.

<sup>6</sup> Elias Boudinot, “An Address to the Whites,” in *Cherokee Editor: The Writings of Elias Boudinot* edited by Theda Purdue (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1996), 71. Theda Purdue adds that “[t]erritory west of the Little Tennessee River in North Carolina was also a part of the Cherokee Nation.” *Ibid.*, footnote 4, 79. The Cherokee nation was about 200 miles in length from East to West and about 120 in breadth with 10,000,000 of acres and approximately 6000 people in 1817. *Ibid.*, 71.

<sup>7</sup> James Adair operated a trading house among the Chickasaws: “In the year 1765, when the Chikkasah returned with two French scalps, from the Illinois, (while the British troops were on the Mississippi, about 170 leagues below the Illinois) as my trading house was near the Chikkasah leader, I had a good opportunity of observing his conduct, as far as it was exposed to public view.” *Ibid.*, 173.

needful things to make a reasonable life easy. Through all the Indian countries, every person lives at his own choice, not being forced in the least degree to any thing contrary to his own inclination. Before that most impolitic step of giving general licenses took place, only a sufficient number of orderly reputable traders were allowed to traffic, and reside among the Indians: by which means the last were kept under proper restraint, were easy in their minds, and peaceable, on account of the plain honest lessons daily inculcated on them. But at present, most of their countries swarm with white people, who are generally the dregs and off-scourings of our colonies. The description is so exceedingly disagreeable, that I shall only observe, the greater part of them could notably distinguish themselves, among the most profligate by land or sea, no day of the week excepted, indeed the Sabbath day is worst. This is the true situation of our Indian affairs,--the unavoidable result of ignorant and wicked clergymen settled as Missionaries on the frontiers; and of that pernicious practice of general licenses, by which crowds of disorderly people infest the Indian countries, corrupt their morals, and put their civilization out of the power of common means: the worst and meanest may readily get nominal security to intitle them to a trading licence; ill uses are made of them with impunity.<sup>8</sup>

This pressure on the Cherokee country increased until the early nineteenth century when the Cherokees were removed to Oklahoma in the 1830s during what is known as the “trail of tears.”<sup>9</sup> In this way, the ABCFM Cherokee mission in 1817 was part of a story of complex relationships between the “Cheerake” whose “national name is derived

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 443-444.

<sup>9</sup> Thurman Wilkins describes the circumstances of this tragedy when he discusses how a group of members of the Cherokee nation signed the Treaty of New Echota on December, 29, 1835 which “set in motion a mournful train of event that would carry most of that nation to a new home in Indian territory beyond the Mississippi and even beyond the young state of Arkansas. [p.3] At no time since the ratification of the treaty had the masses shown any inclination to budge, and in the fall of 1837, emigration fell below the superintendent’s expectations [p.316]... May 23, 1838, the deadline set by the treaty, arrived; and three days later the grim roundup work began. Seven thousand soldiers took part in the operation [p.320]...forcible emigration began on June 6, 1838 [p.322]...All the detachments were on the road longer than the eighty days planned for. Their travel time ranged from 93 to 139 days, for an average of 116. The last to arrive, on March 25, 1839, was a party led by Peter Hilderbrand.” Thurman Wilkins, *Cherokee Tragedy: The Ridge Family and the Decimation of a People*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., rev. (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1986), 328.

from Chee-ra, ‘fire’,”<sup>10</sup> and the white settlers that became citizens of the new nation-state in the late eighteenth century, the United States of America.

In 1817 pro-civilization Cherokees were already politically “civilized” in the sense that they had already modeled their political administration after that of the United States. They adopted “the articles of government of 1817,” which in 1827 became the basis of the Cherokee Constitution.<sup>11</sup> This larger context should be kept in mind as I reconstitute the relationship between the ABCFM and the Cherokees in 1817, when the Cherokees still lived in their soon-to-be-lost homeland east of the Mississippi.<sup>12</sup>

As the encounters between Europeans and the native peoples around the world increased in the Age of Discovery, most Western adventurers became more and more interested in rationalizing the origin of what they perceived as the different races of humanity.<sup>13</sup> Many of these Europeans pointed to origins in the Bible. A dominant theory

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 237. The editor Samuel Williams historicized the Cherokee name in the following manner: “The name as given by [Albert] Gallatin (*Archeologia Americana*, II, 90) is, properly, Tsalakies. [James] goes into more detail: “In the Lower dialect, with which the English settlers first became familiar, the form is Tsa-ragi. In the other dialects the form is ‘Tsa-lagi.’ *Myths*, 182; with Gatsschet in accord, *Migration Legend*, 24. De Soto chroniclers wrote it: Chalaque. The present standard form, Cherokee, dates back at least to 1708. Mooney says (*Myth*, 15) that the name by which the Cherokees call themselves is Yunwiya, signifying ‘real or principal people’; and that on ceremonial occasions they frequently speak of themselves as Kituhwagi (or Cuttawa).” Ibid., footnote 110.

<sup>11</sup> Purdue, ed. *Cherokee Editor*, footnote 22, p. 82.

<sup>12</sup> Theda Purdue. *Nations Remembered: An Oral History of the Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles in Oklahoma, 1865-1907* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1980; Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1993).

<sup>13</sup> Various theories competed, the most dominant in the eighteenth century being the theory of independent origination of the different races of the world. For example, James Adair was concerned that “[s]ome writers have contended, from the diversity of colour, that America was not peopled from any part of Asia, or of the old world, but that the natives were a separate creation [with] ... one creation of *whites*, a second creation for the *yellows*, and a third for the *blacks*.” Williams, ed. *Adair’s History of the American Indians*, 3. This theory survives to this day despite the discovery of new scientific evidence points to a single origin of humanity in Africa. Christopher Ehret attributes the persistence of this theory to “Eurocentric thinking ... We now know that our particular species, *Homo sapiens*, evolved entirely in Africa. Yet most early

about the origin of Native Americans in general was that they were descendants of the Jews,<sup>14</sup> while Africans were viewed the descendants of Ham. <sup>15</sup> Africans tended to be

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work on human paleontology focused on discoveries in Europe of ancient bones and tools and was slow to accommodate new information from other parts of the globe. This is why Western folk imagination became so deeply imbued with the mysteriousness and romance of the extinct Neanderthal, which was, after all, an almost purely European species of *Homo*. Then, too, in the works of certain mid-twentieth-century writers who favored the idea of a million-year-long, multiregional evolution of a single human species all across the Eastern Hemisphere, one can detect, sadly a more insidious tendency, a difficulty with accepting the idea that all of us might have a common, more recent African ancestor [60,000 years ago].” Christopher Ehret, *The Civilizations of Africa: A History to 1800* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2002), 20-21.

<sup>14</sup> The central argument of James Adair’s *History of the American Indians* is in the section, “Observations, and Arguments, in Proof of the American Indians’ Being descended from the Jews.” Williams, ed., *Adair’s History of the American Indians*, 16. Adair structured his argument in the following way: “As the Mosaic account declares a completion of the manifestations of God’s infinite wisdom and power in creation, within that space of time [six days]; it follows, that the Indians have lineally descended from Adam, the first, and the great parent of all the human species... Some have supposed the Americans to be descended from the Chinese: But neither their religion, laws, and customs, etc, agreed in the least with those of the Chinese: which sufficiently proves, they are not of that line... From the most exact observations I could make in the long time I traded among the Indian Americans, I was forced to believe them lineally descended from the Israelites, either while they were maritime power, or soon after the general captivity; the latter however is the most probable. I shall endeavour to prove from their religious rites, civil and martial customs, their marriages, funeral ceremonies, manners, language, traditions, and a variety of particulars—which will at the same time make the reader thoroughly acquainted with the nations, of which it may be said to this day, very little have been known.” *Ibid.*, 13-15.

<sup>15</sup> Wilson wrote the following account about the people of Africa: “In the earlier ages of the world the continent of Africa was inhabited by three distinct aboriginal races, all of whom are mentioned in the Old Testament Scriptures, and recognized there as the descendants of Ham, the Son of Noah. The first and most prominent of these were the ancient Egyptians, who are regarded as the descendants of Mizraim, the second son of Ham. Their history is well known, and it is no part of the plan of the present work to give even a sketch of it. The second family was known to Greek and Roman historians as the Lybian race. They are supposed to be the descendants in part of one branch of the family of Mizraim, and in part from Phut, the third son of Ham. Whether these two branches formed a mixed race, or were interspersed as separate families over the same region of country, is not certainly known. They occupied all the country between the northern borders of the Great Desert and the Mediterranean Sea. In this family were included the Numidians, Mauritanians, and other names equally familiar in Greek and Roman history. The only descendants of this once numerous and powerful people are the modern Berbers, who are to be found in many parts of the Barbary states, but their chief place of residence is along the northern slopes of Mount Atlas. The third family was known to Greek and Roman historians as the Ethiopian or Black race. These are spoken of as the descendants of Cush, the eldest son of Ham. The terms Cush and Ethiopia are interchangeably used in the historical parts of the Old Testament for the same people. One of these terms is of Hebrew origin, and is indicative of the origin of the parentage of the people; while the other is Greek, and is descriptive of their physical character. This term was applied both to Asiatic and African races. The chief locality of the African branch of the Ethiopian family was on the Upper Nile, and in what is now known as Nubia and Abyssinia. But they were scattered indefinitely over the whole of the central and southern parts of the continent, so far as those regions were known to the ancients. From this family have undoubtedly descended the modern African or Negro race. From the account which Herodotus and other



viewed as monolithic and with little change in history.<sup>16</sup> In this line of reasoning, Africans were homogenous, and it would have been revolutionary had their contacts with the outside world—with the Carthaginians in the antiquity and with the Portuguese in the Common Era—changed this homogeneity.<sup>17</sup>

Consequently, when the ABCFM sent Wilson to the U.S. colony of Liberia, the board was actually sending him to the entire “Western Africa,” whose geography Wilson described with the only major distinction being between the explored and the unexplored parts of Africa. In fact, he described a chain of mountains that is

more than two thousand miles long, and is known as the Kong Mountains. It forms the eastern boundary of the northern half of Western Africa, and separates it from the great kingdoms of Sudan, or Central Northern Africa. The other chain...was called by the Portuguese navigators the “Sierra del Crystal.” It forms the eastern of the southern half of Western Africa, and separates it from the unexplored regions of Central Southern Africa.<sup>18</sup>

According to Wilson’s reasoning West Africa was defined by the new European explorations. Europeans were the ones who coined the term “West Africa,” and who gave new meaning to the region, since the peoples in West Africa all belonged to the “Negro

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ancient historians give of the habits and physical character of the ancient Ethiopian stock, they do not differ essentially from the modern African race—a people who are now spread over two-thirds of the whole continent, and are vastly more numerous than ever were in any previous period of their history.” John Leighton Wilson, *Western Africa: Its History, Condition, and Prospects* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1856), 14.

<sup>16</sup> Wilson observed, “It is an interesting historical fact that the Negro race had reached the Western frontiers of the African continent more than two thousand years ago, and that they were then distinguished not only by the same physical characteristics, but by many of the customs and habits that have been continued with little change, even down to the present time.” *Ibid.*, 21.

<sup>17</sup> Wilson wrote, “What revolutions may have taken place in their moral, social, and civil condition during the long interval which elapsed between the periods of the visit of the Carthaginians and the modern Portuguese discoverers, it is impossible to conjecture.” *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 22-23.

race,” which had changed very little in physical appearance and culture since its descent from Ham in the Old Testament:

West Africa, in the modern and general acceptance of the term [by Europeans], is that portion of the continent lying along the Atlantic Ocean, between the southern borders of the Great Desert, in 16o north latitude, and the Portuguese province of Benguela, in about the same degree of south latitude, and varies from two hundred to three hundred and fifty miles. It bears about the same geographical relation to the continent of Africa that what are here called the Atlantic States to North America.<sup>19</sup>

This does not mean that in the mid-nineteenth century Wilson did not find any differences among the West African peoples. As he reported, “The inhabitants of Western Africa may be arranged into three great families: Senegambia, Upper or Northern Guinea, Southern Guinea sometimes called ‘Southern Ethiopia.’<sup>20</sup> However, these differences were due to outside influences, Wilson thought, rather than to a change in the family of the “Negro race”:

These families all belong to one race, known as the Negro or African race...In Senegambia, there are three leading families, known as the Jalofs, the Mandingoes, and the Fulahs. By many it is doubted whether they are pure Negroes. The Fulahs show the strongest marks of being a mixed race. Those families are farther distinguished from the inhabitants of Northern and Southern Guinea by professing the Mohammedan faith, while the other two are essentially pagan.<sup>21</sup>

Thus, besides the fact that Liberia was a U.S. colony, it was further east of Senegambia where the “less pure Negroes” resided. Once he was in Liberia (Northern or upper Guinea), following the year of the establishment of his mission station Fair Hope in

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 30.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

Cape Palmas in 1834, Wilson still found the black people in Liberia too much under outside influences, and in 1842 he moved further east to Gabon (Southern Guinea or Southern Ethiopia) due to clashes with the Liberian colonial authorities.<sup>22</sup> This move was in compliance with the policy of the board that Wilson should target the “pure Negroes” with less outside influence: “The object of the American Board in planting its first mission on the western shores of Africa was that this should be the headquarters for a line of stations to extend far into the interior.”<sup>23</sup>

This and many other policies of the board regarding the Christianization of the Cherokees and West Africans were conceived with little attention to the challenges that the native populations would pose. For example, when Kingsbury arrived in the Cherokee nation in 1817, he did not speak Cherokee and had to rely on bilingual Cherokees. Unfortunately for him, most of these Cherokees were the most inclined to attain secular business gains, which had been the basis for the relationship between the Native Americans and the white trader-settlers that James Adair outlined (as described above).

Before the advent of the ABCFM English had become the language of trade for the Cherokees, just as Cherokee had become the language of trade for the white trader-settlers. Cherokees who spoke English had learned it as a result of these trade interactions with the white trader-settlers. Many of these Cherokees were persons of mixed Cherokee-

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<sup>22</sup> “In consequence of frequent collisions between the colonists and the natives, which kept the minds of the latter in an unfit state to receive religious impressions; the jealousy with which the colonists looked upon the efforts of the missionaries to raise the natives in the scale of civilization and intelligence, and in consequence of legislation which had tendency to embarrass the labors of the missionaries, the mission was transferred to the Gabun in 1842, where it has been carried on efficiently ever since.” *Ibid.*, 501.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 106.

and-white ancestry, who formed a new class that had been born as the result of the settlement of the white traders among the Cherokees. Some of these Cherokees who lent their services as interpreters to Rev. Cyrus Kingsbury and his colleagues were Charles Hicks, Charles Reece, and John Arch. I have more details on them in subsequent chapters, but for now it is sufficient to note that their ancestry was mixed. Because of the Lancasterian school model that the missionaries adopted as their strategy for Christianization, which I discuss in detail in Chapter Two and Four, these Cherokees were put in a position of prominence that competed with that of their missionary employers. The communication of the power of the Christian message rested with them—that is, a missionary could preach without triggering emotions in their Cherokee audience but the translator of this message could. Besides their apparently positive influence on the work of the ABCFM missions, these Cherokees had other agendas of their own, which the missionaries would have interpreted negatively, had they detected them. For example, the interpreter John Arch said that he sought missionary school education because he “felt inclined to tell the Indians about God and the Saviour, but he knew so little that he thought it would not please God; and he desired to obtain education, that he might be able to do it.”<sup>24</sup>

In reality, as I show in Chapter Two, John Arch and most of the mixed-heritage Cherokees who sought missionary formal education were looking for ways to establish wealth and influence among the new Cherokee elite leadership that had progressively assumed monopoly over Cherokee affairs because of the U.S. government and the

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<sup>24</sup> Tracy, *History of the American Missions*, 78.

missionaries' ethnocentric preference. Although operating in a different context in West Africa, the missionaries of the ABCFM transplanted the Cherokee model to West Africa with curiously the same results. In 1834 Wilson went to Africa with plans to establish Christianity using the Lancastrian school model. There, he had to rely on a similar class of people—that is, it was not a mixed-blood population he relied on; rather, it was the coastal people, whose interests in secular gains Wilson actually detected but overlooked. “The King,” he wrote in a report to the Secretary of the Board,

sent some of his men to show me a situation which he has pointed out for mission premises and he is to send me five or six boys in the course of a few days out of whom I am to choose two to be connected with the school here until they have a teacher for themselves. What are we to think my dear Bro of the importunacy of these people? Admit that their wish to have a teacher arises from no other than motives of peculiar gain, still does it not show that the hand of God has made the opening for us?<sup>25</sup>

As we can see, it was not that these Cherokee and West African English speakers were acting covertly, as James Scott suggested about slaves he studied.<sup>26</sup> Rather, these Cherokee and West African people were open about their motives. If their agency seemed encrypted, it was because the missionaries were blinded by the illusion of their own

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<sup>25</sup> J. Leighton Wilson and Stephen Wyncoop to the Prudential Committee, Report of the State of the Colony of Liberia, March 24, 1834, Papers of the ABCFM, ABC 15: Letters from Missionaries to Africa, 1834-1919), Unit2, Reel 149, 15.1: Western Africa, Vol. 1 Western Africa, South Africa previous to 1838 (Cambridge, MA: The Houghton Library, Harvard University, no date), Frame 137.

<sup>26</sup> Although James Scott's study of what could be considered the power of the slaves (“hidden transcripts”) was groundbreaking, Scott assumed that the slaves were already in a position of subordination and the masters in a position of power and domination. This assumption derived from his never truly defining what he meant by “power.” He stated only that his, “broad purpose is to suggest how we might more successfully read, interpret, and understand the often fugitive political conduct of subordinate groups. How do we study power relations when the powerless are often obliged to adopt a strategic pose in the presence of the powerful and when the powerful may have an interest in overdramatizing their reputation and mastery?” James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), xii. We must expand the path Scott cleared to perceiving the power of the so-called subaltern peoples by simply suspending the assumption that they are in a subordinate position and their so-called oppressors in a position of power or domination.

power, a willful ignorance that would cost them dearly as most of their missions fell short of their expectations.

This dissertation attempts to answer several questions about the power dynamic between the Christian missionaries of the ABCFM and the Cherokees, on the one hand, and between the missionaries and the West Africans, on the other. How we distribute credit between missionaries and their converts when appraising their interactions during the early nineteenth-century is the central question of this work. Most students of these cross-cultural relations have answered this question by weighing variously the power of each group. Although their conclusions have rightly captured the complexity of the power relations between the groups,<sup>27</sup> their scholarship nevertheless supports a consensus on missionary hegemony and a native subalternization.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> See John Leighton Wilson, *Western Africa: Its History, Condition, and Prospects* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1856). David Barrett, *Schism and Renewal in Africa* (Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1968); John and Jean Comaroff, *Ethnography and the Historical Imagination* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview, 1992); Richard White, *Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (Cambridge, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Fernando Cervantes, *The Devil in the New World: The Impact of Diabolism in New Spain* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994); Harvey J. Sindima, *Drums of Redemption: Introduction to African Christianity* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1994); William McLoughlin, *Cherokees and Missionaries, 1789-1839* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995); Theda Purdue, *Cherokee Women: Gender and Cultural Change, 1700-1835* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998); Vine Deloria, Jr., *For this Land: Writings on Religion in America* (New York: Routledge, 1999).

<sup>28</sup> Antonio Gramsci's "History of the Subaltern Classes" has influenced many students of missionaries. These scholars have used Gramsci's notion of hegemony and ideology—both attempted refinements of Karl Marx's conceptions of the history of the working classes and the ideology of capitalism—to understand the leadership of the missionaries among the natives. Gramsci's contention that "the supremacy of a social group manifests itself in two ways, as 'domination' and as 'intellectual and moral leadership,'" has served to explain the structure of the missionary "hegemony" in the refined Marxist ideological deterministic tradition established by Gramsci and pursued by his followers. In this Gramscian proposition the material forces and the ideologies are not separate, as Marx thought, but the mutually inclusive—heads and tails of the same coin. Antonio Gramsci, (i) *History of the Subaltern Classes*; (ii) *The Concept of "Ideology"*; (iii) *Cultural Themes: Ideological Material*, in *Media and Cultural Studies: Keywords* ed. Durham and Kellner, (Malden, Mass: Blackwell, 2001), 43-47.

This dissertation argues that a comparison of the Cherokee and West African Christianizations points to three kinds of power, whose identification and operation seriously challenge the hegemonic and subalternization paradigms. The modes of operation of these three kinds of power constitute what I will hereby posit as *parallel agency*. Tracing these three modes of operation not only makes problematic the propositions of missionary hegemony and native subalternization, but also historicizes these paradigms. More importantly, a comparative study of the Christianization of the Cherokees and West Africans contradicts many of the major tenets of the missionary hegemony and native subalternization theories.

By parallel agency I mean that each group had the capacity to define its relationship with the other group. Parallel agency suggests that each group possessed the power of definition—the theoretical capacity to define its interests.<sup>29</sup> The first important revelation of the operation of parallel agency is that the American Christian missionaries, the Cherokees and the West Africans were equal in definitional power; hence, my rationale for using the word *parallel* to characterize the agency of the three groups above.

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<sup>29</sup> My definition of power is an effort to introduce culture-centric conceptions of power along goal-outcome lines as opposed to conceptions of power through European eyes only. There is a wealth of discussions of power across academic disciplines echoing the latter power concepts. See Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage Books, 1977); Peter Digeser, “The Fourth Face of Power,” *The Journal of Politics* 54, no. 4 (November 1992): 977-1007; Craig Matheson, “Weber and the Classification of Forms of Legitimacy,” *The British Journal of Sociology* 38, no. 2 (June 1987): 199-215; Per Anderson, “A Theology of Power: Being beyond Domination,” *The Journal of Religion* 76, no. 3 (July 1996): 489-90. There is yet another competing construction of power from the perspective of the natives, such as that found in Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978); James Treat, *Around Sacred Fire: Native Religious Activism in the Red Power Era, A Narrative Map of the Indian Ecumenical Conference* (New York: Pelgrave, 2003); Cheikh Anta Diop, *The Cultural Unity of Black Africa: The Domains of Patriarchy and Matriarchy in Classical Antiquity*, 3d ed. (Chicago: Third World Press, 1978); Cheikh Anta Diop, *Civilization or Barbarism: An Authentic Anthropology*, 2d and 3d ed. (New York: Laurence Hill Books, 1991).

This proposition throughout this dissertation challenges the assumptions of previous scholarship—namely, that of European domination on the one hand, and the hierarchical classification of cultural powers on the other.

Finally, the evidence I present herein suggests that we reformulate the following very influential definition of politics for the reading of cultural interactions:<sup>30</sup> “The study of politics is the study of influence and the influential.... The influential are those who get the most of what there is to get.... Those who get the most are elite; the rest are mass.”<sup>31</sup> Politics in this account is a quantitative theory with little reference to the qualitative dimension of political gains. Parallel agency invites caution when using categories such as influence, elite, and mass, and when reducing politics to only quantitative terms.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Most policy makers use this definition. Deborah Stone, an influential voice in policy studies, writes, “Safety, or the prevention of future needs, has become a major preoccupation in public policy...One mark of how recent this concern with future needs is, is that Harold Lasswell, in his 1936 classic book on politics [*Politics: Who gets What, When, and How?*], had only one thing to say about safety and its distribution in society.” Deborah Stone, *Policy Paradox: The Art of Political Decision Making*, rev. ed. (New York: W. W. Norton: 1988, 1997, 2002), 94. If you are a student of Cherokee policy for example, as I am, the concern with future needs in policy is as old as the settlement of the Americas. It was certainly the policy of the United States in which the ABCFM actively participated in the nineteenth century. The following letter makes this point: “The preservation of peace with the Indians, and, indeed with our neighbours in Canada whether acting as a company of merchants, or as a Government, will essentially depend upon the positions which are now to be occupied in the Indian country. The object contemplated in that respect is to establish ports along the course of the British trade, from Michilimackinac by Green Bay, the Hox river, and the Wisconsin river, to Prairie de Chiens, and thence up the Mississippi to St. Anthonys Halls....The object of preserving peace may be united with the policy of improving the country, and civilizing the Indians... Louis. A. J. Dallas to Andrew Jackson, May 1815, in the National Archives, RG 75, M-271, Letters Received by the Office of the Secretary of War Relating to Indian Affairs, 1800-1823, Roll 1, 1800-1816 (Washington, DC: The National Archives and Records Service, 1959), Frame 906.

<sup>31</sup> Quoted in Dankwart A. Rustow, “The Study of Elites: Who’s Who, When, and How,” *World Politics* 18, no. 4 (July 1966): 690-717, 1.

<sup>32</sup> Marxists and neo-Marxists have tended to see an economic determinism and dependency of the periphery on the center which also allows the latter to exercise a cultural hegemony on the former. Such scholars find particularly supportive the quantitative data they compile to prove the areas and the extent of the dominant classes’ economic and cultural domination of the subaltern classes. Andre Gunder Frank, part of a think



On the other hand, parallel agency does not mean that groups examined in this dissertation did not affect one another during the early nineteenth century. For it is exactly *because* they came into contact that they have become objects of study. Parallel agency simply means that no group—whether missionaries, Cherokees, or West Africans—were constituted by the definitional power of another. Each group was the influential, the elite, and the mass all at once in regard to its own independent power of definition. The Christian missionaries were influential in their own eyes when they were able to report conversions of the Cherokees, for example.<sup>33</sup> Likewise, the West Africans exulted at their own influence when they succeeded in getting the missionaries to fulfill their requests for more schools and for free education.<sup>34</sup>

The power of definition of each group involved the following three questions that I infer from their respective plans of action: What do we want? How do we get what we want? Did we get what we wanted? What Kingsbury, first missionary of the ABCFM to the Cherokees, wanted in his first meeting with the Cherokee chiefs was to translate the

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tank of the economic dependency theory has used development indexes to measure how the center has underdeveloped the periphery while Gayatri Spivak, one of the pioneers of the subaltern studies outlines the subaltern's lost voice in the brouhaha of the center's cultural imperialism. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in *The Postcolonial Studies Reader*, ed. Ashcroft Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin (London: Routledge, 1995), 24-28.

<sup>33</sup> "It was impressive to watch some of the converts, like that husky Cherokee half-breed, Charles Reece, once swimming the river in the face of his enemies to seize the canoes, now bowing before the gospel and becoming one of the early helpers of the mission," William E. Strong, editorial secretary, *The Story of the American Board*, 37.

<sup>34</sup> "Since Africans had such well-defined ideas concerning the role of missionaries and the functions of the education they provided, it is hardly surprising that they regularly articulated them. Nor were they reluctant to apply pressure on the missionaries to force them to follow their desires [although without success]. Representatives of the CMS [Church Missionary Society] soon discovered [in Nigeria] how insistent their parishioners could be over educational issues." Edward H. Berman, "Christian Missions in Africa," in *African Reactions to Missionary Education*, ed., idem (New York: Teachers College Press, 1975), 29.

object of his mission while keeping these three questions<sup>35</sup> to himself. Wilson, head missionary to Africa, proceeded in the same way in West Africa.<sup>36</sup>

Those Cherokees who decided that they wanted Christianity invented strategies similar to those of the Mohawk Kateri Mitchell:

Pope John Paul II's catechetical approach presents certain challenges to us. First, we will need to use our peoples' native languages. This means not only vocabulary but cultural idioms, symbols, and thought patterns. Second, it will not be sufficient merely to adapt other catechetical materials for use in our native communities. We will need to develop new materials that will **affirm and challenge our native people's traditions and culture** [emphasis mine].<sup>37</sup>

In West Africa, those who chose to become Christian implemented similar plans. They relied on their traditional networks to access Christianity. They also used their traditional cultural idiosyncrasies to find original (not indigenous<sup>38</sup>) ways to live their

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<sup>35</sup>Rev. Cyrus Kingsbury to Rev. Samuel Worcester, October 15, 1816, Papers of the ABCFM, ABC 18: Missions on the American Continents, 1811-1919, Unit 6, Vol. 3, Reel 738, 18.3.1: Vol. 3 Cherokee Mission, 1816-1824, Letters (Cambridge, MA: Houghton Library, Harvard University, 1985), Frame 5.

<sup>36</sup> In Liberia, where Rev. John Leighton Wilson could be confused with the Liberian colonists, Wilson wrote in his report of his tour to Africa in 1833 "We took all the pains we could to impress the minds of the kings and his people with the fact that the mission is to be entirely distinct from the colony and will be identified with the interests of the natives." J. Leighton Wilson and Stephen Wyncoop to the Prudential Committee, March 24, 1834, Report of the State of the Colony of Liberia, Papers of the ABCFM, Unit 2, Reel 149, Vol. 1, frame 25.

<sup>37</sup> Kateri Mitchell, "Program Development and Native American Catechesis," in *Native and Christian: Indigenous on Religious Identity in the United States and Canada*, ed. James Treat (New York: Routledge, 1996), 171.

<sup>38</sup> Here, as below, I consider that "indigenous" as in "Indigenous Christianity," or "native," as in "Native Christianity," does not capture the new terrain that new African converts carved for themselves in order to affirm and challenge their traditions and cultures on the one hand, and the traditions and cultures of the missionaries on the other. Instead of "indigenous," I prefer the word "original" to translate the beginning of this process of Cherokees' or African Christians' struggle within themselves to get the Christianity they wanted.

Christianity. Thelma Awori, a contemporary Liberian, remembered when she and her mother, and many Christians like them, started attending the

Pentecostal church, a little clapping and tambourine-shaking church....The church was not full on Sunday mornings but was packed to the streets on Sunday nights. This was because people from other denominations, like my mother, could not get an emotionally satisfying religious experience in their own overly sophisticated churches in the morning. Consequently, they came to the Lighthouse Full Gospel Church, as it was called, to get it at night. You had to get there early to get a seat. Some people even brought their own.<sup>39</sup>

As far as the strategy of each group was concerned, the three questions followed each other sometimes rigorously and sometimes not so rigorously. For example, the missionaries revised their strategies many times, especially the question, “How do we get what we want?,” without necessarily having a clear assessment of the question, “Did we get what we wanted?” It is worth pointing out that the majority of missionaries, apart from those who adopted Cherokee or African lifestyles, rarely questioned their objectives vis-à-vis the natives, but rather saw them as their Christian duty. Because of this mode of operation of the missionaries, the frequent conflicts between them centered on the missionizing strategies and not on Cherokees’ or West Africans’ capacity to become Christian. In other words, when the missionaries failed to achieve their goals, they blamed their particular faulty paradigm of conversions.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Thelma Awori, “Revolt Against the ‘Civilizing Mission’,” in Berman, ed. *African Reactions to Missionary Education*, 130-31.

<sup>40</sup> After his return from Africa, Wilson denounced the “revival of the oft-refuted idea that civilization must precede Christianity in reclaiming the heathen tribes of the earth” before adding that “the argument is specially unfortunate when applied to Africa.” Wilson, *Western Africa*, 509. He said that the fact that some missionaries use this argument to persuade themselves not to go to the “uncivilized” Africa was evidence of “such low views of the nature and power of the Gospel.” Ibid.

Robert Lewit echoes one such debate over strategies when he contends that it was theological disputes that caused the “irreconcilable conflict”<sup>41</sup> between the missionaries who used slaves as a strategy for the maintenance of Cherokee mission and the Prudential Committee who opposed the hiring of slaves out of fear of the abolitionists.<sup>42</sup> Although the issue of slaves at the mission station seemed to divide missionaries into two camps, most of the issues they faced allowed a more complex response within the missionary community.<sup>43</sup>

To keep the plans of action of the ABCFM missionaries, the Cherokees, and the West Africans in due focus, parallel agency is a practicable method. First, it can help deconstruct the power dynamic within the Christianization process with the identification of the respective agencies of these groups. Second, it can help integrate the three kinds of power among the missionaries, the Cherokees, and the West Africans into a synthetic narrative of the birth of Atlantic Christianity. Indeed, after the meeting of these three groups in the Atlantic missionary field, a new form of Christianity was born shaped by the experiences of Cherokee and West African Christianizations. This Atlantic

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<sup>41</sup> Robert T. Lewit, “Indian Missions and Antislavery Sentiment: A Conflict of Evangelical and Humanitarian Ideals,” *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 50, no. 1 (June 1963): 39-55, 39.

<sup>42</sup> “At the meeting of the American Board in Detroit in 1858, the committee reported that it seemed ‘desirable that the Board should be relieved ... from the unceasing embarrassments and perplexities connected with the missions in Indian Territory.... In September, 1860, the Board officially withdrew its support of the Cherokee stations.’ *Ibid.*, 53.

<sup>43</sup> ABCFM Secretary Samuel Worcester observed about the issue of having slaves at the mission station in the following extreme statement: “Either the stations must be abandoned, or slaves must be hired,” Samuel Worcester to James Treat quoted in *ibid.*, 45. However, as we will see missionaries on the ground encompassed a whole spectrum especially because the board could not give them firm instructions due to the lack of information on the foreign terrain they were operating in. For example, when Wilson was going to West Africa for his mission he received no blueprint from the board apart from some general guidelines, the reason being that he knew more about Africa than the board did. In this case, flexibility on both parts was the key.

Christianity would be further enriched, as other missions followed among the Choctaws in 1818 and among the Southern Africans in 1847.<sup>44</sup>

The five chapters of this dissertation attempt to elucidate the power dynamic between the American Christian missionaries and each of the native groups they set out to convert. Chapter One, “Cherokee and West African Christianizations,” investigates the different concepts of power held by the ABCFM missionaries and the Cherokees and the West Africans that the missionaries had set out to convert. Chapter Two, “Missionary, Cherokee, and West African Approaches to Conversion,” explores the power relationships in the conversion process. Chapter Three, “Gender and Missions,” focuses on the encounters between the ABCFM missionaries’ concept of gender relations and those of the Cherokees and West Africans who lived on the mission station. Chapter Four, “Missionary Education among the Cherokees and West Africans,” assesses the impact of the ABCFM’s “civilization before Christianization” policy on the relationships of the Cherokees and West Africans to formal education. Chapter Five, “Religious Communication between the ABCFM missionaries and the Cherokees and West Africans,” probes the ABCFM missionaries’ strategies of communicating the gospel to the Cherokees and West Africans, and the strategies of the Cherokees and West Africans in communicating their responses to the missionaries.

Together, these five chapters are an investigation of the agency of the ABCFM missionaries, the Cherokees, and the West Africans in the process of conversion—the

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<sup>44</sup> Shortly after the first mission of the mission in Liberia in 1834, the ABCFM followed with the Zulu mission in 1835. However, due to wars between the Boers and the natives, the board discontinued the mission in 1843 if to be able to more successful reestablish it in 1847 in a “third attempt.” Strong, *The Story of the American Board*, 132-36.

context in which these three groups engaged in the first half of the nineteenth century—  
in order to discover who had the greater power in this process.

CHAPTER 1: THE IMPACT OF ABCFM MISSIONARIES, CHEROKEE AND WEST  
AFRICAN'S CONCEPTS OF POWER ON THE PROCESS  
OF CHRISTIANIZATION

This chapter investigates the concept of power of the missionaries of the ABCFM on the one hand, and that of the Cherokees and the West Africans the missionaries set out to convert on the other. I argue that the agenda of each group in the Christianization process depended to a large extent on the protagonist group. Each group understood this fact, settled with it, and included it in their plan to achieve its agenda. Therefore, the power of each group worked not as a limiting force but as an enabling force.<sup>1</sup> The root of this parallel agency lies in the ABCFM missionaries' concept of foreign mission, which downplayed Cherokees and West Africans' determination to pursue their own agenda independent of those of the missionaries in the process of their Christianization.

The Establishment of the American Board of Commissioners  
for Foreign Missions

According to historian Wilbert Shenk, the ABCFM was not only the first foreign mission society to succeed, but it was also “the oldest American foreign mission board [and] the largest throughout the nineteenth century [and was] recognized as the leader among American foreign missions in terms of working out the theology, theory, and

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<sup>1</sup> Peter Degeser summarized various conceptions of power in the West. He also found that what was common to them was the fact that these “faces of power agree at some level that A exercise power over B when A affects B in a manner contrary to B’s interests,” Peter Degeser, “the Fourth Face of Power,” *The Journal of Politics* 54, no. 4 (November 1992): 977-1007, 980. This Western assumption that power should be limiting or restrictive is not particularly helpful in understanding the agency of the missionaries, the Cherokees and the West Africans. Each group also considered as an important part of its interest the fact that it would enable the protagonist group. In this case power also meant the capacity to achieve such enablement.

policies of foreign missions.”<sup>45</sup> Was the story of the ABCFM as uncomplicated as these positive statements lead us to believe? How did the ABCFM achieve such glowing results—if it did—especially when we learn that “[a]t its launch early in the nineteenth century, the modern missionary movement was long on idealism and enthusiasm but short on know-how born of experience”?<sup>46</sup>

The idea that led to the creation of the ABCFM was formally born at a conference held at Andover, Massachusetts, on 27 June 1810 in “the home of Prof. Moses Stuart [along with] the professors of Andover Theological Seminary, four or five neighboring pastors, and Mr. Jeremiah Evarts, a layman already recognized as a wise and influential counselor, comprised the company.”<sup>47</sup> Also in attendance were Rev. Samuel Worcester, pastor of the Tabernacle Church of Salem, Massachusetts and Dr. Samuel Spring, minister at Newburyport.

This conference was in preparation for the annual meeting of the Presbyterian denomination, held the next day in Bradford. The church leaders who met in Stuart’s home knew that the annual meeting was going to be dominated by the advent of the General Association of Massachusetts Proper, “a recently [1802] organized body of conservative Congregational ministers representing the more evangelical wing of the

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid., Wilbert R. Shenk, “Introduction” to *North American Foreign Missions, 1810-1914. Theology, Theory, and Policy*, Idem ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: William. B. Eerdmans, 2004), 1-5

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Strong, *The Story of American Board*, 3.



denomination.”<sup>48</sup> Could the church leaders recognize the ascendance of the evangelical temperament within the denomination? Could they harness this impulse?

These leaders first glimpsed these challenges at Stuart’s home when “a band of four Seminary students [who] had set their minds upon undertaking a Christian mission in some foreign land” introduced their “desire[...] to offer a memorial on the subject to the General Association of Massachusetts Proper.”<sup>49</sup> The Church leaders had a second glimpse the next day, when the association held its meeting. There, the four Seminary students, Adoniram Judson, Jr., Samuel Nott, Jr., Samuel J. Mills, and Samuel Newell, assertively presented their foreign mission project. They were determined to act “whether they may expect patronage and support from a missionary society in this country or must commit themselves to the direction of a European society.”<sup>50</sup>

The story of the American Board of Commissioners has been told from various perspectives since Joseph Tracy first penned his in 1840. While Tracy emphasized more a compilation of primary documents in his *History of the American Missions to the Heathen*, the later generations of historians of the board such as William Strong highlighted the achievements of the Board. In 1910, Strong wrote his *Story of the American Board* in order to show “how it came to pass; what it set out to do; and, in such degree as space will allow and as can be put into words, what it has done.”<sup>51</sup> In this

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> The speech of the four students is reproduced by Strong in *The Story of American Board*, 4-5.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., v.

process, notably, Strong credited Church leaders such as Rev. Samuel Worcester<sup>52</sup> rather than the four students for the creation of the board.<sup>53</sup>

What was the rationale? It seems apparent that it was the students who put forth the idea that started the Board. Tracy himself recognized that as a result of the “efforts he [Samuel Mills] made during the hours of relaxation to promote piety among his fellow students,” a society was formed in the spring of 1808, in the north-west lower room of the east college “for the purpose of making inquiries and forming plans for future missions.”<sup>54</sup> Besides, Mills’ vision was not even popular among church leaders. Indeed, in 1808, “[t]he spirit which was to sustain a system of missions to the heathen in foreign lands was gaining strength in the churches; but, beside the members of this society, there were few, if any, in whose minds it had ripened into a distinct idea of something soon to be actually attempted and accomplished.”<sup>55</sup> Because they were ahead of their time, the students even had to make sure that the “existence [of this student association] was kept secret from all but its members.”<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>53</sup> Joseph Tracy, the pioneer historian of the American missions, did the same although he gave more credit to the Church leaders for harnessing the passion of the students: “Every great and effectual movement in human society begins in secret and in silence....As the movement draws towards its full development, it produces the leading minds which it needs; the men who first understand, and cause others to understand, what the movement is to be, and under whose guidance the multitude labor purposely for its accomplishment.” Tracy, *History of American Missions*, 28. Thus such leaders were those who launched “on the 25<sup>th</sup> of June, 1810...the first idea of the “American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions.” Ibid., 30.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 28-29.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid..

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

In my opinion, the grassroots experience of these students characterizes how the board began, because it is in the college rooms where “Samuel J. Mills, born at Torrington, Ct. April 21, 1783....and a few others...often met where this first conversation was held.<sup>57</sup> Yet why did most serious commentators on the origin of the Board, including Joseph Tracy and William Strong give the ultimate credit to the church leaders for the establishment of the ABCFM? These two distinguished authors seemed to have taken the institutional perspective in their accounts. They would argue that after the idea of foreign mission was officially adopted in 1810, the ABCFM board, which was composed of Church leaders, gave the foreign mission movement the institutional outlook that continues to influence the ABCFM today.

Indeed, because most friends of foreign missions in the words of the board acknowledged that “Christian missions cannot be executed without pecuniary support,”<sup>58</sup> the actions of the board of the ABCFM such as fundraising, after 1810, eclipsed the pioneering leadership of Samuel Mills and his friends.<sup>59</sup> It makes sense that Strong, one of the most comprehensive writers on the Board after Joseph Tracy, would capture this meaning through a metaphor: “The aim has been to portray the Board as an organism

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid, 28.

<sup>58</sup> Tracy, *History of American Missions*, 33.

<sup>59</sup> These leaders remained consistently committed to the success of the ABCFM, while the students did not. For example, one of the four students, Adoniram Judson, who had even been sent to the London Missionary Society in England in 1811 to enquire about the experience of missions for the new ABCFM resigned shortly after being sent to Calcutta in 1812: “On the 27<sup>th</sup> of August, Mr. Judson went to Serampore, and informed the Baptist missionaries there that he and his wife had adopted their views of baptism. They were immersed on the first Sabbath in September. On the first of September, he wrote to the Corresponding Secretary, announcing his withdrawal of himself from under the instructions of the Board.” Tracy, *History of American Missions*, 40.

living and growing in the world; to mark the stages of that growth, to reflect the temper and movement of that life, and to describe briefly and yet vividly some characteristic scenes enacted on the many fields of the Board's enterprise."<sup>60</sup>

That is to say, without the decided leadership of the church authorities, the will of the students might have produced everything but an American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. Although the movement leading to the creation of the ABCFM was a grassroots movement, it needed the approbation and investment of church leaders to take shape. This procedure was not lost on the four students. Shortly after forming their association, Tracy reported, "[t]hey made out a written list of clergymen, on whose attention they resolved to urge the subject."<sup>61</sup> They then wrote a letter confessing that "[t]he undersigned, feeling their youth and inexperience, look up to their fathers in the church, and respectfully solicit their advice, direction and prayers."<sup>62</sup>

Their strategy was successful. They secured the attention of these clergymen, who approved their proposal. The report commissioned by the "church fathers" for this matter agreed that "[t]he object of missions to the heathen cannot but be regarded, by the friends of the Redeemer, as vastly interesting and important."<sup>63</sup> "After hearing from the applicants a more particular account of their views, the association referred the subject to a committee, consisting of the Rev. Samuel Spring, D. D. Rev. Samuel Worcester, and

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<sup>60</sup> Strong, *The Story of the American Board*, v.

<sup>61</sup> Tracy, *History of American Missions*, 29.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

Rev. Enoch Hale. On the next day, Friday, June 29, this Committee made [a] report, which was unanimously adopted.”<sup>64</sup>

Tracy’s publication provides the entirety of the report, but it is useful only to mention the administrative structure the report adopted: “Therefore, Voted, That there be instituted by this General Association, a Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, for the purpose of devising ways and means, and adopting and prosecuting measures, for promoting the spread of the gospel in the heathen lands.”<sup>65</sup> It was also “Voted, that the said Board of Commissioners consist of nine members, all of them in the first instance, chosen by this Association; afterwards annually, five of them by this body, and four of them by the General Association of Connecticut...”<sup>66</sup> According to Tracy, “The Association then elected His Excellency John Treadwell, Esq., Rev. Timothy Dwight, D. D., Gen. Jedediah Huntington, and Rev. Calvin Chapin, of Connecticut, and Rev. Joseph Lyman, D. D., , Rev. Samuel Spring, D. D., William Bartlett, Esq., Rev. Samuel Worcester, and Dea. Samuel H. Walley, of Massachusetts as Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions.”<sup>67</sup>

On 5 September 1810, the Board held its first meeting at Farmington, Connecticut and adopted a “Constitution... Its twelfth [article] required that a report of the transaction of the Board should be annually made, in writing, to the respective bodies by which the

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 31.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 31-32.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 32.

commissioners are appointed.”<sup>68</sup> As a result, “The Board then appointed His Excellency, John Treadwell, President; Rev. Dr. Spring, Vice President; William Bartlett, Esq, Rev. Dr. Spring, and Rev. Mr. Worcester, Prudential Committee; Rev. Calvin Chapin, Recording Secretary; Rev. Mr. Worcester, Corresponding Secretary; Dea. S. H. Walley, Treasurer; and Mr. Joshua Goodale, Auditor, for the year ensuing.”<sup>69</sup>

Because the report approving of the students’ proposal also “advise[d] the young gentlemen, whose request is before us, in the way of earnest prayer and diligent attention to suitable studies and means of information...humbly to wait the openings and guidance of providence in respect to their great and excellent design,”<sup>70</sup> time was precious: “The Prudential Committee were directed to prepare a report, to be submitted to the General Associations of Massachusetts and Connecticut; and with the corresponding secretary, to obtain information concerning unevangelized nations, and report to the Board at the next meeting.”<sup>71</sup>

The organization framework of the ABCFM was thus crystallized; however, the plan of action was not as this quote above shows. The board was in a situation comparable to that of a person who owns a car before having a driver’s licence. The car is there, but cannot hit the road because the driver cannot drive it yet. Although the Prudential Committee was put at the command of the newly created ABCFM, it was

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 32.

hardly prepared to execute its mission. The Committee did not have a clear plan of action because the practical circumstances of the work of the missionaries were known to none. Therefore, the Committee sent Mr. Adoniram Judson, Jr., one of the four students of Andover Seminary, to England to enquire with the directors of the more experienced London Missionary Society

whether any arrangements could be made for prosecuting the work of missions in concert with that Society; whether, if desirable, the American missionaries could receive support from that Society for a time, without committing themselves wholly and finally to its direction; whether, in any case, they could be supported by the joint funds of the two bodies; and if so, under whose direction the mission must be placed.<sup>72</sup>

The challenges of forming a foreign mission board before knowing how to operate in foreign lands presented immediately. No one knew the date of the voyage. In January, Samuel Newell and Gordon Hall, “who had been pursuing medical studies at Philadelphia, returned in haste with the intelligence that the ship *Harmony* was to sail from that port for Calcutta in about two weeks, and would receive the missionaries as passengers.”<sup>73</sup> There were barely any funds for the operation: “All things were ready except funds; but of these, the Committee had not more than \$1,200 at their disposal...[when] when the expense of the passage of the missionaries to India, their outfits and their salaries for one year, which had been arranged on a very economical scale would amount to nearly \$5,000.”<sup>74</sup> After hesitation between sending the first missionaries either without “full salary” or “without their wives,” the board finally

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<sup>72</sup> Tracy, *History of American Missions*, 33.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

<sup>74</sup> Tracy, *History of American Missions*, 36.

resolved to send the first four missionaries with their wives and only one year salary.<sup>75</sup> The first foreign missions of the ABCFM sailed from Salem, Massachusetts, on the *Caravan* on February 19, 1812, and February 24, 1812, to India and Ceylon, respectively.

Once their missionaries arrived in India, new and unexpected challenges faced the board. The missionaries had sailed in February, 1812, and in June of the same year, the so-called “War of 1812” commenced between the United States and Great Britain. Its impact on the mission was inevitable: “Soon after their arrival, Mssrs. Newell and Judson were ordered to return home in the same vessel that brought them, and were informed that the vessel would not be allowed to depart without them.”<sup>76</sup> On May 6, 1812, the Schooner *Alligator*, which transported Hall and Nott to Calcutta was seized, accused of “cruising for six weeks off the Cape, to inform American vessels of the declaration of war,” and the missionaries were suspected to be American “political emissaries” and were arrested on charge of evading arrest.<sup>77</sup>

On the mission front, several challenges also rose unexpectedly. Adoniram Judson, Jr., one of the Seminary students who had been sent to the London Missionary Society in England in 1811 to enquire about the experience of missions for the new ABCFM, resigned shortly after arriving in Calcutta for doctrinal reasons:

On the 27<sup>th</sup> of August [1812], Mr. Judson went to Serampore, and informed the Baptist missionaries there that he and his wife had adopted their views of baptism.

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 39.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 41-46. Hall and Nott were to be deported to England as their letter Sir Evan Nepean, Governor of Calcutta, informs us: “Right Honorable Sir—We understand that the final arrangements for our being transported to England are now made.” Quoted in *ibid.*, 45.



They were immersed on the first Sabbath in September. On the first of September, he wrote to the Corresponding Secretary, announcing his withdrawal of himself from under the instructions of the Board.<sup>78</sup>

In September 1812, Mrs. (no first name) Newell died of fever.<sup>79</sup> In December, 1812, the board received information of “the burning of the Serampore Mission printing office, containing 2000 reams of paper, and founts of type in fourteen of the languages of Asia; a loss estimated at more than \$53,000.”<sup>80</sup>

Thus by the time the board authorized Rev. Cyrus Kingsbury to open a mission field among the Cherokees in 1816, the board had gone through four years of trial and error. Cyrus Kingsbury (1786-1870) was born in Alstead, New Hampshire. He graduated from Brown University in 1812 and from Andover Theological Seminary in 1815. He was ordained and worked in Virginia and East Tennessee under the Connecticut Missionary Society.<sup>81</sup> With the help of President James Madison and the secretary of war, he secured a significant subsidy for his educational work. The Cherokees’ Great Council granted him land and, in January 1817, he headed the mission established near Chattanooga, Tennessee, later named Brainerd.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 40.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 39.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 41.

<sup>81</sup> David M. Stowe, “Kingsbury, Cyrus” in Anderson, ed. *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions*, 366-67.

<sup>82</sup> Samuel Worcester to John Calhoun, November 3, 1819, in National Archives, RG 75, Letters Received by the Office of the Secretary of War Relating to Indian Affairs, 1817-1819, M-271, Roll 2 (Washington, DC: National Archives Microfilm Publications, 1959), frame 1605. In 1816 before he took his first visit to the Cherokee country to introduce the subject of the missions there, Rev. Cyrus Kingsbury had introduced his project to the head of the departments of government dealing with the Indian affairs in Washington, DC. After this protocol, the Secretary of War, by order of President James Madison, officially promised to him that “In the first instance, the Agent (for Indian Affairs) will be directed to erect a comfortable school

In 1818, Kingsbury married Sarah Bowdoin Varnum. In the summer of that year he opened a mission among the Choctaws at Elliot. Fifteen months later, he opened a second station among the Choctaws at Mayhew, 100 miles to the east. After the United States removed the Choctaws to the territory west of the Mississippi in 1830, Kingsbury moved his mission work to the Choctaws' new territory at Pine Ridge (now Oklahoma) in 1836.<sup>83</sup> "Irreconcilable" differences between the board and Kingsbury with regard to the admission of the slaveholding Choctaws in the church led the board to withdraw its support from the mission in 1859, which subsequently caused the mission to close.<sup>84</sup> Kingsbury then joined the Southern Presbyterian Board, which supported him in his battle against the ABCFM in Boston. He remained in the southern Presbyterian institution until his death in 1870.<sup>85</sup>

What were the concepts of power of the missionaries of the ABCFM and the Cherokees they set out to convert? Did their respective assumptions of power affect the Christianization process?

### Missionary and Cherokee Concepts of Power

Let us start with the missionaries of the ABCFM. The ABCFM assumed it could define its relationship with the Cherokees. From beginning to end, the ABCFM trusted

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house... The only return which is expected by the President is an annual report of the state of the school, its progress, and its future prospects." Tracy, *History of American Missions*, 62.

<sup>83</sup> Stowe, "Kingsbury, Cyrus" in Anderson, ed. *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions*, 366-67.

<sup>84</sup> Lewit, "In Indian Missions and Antislavery Sentiment," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 50, 39.

<sup>85</sup> Stowe, "Kingsbury, Cyrus" in Anderson, ed. *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions*, 366-67.

that it could build a “Christian civilization” that would include them. Although read at the annual meeting of 1844, ABCFM Secretary Treat’s paper on “The Present Duty of the Church to the Heathen World” captured the spirit of the ABCFM mission from its inception throughout the nineteenth century, as he argued that it was in the power of Christians to evangelize the whole world in less than fifty years. It is not his estimate of the Board’s share of the non-Christian world, which he placed “at sixty million,”<sup>86</sup> that stimulates the most curiosity in the Cherokee nation; it is the way the ABCFM went about achieving this goal that is my concern here.

The ABCFM believed that it could achieve its goal of Christianizing the Cherokees by civilizing them first. On September 3, 1819, its missionaries at Brainerd reported that they were “more and more convinced of the practicality of civilizing and Christianizing this long neglected people [the Cherokees].”<sup>87</sup> In that month, President James Monroe had spent a night at Brainerd to ensure the execution of this plan of civilizing and Christianizing the Cherokees, and Return Meigs, the Cherokee agent, wrote to congratulate him on this visit: “I was much pleased that you visited the seminary because I consider it as the commencement of a plan that promises more than any other yet tried, to raise the uncultured savages to civilized life.”<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Strong, *The Story of the American Board*, 160.

<sup>87</sup> Isaac Anderson and others to Samuel Worcester, September 13, 1819, Unit 6, Reel 737, 18.3.1.: Cherokee Missions, Vol. 2, 1817-1824, Journals, Letters, Joint Communication, Papers of the ABCFM, ABC 18: Missions on the American Continents 1811-1919, (Cambridge, MA: The Houghton Library, Harvard University, 1985), Frame 383.

<sup>88</sup> Return Meigs to James Monroe, September 17, 1819, in National Archives, RG 75, Letters Received by the Office of the Secretary of War Relating to Indian Affairs, 1817-1819, M-271, Roll 2, Frame 1380.

Meigs was certainly referring to past efforts to “civilize” the Native Americans such as those of the Society of Friends (Quakers). Before the ABCFM, they had also planned to draw the “Indian Natives from their ancient riveted habits into the more useful and comfortable ways of the White People.”<sup>89</sup> In contrast to the Society of Friends who worked independently as a missionary organization, however, the ABCFM preferred to work very closely with the U.S. government. Kingsbury first met the Cherokees and Meigs at a meeting in Washington, D.C. after the secretary of war had made a long communication to the senate on “civilization” of the Native Americans. It is at that meeting that Meigs first informed Kingsbury that “a certain sum would be specified, which might be appropriated as should be thought best” for the purpose of civilizing the Native Americans.<sup>90</sup> Indeed, on March 3, 1819, Congress appropriated the sum of ten thousand dollars “to be yearly applied for the purpose of civilizing the Indians.”<sup>91</sup>

I argue that Kingsbury’s official contacts with the U.S. authorities suggest that the ABCFM defined its mission among the Cherokees as an offshoot of the government’s civilization program. The following facts also contribute to this impression. First, the ABCFM was created in 1810, and its first missionaries were sent to India, not to the Native Americans; the ABCFM did not send missionaries to the Cherokees at its inception because the official talk of civilization was not yet matured if we consider 1819

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<sup>89</sup> Henry Drinker and others to Henry Dearborn, December 31, 1801, in National Archives, M-271, Letters Received by the Office of the Secretary of War Relating to Indian Affairs, 1800-1823, Roll 1, 1800-1816 (Washington, D.C.: The National Archives and Records Service, 1959), Frame 771.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Henry Drinker to John Calhoun, in National Archives, M-271, Letters Received by the Office of the Secretary of War Relating to Indian Affairs, 1800-1823, Roll 3, 1820-1821, Frame 976.

above as a landmark. However, when this talk gained way in the U.S., the ABCFM seized the opportunity and sent Kingsbury to meet the Cherokees at the meeting mentioned above that also discussed their civilization in Washington, D.C. on April 6, 1816.<sup>92</sup>

If the ABCFM did not intend to graft its mission on the government's civilizing program, why did it not go directly to the Cherokees in their nation as other missionary boards like the Society of Friends had done? Indeed, this Society, who received the circular about the fund Congress appropriated for the civilization of the Native Americans, was already operating among Native Americans in Pennsylvania, but more importantly they admitted that their contribution was to "aid our government in its benevolent purpose in civilizing the Indians."<sup>93</sup> Kingsbury does not explicitly say so, but his actions point to a similar aid the ABCFM thought it was bringing to the government's civilization program. For at the meeting in Washington referred to above, Kingsbury obtained Meigs's "approbation" for his mission and an assurance of "cordial aid in promoting it."<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Cyrus Kingsbury to Samuel Worcester, May 8, 1816, Letters and Papers of the Board, Vol. VI, Cherokee Mission, Communications from Individual missionaries and Papers Respecting them, Received before September 1, 1824, Missions on the American Continents, 1811-1919, Cherokee Mission, 1816-1824, letters, Papers of the ABCFM, Unit 6, Vol. 3, Reel 738 (Boston, MA: Houghton Library, Harvard University, 1980), Frame 12.

<sup>93</sup> Henry Drinker to John Calhoun, in National Archives, M-271, Letters Received by the Office of the Secretary of War Relating to Indian Affairs, 1800-1823, Roll 3, 1820-1821 (Washington, D.C.: The National Archives and Records Service, 1959), Frame 978.

<sup>94</sup> Cyrus Kingsbury to Samuel Worcester, May 8, 1816, Letters and Papers of the Board, Papers of the ABCFM, Unit 6, Vol. 3, Reel 738, Frame 12.

If this reasoning is correct, it will follow that the ABCFM consulted the U.S. government about the content of its mission, but only informed the Cherokees about it. Indeed, the actions of the ABCFM in the Cherokee nation confirm exactly that. On his first trip to the Cherokee nation to inform them of his mission, Kingsbury accompanied Andrew Jackson who went to the nation to get the Cherokees to ratify a treaty. He reported afterward, “After the treaty was ratified, Gen. [Andrew] Jackson politely introduced the subject of the schools, and urged the importance of educating their children. I then stated distinctly the object of the society in sending me out. I told them we would take their children, teach them freely without money.”<sup>95</sup>

To sum up, the overall approach to their mission in the Cherokee nation shows that, firstly, the ABCFM missionaries defined their plan of Christianization of the Cherokees as one that should civilize them first. Secondly, this decision was taken more as a result of the talk of civilization of the U.S. government than as a result of a plan of their own as a one way street. Thirdly, the missionaries were to be the subjects to execute this plan, and the Cherokees were to be the objects on whom this plan was executed.

However, neglecting the Cherokees’ input in this process did not mean that they remained the passive objects the ABCFM intended them to be. By *passive*, I do not mean that missionaries intended the natives not to do any thing in the process of their Christianization. What I mean by *passive* is that the missionaries expected the natives to do only what the missionaries said. As I show below, this plan failed because the records

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<sup>95</sup> Cyrus Kingsbury to Samuel Worcester, October 15, 1816, Letters and Papers of the Board, Papers of the ABCFM, Unit 6, Vol. 3, Reel 738, Frame 5.

points to a vibrant Cherokee independent power of definition. That is to say, throughout the encounter with the ABCFM missionaries, Cherokees never doubted their capacity to define their relationship with the ABCFM missionaries according to their interests—this is what I call Cherokee power of definition.

The Cherokee power of definition was as complex as the missionaries'. Defining their interests as a group was strongly debated—"What do we want? How do we get what want? Did we get what we wanted?" The ABCFM board was certainly not well acquainted with the secular affairs in the Cherokee nation, for the Cherokees did not want to become civilized in order to be Christians, as the ABCFM planned. Their goal was to become civilized in order to secure their lands from the encroachment of the white settlers. This was the fundamental issue among the Cherokees starting in 1808, which eventually led to divisions between upper and lower towns. Even this issue was not fully grasped by the U.S. government, as Henry Dearborne, the then secretary of war, reported in 1808 that the Cherokee deputation had proposed "a division of the lands of the Nation between the upper and lower Cherokees by a fixed line, and then to have certain tracts, for farms, laid off for each family to be farmers."<sup>96</sup>

As historian Wilkins correctly observes, "[H]ad officials in Washington taken as shrewd an interest in the Cherokees as the Cherokees did in them, they would have suffered less surprise at the competence with which these Indians conducted their affairs."<sup>97</sup> When Cherokees divided into two groups with those of the upper towns

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<sup>96</sup> Wilkins, *Cherokee Tragedy*, 44-45.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

wanting to stay in the east and “civilize,” and those of the lower towns wanting to exchange their lands east of Mississippi for land on the Arkansas River,<sup>98</sup> they were arguing over what was best for the Cherokees, not over what was best for the U.S. government or the missionaries.

Historian Theda Purdue has tried to capture this debate in her terminology of “progressives” and “conservatives.” She writes, “I have used the term ‘progressive’ to refer to those Indians who favored adoption of Anglo-American culture and ultimate assimilation into the dominant white society. By ‘traditionalist’ or ‘conservative,’ I mean those Indians who wanted to preserve traditional practices and values and to maintain their cultural integrity.”<sup>99</sup> Although this categorization aptly echoes Cherokee agency, we must be careful not to assume that the debate in the Cherokee nation was cultural; that is, between forward looking or “progressive” Cherokees who wanted to remain in the east and culturally adapt to their times, and backward looking or “conservative” Cherokees who wanted to preserve their traditional practices at all costs.

Both groups understood that times had changed, but both groups significantly differed on how to cope with this change. Indeed, out of all changes, the pressure on Native American lands was greatest, as recognized by Kingsbury here.

The Indians flatter themselves of being nursed and protected in the enjoyment of their vast extend of land, so disproportionate to their population; but this I conceive to be impossible; they are now surrounded by at least two millions of inhabitants. They are by the changes that have taken place, now placed in the center of that population—the two Carolinas, Georgia, Tennessee, and Alabama now environ them and they cannot long remain in possession of that extent of

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<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

<sup>99</sup> Purdue, *Nations Remembered*, xii.



land within the boundaries of these states...I do not think it will be in the power of Government to prevent it. If some arrangement does not take place by sale or exchange, they will be overrun by intruders. I know the power of the Government is great; but whether that power would be exercised with rigor in such a case is at least very doubtful, and if not rigorously exercised the case would be without remedy. The States of Tennessee and Georgia are pressing of the Government to extinguish the Indian title to the lands within their respective chartered limits. While they be content to see a Government existing especially within their limits—imperium in imperio—independent of their governments, exercising barbarous policy over such an extensive part of their territory while their population is rapidly increasing for whom they want lands. Will they not say the General Government is nursing or protecting a barbarous polity in their constitutional lands and at great expense.<sup>100</sup>

Therefore, the so-called “progressives” were Cherokees who thought it was still possible for Cherokees to control the threat to their lands, even though they believed it was chimerical to think Cherokees could achieve this goal by putting a spatial wedge between themselves and white settlers. Because most white settlers preyed on their lands on the pretext that they were not “civilized,”<sup>101</sup> pro-civilization Cherokee leaders naively thought that all they had to do to stop such encroachment was to “civilize”:

We have ever been opposed to Emigration to the west of Mississippi knowing that we could not get out of the way of the white people by going there, and that the wild game would last no longer there than they had done here and we believe our

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<sup>100</sup> Cyrus Kingsbury to President Madison, February 5, 1820, in National Archives, RG 75, M-271, Letters Received by the Office of the Secretary of War Relating to Indian Affairs, 1800-1823, Roll 3, 1820-1821, Frame 491.

<sup>101</sup> William Rabun, Governor of Georgia, wrote to Andrew Jackson about the “bleeding frontier” protesting the arrest of captain Obed Wright of the Georgia Militia, who Jackson accused of leading an “unwarranted attack of a party of Georgians on the Chehaw village, burning it and killing six men and one woman.” The governor questioned Jackson’s “demand that Capt. Wright be delivered in Irons to your Agent Major Davis,” because Capt. Wright was appointed by him, and not by Jackson. He then defiantly insisted to Jackson, who posed as the defender of the Cherokees, that “You may rest assured, that if the savages continue their depredations on our unprotected frontier, I shall think and act for myself in that respect. William Rabun to Gen. Andrew Jackson, June 1, 1818, Deputation to the Secretary of War, February 5, 1818, in National Archives, RG 75, Letters Received by the Office of the Secretary of War Relating to Indian Affairs, 1817-1819, M-271, Roll 2, Frame 779-810.

children could better get education on the lands of their fathers and be taught to the habits of industry, than to follow the precarious life of the chase.<sup>102</sup>

Thus, these leaders believed that with the aid of the president of the United States, they would “be able to effect some change for the better and that it[Cherokee culture] will regularly progress until it arrives at that point of perfection which will secure to us peace and happiness.”<sup>103</sup> In their opinion, this peace they were pursuing was threatened by the Cherokees who moved to Arkansas. Therefore, they lobbied and led the U.S. government to annul the treaty it had contracted with the Arkansas Cherokees:

The Cherokee Nation are not less anxious now than heretofore to bring the late treaty of the 8<sup>th</sup> of July 1817 to a close, the period for its termination June 1818 having passed without its accomplishment. We would now be glad to enter such arrangements as may be mutually thought advantageous to the United States and the Cherokee Nation and thus obviate or remove the disagreeable situation in which the non-execution of that treaty has placed us.<sup>104</sup>

The Arkansas Cherokees expressed their surprise at such volte-face in a letter to the president of the United States: “The treaty entered into between the United States and the Cherokee nation at Highwassee the 8<sup>th</sup> of July 1817 is the treaty we rely on. We did not believe it would ever be annulled.”<sup>105</sup> They reminded the government that the

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<sup>102</sup> Pathkiller and Charles Hicks to Return Meigs, November 2, 1819, in National Archives, RG 75, Letters Received by the Office of the Secretary of War Relating to Indian Affairs, 1817-1819, M-271, Roll 2, Frame 1394-1395.

<sup>103</sup> Cherokee Deputation to the Secretary of War, February 5, 1818, in National Archives, RG 75, Letters Received by the Office of the Secretary of War Relating to Indian Affairs, 1817-1819, M-271, Roll 2, Frame 577-78.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 579.

<sup>105</sup> Cherokee Nation –Arkansas to the President of the United States, August 3, 1819, in National Archives, RG 75, Letters Received by the Office of the Secretary of War Relating to Indian Affairs, 1817-1819, M-271, Roll 2, Frame 1205.

Cherokees who remained in the east were not spokesmen of the Arkansas Cherokees who considered themselves “capable of acting for ourselves.”<sup>106</sup>

Despite this conflict, we should remember that both “progressive” and “conservative” Cherokees tried to maintain their Cherokee-ness that they wanted to protect in the face of whiteness. The “conservative” Cherokees were well known for their rhetoric about preserving Cherokee traditions, but “progressive” Cherokee leaders also strove to protect their Cherokee traditions such as the Cherokee language and the concept of native land. For example, Charles Hicks, speaker of the Cherokee Council, wrote to his son, Loaney, whom he had sent to missionary school, praying that “the Lord keep and protect you on your journey, and convey you back to your native land,” and advised him to converse with Red Bird, his countryman, “at times in your own language so as not to forget it.”<sup>107</sup>

Of course, Hicks advice ran parallel to the intention of U.S. government by the Cherokee agent. Meigs wrote to the secretary of war about the policy to adopt with the Cherokee children who could be civilized in three years, cautioning their separation from their society: “if they return into their former society they will lose the advantage of it[civilized education] for the predominant manners will prevail ... I have no doubt of such a change being opposed by the chiefs.” This is an excellent case of misjudgment of the Cherokee agency for the fears of the Cherokee agent give me exactly a clue at what Cherokees wanted, especially if I contrast these fears with Hicks’s advice to Loaney

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<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> Charles Hicks to Loaney, May 22, 1818, in National Archives, RG 75, Letters Received by the Office of the Secretary of War Relating to Indian Affairs, 1817-1819, M-271, Roll 2, Frame 646.

above.<sup>108</sup> Meigs was not aware of this Cherokee agency, and Kingsbury was unaware either. If the latter had been, he would not have indulged in a superficial replacement of the Cherokee children's names with English names.<sup>109</sup>

Finally, characterizing the interests of the Cherokees, we should also remember that both "conservative" and "progressive" Cherokees did not completely reject including elements of white civilization into their societies. The "progressive" Cherokees were well known for their rhetoric about allowing schools and the arts of "civilized life" in their midst, but "conservative" Cherokees were not against such things either. For example, these latter informed the president of the United States that they had allowed "now missionaries with us, whose object is to establish schools among us" in Arkansas.<sup>110</sup>

To many Native Americans like the Creeks, these "conservative" Cherokees were even "civilized":

We hear much talk of the Cherokees wishing to exchange part or whole of their land South and West of the Tennessee river with you for lands West of the Mississippi river. This is a business of their own and with which we have nothing to do only so far as this. That about the time of our late troubles and war, the Cherokees attempted to lay claim to a large body of our land West of our boundary line with you from the head waters of the Apalachy river on the Hog Mountain to the Mouth of Welles Creek on the Coosa River and have recently began to settle on it. To this they have no right and we do not admit their claim nor do we wish you to listen to them on the subject of exchanging any territory or land South of the above mentioned line or East of the Coosa River until we have

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<sup>108</sup> Return Meigs to John Calhoun, February 5, 1820, in National Archives, RG 75, M-271, Letters Received by the Office of the Secretary of War Relating to Indian Affairs, 1800-1823, Roll 3, 1820-1821, Frame 494-98.

<sup>109</sup> Cyrus Kingsbury to Samuel Worcester, June 30, 1817, Letters and Papers of the Board, Papers of the ABCFM, Unit 6, Vol. 3, Reel 738, Frame 31.

<sup>110</sup> Cherokee Nation –Arkansas to the President of the United States, August 3, 1819, in National Archives, RG 75, Letters Received by the Office of the Secretary of War Relating to Indian Affairs, 1817-1819, M-271, Roll 2, Frame 1205.

councilled with them and understood each other more fully on this subject. There is a great portion of the more influential Cherokees who are anxious to swap all their land but I know many and nearly half of the force of the Cherokees who are not much civilized and live mostly in the woods that do not wish to swap but would prefer remaining where they are. They requested us to tell you, should we see you, that they were afraid the influence which the other portion of their nation had (for they are mostly half-breed) might eventually swap all their land and leave these without any land walk on and we fear the want of land in their nation might throw them on us. This last mention is simply a request of these people and not part of my business.<sup>111</sup>

In a nutshell, it is more useful to think of “conservatives” as those Cherokees who thought it was still possible for Cherokees to control the threat to their lands by putting a spatial wedge between themselves and the white settlers. For, they like the “progressive” were following their interests, and did what they thought best to secure their lands. In the words of the Cherokee agent, they had no choice but to exchange their lands: “I know of no alternative for their salvation as a people in lieu of what is proposed above, except that of an exchange of land.”<sup>112</sup>

To sum up, the Cherokees did not follow the civilization program of the U.S. government and the ABCFM for the reasons these latter two imagined. They did not divide for the reasons given either. Therefore, the next fundamental question for us is to know Cherokees’ side of the story when it comes to their adoption of Christianity. What was their interest in pursuing Christianity or the lack thereof?

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<sup>111</sup> William Mckintosh to Pr. James Madison, January 15, 1817, in National Archives, RG 75, Letters Received by the Office of the Secretary of War Relating to Indian Affairs, 1817-1819, M-271, Roll 2, Frame 48.

<sup>112</sup> Return Meigs to John Calhoun, in National Archives, M-271, Letters Received by the Office of the Secretary of War Relating to Indian Affairs, 1800-1823, Roll 3, 1820-1821, Frame 494.

Because Cherokees pursued civilization in order to save their lands, they did not regard civilization as a stepping stone towards Christianity. For example, although the “civilized” Cherokees saw private property and farming as an outward sign of civilization with missionaries in general<sup>113</sup> or the ABCFM in particular,<sup>114</sup> they viewed Christianity as a part of civilization, not as a separate and higher goal. This attitude is what explains why most civilized Cherokees were Christian. For example, the first Cherokee audience to which Kingsbury preached on February 2, 1817, after his arrival in the Cherokee nation on January 19, 1817, was composed of Cherokees of mixed ancestry. He reported that “[a]bout 30 [people] were present, 1/3 mixed blood Cherokees, 1/3 whites, and 1/3 blacks Christians.”<sup>115</sup>

Another example is that although the majority of the Cherokees (5000) who moved to Arkansas in 1818 and 1819 may have been less inclined to adopt Christianity, the minority of the Cherokees (2000) who remained in the east were ready to embrace

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<sup>113</sup> The Society of Friends considered private property and farming as a sign of civilization among the Native Americans they worked on the Allegheny River in Pennsylvania: “One young chief observed, “When I lived at Teneshadago, I could do no good, now I have left it I can work and make farm.” They also begin to have ideas of distinct property, each family considers the lots they clear, fence and cultivate as their own.” Henry Drinker and others to Henry Dearborn, December 31, 1801, in National Archives, M-271, Letters Received by the Office of the Secretary of War Relating to Indian Affairs, 1800-1823, Roll 1, 1800-1816, Frame 773.

<sup>114</sup> “It is the instruction of the board to follow the plan of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions adopted by their missionaries in the Cherokee Nation and Choctaw Nations to combine instruction in the various branches of husbandry and the most useful mechanic arts with the common rudiments of education.” Art Hoyt to John Calhoun, February 5, 1822, in National Archives, RG 75, M-271, Letters Received by the Office of the Secretary of War relating to Indian Affairs, Roll 4, 1822-1823 (Washington, DC: The National Archives and Records Service, 1959), Frame 139.

<sup>115</sup> Journal of Missions, January 19, 1817, Unit 6, Reel 737, 18.3.1.: Cherokee Missions, Vol. 2, 1817-1824, Journals, Letters, Joint Communication, Papers of the ABCFM, ABC 18: Missions on the American Continents 1811-1919, Frame 5.

Christianity.<sup>116</sup> This situation was not very clear in 1808 when both groups left Hiwassee, symbol of old traditions, and moved to Oothcaloga, symbol of a new course around 1800. At that time Cherokees as a whole welcomed the Moravian missionaries among them and sent their children to the mission school at Spring Place in 1804.<sup>117</sup>

However, by 1817 it was clear that only the Cherokees who remained in the east were pro-Christianity. The new members of the Cherokee council, which was formed in the aftermath of the division, were all Christians. These were Pathkiller (King), Charles Hicks (treasurer of the Nation), John Ross (President of the National Committee), Major Ridge (Speaker for the Committee in the Coosawatie District), Charles Reece (member of Committee at Chickamaugh).<sup>118</sup> Old Pathkiller was probably just in favor of Christianity, but Hicks had converted to Christianity with the Moravians before Kingsbury arrived.<sup>119</sup> Shortly after Kingsbury founded the ABCFM mission, Hicks and Ross expressed their sympathy for Christianity to Samuel Worcester by declaring, “we trust in the Great Author of our existence that the time is not far distant when the Red children of the forest will embrace the Knowledge of Civilization, Religion.”<sup>120</sup> The

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<sup>116</sup> Boudinot, “An Address to the Whites,” in *Cherokee editor: The Writings of Elias Boudinot*, ed. by Purdue, 71.

<sup>117</sup> Purdue, *ibid.*, 5-6.

<sup>118</sup> Cherokee Civil List, May 1822, Unit 6, Reel 737, 18.3.1.: Cherokee Missions, Vol. 2, 1817-1824, Journals, Letters, Joint Communication, Papers of the ABCFM, ABC 18: Missions on the American Continents 1811-1919, Frame 546-48.

<sup>119</sup> Wilkins, *Cherokee Tragedy*, 36.

<sup>120</sup> John Ross and Charles Hicks to Samuel Worcester, March 6, 1819, Letters and Papers of the Board, Papers of the ABCFM, Unit 6, Vol. 3, Reel 738, Frame 471.

Ridge had also become Christian with the Moravian missionaries “three years after residence in Oothcaloga.”<sup>121</sup> Reece entered Kingsbury’s church on February 1, 1818.<sup>122</sup>

Thus when Kingsbury claimed that soon after he arrived in the Cherokee nation, he opened his “doors to receive children into our family to teach them the rudiments of the English language, the principles of the Christian religion and the industry and arts of civilized life,”<sup>123</sup> he failed to mention that John Ridge, for example, was not his convert since he was among those children attending the Moravian School at Spring Place. His father, The Ridge, only withdrew him and placed him in the care of Kingsbury on May 24, 1817.<sup>124</sup> Also why did Kingsbury report that he taught these children the rudiments of English language and the principles of Christianity among other things, when he acknowledged that “[a]ll speak the English language well ... and regularly read a portion of scripture at our family worship?”<sup>125</sup> Does this not mean that these “civilized” Cherokee children had already embraced Christianity?

This situation, coupled with later declarations, also means that Cherokee agency was consistent throughout the life of the ABCFM mission from its commencement in

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<sup>121</sup> Wilkins, *Cherokee Tragedy*, 35.

<sup>122</sup> Members of the Church, May 1822, Cherokee Civil List, May 1822, Unit 6, Reel 737, 18.3.1.: Cherokee Missions, Vol. 2, 1817-1824, Journals, Letters, Joint Communication, Papers of the ABCFM, ABC 18: Missions on the American Continents 1811-1919, Frame 549.

<sup>123</sup> Cyrus Kingsbury to Samuel Worcester, June 30, 1817, Letters and Papers of the Board, Papers of the ABCFM, Unit 6, Vol. 3, Reel 738, Frame 31.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*; see also Wilkins, *Cherokee Tragedy*, 98.

<sup>125</sup> Cyrus Kingsbury to Samuel Worcester, June 30, 1817, Letters and Papers of the Board, Papers of the ABCFM, Unit 6, Vol. 3, Reel 738, Frame 31-32.



January, 1817 to its end in September, 1860.<sup>126</sup> The long quote below will be sufficient to make this point since the pro-civilization and pro-Christianity Cherokee leaders (Ross and Hicks) who wrote this letter to the secretary of war in 1818 were among the leaders who ruled until the Cherokee removal between 1835 and 1839.<sup>127</sup> xxx

In communicating to you the future views, wishes and hopes of the Cherokee nation, we shall confine ourselves principally to those points only which we conceive of the most importance (very). Mental improvement, civil government and a progressive approach towards civilized life you are aware of the many embarrassments under which we labour. The light of education has fell upon us only in an oblique manner. The rays have but partially illuminated our minds or softened our hearts. History, Politik, Religion and Law are but partially known to us. We have had to combat with prejudices common to all unenlightened people.—Yet under all these multiple evils we have made some progress in the useful arts and in the first rudiments of literature. The English language is spoken, read, and wrote by a considerable portion of the rising generation. Our manners and customs are rapidly assimilating to those of our white brothers and sisters who surround us and we fondly look forward to the time when we shall see those dark clouds of Supersticious prejudices and ignorance vanish from among us and then propelled by the dictates of Reason, restrained by prudence, education and science, we may with confidence assure ourselves that we shall participate with our white Brothers and sisters in the enjoyment and advantage of the best of earthly governments. It is to the want of education and not to a defect in nature to which we must ascribe nearly all of our evils.<sup>128</sup>

### Missionary and West African Concepts of Power

The same consistency of agency was true with West Africans who embraced Western civilization and Christianity. Like their Cherokee counterparts, those West

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<sup>126</sup> Lewit, “Indian Missions and Antislavery Sentiment,” *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 50, 53.

<sup>127</sup> See Wilkins, *Cherokee Tragedy*, 142 and Chapter Eleven, “The Treaty of New Echota.”

<sup>128</sup> Cherokee Deputation to the Secretary of War, February 5, 1818, in National Archives, RG 75, Letters Received by the Office of the Secretary of War Relating to Indian Affairs, 1817-1819, M-271, Roll 2, Frame 576-77.

Africans who adopted the changes introduced by the missionaries never doubted their capacity to define their relationship with the ABCFM missionaries. Nor did they leave their interests to the missionaries to decide. While on his tour of Africa (1833-34) for the purpose of determining the conditions of establishment of a mission, Rev. John Wilson reported in his diary the following interaction, which illustrates that West Africans knew their interests very well and assertively pursued them.

Friday February 14, 1834: This forenoon, I visited Rocktown situated about five miles above the Cape. I made known my visit on my arrival to see the king and was invited to his house where a seat was furnished me in front under a shade tree. After waiting some time, an old man made his appearance whom I was told was the king. I explained to him the object of my visit. He was very willing to have a school in his town, but I found it difficult to convince him that I was not practically a cheat. He finally urged me to give him a book (a writing), as an assurance that I would come to live in his town or send some other American. I was not allowed to leave the town until I had given such an assurance.<sup>129</sup>

Thus, these chiefs not only showed Wilson that they knew what they wanted, they were ready to help him succeed in his mission in order for them to get what they wanted. In that sense, the power of West Africans worked not as a limiting force<sup>130</sup> but as an enabling force, which could be a serious challenge to those scholars who, like Chinua Achebe, believe that missionaries were dominant in the evangelization process because

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<sup>129</sup> Journal of Mission, 1834, Report of the state of the Colony of Liberia, Papers of the ABCFM, Unit 2, Vol. 1, Reel 149, 53.

<sup>130</sup> Peter Degeser summarized various conceptions of power in the West. He also found that what was common to them was the fact that these “faces of power agree at some level that A exercise power over B when A affects B in a manner contrary to B’s interests,” Peter Degeser, “the Fourth Face of Power,” *The Journal of Politics* 54, no. 4 (November 1992): 977-1007, 980. This Western assumption that power should be limiting or restrictive is not particularly helpful in understanding the agency of the missionaries, the Cherokees and the West Africans. Each group also considered as an important part of its interest the fact that it would enable the protagonist group. In this case power also meant the capacity to achieve such enablement.

they caused “things [to] fall apart,”<sup>131</sup> or to scholars like Don Ohadike, who believed that missionaries “played an important role in the establishment of British domination over the Igbo people.”<sup>132</sup>

Much of this West African agency was possible because in West Africa before the Colonial period, 1800-1875, in the words of historian Adu Boahen, “an overwhelming majority of the states and polities of Africa enjoying their sovereign existence, and their rulers were in full control of their own affairs and destinies.”<sup>133</sup>

It is in the context that the ABCFM launched its African mission in 1834 with John Leighton Wilson (1809-1886) as head missionary, seventeen years after launching its Cherokee mission in 1817.<sup>134</sup> Wilson summarizes his trips to Africa saying he was “sent out in the autumn of 1833, accompanied by Rev. Stephen R. Wyncoop,<sup>135</sup> an esteemed friend and college classmate, to explore the country and fix upon a suitable

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<sup>131</sup> Okonkwo’s suicide symbolizes the fall of the traditional religious order he protected, while his friend, Obeirika’s accusation of the District Commissioner, “you drove him to kill himself,” points to Achebe’s own conviction that the missionary power eroded the Igbo religious base, and the British colonial power precipitated the downfall of the Igbo traditional order.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid., xli.

<sup>133</sup> A. Adu Boahen, *African Perspectives on Colonialism* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), 1. See also Roland Oliver and Anthony Atmore, *Africa Since 1800*, fifth edition, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 63.

<sup>134</sup> *Wilson, Western Africa, 500.*

<sup>135</sup> Ibid. Stephen Wyncoop was also a classmate of William Strong whose following book I use in this dissertation as a primary source because of this information. Strong, *The Story of the American Board*, 124. See also the report of the exploratory tour sent by Wilson and Wyncoop in J. Leighton Wilson and Stephen Wyncoop to the Prudential Committee, March 24, 1834, Report of the State of the Colony of Liberia, Papers of the ABCFM, Unit 2, Reel 149, Vol. 1, Frame 14.

place for the commencement of a mission...The writer and his family arrived at Cape Palmas on 25<sup>th</sup> of December, 1834, and immediately entered upon their labor.”<sup>136</sup>

Since Wilson was the only one to go to Africa on the real mission, I will limit my biographical sketch to him. Wilson was born near Salem, South Carolina. He graduated from Union College, Schenectady, New York, and Columbia Theological Seminary (then in South Carolina, now in Decatur, Georgia).<sup>137</sup> Eight years after the board had been actively searching for a missionary to send to Western Africa, Wilson finally broke the deadlock.<sup>138</sup> He volunteered to go to Africa in 1833 and studied Arabic for a few months at Andover Theological Seminary, Massachusetts with “Mr. Eli Smith, the only man in the United States who can teach it.”<sup>139</sup> Concerning his marriage, Hampden DuBose, the editor of his memoirs, reports that he took a “voyage down the coast...and, in Savannah, Georgia, on May 21, 1834, John Leighton Wilson and Jane Elizabeth Bayard were united in marriage.”<sup>140</sup>

As an owner of slaves, Wilson was in the line of fire of the Northern missionary philanthropists, who later threatened to withdraw their financial support from the Board if

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<sup>136</sup> Wilson, *Western Africa*, 500; see also Tracy, *History of American Missions*, 252.

<sup>137</sup> James A. Patterson, “Wilson, John Leighton,” Anderson, ed. *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions*, 742-43.

<sup>138</sup> Hampden DuBose, *Memoirs of Rev. John Leighton Wilson: Missionary to Africa and Secretary of Foreign Mission* (Richmond, VA: Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1895), 58.

<sup>139</sup> DuBose, *Memoirs of Rev. John Leighton Wilson*, 50.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, 68.

missionaries like Wilson were not removed from the mission fields of the ABCFM.<sup>141</sup> In 1852, after eighteen years in Africa, the 42-year-old Wilson returned to America physically and morally worn out. In 1853, he became a secretary for the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions, which had supported him in his battle against the Northern abolitionists. During that tenure, he wrote *Western Africa. Its History, Condition, and Prospects* (1856). In 1861, he helped to organize the Executive Committee of Foreign Missions for the (Southern) Presbyterian Church, an opposition group of the ABCFM and served as its executive secretary until his retirement in 1885.<sup>142</sup>

Thus, Wilson's mission in West Africa was different from Kingsbury's in the Cherokee nation in many respects. The most outstanding difference was that there was no U.S. civilization campaign in Africa to build on. The ABCFM typically went to West Africa as an independent missionary agency. Of course, the ABCFM exuded much of the racist attitudes towards Africa associated with the civilization program in the U.S., but there was no official support of the U.S. government for the mission to Africa like it had

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<sup>141</sup> Wilson sent the following comments to the Board after receiving mail about the threats of the abolitionists. He wrote, "I see from Boston Recorder that a heavy assault has been made upon the ABCFM for receiving Southern patronage. I do not know how far Mr. Leavitt's paper speaks the feelings of any party. But I am afraid that those sentiments may yet embarrass the operations of the Board. I have serious fears that in consequence of Mr. Eckard and myself both being slave holders and members of your Board, it will be a source of much bitterness. But my dear Bro, what can we do? I feel desirous of doing the very thing that God would have me do. If we set them free on Carolina or Georgia soils, they will be bid off under sheriff's laws to transfer them to the North with their present habits and feelings is to throw them contrary to their own wishes into the very arms of poverty and want. To bring them to Africa is what we want, but many of them will not come unless they are forced. This is the situation of almost every conscientious and reflecting Christian slaveholder at the South. And why are Northern men perpetually harassing those who are thus hemmed up on all sides? Is it right? Is it a Christian spirit? But it seems there is no use to reason or remonstrate with such men and I am determined as my own mind is clear on the subject to remain a member of your Board until you drop me, let the abolitionists say what they may. I hope I shall not trouble you again for sometime with so long a letter." J. Leighton Wilson to Rufus Anderson, February 1, 1843, Papers of the ABCFM, Unit 2, Vol. 1, Reel 150, 141.

<sup>142</sup> Patterson, "Wilson, John Leighton," *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions*, 742-743.

done with the mission to the Cherokees. Wilson only consulted with the American Colonization Society, but this society was a private organization although it had support from the U.S. government.<sup>143</sup> Wilson was later repulsed by the exceedingly glorious reports about West Africa designed to attract the U.S. blacks to their colonization to Africa, which even pushed it further into isolation. He denounced the Society's "ardent and enthusiastic desire for the success of the colonial scheme," which not only lured the black emigrants into misery in Africa, but also misled travelers like Wilson who relied on their reports to make sound preparation for settlement in Africa.<sup>144</sup>

Thus, if Wilson could not count on the ACS who historian Thomas Hietala confirms counted influential statesmen like President John Tyler, and whose commitment to the removal of blacks from the United States in order to protect the South from the "black peril" in the Abolitionist era<sup>145</sup> could warrant support for the ABCFM mission, who was left for Wilson to rely on? Therefore, Wilson and by implication the ABCFM was totally on its own in Africa. They had to fully take charge of their Christian agenda. This was a radical new departure considering the ACS had intended to appoint Wilson as governor of Liberia,<sup>146</sup> and thereby graft the ABCFM's mission to its program:

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<sup>143</sup> Robert Finley, the founder of the American Colonization Society, was passionate clergyman who launched his organization at the apex of the civilization talk in the U.S., but he was only acting as a private reformer who sought to colonize Blacks to Liberia and Sierra Leone in order to protect their lives. He died in 1817, as President of the University of Georgia, without realizing his dream of protecting the lives of U.S. blacks.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid., 12-13.

<sup>145</sup> Hietala, *Manifest design*, 129.

<sup>146</sup> "An application has been made to the Board for me to become Governor of Liberia; what think you of that, Jane? 'Governor Wilson?'—howe does it sound to you? I love the privilege of preaching the gospel

Day before yesterday I was detained part of the day in Baltimore, and having nothing else to do, I went to the Maryland Colonization office, where I received information about Africa and our mission which encouraged my heart. The M.C.S. is about to plant a new colony on the coast of Western Africa, to be located at Cape Palmas, two hundred and fifty miles south of Monrovia, and presenting, as we all think, a much more eligible site for the commencement of a mission than any place in or about Liberia. The society in Baltimore is anxious to have a mission started with the commencement of the colony, and they hold out strong inducements for us to go there ... My plan will be to go to Baltimore and embark with the first party of emigrants for the new colony, which will consist of about twenty men with the agent, and it will probably be three or four weeks from this time.<sup>147</sup>

Despite this difference between Wilson's mission and Kingsbury's in this sense that Wilson was the sole responsible for the success of the ABCFM mission in Africa, Wilson's plan of mission was the same as Kingsbury's in the Cherokee nation. The ABCFM used its experience with Kingsbury in the Cherokee nation as the basis for instructions to Wilson. Wilson revealed this connection when he admonished Christians in America for still upholding an argument whose limits were visible in Western Africa. He said:

[t]he argument amounts to this: The climate of Western Africa is too inimical to European constitutions to allow white men to live and labor there for any considerable length of time; and farther, if such were the case, yet the aborigines of Africa are so turbulent and savage in their habits that no missionary could live among them, except so far as he could enjoy the countenance and protection of some civilized power, which the natives would hold in fear...it is, in reality, but the revival of that oft-refuted idea, that civilization must precede Christianity in reclaiming the heather tribes of the earth; and the argument is specially unfortunate when applied to Africa.<sup>148</sup>

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too much to give it a serious consideration." Wilson to his wife Jane (no date), in DuBose, ed. *Memoirs of Rev. John Leighton Wilson*, 54.

<sup>147</sup> Wilson to his wife Jane, September 21, 1833, in *ibid.* 57.

<sup>148</sup> Wilson, *Western Africa*, 508-09.

Like their Cherokee counterparts, most West African progressives were persuaded very early that the stronger the missionaries were in carrying out their mission, the stronger they themselves would be in pursuing the new opportunities that they had identified. Wilson gave this assessment of West Africans' motives for the most visible item on the civilization program (schools) when he reported that "the feeling is very general that they impose a weighty obligation upon the missionaries by giving their children up to them to be taught."<sup>149</sup>

As historian Edward Bernard notes, West Africans' wish for missionary power is also apparent in missionaries' exploitation of West Africans' desire for modern status through the creation of schools.<sup>150</sup> Progressive West Africans knew their interests depended on an increase of missionary investments in education to the extent that it was circulated among the missionary community that "whoever controlled the schools would own Africa."<sup>151</sup>

Of course, such a declaration should not lead one to think that Africans were at the mercy of the missionaries. The opposite was closer to the truth. Indeed, the more Wilson believed that schools would help him control Western Africa, the more he unconsciously helped the progressive Africans achieve their own interests. The more

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<sup>149</sup> Ibid., 39.

<sup>150</sup> Berman, ed. *African Reactions to Missionary Education*, xi-xii.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid., 33. In footnote 156, Berman mentions one such instruction to missionaries like Father Dubois' *Le Répertoire Africain; Traite de Missiologie pratique* issued in Rome in 1932. Ibid., 51.



progressive Africans achieved their interests, the more they hoped that the missionaries would remain strong. These West Africans did not want to be civilized in order to become Christian, as Wilson had planned. This is what explains that they occasionally complained that “Christian missionaries tended to focus on issues of morality and on the sacraments, insisting that Africans become monogamous and eliminate superstitions before they could be accepted in the church.”<sup>152</sup>

### Conclusion

From 1810, when the ABCFM was founded, until September 1860, when the Board formally withdrew its support from the Cherokee stations,<sup>153</sup> and 1852 when Wilson returned to America, its missionaries, the Cherokees and the West Africans acted in parallel agency—that is, each group believed in its own capacity to define its best interests. Missionary powers and native powers were interdependent to the point that we can say that although some native groups have accused missionaries of oppression, no one power in the processes of Christianization was ever totalizing, much less single-handed.

Therefore, we should resist accepting the naïve attitudes of missionaries about their own power: “When the heathen see how their own people are changed by attending the mission school...and how they gain something of the white man’s power as they

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<sup>152</sup> Patrick Manning, *Francophone Sub-Saharan Africa, 1880-1995*, rev. and updated ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 95.

<sup>153</sup> Lewit, “Indian Missions and Antislavery Sentiment,” *The Mississippi Valley Review* 50, 39-55.

embrace his religion, the general keenness to “learn book” beggars description.”<sup>154</sup> Neither should my investigation of the conversion process of Africans be impaired by the following declaration of Wilson either: “The inhabitants of Africa taken together, are the most defenseless race on earth. We stop not to inquire what has made them so. We speak of a well-known and undeniable fact. It is equally well-known that Providence has assigned them a country too rich in natural resources not to attempt the cupidity of other and more powerful races.”<sup>155</sup> Works on Cultural exchange such as Jerry H. Bentley’s *Old World Encounters: Cross-Cultural Contacts and Exchanges in Pre-Modern Times* and James C. Scott’s *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* show how urgent it is to rethink the power relations between cultures for the entire world history.<sup>156</sup> The conversion process in which the ABCFM missionaries, Cherokees and West Africans the power of definition of each of these groups was very vibrant is a good place to expand the work of these scholars. The study of the conversion process is the subject of chapter two.

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<sup>154</sup> *Church Missionary Society*, 1920, no 648327.

<sup>155</sup> Wilson, *Western Africa*, 516.

<sup>156</sup> The titles are suggestive enough about the idea that power might be a two way street as opposed to a one way street of missionary power. Jerry H. Bentley’s *Old World Encounters: Cross-Cultural Contacts and Exchanges in Pre-Modern Times* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993) and James C. Scott’s *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990).

## CHAPTER 2: MISSIONARY, CHEROKEE, AND WEST AFRICAN POWER RELATIONSHIP IN THE CONVERSION PROCESS

This chapter explores the power relationship in the conversion process between the ABCFM missionaries on the one hand, and the Cherokees and West Africans who were involved in this process on the other. I argue that while the ABCFM missionaries pursued their project of Cherokee and West African conversion through various strategies of their own, Cherokees and West Africans who participated in this project of conversion developed and pursued their own agendas through various strategies of their own as well. More than often, the Cherokee and West African agendas run parallel, and many times counter, to the missionary agenda. This parallel agency had its roots in the ABCFM missionary strategies in converting Cherokees and West Africans, which ignored the latter's determination to embrace Christianity on their own terms.

### The ABCFM Missionary Strategies in Converting Cherokees

The ABCFM strategies in converting the Cherokees resulted from the board's plan to civilize the Cherokees before Christianizing them. Therefore, they put emphasis on the creation of schools first, and the building of churches came second. The strategy adopted for schools was the Lancasterian school model. Kingsbury opened his journal with the

statement: “1817. Saturday, January 18—arrived at Chickamaugah for the purpose of making preparations to commence and establish a Lancasterian school at that place.”<sup>157</sup>

The Lancasterian pattern of education was “a method devised by an English scholar, Joseph Lancaster, in which the old order or more advanced students served as monitors and taught the younger, thus reducing the number of foreign teachers and making possible a large number of scholars.”<sup>158</sup> Education historian Ronald Rayman confirms that, “In 1798, Joseph Lancaster introduced a revolutionary idea for public education in England. The fundamental premise of Lancaster’s system revolved around mass public education utilizing older or more advanced students, or “monitors,” as instructors.”<sup>159</sup>

Rayman also corroborates my assertion that the ABCFM strategy in converting the Cherokees resulted from their plan to “civilize” the Cherokees before Christianizing them when he writes, “Realizing the impracticality of spreading the Gospel to uneducated ‘pagan aborigines,’ the [ABCFM] board provided funds for the construction of a school to be built ‘for the education of the heathen youths in our country.’”<sup>160</sup> The Lancasterian system was so vital a strategy that Kingsbury informed the board, “I shall wish very much for an assistant in teaching as soon as one can be sent, and I hope he will spend a

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<sup>157</sup> Journal of Mission to the Cherokees, 1817, Unit 6, Reel 737, 18.3.1.: Cherokee Missions, Vol. 2, 1817-1824, Journals, Letters, Joint Communication, Papers of the ABCFM, ABC 18: Missions on the American Continents 1811-1919, (Cambridge, MA: The Houghton Library, Harvard University, 1985), 5.

<sup>158</sup> Strong, *The Story of the American Board*, 36-37.

<sup>159</sup> Rayman, Ronald, “Joseph Lancaster’s Monitorial System of Instruction and American Indian Education, 1815-1838,” *History of Education Quarterly* 21, no 4 (Winter, 1981): 395-409, 396.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*, 398.

few weeks in the Lancastrian school.”<sup>161</sup> Upon this request, the board officials “enrolled a missionary, Moody Hall, in the Lancasterian school “for the purpose of becoming well-versed in that method of instruction.”<sup>162</sup>

The short-term purpose of the Lancasterian school model was to achieve a faster civilization of the Cherokees for the ultimate goal of Christianization to begin. The long-term purpose was to “gradually make the whole tribe English in language, civilized in habits, and Christian in religion.”<sup>163</sup> As a result, the first twenty-six recruits in Kingsbury’s school included seventeen who spoke English well, and only nine who did not with the understanding that those who spoke English would teach those who did not.<sup>164</sup> These children were also dominantly civilized or of mixed ancestry with only “some” children being full-blooded with the expectation that the overwhelming civilized children would cause a desire for civilization in the full-blooded children faster.<sup>165</sup>

Another plan was to send the students at the Cherokee school for a higher education in Cornwall, Connecticut,<sup>166</sup> where the ABCFM educated and civilized children all over

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<sup>161</sup> Cyrus Kingsbury to Samuel Worcester, October 15, 1816, Letters and Papers of the Board, Papers of the ABCFM, Unit 6, Vol. 3, Reel 738, Frame 7.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid.

<sup>163</sup> Strong, *The Story of the American Board*, 36.

<sup>164</sup> Cyrus Kingsbury to Samuel Worcester, June 30, 1817, Letters and Papers of the Board, Papers of the ABCFM, Unit 6, Vol. 3, Reel 738, Frame 31.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid.

<sup>166</sup> The “Foreign Mission School” was instituted at the board’s seventh annual meeting at Hartford, Connecticut on September 18, 19, and 20, 1816. Tracy reports that “the people in Cornwall, Ct. gave an academy building, 40 feet by 20, and other property amounting in all to about \$1,200” for the purpose of establishing this school. Tracy, *History of American Missions*, 57. The school actually commenced the following year on May 1, 1817. Ibid., 63.

the world were to meet and consolidate the plan of civilizing the natives before Christianizing them.<sup>167</sup> ABCFM secretary Samuel Worcester reported this plan to the secretary of war in the early years following the establishment of the Cherokee mission: “Besides the Establishments in the Indian Nations, we have a school at Cornwall, Con. instituted for the purpose of educating youths of heathen Nations with a view to their being useful in their respective countries. This school commenced in May 1817.”<sup>168</sup>

At the time of this report, there were Cherokee children among the students at Cornwall Foreign Mission School, and Worcester’s language suggests that these children were descendants of “civilized” or mixed-ancestry Cherokee families: “The number of pupils [at Cornwall school] is at present about 30—15 of whom are Indian youths of principal families belonging to five or six different Indian tribes.”<sup>169</sup> Whether because the Lancasterian school system “was hailed as a milestone in public education” at the time,<sup>170</sup> or because of its actual success, the ABCFM civilizing strategy received a lot of support from the U.S. government and general public. Many students received “an allowance

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<sup>167</sup> Ibid., 68.

<sup>168</sup> Samuel Worcester to John Calhoun, November 3, 1819, in National Archives, RG 75, Letters Received by the Office of the Secretary of War Relating to Indian Affairs, 1817-1819, M-271, Roll 2, Frames 1607-08.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid. Elias Boudinot then known as Gallegina “Buck” Watie was among those “civilized” Cherokee children. Purdue, *Cherokee editor*, 6.

<sup>170</sup> Ronald, “Joseph Lancaster’s Monitorial System of Instruction and American Indian Education, 1815-1838,” *History of Education Quarterly* 21, 396.

from the government” as very promising youths that would bring their “unbending influence” to their respective Nations.”<sup>171</sup>

As the strategy of Lancasterian school system met approbation from most U.S. groups interested in the ABCFM work of missions in the Cherokee nation, the strategy adopted for the recruitment of converts could not wait for a total civilization of the Cherokees before their Christianization. For the ultimate result that the board and its donors really cared about was the numbers of Cherokees that were being Christianized, not just the numbers of Cherokee children attending school and being civilized. Because Kingsbury deplored that the Cherokees “appeared hardly to have felt the genial influence of civilization ... were living without hope and without God,”<sup>172</sup> his strategy to bring them to civilization and Christianity was to place them in the bosom of a Christian family. He requested from the Cherokee council that “they must permit us to cultivate land, raise corn and other things for ourselves and for the children, [and] that we should wish to have one or two families settle at the school and perhaps one or two mechanics.”<sup>173</sup> He first referred to his “need of an industrious pious family from N. England” to help him in the Cherokee nation while on the preparation tour in 1816,<sup>174</sup> and sure enough this was

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<sup>171</sup> Samuel Worcester to John Calhoun, November 3, 1819, in National Archives, RG 75, Letters Received by the Office of the Secretary of War Relating to Indian Affairs, 1817-1819, M-271, Roll 2, Frames 1608-09.

<sup>172</sup> Cyrus Kingsbury to Samuel Worcester, October 15, 1816, Letters and Papers of the Board, Papers of the ABCFM, Unit 6, Vol. 3, Reel 738, Frames 5-7.

<sup>173</sup> Cyrus Kingsbury to Samuel Worcester, October 15, 1816, Letters and Papers of the Board, Papers of the ABCFM, Unit 6, Vol. 3, Reel 738, Frame 5.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*

the strategy he adopted in 1817 when he opened his mission: “[s]oon after our arrival in the nation, we opened our doors to receive children into our family.”<sup>175</sup>

After Jeremiah Evarts took over from the late Samuel Worcester as Corresponding Secretary,<sup>176</sup> he sent a letter to the missionaries of Brainerd to remind them of the purpose of establishing missionaries as families. He wrote, “It is a subject of great importance that the children of the mission families be brought up to rigorous industry, that they be examples to the Cherokees in everything good, and that, to secure this object they be kept in the same state of discipline while at school as the Cherokee children.”<sup>177</sup>

Native or Cherokee teachers were another strategy Kingsbury used to recruit converts among the Cherokees. On his exploratory tour, he informed the board that he expected “a Sunday school will be established in a few weeks under the direction of a serious young man who lives in the nation.”<sup>178</sup> On November 28, 1817, Kingsbury found such a native teacher in Charles Reece. He wrote about him, “I cannot omit to mention that, the Lord has greatly encouraged us by some drops of mercy, which have fallen around us. Three Cherokees, one member of our school, give, I think I may say, comfortable evidence of piety.”<sup>179</sup> Tracy writes that “the Cherokee man was a half breed, named Charles Reece,

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<sup>175</sup> Cyrus Kingsbury to Samuel Worcester, June 30, 1817, Letters and Papers of the Board, Papers of the ABCFM, Unit 6, Vol. 3, Reel 738, Frames 31-32.

<sup>176</sup> Tracy, *History of American Missions*, Appendix D.

<sup>177</sup> Recommendations of the Corresponding Secretary to the Missionaries of Brainerd, May 17, 1822, Unit 6, Reel 737, 18.3.1.: Cherokee Missions, Vol. 2, 1817-1824, Journals, Letters, Joint Communication, Papers of the ABCFM, ABC 18: Missions on the American Continents 1811-1919, Frame 543.

<sup>178</sup> Cyrus Kingsbury to Samuel Worcester, October 15, 1816, Letters and Papers of the Board, Papers of the ABCFM, Unit 6, Vol. 3, Reel 738, Frame 7.

<sup>179</sup> Tracy, *History of American Missions*, 67.



who could speak English. He had lately received from the President an elegant rifle, as a reward for his bravery at the battle of Horseshoe, where he, with two others, swam the river in the face of the enemy, and brought off their canoes in triumph.”<sup>180</sup>

Kingsbury also expected the Lancasterian school system to work as a domino effect for conversion as well. One of the three Cherokees who gave evidence of piety above was Catherine Brown, a woman of mixed ancestry Cherokee who was admitted to the Brainerd church on March 29, 1818.<sup>181</sup> Tracy writes that, “ she was the daughter of half breed parents, about 18 years of age, genteel in her appearance, and amiable in her manners. When she entered the school, three months before, she could speak English, and read words of three letters.”<sup>182</sup> Catherine brought her brother David Brown to the school and the church at Brainerd in 1819,<sup>183</sup> and her brother John Brown, Jr. to the church at Creek Path in 1820.<sup>184</sup>

Besides Cherokee teachers, Kingsbury also relied on interpreters to preach and recruited more converts through this strategy. Tracy reports that “Mr. Kingsbury preached regularly on the Sabbath through an interpreter, to an increasing

<sup>180</sup> Ibid., 67.

<sup>181</sup> Names of those who have been admitted to the church at Brainerd, May 1822, Unit 6, Reel 737, 18.3.1.: Cherokee Missions, Vol. 2, 1817-1824, Journals, Letters, Joint Communication, Papers of the ABCFM, ABC 18: Missions on the American Continents 1811-1919, Frame 549.

<sup>182</sup> Tracy, *History of American Missions*, 67.

<sup>183</sup> See letter of missionaries at Brainerd recommending David and another Cherokee student to the board for acceptance at the Foreign Mission School at Cornwall, Ct. Art Hoyt and others to Samuel Worcester, December 6, 1819, Unit 6, Reel 737, 18.3.1.: Cherokee Missions, Vol. 2, 1817-1824, Journals, Letters, Joint Communication, Papers of the ABCFM, ABC 18: Missions on the American Continents 1811-1919, Frame 375.

<sup>184</sup> Names of those who belong to the Church at Creek Path, May 1822, Unit 6, Reel 737, 18.3.1.: Cherokee Missions, Vol. 2, 1817-1824, Journals, Letters, Joint Communication, Papers of the ABCFM, ABC 18: Missions on the American Continents 1811-1919, Frame 550.

congregation.”<sup>185</sup> Charles R. Hicks, a convert to Christianity for at least five years prior to the commencement of Brainerd mission in 1817 became Kingsbury’s personal interpreter: “Mr. Hicks and another chief [Charles Reece] were then appointed to render all suitable assistance and protection to the mission.”<sup>186</sup> If the school at Brainerd started almost immediately in May 1817 only five months after Kingsbury’s arrival, the church started on January 21, 1818, a year after Kingsbury’s arrival.<sup>187</sup>

The following incident reported by Tracy illustrates how important interpreters were to Kingsbury as a strategy of conversion.

January 27, Messrs. Hoyt and Hall went out to visit native families, and spent the night at the house of Mr. Reece. Several of the natives were present. Mr. Reece acted as interpreter, and made some remarks of his own. All were serious. One woman wept freely, when told of the sinfulness of man, the sufferings of the Saviour, and forgiveness through his blood. She said she had before thought that the wicked would be punished and the good made happy after death, but did not think that there was any way for those who had once been wicked, to become good and happy. She wished them to tell her what was wicked; and though backward and ashamed to confess what she felt of her own guilt, said she knew that she had done wrong things; that she was sometimes so much afraid, on account of her wickedness, that she could not stay in her own house, but fled into the woods; but that gave her no relief, for she was afraid everywhere.<sup>188</sup>

This translation of the word of the missionaries earned Reece his baptism four days later on the “Sabbath, February 1, 1818. His success was so resounding that a Cherokee man and his wife ended up spending the night with the missionaries at Reece’s house. The Cherokee man said, ‘He had understood nothing of what he had seen and

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<sup>185</sup> Tracy, *History of American Missions*, 66.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*, 67.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*, 70.

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*

heard that day; but said he had heard that the missionaries could tell him some way by which bad people might become good and happy after death; that he was bad himself, and wanted to become good, and had come to learn what their way was.”<sup>189</sup> In October 1821, Reece brought his mother and father to church as Catherine Brown and others in the nation had done with their family members. The missionaries welcomed her and “baptized the mother of Charles Reece.”<sup>190</sup>

The Cherokee translator was central to this missionary strategy of itinerant conversion, as Jeremiah Evarts reminded the missionaries at Brainerd after taking over from the late Samuel Worcester. He emphasized the “religious motives” behind the mission to the Cherokees before reminding them to stay focused on the itinerant preaching as a strategy of conversion in the Cherokee nation. He wrote,

Unless I am mistaken, the persons now on this ground should aim at the accomplishment of the following things: Preaching the Gospel regularly here on the Sabbath, and at two other places in the nation. It seems desirable that there be two public exercises here on the Sabbath, unless there are strong reasons for believing that one will be more useful than two. The gospel should also be preached on other days as well as the Sabbath in many different and distant parts of the Nation, the people visited from house to house, and many opportunities seized of communicating Christian instruction. The members of the church, Cherokee converts especially should be visited, and led into the understanding of the truth. The ability to preach some of the things must depend much on the aid of interpreters.<sup>191</sup>

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<sup>189</sup> Ibid.

<sup>190</sup> William Chamberlain to Samuel Worcester, October 1, 1821, Unit 6, Reel 737, 18.3.1.: Cherokee Missions, Vol. 2, 1817-1824, Journals, Letters, Joint Communication, Papers of the ABCFM, ABC 18: Missions on the American Continents 1811-1919, Frame 238.

<sup>191</sup> Recommendations of the Corresponding Secretary to the Missionaries of Brainerd, May 17, 1822, Unit 6, Reel 737, 18.3.1.: Cherokee Missions, Vol. 2, 1817-1824, Journals, Letters, Joint Communication, Papers of the ABCFM, ABC 18: Missions on the American Continents 1811-1919, Frame 541.

As should be apparent in Evarts's recommendations, the intention of the ABCFM missionaries was to recruit as many Cherokees as possible in the church. They had planned to transform the Cherokees into completely new civilized beings by changing their names, their habits, their appearance, their language, and their religion. However, these strategies faced various challenges, as missionaries were obliged to use Cherokee children for the Lancasterian school model, and Cherokee teachers and interpreters for the recruitment of converts. One important challenge was how to harness Cherokees' interest for civilization towards Christianity, another challenge being how to lead the Cherokee converts to "genuine" Christianity.<sup>192</sup> These challenges proved formidable because missionaries had made their plans without serious consideration of Cherokee interests, which the Cherokees pursued through their own strategies that sometimes run parallel to the intentions of missionaries.

#### Parallel Cherokee Agency in their conversion process

Because Cherokees pursued civilization in order to secure their lands, and because they saw Christianity as a part of the civilization program of the U.S. government and the ABCFM missionaries, their conversion to adoption of the arts of civilized life was simultaneous with their adoption of Christianity, a pace which was faster than the civilization-before-Christianity framework of Christianization of the missionaries. The

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<sup>192</sup> The ABCFM board had issued the following directions to all missionaries: "In teaching the gentiles, it will be your business not vehemently, to declaim against their superstitions, but in meekness and gentleness of Christ, to bring them as directly as possible to the knowledge of the truth." Tracy, *History of American Missions*, 37.

leaders expressed this simultaneous commitment to the secretary of war, as they thought this was the price to pay for the release of the pressure on their lands:

we fondly look forward to the time when we shall see those dark clouds of Supersticious prejudices and ignorance vanish from among us and then propelled by the dictates of Reason, restrained by prudence, education and science, we may with confidence assure ourselves that we shall participate with our white Brothers and sisters in the enjoyment and advantage of the best of earthly governments.<sup>193</sup>

The leaders expressed the same commitment to the missionaries a month later in a letter that should have given the missionaries a clue about the Cherokee leaders' determination to pursue their interests.

The delegation has full confidence in the just wishes and intentions of the benevolent societies who have sent missionaries and teachers amongst us and assure you that they have our purest friendship, and shall have our influence and aid to impress same feelings on the minds of our people. When we complain of those bad white neighbours around our frontier, who seek our distress, we are not impressed with a belief that all white men are our enemies. We know that great many are our friends and without this fact, we also know that we could not exist. The missionaries at Brainerd and at Spring place have been more like Fathers than Friends. And we trust in the Great Author of our existence that the time is not far distant when the Red children of the forest will embrace the Knowledge of Civilization, Religion, and Law, and the Rudiments of the Arts and Sciences.<sup>194</sup>

Of course, this letter in which the leaders expressed explicitly the purpose of their pursuit of civilization did not alarm missionaries to the fact that this purpose was different than theirs. All they cared about was the leaders' commitment to wield their influence in order to get the children of the nation to embrace the arts of civilized life and Christianity. Unfortunately, the latter goal was overwhelmed by the pressure from

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<sup>193</sup> Communication of the Cherokee Deputation to the Secretary of War, February 5, 1818, in National Archives, RG 75, Letters Received by the Office of the Secretary of War Relating to Indian Affairs, 1817-1819, M-271, Roll 2, Frame 577.

<sup>194</sup> John Ross and Charles Hicks to Samuel Worcester, March 6, 1819, Letters and Papers of the Board, Papers of the ABCFM, Unit 6, Vol. 3, Reel 738, Frames 471-72.

Washington to “civilize” the Cherokees. Kingsbury revealed this constraint on his exploratory tour in the Cherokee nation: “I am decidedly in favor of one large school at first, in preference to small ones, tho I was almost dissuaded from it at Washington City. It is considered by gentlemen in this part of the country to be a very important object, to give them habits of industry, and teach them the economy of civilized life.”<sup>195</sup>

After Kingsbury assured the government that its demands will be “in a good degree accomplished in the way in which it is proposed to conduct the school,”<sup>196</sup> Kingsbury relied on the Cherokees to realize his promise to the government. In 1817, “the Cherokee delegation at Washington was instructed to ask the assistance of the President in education their children.”<sup>197</sup> After a meeting with Elias Cornelius, an agent of the board, the Cherokee council appointed two of their chiefs, Hicks and Reece, to assist in the missionary work of civilization and Christianization.<sup>198</sup> The Cherokee leaders also took other measures like appropriating land for the education of their children as Hicks’s letter to Evarts below suggests.

Brother,  
A few nights ago we had some conversation with you on the subject of appropriating lands for the use of whole for our rising generation. At which turn we requested you to give us your talk on paper, which we also have heard on the subject. And we are sensible of the benevolent wishes of our white brothers to the north, and know also that we ought to aid their good endeavors towards doing good to our people, and had our people made provisions for educating our

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<sup>195</sup> Cyrus Kingsbury to Samuel Worcester, October 15, 1816, Letters and Papers of the Board, Papers of the ABCFM, Unit 6, Vol. 3, Reel 738, Frame 6.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid.

<sup>197</sup> Tracy, *History of American Missions*, 67.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid.

children some years ago, much good would have resulted from such appropriation. But we did not then see the advantage it might be to our rising generation. Bu we find now that we acted wrong on this subject and trust the Great Spirit that directs all things that it will now be in our power to do something towards aiding our white brothers in educating our people.<sup>199</sup>

Thus, because it was generally known premise in the Cherokee nation that subscription to the U.S. government and the missionary civilization program would secure the Cherokee survival, individuals of Cherokee society stood at the forefront of the civilization and conversion process. Most Cherokee leaders like the Ridge took their children by the hand to Kingsbury.<sup>200</sup> Tracy also reports that one of the first children in school, Catharine Brown, “was sent to school at her own request.”<sup>201</sup>

In the incident of itinerant conversion mentioned earlier, interpreter Reece had “made some remarks of his own” to which I attribute the credit of moving the woman to tears. This is not difficult to understand for any one who understands that it is the message which moved the woman, and she would not have achieved this emotional state had Reece not added remarks of his own to the missionary message that were probably culturally relevant enough to drive the point home. At least missionaries credited Reece with this contribution, as they baptized him the following Sabbath.

The role of Cherokees in their civilization and conversion was even greater if we consider that in 1818, there were no coercive measures on the part of the U.S.

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<sup>199</sup> Charles Hicks to Jeremiah Evarts, January 9, 1819, Letters and Papers of the Board, Papers of the ABCFM, Unit 6, Vol. 3, Reel 738, Frame 463.

<sup>200</sup> See list of first 26 children in the school. Cyrus Kingsbury to Samuel Worcester, June 30, 1817, Letters and Papers of the Board, Papers of the ABCFM, Unit 6, Vol. 3, Reel 738, Frame 31.

<sup>201</sup> Tracy, *History of American Missions*, 67.

government and the missionaries to force the Cherokees to subscribe to the civilization program. Cherokee parents could have retained their children, had they not convinced themselves of the utility of this program to their interests. This logic became apparent when some of the emigrating party to Arkansas circulated a report that it was the missionaries “object to form a large settlement of white people and get possession of their land.”<sup>202</sup> This rumor was sufficient to cause the parents of Catharine Brown who were to immigrate to Arkansas, for example, to want to withdraw Catharine from the missionary school.<sup>203</sup> According to Tracy, a white man who has a Cherokee family was also convinced that “the white people were determined to have the country;” therefore, he wanted to withdraw his son, and was discouraged like “many Cherokees were discouraged, and keeping their children at home on the same account.”<sup>204</sup>

The missionaries had no control over the threat to the Cherokee lands, nor did they have any control over the Cherokees’ decision to send their children to the missionary school or not. The missionaries even further lost control of the conversion process, as the Lancasterian school system and conversion strategies made them rely on Cherokee teachers. Not only had the missionaries resigned to translating the Bible into

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<sup>202</sup> Cyrus Kingsbury to Samuel Worcester, March 6, 1818, Letters and Papers of the Board, Papers of the ABCFM, Unit 6, Vol. 3, Reel 738, Frame 47.

<sup>203</sup> This rumor was especially powerful for Catharine’s parents because her father “with tears in his eyes” said he was moving away from the “white people [who] had stolen his cattle, horses, and hogs, until he had very little left.” Tracy, *History of American Missions*, 71.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid.



the Cherokee language,<sup>205</sup> but it is the Cherokee teachers who found the final formula to turn the hymns of the missionaries into a more effective tool of instruction and conversion. The following incident aptly captures this state of affairs, of which missionaries were not always aware. Note that the missionaries did not hide their satisfaction at this surprise.

The instructors have adopted a method of treating the scholars, which meets with our most cordial approbation. After supper, students are collected male and female into the female schoolhouse and are seated in order on the right and left and in front of the fire. A hymn is sung by memory in which all join, then questions are proposed by Mr. Chamberlin on the first principles of the Christian religion; all answer; then the reason for the answer which has been given are demanded; they answer again in the language of the holy spirit; after questioning them in this manner a while, another hymn is sung; then questions are posed again in the same manner and this alternating questions and singing for an hour or two. The exercises are closed by prayer. Perhaps no expedient could be chosen better calculated to have the children rooted and grounded in the first principles of our holy religion than this very method. Your committee witnessed with particular sensations, the effects produced on some of them. They were attentive, solemn and tender even to tears.<sup>206</sup>

The examples of two converts, one in the words of the missionaries, and the other in his own words, are my last examples showing that Cherokees controlled the process of their conversion more than the missionaries did. The first example is that of John Arch, a

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<sup>205</sup> In 1822 missionaries at Brainerd, with the help of Reece probably, translated into Cherokee: “1-the first, second, third, seventh, eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth Chapters of Genesis, and the ninth Chap. to the tenth verse, and 22<sup>nd</sup> Chapter to 20<sup>th</sup> verse; 2-Everythin relative to the death, burial, resurrection and ascension of our Saviour and also what he said and did the week previous to this death, collected from the four evangelist; 3-A summary of Christian Doctrine and duties; 4-An Hymn.” See Translations into Cherokee, May 1822, Unit 6, Reel 737, 18.3.1.: Cherokee Missions, Vol. 2, 1817-1824, Journals, Letters, Joint Communication, Papers of the ABCFM, ABC 18: Missions on the American Continents 1811-1919, Frame 555.

<sup>206</sup> Isaac Anderson and William Eagleton to Samuel Worcester, September 13, 1819, Unit 6, Reel 737, 18.3.1.: Cherokee Missions, Vol. 2, 1817-1824, Journals, Letters, Joint Communication, Papers of the ABCFM, ABC 18: Missions on the American Continents 1811-1919, Frame 380.

full-blooded Cherokee whose story of conversion I argue started way before he even met the missionaries. That is, the fact that Arch traveled 150 miles to enroll in the mission school, the fact that he exchanged his only property (his gun) for tuition, the fact that the missionaries hesitated at first to take him shows that he deserves more credit for his conversion than the missionaries who gave him the opportunity to go to school and become Christian. Here is the Arch's story in the missionaries' own words quoted at length:

Last Christmas, a young man called John Arch, who had been raised in the mountains near the confines of South Carolina happened in Knoxville, where he met with Mr. Hall who informed him that there was a school in the nation. As soon as he went home, he took his gun and wandered off in search of the place, which we hope has proved to him the house of God and the gate of Heaven. After traveling one hundred and fifty miles, he arrived at the missionary station, told them he had come to go to school, and offered them his gun, his only property, for clothes [sold for tuition]. His appearance was so wild and forbidding, the missionaries said they hesitated to receive him, inasmuch as he was upward of twenty years of age. He would not be put off. They took him on. In a short time, he discovered a thoughtful concern about his soul, and now gives the most satisfactory evidence of gracious change of heart. His thirst for knowledge is great. He has learned to read and write well although he has not been more than ten months at the school. ...He says he often feels strongly inclined to tell the Indians about God and the Saviour, but he knows so little; he thinks it would not please God. He desires to get an education that he may preach. The history of this young man and the account he gave of himself is so pleasing that brother Eagleton with the advice and consent of the missionaries has agreed to take him home with him to superintend his course of preparation for the Gospel ministry.<sup>207</sup>

The second story is that of Buck Watie, named after Elias Boudinot, a "corporate member" deceased.<sup>208</sup> Boudinot parents were pro-civilization,<sup>209</sup> and as noted before he

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<sup>207</sup> Art Hoyt and others to Samuel Worcester, December 6, 1819, Unit 6, Reel 737, 18.3.1.: Cherokee Missions, Vol. 2, 1817-1824, Journals, Letters, Joint Communication, Papers of the ABCFM, ABC 18: Missions on the American Continents 1811-1919, Frames 381-83.

<sup>208</sup> Tracy, *History of the American Board*, Appendix B.

was one of the first students to attend Cornwall Foreign Missionary School in Connecticut. As a product of the civilization program, he was appointed in October 1825 by the Cherokee Council to tour the nation for the purpose of raising funds for a newspaper that would help the program soar like a Phoenix.<sup>210</sup>

In his “address to the Whites” delivered in the First Presbyterian Church on May 26, 1826, he made many points, several of which situate on the Cherokee commitment to civilization and Christianity as a consciously chosen course of history even before the ABCFM missionaries arrived in their nation. He said, “[t]he rise of these people [the Cherokees] in their movement towards civilization, may be traced as far back as the relinquishment of their towns [reference to Hiwassee left around 1800 as mentioned earlier], when the game became incompetent to their support, by reason of the surrounding white population.”<sup>211</sup>

He then placed the Cherokees at the center of their “uncivilization”— “I am aware of the difficulties which have ever existed to Indian civilization, I do not deny the almost insurmountable obstacles which **we ourselves** have thrown in the way of this improvement [emphasis mine]”<sup>212</sup>—before placing them at the center of their “civilization”: “It needs only that the world should know **what we have done** in the few last years, to foresee **what yet we may do with the assistance of our white brethren**

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<sup>209</sup> Purdue, *Cherokee Editor*, 5.

<sup>210</sup> *Ibid.*, 67, 78.

<sup>211</sup> Boudinot, “An Address to the Whites,” in Purdue, ed. *Cherokee Editor*, 71.

<sup>212</sup> *Ibid.*, 69-70.

[emphasis mine].”<sup>213</sup> He did not dismiss the contribution of whites in general and missionaries in particular, as he hoped they would assist in creating the newspaper for which he was raising funds; but he assigned the ultimate responsibility for the success of this plan to the fact that many Cherokees “already speak and read the English language,” which in his opinion was the tool “most likely to throw the mantle of civilization over all tribes.”<sup>214</sup>

He explained that the Cherokees would operate the paper in a way which would “have a powerful influence on the advancement of the Indians themselves.”<sup>215</sup> To show that he meant what he said, he explained that the “Cherokee authorities have adopted the measures already stated [laws and the like], with a sincere desire to make their nation an intelligent and virtuous [that is, civilized and Christian] people, and with a full hope that those who have already pointed out to them the road of happiness, will now assist them to pursue it.”<sup>216</sup> It is important to note that as “civilized” and Christian as Boudinot was, he expected the whites to only assist the Cherokees in the pursuit of these goals, while maintaining that the purpose of Cherokees was to form an independent Cherokee civilization equal to the white civilization within the “American family.”<sup>217</sup>

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<sup>213</sup> Ibid., 70.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid., 76.

<sup>215</sup> Ibid., 76.

<sup>216</sup> Ibid., 77.

<sup>217</sup> Ibid., 75. Purdue confirms this interpretation of Boudinot’s words. She says when he wrote, “I trust that they [the Cherokees] will be admitted into all privileges of the American family ... Boudinot did not mean assimilation. He believed that when the Cherokee government had reached a certain level of sophistication, the Cherokee people as a distinct political entity could enjoy the rights and privileges of other Americans.” Purdue, ed. *Cherokee Editor*, footnote 19, p. 81.

In sum, most Cherokees pursued civilization and Christianity because of the pressure on their lands. This goal did not prevent some like the David Brown, the brother of Catherine Brown, to become what the missionaries considered “genuine” converts, as he expressed regularly: “I flatter myself with much hope that the period is not far off when every aboriginal inhabitant of North America shall hear the glad tiding of salvation.”<sup>218</sup> However, many Cherokees like Boudinot above were advocating for a “civilized” Christian Cherokee nation within the U.S. civilization even though their meanings of civilization and Christianity was sometimes at odds with the meanings of the missionaries. For example, after Cherokees were removed some still remembered that in the old nation, they gathered in camp meetings to show spirituality at camp meetings, and that many participants “also hunted during the stay at the camp.”<sup>219</sup> This practice was popular, I have found it difficult to reconcile it with the missionary warning that hunting was “unchristian,”<sup>220</sup> except to see it as evidence that Cherokee agency and missionary run parallel in the conversion process.

### The ABCFM Strategies in Converting West Africans

The ABCFM board’s strategies in converting the West Africans were similar to its strategies in converting the Cherokees. Both resulted from the board’s plan to “civilize”

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<sup>218</sup> David Brown to Samuel Worcester, December 6, 1819, Unit 6, Reel 737, 18.3.1.: Cherokee Missions, Vol. 2, 1817-1824, Journals, Letters, Joint Communication, Papers, Frame 960.

<sup>219</sup> Purdue, *Nations Remembered*, (Cherokee Interview, 1;51-52), 129.

<sup>220</sup> Cyrus Kingsbury to Samuel Worcester, March 10, 1817, Unit 6, Reel 737, 18.3.1.: Cherokee Missions, Vol. 2, 1817-1824, Journals, Letters, Joint Communication, Papers, Frame 70.

the natives before Christianizing them, although Wilson did not benefit from a civilization program such as the one the U.S. government sponsored in the Cherokee nation. This is why the board chose to plant its mission in Liberia, a relatively “civilized” place because of the American presence there. On September 21, 1833, Wilson wrote to his wife informing her about this rationale for choosing Liberia for his prospective mission: “The M.C.S. [Maryland Colonization Society] is about to plant a new colony on the coast of West Africa, to be located at Cape Palmas, two hundred and fifty miles south of Monrovia, and presenting, as we all think, much more eligible site for the commencement of a mission than any place in or about Liberia.”<sup>221</sup>

Cape Palmas was the most “civilized” place on the coast of West Africa, in the board’s reasoning, because of the emigration American settlers who included the agents of the American Colonization Society, some American missionaries, all there to assist the American black emigrants in maintaining their level of civilization and Christianization. Cape Palmas, like other settlements in Liberia in general, was also supposed to be the point from where the influence of civilization and Christianity spread to the neighboring African natives. However, Wilson became disappointed in the “general character of the settlements” of Liberia upon his arrival. He estimated that the settlements were “composed of all classes of men—comprising not only those who are indifferent to religion but many whose conduct and sentiments are directly opposed to all its

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<sup>221</sup> DuBose, *Memoirs of Rev. John Leighton Wilson*, 57.

precepts.”<sup>222</sup> In these circumstances, Wilson regretted that the “influence of such examples upon uncivilized communities cannot readily be conceived.”<sup>223</sup>

He also thought that the influence of “civilized” Liberia might not spread to the “uncivilized” neighboring communities because of what might be called excesses of civilization, namely, the frenzy pursuit of secular gain: “The chief motive which is often urged by those who take an active part in sending out emigrants to Africa is the prospect or possibility of acquiring riches. Their minds are filled schemes of amassing property, not with plans for Christianization of the country.”<sup>224</sup> This assessment was a disappointment for Wilson and a surprise for me, especially when I consider that private property was one of the first signs of civilization missionaries reported among Native Americans.

Finally, it was disappointing and surprising for Wilson to see “individuals who in America are regarded as consistent Christian men ... allow such feelings to take possession of their minds [and] become so completely enslaved by them, as almost ever after to forget their duty to God and their fellow men.”<sup>225</sup> It was even more disappointing and surprising these “civilized” colonists in Liberia “[o]ften ... do not adhere strictly to the principle of Christian integrity in their dealings with the natives” they were supposed

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<sup>222</sup> J. Leighton Wilson and Stephen Wyncoop to B.B. Wisner, April 18, 1834, Report of the state of the Colony of Liberia, Papers of the ABCFM, Unit 2, Vol. 1, Reel 149, Frames 21-22.

<sup>223</sup> Ibid.

<sup>224</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>225</sup> Ibid.

to inspire.<sup>226</sup> Therefore, Wilson sadly concludes that “[f]rom this class of men, nothing certainly can be expected in the way of advancing Christianity.”<sup>227</sup>

Wilson’s disappointment in the religious and secular affairs of Liberia, however, did not cause him to question the ABCFM strategy of “civilization” before Christianization. It is true that he became skeptical about the influence of the “civilized” colonists on the natives being permanent, but it is also true that was a little satisfied that neighboring African natives had become more civilized as a result of their intercourse with the American settlers: “We do not know that any special of permanent influence has been exerted upon the character of the natives by their intercourse with American settlers [but] [t]hey have been familiarized with the habits and customs of civilized life and disciplined to more thorough habits of industry.”<sup>228</sup>

It is probably Wilson’s strong faith in the power of God which caused him to remain optimistic about the Christianization of West Africans, although he regrettably had to start from scratch: “The natives about the Cape, with whom we conversed, we found to be as ignorant of the truths of revelation, as those who have had no intercourse with the Christian people at all.”<sup>229</sup> He remained optimistic although the answer was “no” to the board’s anxiety to know the extent to which the “civilized” colonists might help the mission: “The committee feels anxious no doubt to know how far they may rely upon the

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<sup>226</sup> Ibid.

<sup>227</sup> Ibid.

<sup>228</sup> J. Leighton Wilson and Stephen Wyncoop to the Prudential Committee, March 24, 1834, Report of the state of the Colony of Liberia, Papers of the ABCFM, Unit 2, Vol. 1, Reel 149, Frame 20.

<sup>229</sup> Ibid.



colonists to forward their purpose of evangelizing the country. Or if they may expect anything at all; to this we reply that in our opinion nothing direct can be expected from the colonists at all.”<sup>230</sup>

Wilson then suggested an alternative strategy still based on the ABCFM’s plan that civilization should precede Christianity: “There is no other hope of disseminating Christianity extensively in Africa except through the medium of educated natives.”<sup>231</sup> He went on to outline how this strategy might be executed in order to create a lasting Christian influence on West Africans. The board, he said, had to ensure that the hearts of the natives were thoroughly conquered by the Christian spirit if it did not want the natives to fall back into irreligion:

Our hopes, however, from this quarter ought not to be too sanguine at the outset. Unless the hearts of the natives shall be thoroughly imbued by the spirit of religion and their minds illuminated by its doctrine, there is too much reason to fear that when they leave this place of their education and return to their homes, they will relapse into the habits and customs of their countrymen.<sup>232</sup>

Wilson suggested this precaution because he had “seen several instances of natives who had been educated in Europe or America who had renounced their habits of civilized life and are living in the habitual practice of the most odious vice of their uninstructed countrymen.”<sup>233</sup> Thus, if Wilson suggested replacing the “civilized” Liberian colonists with “civilized” Africans, what did he think of the board strategy to

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<sup>230</sup> Ibid.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid., Frame 33.

<sup>232</sup> Ibid.

<sup>233</sup> Ibid., Frame 34.

use “civilized” Christian African-Americans to propagate Christianity in West Africa? Indeed, the board had asked him to investigate “how far it would be expedient to take coloured children from the United States to be educated in Africa and coloured teachers from this country for the purpose of instructing the natives.”<sup>234</sup> He recognized that it was “too highly desirable that a small number of children of suitable character should be sent out for this purpose mentioned” because they would be used to “acquire the language of the country and aid the native children not only in their studies, but in acquiring manners of the simple arts of civilized life.”<sup>235</sup>

However, Wilson recommended some precaution here again because “several coloured persons who have been sent from Europe and the United States as missionaries to Africa without any connection to any white men have turned out badly and others have become so entirely absorbed by secular business as to lose sight entirely of the object of the mission.”<sup>236</sup> Therefore, he insisted that great care be taken in the selection of suitable children for this purpose because these children would do more harm than good if they should prove vicious.<sup>237</sup> Concerning the “coloured teachers from this country,” his ultimate advice was that “[t]hey ought always to be under the inspection and direction of

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<sup>234</sup> Ibid.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid., 33-34

<sup>236</sup> Ibid., 34.

<sup>237</sup> Ibid.

white men and never allowed while sustaining this office of missionary, in any form, to engage in any secular business whatsoever except what the mission may demand.”<sup>238</sup>

This measure was extremely important because another strategy in Christianizing West Africans was the board’s plan that Wilson start on the coast and then work his way into the interior: “The object of the American Board in planting its first mission on the western shores of Africa was so that this should be the headquarters for a line of stations to extend far into the interior.”<sup>239</sup> Throughout his tours, “the early hope was reinforced that this mission on the west coast might be the point of approach to the vast interior of the continent.”<sup>240</sup>

Wilson, however, later rejected this strategy as a viable one. Although Wilson had agreed to recruit “two suitable negroes in this country, go to Liberia ... to explore the adjoining country [because] I shall not be exposed to savage violence,”<sup>241</sup> Wilson rejected the rationale of this preparation, which was that missionaries should not go to “un-civilized” parts of Africa. He recanted after living in Africa:

No one, who has given attention to the subject, can be ignorant of the fact that, of the numerous missionary stations established in that country during the last fifteen years, the majority of them are located, not only beyond the jurisdiction of all civilized governments, but many of them in situations where no civilized government on earth could render them aid, however urgent might be their distress. And yet, we ask, what one of those stations has been cut off by native

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<sup>238</sup> Ibid.

<sup>239</sup> DuBose, *Memoirs of Rev. John Leighton Wilson* , 106. It is fascinating that Wilson’s reports into the interior did not only include the potential to spread Christianity, but also similarities (rice fields) between the interior and his native South Carolina. See Ibid., Chapter Thirteen, “The Itinerant Missionary.”

<sup>240</sup> Strong, *Story of the American Board*, 131-32.

<sup>241</sup> DuBose, *Memoirs of Rev. John Leighton Wilson*, 54.

violence? What spot on African soil has been stained with the blood of these missionaries?<sup>242</sup>

In a word, the board's practical strategies of Christianizing West Africa, different as they were from its strategies in the Cherokee nation, were attributable to the fact that Africa was far from the United States and the board did not receive the support it had received for its Cherokee mission. However, some similarities remained between the two missions such as the assumption that civilization should precede Christianization as noted earlier. Also during the seven years Wilson spent at Cape Palmas, he preached through a native "interpreter."<sup>243</sup> He also relied on native preachers to spread the gospel at his Cape Palmas mission station and at his second station in the Gabon. Commenting on the potential of the Gabon mission for example, the board exulted that "[w]hen, under the guidance of God's good providence, the mission shall reach such a point, where it can make a home and centre, and there gather converts and educated native preachers to go forth with the Word of Life in all directions, then will its grand idea be realized."<sup>244</sup>

This pursuit of native teachers produced a similar but slightly different effect in the Cherokee nation where the board encouraged the use of mission families for this purpose and West Africa where the board privileged the use of boarding schools. Indeed, the board's strategy of taking Cherokee children into missionary families was readapted in West Africa because Wilson and his wife constituted the only missionary family. Therefore, Wilson put more emphasis on boarding schools to replace the Christian bosom

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<sup>242</sup> Wilson, *Western Africa*, 509-10.

<sup>243</sup> DuBose, *Memoirs of Rev. John Leighton Wilson*, 82.

<sup>244</sup> *Ibid.*, 119-20.

that the mission family provided in the Cherokee nation, as he explains in the following report:

We learned a very important fact today with regard to the intercourse between native children and those of the colonists. The latter when they are sent out into the country for trade, and especially the younger lads, very readily acquire the language of the natives and are ever after more disposed to speak this than their own. And they almost invariably fall into the habits of the people around them. On the other hand when natives are taken into the families of Americans, and especially females, they conform to civilized life and become respectable. This fact among many others confirms my own mind in the belief that to do any material good for the rising generation of Africans, it will be necessary to separate the children entirely, and that at a very early age, from the example and influence of their parents.<sup>245</sup>

With only this adaptation to make, Wilson rushed to build schools followed by churches like his colleague in the Cherokee nation. A “dormitory”<sup>246</sup> or a “boarding-school was begun at once at Cape Palmas, with fifteen boys and four girls as pupils, and more applying than could be received ... Soon a mission church was organized, to which new members were gradually added, eight being received during the third year of the mission.”<sup>247</sup> In Gabon, boarding schools were also “opened at once with a good number of pupils ... A church was organized within a year by Christian natives who had come from Cape Palmas.”<sup>248</sup>

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<sup>245</sup> Journal of Mission, 1834, Report of the state of the Colony of Liberia, Papers of the ABCFM, Unit 2, Vol. 1, Reel 149, Frame 45.

<sup>246</sup> DuBose, *Memoirs of Rev. John Leighton Wilson*, 81. Wilson also mentions boarding-schools in the statistics about his missions in West Africa. Wilson, *Western Africa*, 501.

<sup>247</sup> Strong, *The Story of American Board*, 126.

<sup>248</sup> *Ibid.*, 128.

All these schools, like their counterparts in the Cherokee nation, were built on the Lancasterian school system. Just as the ABCFM board had in the Cherokee nation, it asked Wilson to investigate conditions to create Lancaseterian schools. It instructed Wilson on his exploratory tour to enquire “[h]ow far the Gospel may be preached among the natives,”<sup>249</sup> and also “[h]ow far may educated natives be expected to aid spreading the gospel over Africa and is it expedient to send Africans from the United States for this purpose.”<sup>250</sup>

In sum, although the ABCFM made some crucial adaptations, its strategies in Christianizing Cherokees and West Africans remained fundamentally the same. The linchpin of these strategies was the assumption that civilization should precede Christianity. Also similar was the fact that, in both cases, the board designed these strategies without consulting the natives who were supposed to just do as the missionaries said. In West Africa, one cannot help but wonder why Wilson believed he could so direct the agency of West African since he reported time and again cases of men “interested in Christianity with suspicious motives.”<sup>251</sup> This question is important because in West Africa as in the Cherokee nation the Lancasterian system recommended that “much dependence must be put upon pious natives” to become teachers and preachers?<sup>252</sup>

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<sup>249</sup> J. Leighton Wilson and Stephen Wyncoop to the Prudential Committee, April 18, 1834, Report of the state of the Colony of Liberia, Papers of the ABCFM, Unit 2, Vol. 1, Reel 149, Frame 31.

<sup>250</sup> Ibid., Frame 34.

<sup>251</sup> Journal of Mission, 1834, Report of the state of the Colony of Liberia, Papers of the ABCFM, Unit 2, Vol. 1, Reel 149, Frames 56- 57.

<sup>252</sup> Strong, *The Story of the American Board*, 126.

Therefore, how did West Africans pursue their interests in comparison to their Cherokee counterparts in the conversion process?

#### Parallel West African Agency in their conversion process

Contrary to the Cherokees whose writing about their conversion experiences is available in various sources, West Africans' writing is unavailable even in the Papers of the American board. Therefore, I had to read between the lines of Wilson's reports in order to reconstruct the interests West Africans might have been pursuing independently of his. I found that West Africans' interests sometimes coincided with and sometimes drastically diverged from Wilson's. An example both interests coinciding is the case of the West African teachers who followed Wilson to Gabon after the Liberian authorities expelled him from Liberia.<sup>253</sup>

The "annual tabular" summarized below also show the list of members of the mission including native members over the first two years at the Cape Palmas missionary station. The digits on the left represent the statistics of the first year, and the digits on the right represent the statistics of the second year. The headings are in bold and cap locks, and the statistics after the headings belong to that category.

**AMERICAN**- 1 preacher 1, 0 physicians 0, 4 teachers 4, 1 printers 1, 0 farmers 0, 2 females 3-- 6 total 5 **NATIVES**- 1 Native preacher 0, and 3 assistants 4; **PREACHING**- 1 place stated for preaching 4; 50 average congregation at station on Sabbath 100; **EDUCATION**- 1 Seminary 1; 35 pupils in the seminary 54; 1 Boarding school for males 1; 25 pupils at male boarding school 39; 1 Boarding school for females 1; 12 pupils at female boarding school 15; 3 Free schools 2; 50 male pupils at free school 20; 1 female at free school 0; 85 total of students at free

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<sup>253</sup> Wilson, *Western Africa*, 298. See also Strong, *The Story of American Board*, 128.

school 80; 4 school masters members of the church 2; 7 pupils members of the church 4; \$50-120 school cost (schools taught by Americans cost \$150) \$50-120; \$50 cost of school taught by Native teachers \$85; **CHURCHES**- 1 church 1; 8 members received during the year 1; 1 excommunication 0; 1 member suspended 0; 21 whole number of members 23.<sup>254</sup>

I consider all those natives who are listed here, whether as teachers or as students, to have a genuine interest that coincided with that of Wilson. However, I presume from the statistics under the heading “**CHURCHES**” that there were two native members of the church whose interests ended up diverging from those of Wilson since he excommunicated one and suspended another. Although Wilson did not specify the reasons for these sanctions, I can easily guess that whatever these reasons were, they represented for Wilson sufficient indication that these members were unfit for the church. Thus, if Wilson only excommunicated or suspended these two members without being able to bend them to his interest, I conclude that the interests of these delinquent members had been running parallel to Wilson’s since before the time they were admitted in the church.

Another instance of West African interests coinciding with or diverged from Wilson’s is West African demands for schools. West African, like their Cherokee counterparts, certainly did not dissociate Christianity from civilization, but they separated these two to a greater extent than the Cherokees did. That is, West Africans more than the Cherokees desired elements of Western civilization like schools without necessarily pursuing Christianity. From Gabon, Wilson reported that “the adult population seems

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<sup>254</sup> Annual Tabular Report, 1835-36, Papers of the ABCFM, Unit 2, Vol. 2, Reel 150, Frames 3-4.



disposed to listen to the truths of the gospel, and the children which have been gathered into the school show as much aptitude for learning as the generality of African children.”<sup>255</sup> If I combine Wilson’s report that “four-fifths of the male adult population speak the English or French language with tolerable ease,”<sup>256</sup> with his report that “their interest as well as their inclination have led them to study and cultivate those [‘civilized’] manners which would ingratiate them with the traders who frequent their country,”<sup>257</sup> I suspect that the people on the Gabon coast were pursuing education more than Christianity. This is how I make sense of Wilson’s report in 1856 that “the love of trade was their [the Gabon people] ruling passion,”<sup>258</sup> and his report in 1843 that he has “visited most of the chiefs in the vicinity, and found them already interested in our mission, or with a little explanation have made them so; there are none of those whom I have visited who have not either promised to send their sons to our schools when organized, or requested that schools might be established in their towns.”<sup>259</sup> For, neither of these reports includes a thirst for Christianity.

Indeed, these reports match Wilson’s reports in Cape Palmas where he had declared that even those West Africans who had embraced Christianity pursued its practice less devotedly than they pursued secular elements of Western civilization. He had hurriedly reported then that “The preachers in the Colony are, we believe, without

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<sup>255</sup> Wilson, *Western Africa*, 301.

<sup>256</sup> *Ibid.*, 293.

<sup>257</sup> *Ibid.*, 292.

<sup>258</sup> *Ibid.*, 297.

<sup>259</sup> Wilson to the mission rooms, July 26, 1843, in DuBose, *Memoirs of Rev. John Leighton Wilson*, 143.

exception men of business—their hearts are bent upon making wealth.”<sup>260</sup> Whether Wilson was lenient towards the people of Gabon in gratitude for the asylum their king offered him remains an open question.

Indeed, the general association of Westerners with trade is also what explains that the so-called kings of West Africa treated Wilson like a trader, as they capitalized on his desire to recruit scholars and converts. The following quote illustrates this point.

The way Africans do trade

Trade is usually commenced by giving each head man a glass of rum, a libation which they say the devil always receives.... The first glass is always poured into the sea. Mr. Wyncoop and myself went ashore to see the town and confer with the king about the establishment of schools. Grand Sester is one of the largest and most important native towns on the coast... We were conducted soon after we landed to the presence of the king. He is an old man, nothing remarkable about his person. He wore a loose gown that covered almost the whole of his body. We stated to him the object of our visit to his town with which he seemed pleased, and said he would be ready to make any arrangements for the accommodation of a mission as he arrived. After our interview with the king, we were conducted to the government apartment to see him on the same subject. What authority he exercises in the town, we could not satisfactorily ascertain. He is a very aged man and seemed much more anxious for trade. We were asked why we did not bring the king some rum as it was always the case to do this. After our interview with the king, we took a stroll through the town with two or three hundred children at our heels.<sup>261</sup>

The following incidents also show that West Africans pursued Western education more than Christianity before Wilson arrived in Africa, during the time he operated in Africa, and still after he left. The situation before Wilson’s arrival in Africa stems from the fact that West Africans on the coast strove to appropriate the advantages of Western

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<sup>260</sup> J. Leighton Wilson and Stephen Wyncoop to the Prudential Committee, March 24, 1834, Report of the state of the Colony of Liberia, Papers of the ABCFM, Unit 2, Vol. 1, Reel 149, Frames 19-20.

<sup>261</sup> Journal of Mission, 1834, Report of the state of the Colony of Liberia, Papers of the ABCFM, Unit 2, Vol. 1, Reel 149, Frames 55-56.

civilization.<sup>262</sup> For example, they developed a superiority complex toward “non-civilized” Africans in the interior. This is evident in the following report Wilson filed on “[t]he “relation existing between the natives and the colonists and how far the colony will aid in disseminating Christianity in Africa”:

The natives in the bounds of the colony are literally the ‘hewers of wood and drawers of water’ for the colonists. Very little manual labor or any kind of drudgery is performed except by them. They are employed as servants into families and are required to perform all kind of domestic duty. They receive a moderate compensation for their services and are generally treated with kindness. We do not know that any special or permanent influence has been exerted upon the character of the natives by their encounter with American settlers. They have been familiarized with the habits and customs of civilized life, and disciplined to more thorough habits of industry. No other influence, as we were able to discern, has been exerted. Perhaps the settlement of the colonists has not been long as to justify the expectation of a very material change in their character as to imparting to them education or religion.<sup>263</sup>

This complex of superiority is what explains that once in Africa, Wilson realized for example that he had misjudged the influence of the U.S. blacks on West Africans. As the reader may recall, on his exploratory tour Wilson investigated, “How far may educated natives be expected to aid spreading the gospel over Africa and is it expedient to send Africans from the United States for this purpose,”<sup>264</sup> only to realize later that “[t]he coloured people from the US are frequently upbraided for having been

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<sup>262</sup> Wilson reports in his journal different incidents during his meetings with the kings on the coast in which civilized manners like eating with a knife and fork were more extravagant than any practice of Christianity. Ibid., Frames 53-54.

<sup>263</sup> J. Leighton Wilson and Stephen Wyncoop to B.B. Wisner, April 18, 1834, Report of the state of the Colony of Liberia, Papers of the ABCFM, Unit 2, Vol. 1, Reel 149, Frames 53-54.

<sup>264</sup> J. Leighton Wilson and Stephen Wyncoop to the Prudential Committee of the ABCFM, April 18, 1834, Papers of the ABCFM, Unit 2, Vol. 1, Reel 149, Frame 34.

slaves.”<sup>265</sup> As a result, Wilson resigned himself to an unexpected prominent role of West Africans in their conversion: “I think upon the whole much more may be expected from a native ministry and it will be as easy for us to educate natives here as for you to educate any negroes in the US.”<sup>266</sup> As I explained earlier, Wilson had also proposed to keep the excesses of civilization in these educated West Africans in check. Apparently, this fear did not subside since he still insisted in 1856 that this policy should be followed.<sup>267</sup>

In sum because Wilson had made schools his instrument of conversion, many West Africans enrolled for the perceived economic opportunity that schools represented. It is not after entrance in the school that they learned about Christianity being the ultimate expected outcome. Some followed by entering and remaining in the church,<sup>268</sup> but others relapsed into their previous unchristian habits as the example of excommunication above suggests. This is why even when Wilson proudly reported that “The headmen and chiefs of Cape Palmas a few days since, now and formally abolished the [unchristian] practice of giving saucy wood,” he was still cautious and admitted that he “cannot say that there is any thing at present which authorizes us to suppose that God is about to pour out his spirit on this people at once as he has done in some other places of the world.”<sup>269</sup>

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<sup>265</sup> Ibid., Frame 122.

<sup>266</sup> Ibid.

<sup>267</sup> See Wilson, *Western Africa*, Part IV, Chapter Six, “The Agency Devolving on White Men in connection with Missions to West Africa.”

<sup>268</sup> J. Leighton Wilson to the Prudential Committee, July 10, 1839, Papers of the ABCFM, Unit 2, Vol. 2, Reel 150, Frame 18.

<sup>269</sup> J. Leighton Wilson to the Prudential Committee, March 10, 1836, Papers of the ABCFM, Unit 2, Vol. 2, Reel 150, 18-20.

## Conclusion

It will be sufficient to remember that the ABCFM missionaries had single-handedly planned the conversion of the Cherokees and West Africans. The board counted on determined missionaries like Kingsbury, who even when reporting difficulties hoped he did not say “too much respecting our labour and difficulties and that we have produced the impression that we have been called to uncommon selfdenial in the cause of Christ.”<sup>270</sup> Wilson’s determination was also stark: “I feel a privilege to have the means of visiting a country which my heart loves and longs to do good. I have no other wish in this world than to live, labour and die for Africa.”<sup>271</sup> Both missionaries had the task of civilizing before Christianizing the Cherokees and West Africans. They created schools and churches based on the Lancasterian system.

Despite the ignorance of their interests, Cherokees and West Africans managed to outgrow the role of objects to be acted upon missionaries had envisioned for them. Cherokees actively pursued their interests like civilization and Christianization as a strategy to secure their lands, while West Africans embraced missionary civilization and Christianization program with even less pressure. The strategies of the missionaries and the Cherokees were both heavily influenced by the general assumption in the United States at the beginning of the nineteenth century that civilization was a path to the salvation of the Cherokees and their lands.

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<sup>270</sup> Cyrus Kingsbury to Samuel Worcester, March 6, 1818 Frame 45-48, Reel 738, Letters and Papers of the Board, Papers of the ABCFM, Unit 6, Vol. 3, Reel 738, Frame 45

<sup>271</sup> J. Leighton Wilson and Stephen Wyncoop to the Prudential Committee, Report of the state of the Colony of Liberia, March 24, 1834, Papers of the ABCFM, Unit 2, Vol. 1, Reel 149, Frame 14.

In West Africa, the ABCFM worked with the same assumption that civilization should precede Christianization. Therefore, West Africans rushed in droves to embrace “the habits of civilized life,” which finally overwhelmed their Christian practice. In fact, one can safely argue that because the missionaries had emphasized schools at their arrival in both the Cherokee nation and West Africa, Cherokees and West Africans placed schools higher than Christianity on their agendas. As a whole, the missionary strategy to civilize the natives before Christianizing them impacted Cherokees and West Africans’ perceptions of gender relations, formal education, and communication in unexpected ways. Chapter Three assesses the impact of the missionary premise that “civilization should precede Christianity” on the Cherokee and West African gender regimes.

### CHAPTER 3: GENDER AND MISSIONS

What is gender? Scholars may vary in their opinions, but they tend to concur that the key elements defining gender are the meanings attached to sexual differences between male, female and hermaphrodite sexes. John Tosh explained:

In current usage “gender” means the social organization of sexual difference. It embodies the assumption that most of what passes for natural (or God-given) sexual difference is in fact socially and culturally constructed, and must therefore be understood as **the outcome of historical process [emphasis mine]**. (Of course, it is that very confusion between nature and culture that has given stratification by gender such staying-power, and has caused it to escape notice in much of the historical record.) The focus on gender is less on the predicament of one sex than on the whole field of relations between the sexes.<sup>272</sup>

On a similar note, Peter Stearns explained that “[H]is book deals with the interactions between definitions of male and female, and the roles assigned to men and women, on the one hand, and encounters between different cultures, on the other.”<sup>273</sup>

In this respect, because my reflection on the work of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) involves individual men and women as well as individual societies, and because the missionaries to the Cherokees and West Africans made gender relations a conspicuous concern,<sup>274</sup> my interest is in discovering the outcome of the gender relations between these missionaries and their Cherokee and

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<sup>272</sup> John Tosh, *The Pursuit of History: Aims, Methods, and New Directions in the Study of Modern History*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (New York: Pearson Education, 1984, 1991, 1999), 156-57.

<sup>273</sup> Peter N. Stearns, *Gender in World History* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 1.

<sup>274</sup> The Board of the ABCFM had a marriage policy for missionary applicants. Unmarried at the time of their assignment to their foreign missions, Rev. Cyrus Kingsbury, the missionary to the Cherokees, and Rev. John Leighton Wilson, the missionary to West Africa exchanged various communications with the Board regarding their prospective wives. Once among the Cherokees and, especially among the West Africans, these missionaries made numerous observations, policies, and communications about the gender conception of these native peoples. The Cherokees and West Africans changed as a result of these efforts but also as a result of their own choices. I will discuss all these aspects ahead.

West African interlocutors. If we agree with Susan Kent that, “the sex of individuals is a basic biological division among humans, [and that] gender is the cultural construction of that division. That is, humans use their conceptions of gender to define and categorize the biological sexes,”<sup>275</sup> it then follows that “...by definition it [gender] cannot be universal because it must vary by culture, just as kinship and political organizations vary.”<sup>276</sup> This observation is important due to the fact that “Because one’s own culture seems innate or “normal,” both male and female researchers [and missionaries] sometimes are not aware that they are applying Western gender concepts to non-Western societies.”<sup>277</sup>

Therefore, one should be particularly careful in my use of missionary and other Western sources because too many of them in the nineteenth-century were Eurocentric in their approach to world affairs.<sup>278</sup> The assumption should also be avoided that native peoples of the so-called colonized world were condemned to always be Eurocentric because of some critical limitations that the Western colonizing scholarship had imposed

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<sup>275</sup> Susan Kent, “Gender and Prehistory in Africa,” in *Gender in African Prehistory* ed. by idem (Walnut Creek: AltaMira, 1998), 9.

<sup>276</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>277</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>278</sup> Their main argument is repeated here by William McNeill in the twentieth century if with more sophistication. He wrote that “At the outbreak of the French Revolution in 1789, the geographical boundaries of Western Civilization could still be defined with reasonable precision. By the time of the Russian Revolution in 1917, this was no longer the case. Western history had merged into world history; but simultaneously and by definition, the same fate overtook all the other civilizations, savageries, and barbarisms of mankind....Until very nearly our own time—an perhaps even today—cultural exchanges precipitated by the cosmopolitan mixing of men from all diverse regions of the earth have tended to run strongly in one direction: from Western to non-Western. As a result, contemporary higher culture and thought owe little to non-Western cultural traditions. Indeed, as conviction of the inherent superiority of their own civilization took firmer hold upon Western minds—conviction conveniently sustained by repeating rifles and naval gunboats—educated Europeans became less accessible to alien cultural influences and in that sense more parochial than their forefathers of the eighteenth century had been.” William McNeill, *The Rise of the West: A History of Human Community* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1963), 795-797.



on them.<sup>279</sup> For “...there is currently much evidence disproving the idea that all societies organize males and females similarly—that is, not all societies emphasize the differences between the sexes or rank them hierarchically in terms of power, dominance, domesticity, status, and so on”<sup>280</sup> like Europeans do.

Secondly, as Fekri Hassan identified, one must be mindful of the Eurocentric chauvinistic assumption that the European model of gender system was superior to non-European gender system: “The industrial revolution and the commercial transformation of Europe have generated hegemonic visions of civilization, ethnicity, nationalism, and an epistemic prism that makes it difficult to examine our [African] past from other vantage points and within other cultural narratives.”<sup>281</sup> Hassan then warned any student of gender relations not to “rely solely on the totalizing, stereotypical views of women and men developed and perpetuated within the Judeo-Christian-Islamic tradition and the

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<sup>279</sup> Reacting to what he viewed as the “unexamined romantic notions of human action in the world,” Eric Wolf wrote: “One notion portrays humans as inherently creative and ever ready to reinvent who they are and who they want to be. Another is that humans will instinctively resist domination and that “resistance” can be thought of and studied as a unitary category. I believe that here the wish has become father and mother to the thought. People do not always resist the constraints in which they find themselves, nor can they reinvent themselves freely in cultural constructions of their own choosing. Culture refashioning and culture change go forward continually under variable, but also highly determinate, circumstances.” Eric R. Wolf, *Europe and People without History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), xiii. Of course, Professor of Anthropology Emeritus, Eric Wolf, had to assume that Europe did dominate the non-European cultures for his argument of cultural determinism to stand. If this assumptions crumbled, and we were for example to discover that non-European cultures did have history or that their cultural agency was never under such constraints that he imagined to be imposed by Europeans, then the structural determinism of Wolf would become chimera. My dissertation will address this issue through the method of parallel agency.

<sup>280</sup> Kent, “Gender and Prehistory in Africa,” in *Gender in African Prehistory*, 18. Kent also said that, for example, many Western archeologists investigated “pre-historic” societies assuming that “in all societies males equal power...while females equal domesticity, subordination (19);” Kent also said that many Western anthropologists traced the “the exciting, risky, and generally more interesting lives of men [and claimed in contrast that] Women were “burdened” with child care (a concept, I suggest, that is probably most appropriate to Westerners who perceive raising children as a burden..” *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>281</sup> Fekri Hassan, “Toward an Archeology of Gender in Africa” in *Ibid.*, 261.

commercial-industrial experience.”<sup>282</sup> We must also avoid in his opinion “making a facile projection of Africa’s present to its past.”<sup>283</sup>

Thirdly, as Hassan insisted, all scholars must be sure “to examine gender as gendered entities ourselves, and we can only examine it through language and introspection in social categories that are already preformed.”<sup>284</sup> Thus must be avoided “the masculinist language of discourse (as in Lacan’s phallic theory of language), which creates a problem both for women who must speak as men and for men who cannot approach women except from within the prism of sexist language.”<sup>285</sup>

Thus, how can the researcher follow Hassan’s advice that studying gender, “we may wish to inquire why [or how] certain crafts or activities are so gendered?”<sup>286</sup> In doing so, he should not exempt any area of inquiry or any writer from scrutiny, for “The social fabrication of gender is not separable from sociopolitical machination, manipulation, and control.”<sup>287</sup> Thus the study of the gender relations between the ABCFM missionaries and the Cherokees and the West Africans requires that we understand first the cultural contexts of each group. Secondly, because missionaries also

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<sup>282</sup> Ibid., 261-262.

<sup>283</sup> Ibid., 262.

<sup>284</sup> Ibid., 269.

<sup>285</sup> Ibid.

<sup>286</sup> Ibid., 264. Hassan provided important insights as to what other questions might be asked in order to uncover these processes in iron-smithing for example: “is it possible that the association between iron smithing and males is a continuation of the link between males and weapons? We should, of course, realize that the attribution of a craft to a specific gender does not imply that other gender affiliations are absent from the craft. In general, the tendency to link a certain craft with one gender or another masks a **negotiated range of gender relations [emphasis is mine].**” Ibid., 265.

<sup>287</sup> Ibid., 270.

operated on an individual basis, the researcher shall also pay attention to the singular gender outlook of each missionary, Cherokee and West African. Finally, he will want to know if any change resulted from the encounter between the missionary, Cherokee and West African gender conceptions. he will apply his method of parallel agency.

#### ABCFM Missionary Conception of Gender Relations in 1810 and 1834

What was the general missionary conception of gender relations in 1810, the date of formation of the ABCFM? As demonstrated in Chapter one, the individual missionaries of the ABCFM received only general instructions from the Board because the formation of the Board and the dispatching of the missionaries were simultaneous. Since the researcher already demonstrated in that chapter that America was dominantly Christian in the early nineteenth century, he hopes now that the description of the general American gender conceptions in that century will give the readers a good sense of the gender assumptions of the individual American missionaries of the ABCFM.

#### Gender Relations in America

In her book, *Sex in the Heartland*,” Beth Bailey argued that “those who claim the radical nature of the [sexual] revolution [as the post-World War II sexuality has long been viewed in America] may be surprised by just how deep-seated and mainstream the origins of many of those revolutionary changes really were.”<sup>288</sup> Reviewer Michael Sherry, author of *In the Shadow of War: The United States since the 1930s* applauded

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<sup>288</sup> Beth Bailey, *Sex in the Heartland* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 3.

Beth Bailey as “An accomplished scholar of modern American manners and morals”<sup>289</sup> despite the fact that Beth questionably attributed these American manners and morals solely to post-World War II market forces:

The set of changes we call the sexual revolution was thoroughly part of American culture, born of widely shared values and beliefs and of major transformations in the structure of American society. For, while the revolution was built of purposeful assertions and acts, often on the part of self-proclaimed outsiders, it was possible because of the recasting of American society during and after World War II. In those years the nationalizing forces of the federal government, the market, consumer society, the mass media, and large institutions, both public and private, undermined the ability of local elites to control the boundaries of their communities.<sup>290</sup>

As brilliant as this observation was, it depended on what Bailey called “mainstream” American “values and norms,” when she wrote that “Some of them [the revolutionaries] sought to challenge the values and norms of a repressive society they often called “Amerika”...[and] completely rejected mainstream concerns about “respectability”.”<sup>291</sup> A little scrutiny of Bailey’s contention that “widely accepted beliefs in American society—in this case, the need to promote mature youth, capable of sustaining democracy in the Cold War—inadvertently paved the way for a sexual revolution”<sup>292</sup> leads us to two observations. One, Bailey seemed contradicted by the recent findings of the scholarship of international relations that “foreign policy is the

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<sup>289</sup> See the back of the jacket of hardcover of Bailey’s *Sex in the Heartland*.

<sup>290</sup> Bailey, *Sex in the Heartland*, 6.

<sup>291</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>292</sup> *Ibid.*, 104.

purview of a policy elite,”<sup>293</sup> and not the matter of a “mature youth” as she suggested.

Two, in order to explain a revolution such as the one Bailey identified in the post-World War II era, it seems insufficient that she only had to uncover the new forces that overthrew the old order without identifying the old order itself.<sup>294</sup>

Therefore, I argue that if we accept Jacob Neusner<sup>295</sup>’s contention that “to understand America, you have to know about religion,”<sup>296</sup> we should accept that religion especially Christianity is at the core of American mainstream culture.<sup>297</sup> If we understand

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<sup>293</sup> Mary Beth Norton, et al., *A People and a Nation*, Brief sixth edition (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 2003), Besides, after World War II, the youth whether mature or immature was no longer relevant because it was not needed on the American Cold War diplomatic front. The United Nations was. Indeed, as the scholar of international communication Mark Alleyne explained, by the end of the 1990s the UN [United Nations] was best known as a peacekeeper than as peacemaker (131),” and one of the Assistant-secretaries to the Secretary-General of the UN civil service established in 1946 was the Assistant Secretary in charge of the Department of Public Information (DPI), a “new job created in large part to respond to the possibility that the evil work of Joseph Goebbels [Adolph Hitler’s Minister of Propaganda] might be replicated in the post-Second World War world (1).” Mark D. Alleyne, *Global Lies? Propaganda, the UN and the World Order* (New York: Pelgrave, 2003).

<sup>294</sup> The only chapter of *Sex in the Heartland*, which had a chance of doing such a job is chapter one, “Before the Revolution.” Unfortunately, it starts with “World War II” and ends “In the 1950s” clearly renouncing the opportunity of even reminding the reader of a certain American value system that supposedly outraged the sex revolutionaries, *Ibid.*, 13-44.

<sup>295</sup> Jacob Neusner is Research Professor of Religion and Theology and Senior fellow at the Institute of Advanced Theology, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York. He is author of more than forty books on Christianity and Judaism. His influence in the field of religious studies is national: “In June 1999, I was invited as the only scholar of religious studies to a Department of Defense-sponsored conference in Washington, D.C., on America’s defense requirements twenty-five years hence, in 2025. The question was, How can we prepare even now for dangers beyond the near horizon?” Jacob Neusner, ed. *World Religions in America: An Introduction*, 3d edition (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003), “preface to the Third edition,” ix.

<sup>296</sup> *Ibid.*, “Introduction,” 1.

<sup>297</sup> Jon Butler also wrote that “Despite complaints about “secular humanism” and eroding religious values, over 97 percent of Americans polled on religion expressed a belief in God, and 60 percent regularly attended public worship, figures that stood in marked contrast to polls in Western Europe, where 40 percent of respondents said they did not believe in God and less than 10 percent regularly attended church.” Jon Butler, *Awash in a Sea of Faith: Christianizing the American People* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990), 1. This book studied American Christianity after 1700 and argued among other things that “the story of religion in America after 1700 is one of Christian ascension rather than declension—Christianization rather than dechristianization. (2)” Jon Butler and his book were the winners

that sex is at the core of American Christianity,<sup>298</sup> therefore the conceptualization of gender relations in America will be the result of this religious outlook.<sup>299</sup>

Thus America's general conceptions of gender are visible in the way Americans have raised their children. Indeed, one of the classic works in this area remains Philip Greven's *The Protestant Temperament: Patterns of Child-Rearing, Religious Experience and the Self in Early America* in which he argued that American children were raised in

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of the Albert J. Beveridge Award of the American Historical Association in 1990. Patricia Bonomi before Butler had studied the "American religious life from 1607 to 1776 in all thirteen colonies (viii)" and had concluded that America was "Under the Cope of Heaven." See Patricia U. Bonomi, *Under the Cope of Heaven: Religion, Society, and Politics in Colonial America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986). See also the 2003 updated edition, which upheld the same argument. Thus, as the trend has not subsided, we can take the entire history of the American culture to be that of American Christianity and vice versa. Neusner affirmed the same trend recently: "Nearly all Americans (92.5 percent) profess a certain belief in God. A majority prays from day to day and week to week...About 60 of American people are Protestants. Another 26 percent are Roman Catholics." Neusner, ed. *World Religions in America*, 1.

<sup>298</sup> In his book, *The Puritan Family: Religion and Domestic Relations in Seventeenth-Century New England*, New edition, Revised and Enlarged (New York: Harper and Row, 1944, 1966), Edmund Morgan captured the Puritan theology of society when he wrote that "the Puritans came to New England not merely to save their souls but to establish a "visible" kingdom of God, a society where a smooth, honest, civil life would prevail in family, church, and state." *Ibid.*, 3. Since God is the one that had assigned specific duties to each relationship, "The order of society, then, consisted in certain dual relationships, most of them originating in agreements between the persons related and all arranged in a pattern of authority and subjection." *Ibid.*, 28. Therefore, according to Morgan decided the foundational unit of the Puritan society is the family: "It [his book] is confined to the duties of husband and wives, parents and children, masters and servants, and with the implications of these relationships in the society the Puritans founded in seventeenth-century New England." *Ibid.* This shows that sexual difference was at the core of Puritan Christianity.

<sup>299</sup> An example of that is the fact that "Throughout the Anglo-American world, probably at all levels of society from the poorest to the wealthiest, children were dressed in the clothing of females regardless of their actual gender. From infancy until about the age of six, both girls and boys wore petticoats or gowns, thus appearing almost indistinguishable on the basis of their clothing until the boys were breeched, when they abruptly shifted to the clothes characteristic of young and adult men, giving up forever the feminine dresses and gowns they had worn throughout the formative years of childhood. The portraits of children from genteel and wealthy families which survive from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries provide clear evidence of this practice among upper ranks of early American society—a practice that continued throughout at least the first half of the nineteenth century and, in some families until the early twentieth century." Greven, *The Protestant Temperament*, 45-46.

the “Protestant temperament” from the colonial times to the present.<sup>300</sup> According to him, American parents impressed their Protestant education upon the young minds of their children from the beginning of American colonization until the early years of the new republic in the nineteenth century when this education had formed the unconscious of the American collective mentality.

Thus his study became a milestone for historians. For the first time, as he said, a scholar had “sought to analyze and to understand religious experience or piety rather than theology or sacraments.”<sup>301</sup> By historicizing for the first time the conclusions of influential students of religion in America such as Edmund Morgan<sup>302</sup> and especially Perry Miller who constantly argued in Greven’s quoted words that “The real life of Jonathan Edwards was the life of his mind,”<sup>303</sup> Greven’s “new paradigm...[sought] to discover the ways in which personal experience and religious experience and thought were interconnected.”<sup>304</sup> He redirected Perry Miller’s monumental insight in religious studies in ways that would have unprecedented implications for students of American

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<sup>300</sup> Philip Greven, *The Protestant Temperament: Patterns of Child-Rearing, Religious Experience, and the Self in Early America* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977). This study was an extension of Greven’s concern in an earlier work, *Child Rearing Concepts, 1628-1861: Historical Sources* (Itasca, Ill., 1973).

<sup>301</sup> Greven, *The Protestant Temperament*, 17.

<sup>302</sup> Greven quotes Edmund Morgan as the sole authority on how Puritan children were raised within Puritan Theology of relationships: “Children grew up with an awareness of gradations and degrees of relationships that sustained the general conception of “human society” as “a network of dual relationships...in which one party was usually subordinate to the other”—as Edmund Morgan has observed of New Englanders in the seventeenth century.” *Ibid.*, 179.

<sup>303</sup> *Ibid.* Of Perry Miller, Edmund Morgan wrote, “to the late Perry Miller, teacher and friend, under whose guidance my study was began and whose work will remain a challenge to all who think about the meaning of New England,” Morgan, *The Puritan Family*, x.

<sup>304</sup> *Ibid.*

culture: “any new paradigm must strive to accomplish what Miller achieved: the integrated vision of ways in which theology, politics, and religious institutions in early America formed coherent patterns of thought and behavior.”<sup>305</sup>

In the words of John Tosh,

In the Protestant Temperament (1977), one of the most wide-ranging applications of psychoanalytic perspective, Philip Greven has identified three patterns of child-rearing in colonial America: the “evangelical” or authoritarian, the “moderate” or authoritative, and the “genteel” or affectionate. While these labels signal the directing influence of theology and social position, the impact of each pattern is traced through the characteristic psychic development of children raised in these ways.<sup>306</sup>

Thus for most Americans, “The God of order who made the creatures subordinate to man had arranged human society into network of dual relationships (relatives) in which one party was usually subordinate to the other: ruler and subject, husband and wife, parent and child, master and servant.”<sup>307</sup> Since out of all relationships establishing hierarchy, the one between husband and wife was the oldest and the most influential by the nineteenth century,<sup>308</sup> therefore, I argue that this relationship structured all other relationships in America.

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<sup>305</sup> Ibid.

<sup>306</sup> Tosh, 181.

<sup>307</sup> Morgan, *The Puritan Family*, 25.

<sup>308</sup> The Bible made husband and wife the oldest relationship. Secondly, Puritans had no rulers other than themselves in America. Eric Foner explained that “In September 1620, *the Mayflower*, carrying 150 settlers and crew (among them many non Puritans), embarked from England. Blown off course, they landed not in Virginia but hundreds of miles to the north, on Cape Cod. Here they established the colony of Plymouth. Before landing, the Pilgrim leaders drew up the Mayflower Compact, in which the **adult men** going ashore agreed to obey “just and equal laws” enacted by representatives of their own choosing. This was the **first [independent] government** in what is now the United States [emphases mine].” Eric Foner, *Give Me Liberty! An American History*, Volume one (New York: W. W. Norton, 2005), 63-65. Finally, they did not own slaves. Charles Bergquis reproduced a table “drawn from Ralph Davis’s *The Rise of the Atlantic Economies* in which 256,000 were the total number of slaves in British North America between 1700 and



So what was the structure of the relationship between husband and wife in America? This structure coincided with the biblical creation story of man and a woman: “God created man in his *own* image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.”<sup>309</sup> Thus God had created Adam first, but decided that he should not be alone: “And the LORD God said, *It is* not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.”<sup>310</sup> Therefore, God created the earth to serve Adam: “And out of the Ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought *them* unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof.”<sup>311</sup>

However, Adam was still missing some other help: “And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him.”<sup>312</sup> That’s when God decided to create the woman to supplement the help for Adam: “And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead

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1781 (157). He explained that in this period, “a million and a half slaves were imported into the British colonies in America. Roughly a million and a quarter of these slaves went to the sugar colonies of the West Indies, most of the rest to the southern colonies of the North American mainland. The best estimate of the number of indentured servants who came to the British America during the same period is 350,000, more than a quarter of the slaves imported (159).” It is therefore not difficult to agree that “From virtually the beginnings of settlement, all of the American British Colonies depended on indentured servants to meet part of their labor needs (158). Charles Bergquist, “The Paradox of Development,” in *The Atlantic World in the Age of Empire* ed. by Thomas Benjamin, et al. (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2001). This places the relationship of master and servant after the relationship of husband and wife.

<sup>309</sup> The Holy Bible (New York: Thomson Nelson), Gen. 1: 27.

<sup>310</sup> Gen. 1: 18.

<sup>311</sup> Gen. 1: 19.

<sup>312</sup> Gen. 1: 20.

thereof.”<sup>313</sup> The story continues, “And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto man.”<sup>314</sup> Then Adam was satisfied with the throne God had carved for him, and more so with this last part of his throne: “And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.”<sup>315</sup> Therefore, Adam proceeded to fix the relationship between husband and wife: “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife and they shall be one flesh.”<sup>316</sup>

However, after committing the sin of eating of the forbidden tree of knowledge of good and evil,<sup>317</sup> God punished the Serpent, Eve whose name is mentioned for the first time in the third chapter of Genesis in verse 20, and Adam in proportion to their responsibilities for the sin: “And the LORD God said unto the serpent, because you hast done this, thou *art* cursed above all cattle, above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life.”<sup>318</sup> To the woman who had been led by the serpent to understand why God had forbidden man from eating of the tree

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<sup>313</sup> Gen. 1: 21.

<sup>314</sup> Gen. 1: 22.

<sup>315</sup> Gen. 1: 23.

<sup>316</sup> Gen. 1: 24.

<sup>317</sup> “And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” Gen 2: 15-17.

<sup>318</sup> Gen. 3: 14.

of knowledge,<sup>319</sup> the story went: “And unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire *shall* be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.”<sup>320</sup> Finally Adam received his punishment: “And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life.”<sup>321</sup>

In sum, most Americans assume that Adam’s sin against God’s command was a result of his relationship to Eve, and they accept that God took advantage of this incident to impose curses on Adam and Eve. For these descendants of Adam and Eve, these curses had a fixed impact on the relationship between husband and wife (husband rule over wife as mentioned above), their survival and the like.<sup>322</sup> In a word, most Americans drew the meaning of all relationships from the consequences of this original sin.<sup>323</sup> Indeed, “In

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<sup>319</sup> “Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden. But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree *was* good for food, and that it *was* pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make *one* wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.” Gen. 3: 1-6.

<sup>320</sup> Gen. 3: 16.

<sup>321</sup> Gen. 3: 17.

<sup>322</sup>: “In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt you return.” Gen. 3: 19.

<sup>323</sup> Jonathan Edwards one of the foremost preachers of the first Great Awakening is remembered for his famous sermon, “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God.” Quoted in Anne Taves, *Fits, Trances, and Visions: Experiencing Religion and Explaining Experience from Wesley to James* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), 34. This image of God being angry against those who violate his commands and being ready to destroy them is a projection of the original sin of Adam and his wife. The story of Noah is another example of God’s wrath. Gen. 6-9.

general, revivalism [1740s and 1750s] embraced conservative rather than radical or egalitarian approaches to the question of authority.”<sup>324</sup> Also during the second Great Awakening (1780-1860), there was an “expansion of American denominational structures”<sup>325</sup> “embraced authority and power through their institutions as well as through their buildings.”<sup>326</sup>

Another way that the story of the original sin influenced the perception of all relationships in America is childrearing:

...from the seventeenth century and the eighteenth century...throughout the first half of the nineteenth century, every child before the age of six seems to have been dressed in clothing appropriate to males. Clothing symbolized the feminization of children; and since being female meant being perceived as weaker, inferior, submissive, obedient, the clothing of children became a part of the overall process of discipline by parents who sought to control and dominate the wills of their offspring.<sup>327</sup>

Even the courts in America were influenced by the story of the Original sin. For most Americans “marriage was an ordinance of God and its duties commands of God, and the Puritan courts enforced these duties.”<sup>328</sup> Furthermore, “The duty of a husband to support his wife was also enforced by judicial action.”<sup>329</sup> Here, “English common law

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<sup>324</sup> Butler, *Awash in a Sea of Faith*, 179-180.

<sup>325</sup> *Ibid.*, 270.

<sup>326</sup> *Ibid.*, 272.

<sup>327</sup> Greven, *The Protestant Temperament*, 46.

<sup>328</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.

<sup>329</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

provided that when a woman married, her property passed to her husband and that he must furnish her support. These provisions suited the Puritan conceptions.”<sup>330</sup>

In conclusion, the Puritan theology that regulated all realms of their society or covenant placed the man in position of authority and the woman in position of subordination, just as God had ordained in *Genesis*. It is this condition that Elizabeth Cady Stanton, who organized the first conference on Women’s Rights in Seneca Falls, New York, a conference which launched the modern Women’s Rights Movement in America, denounced when she declared in 1885:

I speak of the Christian Church, Catholic and Protestant, of the priesthood, the bulls of its popes, the decrees of its councils, the articles and resolutions of its general assemblies, presbyteries, synods, conferences, which, all summed up, compose the canon law, which has held Christendom during what are called the Dark Ages until now under its paralyzing influence, moulding civil law and social customs and plunging woman into absolute slavery.”<sup>331</sup>

Although Stanton did not give the details provided in this chapter, she did recognizably refer to them:

According to Church teaching, woman was an after-thought in the creation, the author of sin, being at once in collusion with Satan. Her sex was made a crime; marriage a condition of slavery, owing obedience; maternity a curse; and the true position of all womankind one of inferiority and subjection to all men; and the same ideas are echoed in our pulpits to-day.<sup>332</sup>

Therefore, how did the missionaries of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions personalize this general outlook of American gender relations?

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<sup>330</sup> Ibid.

<sup>331</sup> Elizabeth Cady Stanton, “The Christian Church and Woman,” in *Bible and Church Degrade Woman* (Chicago: H. L. Green, [1885]), pp. 11-20, compiled in S. T. Joshi, ed. *Atheism: A Reader* (New York: Prometheus Books, 2000), 314.

<sup>332</sup> Ibid., 315.

Gender Perspectives of Missionaries to Cherokees  
(Cyrus Kingsbury) and West Africa (John Leighton Wilson)

Thus Elizabeth Cady Stanton, the co-founder of the women's rights movement in 1848 had lived long enough to ask the following question in 1885: "Do our sons in their theological seminaries rise from their studies of the Bible, and the popular commentaries on the passages of Scripture concerning woman's creation and position in the scale of being, with an added respect for their mothers?"<sup>333</sup> Based on her living experience (1815-1902), she answered: "By no means. They come oftentimes fresh from the perusal of what they suppose to be God's will and law, fresh from communion with the unseen, perhaps with the dew of inspiration on their lips, to preach anew the subjection of one-half the race to the other."<sup>334</sup>

I argue that Cyrus Kingsbury, sent to the Cherokees in 1817 and John Leighton Wilson to Africa in 1833 were both similar in their conceptions of gender, which coincided with the timeless biblical order. Their own gender conceptions reflected the general conception of gender relations in America, described by Stanton. They remained fundamentally constant throughout their missionary work for two reasons: the first reason is that Kingsbury and Wilson did not interact with Cherokee and African women; this could have been an opportunity for confrontation between, and change of, the two gender worlds. The second reason is that they married American Christian women who

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<sup>333</sup> Stanton, "The Christian Church and Woman," in Joshi, ed. *Atheism*, 322.

<sup>334</sup> *Ibid.*

themselves had accepted their biblical role; throughout the time of their missionary labors, their wives constantly served to reinforce their gender conceptions.

Indeed, Rev. Cyrus Kingsbury, like most missionaries, believed that the work of missions was that of missionary families. A foreign missionary might go by himself on a missionary tour of a foreign country, but he usually married before entering the missionary field proper if possible. Kingsbury established a missionary station near Chattanooga in January 1817, and married Sarah Bowdoin Varnum in 1818 after being asked by the Board to establish a mission among the Choctaws.<sup>335</sup> Even before he married her and brought her to the mission station, he had identified the mission station at Chattanooga among the Cherokees as a family: “Soon after our arrival in the nation, we opened our doors to receive children into our family to teach them the rudiments of the English language, the principles of the Christian religion and the industry and arts of civilized life.”<sup>336</sup>

It appears that the reason why Kingsbury took all this time to marry Miss Varnum and bring her to the Cherokee nation from New York was due to the fact that the ABCFM was under pressure to be successful in this first attempt: “On this important subject I do not feel that I have any wish or inclination of my own which is in opposition to the wishes of the Prudential Committee and of my Brethren.”<sup>337</sup> Even when he resolved to bring her, he was still afraid that “This would consume much time, be

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<sup>335</sup> Stowe, “Kingsbury, Cyrus” in Anderson, ed. *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions*, 66-67.

<sup>336</sup> Cyrus Kingsbury to Samuel Worcester, June 30, 1817, Letters and Papers of the Board, Papers of the ABCFM, Unit 6, Vol. 3, Reel 738, Frame 31.

<sup>337</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

attended with considerable expense and might I fear too much retard the operations in the Choctaw.”<sup>338</sup>

Like most missionary men, Kingsbury had ensured “Sarah B. Varnum’s willingness to devote herself to the cause in which I am engaged,” before “I contemplated a return to NY the ensuing summer for the purpose of consuming our union and of bringing her out.”<sup>339</sup> As a good husband-to-be, his protection of his wife abundant: “My Brethren have suggested whether, if some pious persons are coming on to our assistance, some arrangement could not be made for her to come on with them to Savannah or New Orleans as the season and the circumstances shall dictate, where I could meet her without much loss of time.”<sup>340</sup> His response was, “To this I feel no objection on my own account, but I am sensible it is placing a female in a delicate situation.”<sup>341</sup>

Kingsbury also knew that a woman was under her husband’s guardianship only after the act of marriage. Before that she fully owned her agency with regard to her judgment of the man who was courting her. Therefore, he made sure that he appeared to her and to the Board as a worthy man who would not come short of his husband duty. Due to the numerous tasks awaiting him on the missionary field, he deferentially proposed to the Board to delegate some of his responsibilities to them with regard to the proper steps to take to allow Sarah Varnum to join him:

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<sup>338</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>339</sup> Ibid.

<sup>340</sup> Ibid.

<sup>341</sup> Ibid.



And I should exceedingly regret to make a request, which would look like want of regard, or unpleasantly embarrass her. But considering the important relation which the subject has to the cause of Missions generally (as an example, in addition to the precedent Brainerd Mission) and to the Choctaw mission in particular, I shall venture to suggest it. And I must request that you will endeavor to ascertain her feelings and those of her friends in order that you may judge how I ought to proceed.<sup>342</sup>

On top of this delegation of powers, Kingsbury also promised to “write to her and her father” regarding this subject.<sup>343</sup> That’s how dedicated missionaries were to their women and their work, as they saw themselves as husbands or fathers on whose shoulders the welfare of the missionary stations and their wives rested. His responsibilities were similar to the ones Rev. Thomas Shepard enumerated:

...our children, servants, strangers who are within our gates, are apt to profane the Sabbath; we are therefore to improve our power over them for God, in restraining them from sin, and in constraining them (as far as we can) to the holy observance of the rest of the Sabbath, lest God impute their sins to us, who had power (Eli in the like case) to restrain them and did not; and so our families and consciences be stained with their guilt and blood.<sup>344</sup>

Missionaries like Kingsbury had no doubt about the role they wanted their women to play in the missions either. He hoped his wife would be a bridge between him and the woman world for the sake of the prosperity of the mission family. He informed the Board that, “I have suggested to Miss Varnum that if she has a female friend who she thinks will be useful to the mission and who for the love of Christ will volunteer her services to

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<sup>342</sup> Cyrus Kingsbury to Samuel Worcester, March 6, 1818, Letters and Papers of the Board, Papers of the ABCFM, Unit 6, Vol. 3, Reel 738, Frame 47.

<sup>343</sup> Ibid.

<sup>344</sup> Quoted in Morgan, *The Puritan Family*, 7.

come out, I presumed the Board would approve of it and make provisions for her.”<sup>345</sup> He also hoped she would embrace the kitchen despite the doubts of the southern women: “It is an important and somewhat difficult question with us to determine what we are to do for help in our kitchen. Our women are of opinion that no white girls from the North [Sarah Varnum, as she was from New York] could bear the heat of the cooking room in the hot season.”<sup>346</sup>

Before Sarah Varnum came down south, Kingsbury put his imagination to work. He replaced her sorely needed female labor with slave labor: “Of this I would not speak positively. I hire slaves and they are attended with much expense and many inconveniences and must be often changed.”<sup>347</sup> He had no choice. Because of the abolitionist pressure “purchase would be very repugnant, to our feelings, as we presume it would be to those of our patrons.”<sup>348</sup> Therefore, he suggested that he be sent free “faithful” blacks or free blacks (male or females) to fill in Sarah Varnum’s place: “Could Free and faithful blacks be sent from the north?”<sup>349</sup>

Another suggestion in this line was “I have sometimes thought of writing to Mr. Caldwell or some person in Virginia to see if some of their surplus blacks could not be sent on here to mutual advantage, where they may now be a burden. On this subject we

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<sup>345</sup> Cyrus Kingsbury to Samuel Worcester, March 6, 1818, Letters and Papers of the Board, Papers of the ABCFM, Unit 6, Vol. 3, Reel 738, Frame 47.

<sup>346</sup> Ibid., 47-48.

<sup>347</sup> Ibid., 47, 54.

<sup>348</sup> Ibid., 47.

<sup>349</sup> Ibid.

feel the need of instruction.”<sup>350</sup> In fact, he was not the first missionary to rely on slave labor to offset the shortage of female labor. He gave the example of the “The Moravians [who] have purchased a black woman for their station.”<sup>351</sup>

When Rev. Cyrus Kingsbury introduced his mission for the first time to the Cherokee Council, he also promised to be a good father:

I then stated distinctly the object of the society in sending me out. I told them we would take their children, teach them freely without money. That we would feed as many as we could, and furnish some clothes to those who are poor. That we could teach more than we could feed if their parents would pay their board, we would teach all such freely. That we would teach them their duty to their parents, to their fellow creatures, and to the Great Spirit, the Great Father of us all.<sup>352</sup>

As the father of the mission, he would “civilize” the Cherokee children by inculcating in them the reverence for the father and work:

And I think this may be in a good degree accomplished in the way in which it is proposed to conduct the school. At first it will be expensive, but the prime articles of living can be raised in this country with the greatest ease and I am confident that in a few years if things are managed properly, the school may be supported at comparatively a small expense. Boys may do much toward raising provisions and cotton and the girls may be employed in cooking and manufacturing cloth.<sup>353</sup>

For this task, he called for more missionary families to join his mission family: “We shall stand greatly in need of an industrious pious family from N. England to take the oversight of the land....A small family or one without children or even a single man

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<sup>350</sup> Ibid.

<sup>351</sup> Ibid.

<sup>352</sup> Ibid.

<sup>353</sup> Ibid.

would be best if he were industrious and truly benevolent.”<sup>354</sup> Needless to say the obsession of Cyrus Kingsbury with establishing missions with and as families was shared by the Board of the ABCFM. As we can recall from Chapter one, their first missionaries to India and Ceylon in February 1812 were all married. This obsession did not change by the time they sent Rev. Cyrus Kingsbury to the Cherokees in 1817, and Rev. John Leighton Wilson to Africa in 1834. This was a foundational belief of the missionaries.<sup>355</sup> Thus if Rev. Cyrus Kingsbury showed total allegiance to the American gender structure predicated on the hierarchy within the family, how did Rev. John Leighton Wilson personalize this structure?

John Leighton Wilson was a Scotch-Irish descendant whose story is even told in a Christian-gendered fashion by Hampden DuBose, the editor of his memoirs:<sup>356</sup>

The subject of this memoir [Wilson] could rejoice in the covenant blessing of a holy ancestry. In the year 1734 there came to America in one vessel a colony of Presbyterians, who settled in Williamsburg County, South Carolina. These were the Wilsons, Jameses, Gordons, Friersons, Witherspoons, and Ervins, and from six families sprang Leighton Wilson, whose ancestry was wholly Scotch-Irish.<sup>357</sup>

These families were deeply religious and conservative. “In the early history of the republic,” wrote DuBose, “the sterling character, inflexible courage, perfect honesty and

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<sup>354</sup> Ibid.

<sup>355</sup> The gender structure of the missionaries of the ABCFM can be said to have passed in their unconscious just as the Hellenization of Christianity is today invisible to the lay person and assumed by the theologian. Leslie Dewart explained the latter by saying that “the twofold features that Christianity’s adaptation of Hellenic forms (a) was most effective when these forms were assumed as a matter of course, and (b) that it was most significant when it helped shape the most basic concepts of Christian faith [like the family].” Leslie Dewart, *The Foundations of Belief* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1969), 105.

<sup>356</sup> The editor of the Wilson’s memoirs, Hampden C. DuBose was a missionary to China for twenty-three years. See title page of DuBose, ed. *Memoirs of John Leighton Wilson*.

<sup>357</sup> Ibid., 10-11.

wise conservatism of the Scotch-Irish settlers rendered them pillars of the temple of the state.”<sup>358</sup> Their conservative values were unmistakable: “But most of all,” insisted DuBose, “their constant appeal to the law and the testimony, their strict observance of the Lord’s Day, and their rigid enforcement of family discipline, made them worthy citizens of the commonwealth.”<sup>359</sup>

Their education of their children reflected their conservative values, as “The voice of prayer and praise was heard morning and evening, [and] the children were taught to obey ... [and] were instructed in the Catechism and the Holy Scriptures, and brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.”<sup>360</sup> Thus according to DuBose, the community of the early immigrants that led to John Leighton Wilson was “a godly community. There was a church in every house.”<sup>361</sup> Or as he amply put it, “The church was the centre of the community, the axis around which their hopes and joys revolved. The people believed in religion, talked of religion, taught religion, and made religion their chief concern.”<sup>362</sup>

The common church of the community was “a large handsome church...now the Mount Zion of the Presbyterian region.”<sup>363</sup> In that church, reported DuBose, “Afric’s sons... the sons of Ham...join[ed] in worship with the white congregation.”<sup>364</sup> “This was

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<sup>358</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>359</sup> Ibid.

<sup>360</sup> Ibid., 11-12.

<sup>361</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>362</sup> Ibid.

<sup>363</sup> Ibid.

<sup>364</sup> Ibid., 13.

Salem, [SC] the home of the Wilsons, and in the midst of these surroundings was the childhood of the Missionary-Secretary [John Leighton Wilson] spent.”<sup>365</sup>

As a good student of his family, church, and missionary traditions, John Leighton Wilson wrote to Rufus Anderson in Andover, MA on June 6, 1833 about “The expediency of my being married before I leave on the exploring tour and leaving my wife behind.”<sup>366</sup> That letter was Wilson’s first official assumption of the mantle of father of the foreign mission who had the responsibility of designing how his household would be. His first unofficial one had been in a letter to his sister Sarah Wilson on October 27, 1832: “I have made up my mind to go to Synod and thence to Savannah. I suppose you know for what. Francis Goulding has made me believe that Miss B. [Wilson’s wife-to-be] is the next to the best girl in Savannah; Mary Howard, his own, not only being the best in Savannah, but also in the world.”<sup>367</sup>

Beside the untold qualities, the major reason Mary and Miss B.<sup>368</sup> were the two best girls in Savannah was their religious attraction. Wilson in the letter to his sister

<sup>365</sup> DuBose, *Memoirs of John Leighton Wilson*, 13.

<sup>366</sup> John Leighton Wilson to Rufus Anderson, Andover, June 6, 1833, Papers of the ABCFM, Reel 149, Frames 7-8.

<sup>367</sup> John Wilson to his sister Sarah, quoted in DuBose, ed. *Memoirs of John Leighton Wilson*, 42.

<sup>368</sup> DuBose gives a brief biography of her: “The Miss B.” referred to above, was Miss Jane Elizabeth Bayard, daughter of Nicholas Bayard, M. D., and Miss Elizabeth McIntosh, who was born on Cumberland Island, off the coast of Georgia, January 8, 1807, on her mother’s plantation, which had been given by Congress to her grandfather, Gen. Lauchlin McIntosh, for distinguished services rendered during the Revolutionary War. By Dr. Bayard’s second marriage there were two daughters, Jane and Margaret. When they reached the ages of thirteen and ten respectively, their parents died and they were sent by their half-brother, Col. Nicholas Bayard, who was then a young man, to their uncle, Mr. Andrew Bayard, of Philadelphia, who for years stood for them in *loco parentis*. Instead of the life of luxury in their Southern home, with maids to perform every service, the carriage waiting at the door and the servants treating them as princesses, they were taught to be independent and useful, and withal a wealth of love was showered

mentioned above explained that “The young ladies have already made up their minds to the work of missions, and they have no parents to say they shall not go.”<sup>369</sup> Sure enough, Wilson campaigned<sup>370</sup> with the ABCFM to allow him to marry her before going on the exploratory tour to Africa. This could allow him to keep her away from the only but unfortunately ungodly relative with whom she might stay if his scheme failed: “The only retreat for her then is the house of a distant relative in McIntosh County, Georgia. He is kind to her and invites her to his house. But in him she has no special claims. He is not a pious man and lives in a neighborhood where there is but little religion.”<sup>371</sup>

Wilson’s rationale for taking no chances would become transparent in the following comment he had about women character in general and his wife’s in particular:

Now when the times arrives for me (on whom, if you will excuse me, her strongest earthly affections are fixed) to leave, situated as she will be, what may the consequences not be? In such a case, we may calculate largely upon the

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upon the orphans. After completing their education they returned to Savannah, where, as young ladies of many accomplishments and considerable wealth, they were much in society. Afterwards Jane consecrated herself to the Lord and became an active and efficient member of the church. The sisters, becoming interested in the Sandwich Islands, offered themselves to the American Board to be sent there. If our information is correct, they were not accepted, for the reason that it was considered inexpedient to send unmarried ladies to foreign lands.” DuBose, ed. *Memoirs of John Leighton Wilson*, 42-43. Without totally dismissing it, this information seems incorrect if we read Wilson’s letter about this subject in which he reviewed the controversy about him and the two sisters going to Ceylon before affirming that “She [Miss B.] believes her sister has been called to Ceylon and she to Africa. John Leighton Wilson to Rev. B. B. Wisner, Andover, June 24, 1833, Papers of the ABCFM, Reel 149, Frame 9. This letter was written on June 24, 1833 two weeks after the letter on June 6, 1833 suggesting to the Board the expediency of him marrying her before leaving for Africa. On the other hand, Wilson did suggest to B. B. Wisner that one way to settle the issue was “You can also allude in your letter to the rule of the Board about the time of missionaries getting married, as seemingly hard, but as expedient and necessary.” Ibid.

<sup>369</sup> Ibid.

<sup>370</sup> As early as January 17, 1833, Wilson was engaged in an effort persuade the Board whose “Dr. B. B. Wisner suggests “going to Liverpool on an exploring tour before marriage.” To this nothing but a very plain providence could induce me to consent.” DuBose, *Memoirs of John Leighton Wilson*, 49.

<sup>371</sup> John Leighton Wilson to Rufus Anderson, Andover, June 6, 1833, Papers of the ABCFM, Reel 149, Frames 7-8.

sustaining grace of God and in her last she expresses the utmost resignation to the will of God, even should the accomplishment of that “cause her soul to ascend to Heaven from the stake or rack.” Notwithstanding all this, she is but a woman [*sic*]. And although she is calm and may be so when I depart, still I tremble for the result and would prosecute my object while away with no ordinary anxiety. All these things might exert a wasting influence upon her constitution and unfit her at least for a mission to Africa—an object dear to us both. But you are ready to ask how would our marriage alter the case? She should then go to my father’s house without any indelicacy [*sic*].<sup>372</sup>

Wilson rightly assumed that the Board was on par with his gender conception would have no difficulty understanding that the presence of his Christian father was an indubitable guarantee that his wife would be kept away from sin: “She would then be with those on whom she would be conscious of having some claim. She would be in the bosom of a Christian family, those who would have common sympathies with her.”<sup>373</sup> It is probable that Wilson found a different if satisfactory arrangement other than marriage, which would have placed his wife in his father’s family. Leighton Wilson only married Jane Elizabeth Bayard on May 21, 1834,<sup>374</sup> after his “exploring tour” to Africa on November 28, 1833<sup>375</sup> from which he returned on April 25, 1834.<sup>376</sup>

About the new Mrs. Wilson, the editor of the *Memoirs* stated that “It was the quiet repose of her soul that rendered her disposition so homelike, and her companionship so restful to her husband.”<sup>377</sup> Such was her role that she agreed to fulfill when she sailed

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<sup>372</sup> Ibid.

<sup>373</sup> Ibid.

<sup>374</sup> DuBose, *Memoirs of Rev. John Leighton Wilson*, 68.

<sup>375</sup> Ibid., 63.

<sup>376</sup> Ibid., 68.

<sup>377</sup> Ibid., 69.



with her husband John Wilson on November 7, 1834, for Cape Palmas in Liberia. As wife, she and her property belonged to her husband as God had ordained. As DuBose put it, “Mrs. Wilson was an heiress, but she cheerfully gave up her property for the privilege of personal service in the missionary field.”<sup>378</sup> This is what Wilson euphemistically asserted when he and the Board were under abolitionist pressure in 1842.<sup>379</sup> “By legal inheritance, I am the legal owner of two slaves. By marriage I became joint owner of about thirty more [He even said one time that “If I withdraw my protection from them and allow them to become public property, it seems questionable whether I am in the line of duty”<sup>380</sup>].”<sup>381</sup> Even before their actual marriage in 1834, Wilson had tacitly assumed property of his wife’s assets. On October 24, 1833, he wrote to Miss Bayard, then his

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<sup>378</sup> Ibid., 97.

<sup>379</sup> “At the meeting of the American Board in 1842, “Mr. Greene read several memorials and other papers on the subject of the connection of the American Board with slavery,” Ibid., 99. More details about the causes and consequences of the slave controversy since the time when “the abolitionists began their assault upon the American Board” are available in Ibid.,103-104. It is curious that Wilson thought that Abolitionists were all men: “And why are Northern men perpetually harassing those who are thus hemmed up on all sides?” John Leighton Wilson to Rufus Anderson, February 1, 1843, Papers of the ABCFM, Reel 150, Frame 141. Of course, there were women abolitionists. Women’s rights activists like Elizabeth Cady Stanton was one; Harriet Beecher Stowe was another to only give these two examples. No one should be surprised either that Wilson thought African power to be residing in men only. He thought they were the only ones worthy of meeting with for the purpose of securing a decision for a missionary station: “The principal places we visited within the bounds just mentioned Cape Mount, Monrovia, Caldwell, Grand Bassa, Grand Sisters, Rock Town, and Cape Palmas. Beside these, we had opportunity to see and converse with the kinds and headmen of all the intermediate towns of any considerable importance along the Coast.” J. Leighton Wilson and Stephen Wyncoop to the Prudential Committee of the ABCFM, April 18, 1834, Report of the State of the Colony of Liberia, Papers of the ABCFM, Reel 149, Frame 24. I will elaborate on this when discussing African gender conceptions.

<sup>380</sup> DuBose, *Memoirs of Rev. John Leighton Wilson*, 102.

<sup>381</sup> Ibid., 100.

wife-to-be, that “I would say about your negroes, by all means, if possible, colonize them [to Liberia],”<sup>382</sup> which he did after marriage if with regret.<sup>383</sup>

One of the few times DuBose directly quoted the words of Mrs. Wilson, she told her husband as the latter was anxious about leaving her by herself “surrounded by the black throng of wild, naked savages” who were at Wilson’s mission house to extract some colonists refugees they wanted for revenge in some prisoner dispute: “My dear, I came to be a helpmeet, not a hindrance, to you; go, I feel sure God will protect me.”<sup>384</sup> For this line, Mrs. Wilson earned the title of “The heroine” from Hampden DuBose, the editor of Wilson’s *Memoirs*.<sup>385</sup>

Wilson needed his second half to be strong at home. No doubt she served well. Wilson’s happiness was compromised when his wife temporarily went to the US in 1842. He wrote that “My earthly happiness under the good hand of God, will be consummated when my beloved wife returns once more to cheer and animate my heart [and his house as he missed the fact that, “You, my dear wife... Always, after returning from fatiguing walks, you were at home to cheer me and listen to the incidents of my travels.”<sup>386</sup>].”<sup>387</sup>

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<sup>382</sup> Ibid., 97.

<sup>383</sup> DuBose wrote that “All except one boy [his own], and these [30 slaves of Mrs. Wilson] were sent to Liberia...he [Wilson] supposed he was better providing for the slaves he loved by sending them to Liberia. It seems, however, that he changed his mind on that subject, for years after he told me [DuBose] he greatly regretted what he had done. He soon lost sight of them after they landed in Liberia, and he never knew what became of any of them.” Ibid., 103.

<sup>384</sup> Ibid., 85.

<sup>385</sup> Ibid.

<sup>386</sup> Ibid., 140.

<sup>387</sup> Ibid., 132.

Like Kingsbury before, Wilson hired male and female Africans to fill in the void created by his wife's departure. He gave her details in one of the numerous letters to her: "Helen is the cook, but next week she will be put to washing, and I will hire a [male] cook. I shall have one boy to bring wood and water. A third is to be employed as my fisherman, and promises to furnish a daily supply for the mission families. A fourth is to be market-boy, to purchase plantains, yams, chickens, etc."<sup>388</sup>

Mrs. [?] White, one of the missionaries visiting the Wilsons, did not see any problem with reporting in 1835 about one of Rev. John Wilson's Sabbath preaching sessions with the natives in which "The audience consisted of about twenty native children from the schools, with about as many men, among whom were the king and several of his headmen. A number of women stood at the windows and looked in during most of the service."<sup>389</sup> This was part of the order of things with the missionaries to provide for men first and for women second.

The education of African children was no different. The Wilsons provided for boys first and for girls second. DuBose quoted Wilson as writing on April 12, 1837 that

Our settlement at Fair Hope [Cape Palmas, Liberia] begins to assume a conspicuous appearance from the sea, and somewhat resembles a pleasant, airy, country village. It embraces besides our own house, two other small but neat dwellings, a handsome church, 25 x 40 feet, a printing office, study, storehouse, and a dormitory for our boys. In addition to this, we expect soon to build a house for female children.<sup>390</sup>

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<sup>388</sup> Ibid.,32.

<sup>389</sup> Ibid., 83.

<sup>390</sup> Ibid., 81.

Teaching in mission schools was a female task and Mr. Wilson did not rob Mrs. Wilson of this honor. On the contrary, he was grateful and regularly congratulated her on such a well-accomplished task. DuBose quoted him as writing in 1836 that

The progress of the children in the schools [at Fair Hope, Cape Palmas, Liberia] is most satisfactory. Some of those who have only had three months' instruction can read with tolerable ease. All this I attribute, under the blessing of God, to Mrs. Wilson's talent for teaching, and the happy faculty she has of making every one about her cheerful and contented.<sup>391</sup>

In fact, Mrs. Wilson herself would not have let Wilson rob her of this honor if he had desired so. This was her devotion as the helpmeet of her husband, and "When Mrs. Wilson returned to Africa she took as an assistant teacher a colored girl whom her mistress had educated."<sup>392</sup>

In conclusion, when observed through the lens of parallel agency, it becomes apparent that the gender conception of missionaries was a personal adaptation of the Biblical story of Adam and Eve. Although there were some slight differences between Rev. Cyrus Kingsbury and Rev. John Leighton Wilson with regard to the timing of their marriage, their gender conceptions were fundamentally similar. Both conceived the missionary station as a family to be operated like a household.<sup>393</sup> In this household,

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<sup>391</sup> Ibid., 81.

<sup>392</sup> Ibid., 146.

<sup>393</sup> In that sense there seems a nuance between my own findings and some recent work on gender and missions. Mary Taylor Huber and Nancy C. Lutkehaus in their "Introduction: Gendered at Home and Abroad" cited the study of Line Nyhagen Predelli and Jon Miller, "Piety and Patriarchy: Contested Gender Regimes in the Nineteenth-Century Evangelical Missions" in the following manner: "Patriarchy has had its way of persisting in missionary organizations despite challenges from the field." Mary Taylor Huber and Nancy C. Lutkehaus, ed. *Gendered Missions: Women and Men in Missionary Practice* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1999), 15. The problem with this finding is that Predelli and Miller's study was done on a European sample in 1815, "the archival records of the Basel Mission, a Pietist organization based in Basel, Switzerland, and on the history of the Norwegian Missionary society (NMS), the overseas

Kingsbury and Wilson both functioned as fathers to all other members of the mission station whether missionaries, Cherokees, Africans, and as husbands to their wives.

Their wives also accepted the conditions of wives to their husbands and mothers to the stations. In that capacity toiled to provide every help their husbands and the mission needed in conformity with the biblical covenant. They expressed this role whenever they had an opportunity, and claimed their roles as mission teacher whenever they could. They never frowned upon the most fundamental chores necessary for the maintenance of their missionary station households. They consciously and actively promoted the feminization of the missions in disciplinary sense by allowing the mission crew to accept their biblical submission to the will of their husband-fathers.<sup>394</sup> What was

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evangelical arm of the established Lutheran Church in Norway(68)” which would make it difficult to apply this finding to a more religious setting like the United States. Secondly, the example of Juliane von Krudener that they use to introduce the evidence of their argument seems not utterly convincing. They say that “However “biblically” those men [in the missionary hierarchy] defined the term, *patriarchy* did not lead them to exclude this resourceful woman from open and meaningful participation [sometimes refusing to obey orders such as “sever[ing] her ties to the German Society for Christianity and the Basel mission and leave the city” which protest she did by “eventually return[ing] to Russia] in the formative stages of the mission (74).” The second example is that of Wilhelmina Maurer “who went out to West Africa for the first time “as a single woman (82).” I did not find any convincing challenge on her part to the patriarchal system if there was such a system since she accepted to go to Africa and perform those roles that were reserved for females in the missions: “Maurer’s task was to establish a system of religious instruction and education for African women and girls, thus (in theory at least) relieving the missionary wives of this part of their workload (ibid.).” In other words, not all confrontation in the missionary fields coming from or involving a woman should be construed as a challenge to patriarchy. The third example of Predelli and Miller about Catherine Mulgrave, an ex-slave, from Jamaica who married George Thompson, “also a mission teacher, who had been the first African to be educated in the Basel Mission seminary (84)” is of that sort. Just because “she had considered leaving the Basel Mission and joining a rival Methodist mission (85)” if out of protest against the Mission’s racist ban on her remarriage with its missionary Johannes Zimmermann, we should not make the stretched argument that she contested the patriarchal order of missions. She might have left Basel, but she was likely to still be bound by the same gender order in the Methodist mission. Besides, her grievance was racial, and not gender-specific. If anything, Predelli and Miller have unintentionally supported my argument that both males and females missionaries (especially American) conceived mission stations as families where men and women would perform the duties pertaining to their relationship as described by the Bible.

<sup>394</sup> Huber and Lutkehaus agreed with Margaret Strobel that “European women in colonies around the world “played ambiguous roles as members of a sex considered to be inferior within a race that considered itself superior.” Mary Taylor Huber and Nancy C. Lutkehaus, *Gendered Missions*, 18. I would argue that to the

the gender conception of the Cherokees, and how did they receive the feminized missions among themselves?

### Cherokee Conception of Gender Relations in 1817

Many European travelers among the Native Americans regularly pointed out that Native Americans were polygamists. One of the most acclaimed of such travelers was James Adair—although his *History of the American Indians* is an eighteenth-century account, he is an invaluable witness for a student of the early nineteenth century since his book was published in 1775.<sup>395</sup> About this practice Adair wrote: “The Indians also are so fond of variety, that they ridicule the white people, as a tribe of narrow-hearted, and dull constitutional animals, for having only one wife at a time; and being bound to live with her and support her, though numberless circumstances might require a contrary conduct.”<sup>396</sup> In light of the discussion above, supporting a wife is part of the Christian structure of gender relations. In order to understand the gender relations of the Cherokees, I argue that polygamy is not a helpful starting point. Polygamy does not tell us how Cherokees understood sexual differences such as ordained by nature, experience, or a social code of belief, nor does polygamy explain the relationship between sexes such

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extent that European or American women were “conservative fundamentalists,” as the missionaries of the ABCFM, they had a clear sense of their roles among the natives: that of a superior white missionary woman whose role was to provide as much help as possible to her superior white missionary husband whose role was to represent on earth the will of their “Father in Heaven.” This what Mrs. Jane Elizabeth Wilson was expressing when she told him, “My dear, I came to be a helpmeet, not a hindrance, to you; go, I feel sure God will protect me [against these savage Africans].” DuBose, *Memoirs of John Leighton Wilson*, 85.

<sup>395</sup> Williams, ed. *Adair’s History of the American Indians*.

<sup>396</sup> *Ibid.*, 145-146.

as hierarchy, code of honor, and the like.<sup>397</sup> As interested as I am in Cherokee gender conceptions, I will focus on beliefs that regulate their perceptions of sexual differences, which hopefully will either confirm or refute European assumptions when they profusely report about Cherokee polygamy.

In this sense, Theda Purdue's study of gender among Cherokee women is an excellent starting point. Indeed, according to her "They [Cherokees] conceived of their world as a system of categories that opposed and balanced one another. In this belief system, women balanced men just as a summer balance winter, plants balanced animals, farming balanced hunting."<sup>398</sup> Commenting about "The traditional ethical norm for non-Indians," Vine Deloria Jr., one of the most influential and prolific Native American thinkers wrote:

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<sup>397</sup> Nor is polygamy to be considered a gender issue among Cherokees and Africans. I will elaborate on the Cherokee case shortly. In Africa, on the other hand, both African men and women seemed to have been exploiting this practice without ever deducing the station of their relationships to each other from their involvement in this practice. John Leighton Wilson's own Judeo-Christian, slave-owner, male interpretation proves that polygamy is what I call a neutralized gender issue: "Polygamy is a favorite institution here as it is in every other part of Africa. In their estimation it lies at the very foundation of all social order, and society would scarcely be worth preserving without it. The highest aspiration [compared to other men not women] to which an African ever rises, is to have a large number of wives. His happiness, his reputation, his influence, his position in society, all depend upon this. The consequence is, that so-called wives are little better than slaves. They have no other purpose in life than to administer to the wants and gratify the passions of their lords, who are masters and owners rather than husbands. It is not a little singular, however, that the females upon whom the burden of this degrading institution mainly rests, are quite as much interested in its continuance as the men themselves. A woman would infinitely prefer to be one of a dozen wives of a respectable man, than to be the sole representative of a man who had not force of character to raise himself above one-woman level. That such a state of feeling should exist in the mind of a heathen woman is not surprising. She has never seen any other state of society; nor has she had any moral or intellectual training that would render such a position revolting to her better feelings. On the contrary, such is the degradation of her moral character, that she would greatly prefer the wider margin of licentious indulgence that she would enjoy as one of a dozen wives, than the closer inspection to which she would be subjected as the only wife of her husband." Wilson, *Western Africa*, 112-113.

<sup>398</sup> Theda Purdue, *Gender and Culture Change, 1700-1835* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 13.

American Indians view ethical relationships with much more sophistication, allocating duties, privileges and respect according to a unique system of family relationships, older people becoming grandfathers and grandmothers, men and women becoming brothers and sisters, wives and husbands, and even strangers occupying the place of cousins within the network of specific relatives who must show concern for one another. Apart from participation in this network, Indians believe, a person simply does not exist. But within the network attitudes and behaviors must be expressed in particular terms, not in general and often unfulfilled rules of conduct.”<sup>399</sup>

In the introduction to the collection of essays, *Negotiators of Change: Historical Perspectives on Native American Women*, Nancy Shoemaker summarized the current scholarship on Native American women by saying that “Much of the recent literature on Indian women views gender as a fundamental, yet non-hierarchical, social category. Women and men had complementary roles of equal importance, power, and prestige.”<sup>400</sup> On the subject of equality, Theda Purdue observed that “The balance that the Cherokees sought to achieve between their categories in particular, between men and women, may not have permitted equality in a modern sense, but their concern with balance made hierarchy, which often serves to oppress women, untenable.”<sup>401</sup>

On the subject of power, Kathleen Brown made the following comment in her article, “The Anglo-Algonquian Gender Frontier,” included in the collection of essays *Negotiators of Change*. She affirmed that

In both Indian and English societies, differences between men and women were critical to social order. Ethnic identities formed along this “gender frontier,” the site of creative and destructive processes resulting from the confrontation of

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<sup>399</sup> Deloria, Jr., *For This Land*, 132.

<sup>400</sup> Nancy Shoemaker, ed. *Negotiators of Change: Historical Perspectives on Native American Women* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 5.

<sup>401</sup> Purdue, *Cherokee Women*, 13.



culturally-specific manhoods and womanhoods. In the emerging Anglo-Indian struggle, gender symbols and social relations signified claims to power.<sup>402</sup>

Then, in another comment, she described English gender conceptions in 1607 in an effort to document the areas in which the English gender conceptions clashed with those of the Algonquians: “Beliefs in male authority over women and in the primacy of men’s economic activities sustained a perception of social order even as women marketed butter, cheese and ale, and cuckolded unlucky husbands.”<sup>403</sup> On the other hand,

Gender roles and identities were also important to the Algonquian speakers whom the English encountered along the three major tributaries of the Chesapeake Bay. Like indigenous peoples throughout the Americas, Virginia Algonquians invoked a divine division of labor to explain and justify differences between men’s and women’s roles on earth.<sup>404</sup>

Was division of labor the fundamental difference between the English (later American) and the Indian gender conceptions? I argue that contrary to the American society which was fundamentally structured by the Biblical sexual hierarchy within the family, Indian society in general was fundamentally structured by seniority within the family. That is to say, within a Cherokee family for example and by extension the Cherokee society, older women and men came hierarchically before younger men and women. Demonstration of this argument will be through the method of parallel agency.

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<sup>402</sup> Kathleen M. Brown, *The Anglo-Algonquian Gender Frontier*, in Nancy Shoemaker, ed. *Negotiators of Change*, 27.

<sup>403</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

<sup>404</sup> *Ibid.* This included a note (12) in support of this argument which rallied authors such as Ramon Gutierrez, *When Jesus Came the Corn Mothers Went Away* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991), 3-7.

Let us begin by investigating the notion of power according to the Cherokees. James Adair captured the concept of power according to Indian perspective in ways that had eluded many of his contemporaries through the following contrast between the English and the Indian methods of government:

This leads me to speak of the Indian method of government—In general, it consists in a federal union of the whole society for mutual safety. As the law of nature appoints no frail mortal to be a king, or ruler, over his brethren; and humanity forbids the taking away at pleasure, the life or property of any who obey the good laws of their country, they consider that the transgressor ought to have his evil deeds retaliated upon himself in an equal manner. The Indians, therefore, have no such titles or persons, as emperors, or kings; nor an appellative for such, in any of their dialects. Their highest title, either in military or civil life, signifies only a *Chieftain*: they have no words to express despotic power, arbitrary kings, oppressed, or obedient subjects; neither can they form any other ideas of the former, than of “bad war chieftains of a numerous family, who enslaved the rest.” The power of their chiefs, is an empty sound. They can only persuade or dissuade the people, either by the force of good-nature and clear reasoning, or colouring things, so as to suit their prevailing passions. It is reputed merit alone, that gives them any titles of distinction above the meanest of the people [sic].<sup>405</sup>

Thus Indian power is acquired not only by age or life experience, but also by strict observance of the religion of the ancestors. This theology of age is what gave members of Indian society precedence over each other one the one hand or precedence over non-Indians on the other.

Agreeable to the THEOCRACY, or divine government of Israel, the Indians think the Deity to be the immediate head of their state. All the Indians are exceedingly intoxicated with religious pride, and have an inexpressible contempt of the white people, unless we except those half-savage Europeans, who are become their proselytes. Nothings is the most favourable name they give us, in set speeches: even the Indians who were formerly bred in amity with us, and in enmity to the French, used to call us, in their war orations, *hottuk ookproose*, “The accursed people.” But they flatter themselves with the name *hottuk oretoopah*, “The beloved people,” because their supposed ancestors, as they affirm, were under the

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<sup>405</sup> Williams, *Adair's History of the American Indians*, 460.

immediate government of the Deity, who was present with them, in a very particular manner, and directed them by prophets; while the rest of the world were aliens and out-laws to the covenant [sic].<sup>406</sup>

Thus their religious ceremonies, as numerous as they were, are the sites par excellence where gender relations among the Indians are most observable. Let us take the example of their “grand festival of the annual expiation of sin, at the beginning of the new moon, in which their corn became full-eared.”<sup>407</sup> Adair explained that “During the festival, some of their people are closely employed in putting their temple in proper order for the annual expiation.”<sup>408</sup> The high-priest or *Archimagus* (old man or old woman) supervised this operation.<sup>409</sup> After the religious ceremony, he or she ordered men and women of an “inferior order [younger that is]” to clear the temple of “the remains of the feast.”<sup>410</sup> “And before sunset, the temple must be cleared, even of every kind of vessel or utensil.”<sup>411</sup> And much to the point about the primacy of age over sexual difference in Indian society, Adair added that “The women carry all off, but none of that sex, except half a dozen of old beloved women, are allowed in that interval to tread on the holy ground, till the fourth day.”<sup>412</sup> Old women had such power in Indian society that when it does not rain, “The old women will exclaim loudly against the young people [men and

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<sup>406</sup> Ibid., 35.

<sup>407</sup> Ibid., 105.

<sup>408</sup> Ibid., 106.

<sup>409</sup> Ibid.

<sup>410</sup> Ibid., 107.

<sup>411</sup> Ibid.

<sup>412</sup> Ibid.

women], and protest they will watch their manners very narrowly for the time to come as they are sure of their own steady virtue.”<sup>413</sup>

The fact that Indian society was ordered along age lines and not gender ones is the reason why its analysis by contemporary historians has still remained unsatisfactory despite their groundbreaking and penetrating insights. Indeed, Theda Purdue correctly perceived that “The gender of observers poses substantial problems for writing the ethnohistory of Native women because Native men and women lived remarkably separate lives.”<sup>414</sup> However, one should not assume that only male observers were and are trapped in their sex when commenting about gender relations. For it seems to me that since the advent of Western feminism, many students of gender relations, male or female, are bent on either discovering oppression of women or resistance of women in history. Indeed, Purdue’s comment that “Native American men and women lived remarkably separate lives” is valid only if the observer exclusively and uncritically considers the historical evidence that “Menstruating women, in particular, had great power, and men regarded them as dangerous; consequently, they kept their distance and knew nothing about the rites of women performed to control and channel that power.”<sup>415</sup>

Otherwise one would pause and search deeper. Thus as much as Purdue was right that “Like the Native American men who provided most of their information, male European observers had virtually no access to the private lives of women or to women’s

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<sup>413</sup> Ibid., 90.

<sup>414</sup> Purdue, “Native Women,” in Shoemaker, ed. *Negotiators of Change*, 3.

<sup>415</sup> Ibid., 4.

culture,”<sup>416</sup> it can be argued that Purdue herself had no access to the private lives of the Indian women and therefore assumed that there was so formidable a separation between a woman and a man’s sphere. There is much evidence to the contrary. It is not always that male observers were far removed from female lives. James Adair, for example, was married to a Chickasaw wife and when writing about women food processing in mortars instead of mills, he testified that

I have the pleasure of writing this by the side of a Chickasaw female [Adair’s wife], as great a princess as ever lived among the ancient Peruvians, or Mexicans, and she bids me to be sure not to mark the paper wrong, after the manner of most traders; otherwise, it will spoil the making of good bread, or hommony, and of course beget the ill-will of our white women.<sup>417</sup>

Thus I suggest that the evidence of menstruation has been uncritically examined. Indeed, besides Purdue, other women writers like Kathleen Brown have repeated the mistake. Writing about the impact of the contacts with the English on the Algonquian gender conception, Brown reasoned Indian women were “by no means equal to men” and suggested that one example male power was that “...Algonquian men warily avoided female spaces the English labeled “gynaeceum,” in which menstruating women may have gathered.”<sup>418</sup> Without totally dismissing such a possibility, it will suffice to note that there is little evidence that it was an Indian man’s decision to quarantine a menstruating woman and not her own. It was true that Indian language had words for such impurity, and the Cherokees for example “invert their magnifying termination U [in Ishtohoollo],

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<sup>416</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>417</sup> Williams, *Adair’s History of the American Indians*, 447-448.

<sup>418</sup> Ibid., 31.

to convey an impure idea. And though the like faint allusion to this divine name [Ishtohoollo], Hoollo signifies “idols, pictures, or images;” a sharp-pointed sarcasm! for the word, Hollo, signifies also “menstruous women,”<sup>419</sup> no one can affirm with certainty that Indian men were responsible for Hollo signifying menstruous women.

Nor has it already proven that the separation of menstruous women from men is of a male doing. The evidence points to the contrary if we resist the temptation to overestimate male power. Indeed, the following little incident will show that women genuinely believed in Indian theology of pollution and were usually proactive to avert consequences. Adair reported that

They [Indians] reckon all birds of prey, and birds of night, to be unclean, and unlawful to be eaten. Not long ago, when the Indians were making their winter’s hunt, and the old women were without flesh-meat at home, I shot a small fat hawk, and desired one of them to take and dress it; but though I strongly importuned her by way of trial, she, as earnestly refused it for fear of contracting pollution, which she called the “accursed sickness,” supposing disease would be the necessary effect of such an impurity [sic].<sup>420</sup>

If an Indian woman refused to even deal with an unclean bird of prey for fear of it bringing her diseases, how more afraid would she be about the proximity of her own perceived pollution—whether originating from men or women stigma? If a woman was that earnest about refusing birds of prey for fear of incurring diseases, how much more earnest would she be about refusing to let perceived polluted body cause her and society diseases? In this sense that we should critically understand Adair’s description below:

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<sup>419</sup> Ibid., 60.

<sup>420</sup> Ibid., 137.

The Indians have customs consonant to the Mosaic Laws or UNCLEANNES. They **oblige [emphasis mine]** their women in their *lunar retreats*, to build small huts, at as considerable distance from their dwelling-houses, as they imagine may be out of the enemies reach; where during the space of that period, they are obliged to stay at the risque of their lives. Should they be known to violate that ancient law, they must answer for every misfortune that befalls any of the people, as a certain effect of the divine fire.

Although Adair said that Indian men obliged their women to seclude themselves during their menstrual month, the fact that Adair always assumed Indian men to have power over their women should force us to reject the idea that Indian women were obliged (by men) to take lunar retreats. Nothing could be further from the truth. Indeed, even if we supposed for a second that men were fond of giving such impositions, how would they know when to issue such orders? Did Indian men know when their women were menstruating? Even if they could discover that their women were menstruating before sexual intercourse, what about when the menstruations descended while the men were on war campaigns? What about the menstruating single women, widows, young and unmarried girls? Who would see that women took the proper steps for their effective purification when they were in the menstruating lodges? Are there not just too many circumstances where men would fail to implement their impositions if they were the ones who had interest in women separating from society in lunar months?

The seclusion of women during their menstrual months was probably a woman decision, just as it was women's decision to "absent themselves from their husbands and all public company, for a considerable time" after giving birth.<sup>421</sup> Indian women were

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<sup>421</sup> Ibid., 130.

only feminizing the religious fear of impurity out of which physicians<sup>422</sup> or men<sup>423</sup> acted as well. Besides, it is hardly believable that men would order such a retreat without it being viewed as punishment by women instead of purification during such a long time as a month, way beyond the actual menstrual days of a woman that rarely exceed a week.

Finally, what would be the rationale for such misogyny? Woman as a sex was not viewed by Indian society as ontologically impure since women participated in religious rituals alongside men at the highest levels. Adair noticed that “In imitation of the Hebrews women being kept apart from the men at their worship, the Indian entirely exclude their females from their temples by ancient custom, except six old beloved women, who are admitted to sing, dance, and rejoice, in the time of their annual expiation of sins, and then retire.”<sup>424</sup>

Therefore, on the subject of power, Katheleen Brown contradicted Nancy Shoemaker’s observation above that current scholars, including Theda Purdue, are in

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<sup>422</sup> Adair reported that “the [Indian] physician is so religiously cautious of not admitting polluted persons to visit any of his patients, lest the defilement should retard the cure.” *Ibid.*, 131. Adair reported that in 1738 an epidemic of small pox among the Cherokees caused their physicians or “their magi and prophetic tribe to break their old consecrated physic-pots, and throw away all the other pretended holy things they had for physical use, imagining they had lost their divine power by being polluted; and share the common fate of their country.” *Ibid.*, 244-45.

<sup>423</sup> Adair wrote the following interesting comparison between female seclusion and male seclusion: “The Indians, in a strict manner, ...build a small hut at a considerable distance from the houses of the village, for everyone of their warriors wounded in war, and confine them there...for the space of four moons, including that moon in which they were wounded, as in the case of their after travel: and they keep them strictly separate, lest the impurity of the one should prevent the cure of the other.” *Ibid.*, 131.

<sup>424</sup> *Ibid.*, 127. The macho Adair might give the impression that Indian men excluded their women on the simple ground that they were women like the Jews did, but the fact that there were six old women excepted proves that it is not the condition of womanhood that was targeted by whomever originated the custom. Indeed, impure men were also banned from religious worship: “This law of purity, bathing in water, was essential to the Jews—and the Indians to this day would exclude the men from religious communion who neglected to observe it.” *Ibid.*



general agreement that there was no gender hierarchy among Native Americans when she wrote that “By no means equal to men, whose political and religious decisions directed village life, Indian women were perhaps more powerful in their subordination than English women.”<sup>425</sup>

Again there is just no evidence that the political and religious decisions that directed the village life were taken by exclusively Indian males—or at least, if there was such a case, Brown has not proven how Indian men secured such power. In my opinion, there is rather stronger evidence suggesting that both women and men participated in the political and religious deliberations on village life. Adair’s description of how Indians made decisions for war suggests participation on the part of women in village deliberations: “The Indians are not fond of waging war with each other...but if they are determined for war...In that case, they proceed in the following manner. A War captain announces his intention of going to invade the common enemy, which he, by consent of the whole nation, declares to be such.”<sup>426</sup>

It may be true that “The Indians will not cohabit with women while they are out at war; they religiously abstain from every kind of intercourse even with their own wives, for the space of three days and nights before they go to war, and so after they return home, because they are to sanctify themselves.”<sup>427</sup> Is also not true that women shared the

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<sup>425</sup> Ibid. She cites Strachey, *History*, 83, 74 (see footnote 17) to support her argument.

<sup>426</sup> Williams, *Adair’s History of the American Indians*, 408.

<sup>427</sup> Ibid., 171.

general religious fear of pollution of their men and took the necessary steps to minimize it when their men were at war?

By ancient custom, when the out-standing party set off for war, the women are so afraid of the power of their holy things, and of prophaning them, that they sweep the house and earth quite clean, place the sweepings in a heap behind the door, leaving it there undisturbed, till *Opae*, who carries the [war] ark, orders them by a faithful messenger to remove it.<sup>428</sup>

Adair also added that “When the time of their purification and thanksgiving expired, the men and women went and bathed themselves separately, returned in the same manner, and anointed again, according to their usual custom.”<sup>429</sup>

Contrary to American gender system which had not significantly changed by the nineteenth century, the Indian gender system was fast changing. Indeed, referring to the Indian society in the eighteenth century, Adair remarked that “Although the same things are commonly alike used or disused, by males and females; yet they distinguish their sexes in as exact a manner as any civilized nation.”<sup>430</sup> This was in fact a sign of change. Although the civilization program of the US government was not in force yet in the late eighteenth century, Adair had noticed that Cherokees were already changing as a result of their contacts with the European traders.<sup>431</sup>

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<sup>428</sup> Ibid., 173. Adair’s language that the women were “ordered” is inappropriate if it was such as an old custom that women were upholding.

<sup>429</sup> Ibid., 175.

<sup>430</sup> Ibid., 179-180.

<sup>431</sup> “It was well-known, that the Indians are unacquainted with the custom and meaning of hostages; to them, it conveyed the idea of slaves, as they have no public faith to secure the lives of such.” Ibid., 265. This custom was also fast changing in the face of the opportunities opened with foreign trade.

Changes did not concern gender alone. In fact, Indian gender system was probably the last to change. Before that Indians like the Cherokees adopted trade as was visible with the impact of trade on Cherokees' traditional burial practices: "The Cheerake of late years, by the reiterated persuasion of the traders, have entirely left off the custom of burying effects with the dead body; the nearest of blood inherits them."<sup>432</sup> Adair also witnessed that "the corrupt Cheerake marry both mother and daughter at once...The Cheerake do not marry their first or second cousin; and it is very observable, that the whole tribe reckon a friend in the same rank with a brother, both with regard to marriage, and any other affair in social life."<sup>433</sup>

Although "corrupt" here was only a reference to the extent of change among the Cherokees, this description will allow the reader to appreciate the extent of the change in gender relations among the Cherokees. Indeed, on top of the fact that Cherokees married mothers and sisters, Cherokees had no laws against adultery. Adair wrote that

The Cheerake are an exception to all civilized or savage nations, in having no laws against adultery; they have been a considerable while under petticoat-government, and allow their women full liberty to plant their brows with horns as oft as they please, without fear of punishment. On this account, their marriages are ill-observed, and of a short continuance."<sup>434</sup>

The other element of Cherokee traditional gender relations is matrilineality.

Theda Purdue contented herself with declaring that

While men did make appearances at the households of their wives and of their own lineages, they could be found most frequently at a communal site in the

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<sup>432</sup> Ibid., 187.

<sup>433</sup> Ibid., 199.

<sup>434</sup> Ibid., 153.

company of other men...But the control exercised by women over domestic matters did not stem merely from male abdication of authority. Matrilineality placed women in a unique position: they alone could convey the kinship ties essential to Cherokee's existence.<sup>435</sup>

Although many a writer has insisted like Purdue on matrilineality among the Cherokees before the advent of Christianity, no one has explained the process that led to such practice. Thus while a plausible case can be made for matrilineality among the Cherokees, the Cherokee name giving practices also suggested the possibility of patrilineality.<sup>436</sup> Indeed, Purdue wrote that "The Cherokees based distinctions within clans on generations and gender and applied the same familial names to all those of roughly the same age and sex,"<sup>437</sup> but James Adair was a little more specific about the type of family names they kept: "When the Israelites gave names to their children or others, they chose such appellatives as suited best with their circumstances, and the

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<sup>435</sup> Purdue, *Cherokee Women*, 46. Purdue insisted that "few early European observers managed to grasp the principle matrilineal descent." Ibid., 41. As a result, they failed to understand that "the Cherokees traced kinship solely through women." Ibid., 41. Although Purdue attributed the power of the Cherokee women to the fact that "This circumstance gave women considerable prestige (Ibid.)," she remained silent on the origin of such a practice as well as the "modern anthropological theory" is, as she claimed this theory has "enabled us to understand matrilineality and the complexity of Native American kinship." Ibid. Without pretending to be able to solve this question, I believe that Cherokee matrilineality seemed to have stemmed from their loose marriage practices as described by Adair above.

<sup>436</sup> Matrilineality or patrilineality is different from matriarchy and patriarchy. Matrilineality has seemed to be confused with matriarchy as a regime in which a woman is in power in comparison to patriarchy in which a man is in power according to some divine order. Indeed, the same case among the Cherokees whereby there was no law against adultery seemed to be the only reason why lines would be traced through the mother as it becomes almost impossible to determine with certainty paternity cases. This was somewhat the same rationale among Africans as Cheikh Anta Diop explained although the rationale for matrilineality seemed accession to power and adultery: "Among these people [in the Middle age kingdom of Ghana], custom and rules demand that the successor to the king be his sister's son; for, they say, the sovereign can be sure that his nephew is indeed his sister's son; but nothing can assure him that the son he considers his own in actuality is." Cheikh Anta Diop, *Pre-colonial Black Africa: A Comparative Study of the Political and Social Systems of Europe and Black Africa, from Antiquity to the Formation of Modern States* (Westport, Conn: Lawrence Hill, 1987), 48.

<sup>437</sup> Ibid.

times...This custom is standing rule with the Indians, and I never observed the least deviation from it.”<sup>438</sup> Thus, without knowing such a minimum as who the Indians named their children after, I conclude that neither Purdue nor Adair solved the problem of matriarchy/matrilineality or patriarchy/patrilineality among the Indians in general and Cherokees in particular.

However, these two writers are extremely helpful in understanding what has become of the gender construction of the Native Americans in general and of the Cherokees in particular. Purdue argued that a shift had occurred to the detriment of women in the late eighteenth century with the advent of trade, and then gave a series of causes of this shift in the name of trade, war, and the “civilization” program of the US government: the first shift, “Trade...introduced new ways for Cherokee men and women to relate to each other...The first traders to the Cherokee country probably arrived in the late seventeenth century, but no one seems to have settled permanently among them until the second decade of the eighteenth century.”<sup>439</sup>

The second shift, she argued, was the practice of war and related diplomacy, which contributed to the dethronement of women from their power, as “colonial officers wanted to negotiate exclusively with warriors.”<sup>440</sup> The third shift, Purdue said, was the US “civilization” program: “Although eighteen-century changes threatened the marginalization of women politically and economically, “civilization” implied a far more

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<sup>438</sup> Williams, *Adair's History of the American Indians*, 200.

<sup>439</sup> Purdue, *Cherokee Women*, 65.

<sup>440</sup> *Ibid.*, 92. “The status and prestige of women had depended in part on their role in matrilineal kinship system, but in the eighteenth century, the kinship system lost one of its political functions.” *Ibid.*, 92.

dramatic transformation” to the detriment of women.<sup>441</sup> As a result of the civilization program and foreign policy, “A centralized Cherokee government originated in the late eighteenth century.”<sup>442</sup> This new Cherokee republic implemented new “written laws and constitutions, and different kinds of property embodied different values, which found expression in gender.”<sup>443</sup>

I agree with Purdue’s analysis above, but I also believe that the fundamental cause of shift in Cherokee gender construction was Christianity, which Purdue recognized only last in on her list of causes:

Cherokees had always regarded women as different from men—Just as Kana’ti, the first man, provided game, Selu, the first woman, provided corn and beans—but each enjoyed a distinct arena of power and each complemented the power of the other. The new view of womanhood promoted by policy makers, agents, and missionaries also recognized difference, but the roles ascribed to women left them in a distinctly subservient, largely powerless position. Christianity emphasized a hierarchy that placed men above women, and the growing romanticism of the period imbued the Protestant theology with intense emotionalism.<sup>444</sup>

Because the first systematic effort at changing the Indian culture in general and Cherokee culture in particular stemmed from a general conclusion that the Indians were

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<sup>441</sup> Ibid., 109. Purdue attenuated the scope of this change by saying that “Where gender was concerned, however, the transformation proved far less successful. Male hunters and female farmers were anathema to “civilization,” and since hunting was no longer a viable enterprise, “civilizers” expected men to replace women as farmers. These expectations, however, failed to take into account the durability of gender conventions and the adaptability of Cherokee culture.” Ibid., 116.

<sup>442</sup> Ibid., 135.

<sup>443</sup> Ibid., 135. Thus, “Protection and individual rights characterized the Cherokees’ approach to personal property. Hunters and warriors [men] had embraced individualism far more strongly than farmers [women] who worked as a group on land shared by matrilineage, and consequently, personal property expressed male values.” Ibid.

<sup>444</sup> Ibid., 159.

not civilized, the “civilization” program sculpted for them in the late eighteenth century was necessarily Christian at its core; the program was destined to turn Indian culture into American culture, which was fundamentally Christian as I have already showed above. Besides, it is not until the formation of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions that the government finally found the most adequate method to implement this program. Sure enough, the government passed the Civilization Fund Act of 1819 which the ABCFM missionaries particularly used to build male schools and female seminaries in order to “force Indians into the American system of society and government.”<sup>445</sup>

Those Indian or Cherokee children who graduated from these schools span a whole spectrum of assimilation of the Christian faith and practices. I argue that to the extent that the Cherokees are now considered 90% Christian, at least, the Christian family was transposed among the Cherokees especially with the male preached gospel.<sup>446</sup> As a result, Cherokee gender relations today reflect the gender order of the Bible describe earlier. This is because with the introduction of schools, the age theology which supported Cherokee society for example has been successfully disrupted. Children in schools learned a different truth from the truth of the ancestors and did not need the

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<sup>445</sup> Fraser, *The Schools in the United States: A Documentary History*, 19.

<sup>446</sup> The consequence of male gospel is evident in the interview of one Cherokee who remembered in the 1930s that, “Mrs. Emma Molloy, who visited Tahlequah in 1884, was noted as a temperance lecturer and was a prominent member of the Women’s Christian Temperance Union in Ohio.” The interviewer found it remarkable that “Women speakers were seldom seen and heard [in mission churches], and for the purpose of listening to a woman a number of persons, who otherwise probably would have remained at home, were present.” Purdue, ed. *Nations Remembered*, 133-134.

ancestors any longer for their own social growth.<sup>447</sup> For example, Elias Boudinot, one of the first students of the ABCFM, later became the editor of the famous *Cherokee Phoenix*, a skill no ancient could have taught him.<sup>448</sup>

This is the reason why we need to revise Kathleen Brown when she regretted that “Even before the English sailed up the river they renamed the James, however, Indian women’s power may have been waning, eroded by Powhatan’s chiefdom-building tactics.”<sup>449</sup> Indian women were not dominated by Indian men such as Powhatan,<sup>450</sup> as other researchers like Theda Purdue have already proven. Furthermore, power among the

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<sup>447</sup> One of these mission school students wrote the following that would have probably been unthinkable in the traditional gender system: “From my boyhood until lately, I have been taught the religion of my fathers, viz. to reverence the great and Supreme Being, love my friends deeply and to take vengeance on my enemies. It is customary with the Indians to spill the last drop of blood in conflict with an inveterate enemy. And on the other hand they will die for a friend, their affection for him being so strong. In their devotions there is nothing like pure religion. Tho they have a faint idea of Deity, yet they are far from loving him with all their hearts.... So, you see, dear sir, if my life is preserved, I may be the means of God to many who are now roaming the region of gloom and death.” David Brown to Samuel Worcester, December 6, 1819, Unit 6, Reel 737, 18.3.1.: Cherokee Missions, Vol. 2, 1817-1824, Journals, Letters, Joint Communication, Papers of the ABCFM, ABC 18: Missions on the American Continents 1811-1919, Frame 960.

<sup>448</sup> Born Buck Watie, “Following the ancient Cherokee custom of changing names and the more recent practice of adopting the names of prominent whites and benefactors, Buck chose to take the old man’s name [Elias Boudinot, American Bible Society President], and so when he arrived in Cornwall, Connecticut, Buck Watie enrolled in the Foreign Mission School as Elias Boudinot.” Purdue, ed. *The Writings of Elias Boudinot*, 6. And as Purdue importantly noted, Boudinot like the other children of his father Oo-watie or like those of his father’s brother Major Ridge were made available by their parents to the government’s “civilization” program, and in the early nineteenth century they “entered a family and a community very different from the ones Oo-watie had known as a boy. They lived a far more isolated and individualistic existences than their father had, sharing their home only with parents and siblings.” *Ibid.*, 5. This supports my argument that, at least, the family cell at the core of American society was transposed among the Civilized Cherokees.

<sup>449</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>450</sup> Adair in the eighteenth century had already cautioned against such claims when he wrote: “At such times, may be seen many war-chieftains working in common with the people, though as great emperors, as those the Spanish bestowed on the old simple Mexicans and Peruvians, and equal in power, (i.e. persuasive force) with the imperial and puissant Powhatan of Virginia, whom our generous writers raised to that prodigious pitch of power and grandeur, to rival the Spanish accounts.” Williams, *Adair’s History of the American Indians*, 437.



Indians needs to be correctly understood before we can speculate about whether Indian women lost or gained power as a result of their contacts with Europeans. As I hope to have shown above, there were no power issues between Indian men and Indian women until their systematic “civilization” program transferred the Christian family cell to them. Their power issues were between old men and women on the one hand, and young men and women on the other. As a result of the “civilization” program, the struggles within and without the family cell that have characterized the American gender history have also transferred to such “civilized” Indians as the Cherokees.<sup>451</sup>

#### West African Concept of Gender Relations in 1833

What was the African conception of gender relations before 1833, when the ABCFM first launched their mission in Africa? Did the African conception of gender change as a result of this contact? Answering these questions will rely on both European observers coeval to these times,<sup>452</sup> but also on African archeologists<sup>453</sup> and the like who have done serious and revolutionary work about reconstructing pre-colonial Africa.<sup>454</sup>

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<sup>451</sup> Some Native Americans for example think that “In the next [this] century, the Christian church is going to experience a second major reformation...While the West will participate in this reformation, it will not play a dominant role. The leaders of the coming reformation will be women. They will be from Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Native America. They are being born right now.” Steve Charleston, “The Old Testament of Native America,” in *Native and Christian*, ed. by James Treat (New York: Routledge, 1996), 79-80.

<sup>452</sup> James Adair remarked about “the conjectural, though perhaps well-intended accounts of the first adventurers, and settlers, in North America, concerning the natives: and which are laid as the only basis for inquisitive writers to trace their origin, instead of later and more substantial observations. Though several of those early writers were undoubtedly sagacious, learned, and candid; yet under the circumstances in which they wrote, it was impossible for them to convey to us any true knowledge of the Indians, more than what they gained by their senses, which must be superficial, and liable to many errors.” Williams, *Adair’s History of the Indians*, 227.

Thus, the following argument has emerged from reading these sources. To the extent that I believe gender relations to be not only sexual difference but also the hierarchy between sexes, the structure of gender hierarchy in Africa was primarily determined by the nature of African religions just as the gender outlooks of missionaries and Native Americans were determined by their religions. I hope the case of the missionaries is clear enough. For the case of the Cherokee society, it will be sufficient to emphasize one more time that the concept of God was monotheist, and that it is such a conception that was responsible for putting elders uniformly in power, as Cherokee generations were all hierarchically layered according to their age and degree of closeness to the ancestral religious worship.<sup>455</sup>

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<sup>453</sup> The work of archeologists such as Cheikh Anta Diop has had a tremendous impact on the study of African history. Patrick Manning wrote that “Cheikh Anta Diop of Senegal devoted a lifetime of linguistic and archeological research to demonstrating the links of ancient Egypt to African civilization. His work held out great hope to many in Africa who saw in it rehabilitation of African culture, and who saw in his erudition the model for future African scholars. On the other hand, his analysis of the unity of Egyptian civilization with that of the Western Sudan remained deeply controversial for methodological reasons. Meanwhile, Cheikh Anta Diop also wrote in favor of the federation of all African states into a great union (he thought this was consistent with his analysis of ancient times) and these views too were widely approved by francophone [and other] African intellectuals.” Manning, *Francophone Sub-Saharan Africa*, 178.

<sup>454</sup> John Samuel Mbiti (1931- ) is a “Theologian, born in Kenya. He taught theology and comparative religion at Makerere University College, Uganda, before becoming director of the World Council of Churches Ecumenical Institute, Bossey, Switzerland (1972-80). He now teaches Christianity and African religions at Bern University and is a pastor in Burgof, Switzerland. His books include *African Religions and Philosophy* (1969) and *Bible and Theology in African Christianity* (1987).” <http://appbio.net/biographies/Mbiti-%20John%20Samuel-4D06.html>; Internet source; accessed on June 30, 2006. John Mbiti’s *African Religions and Philosophy* (New York: Anchor Books, 1970) has become a classic in the studies of African religions, and will be used as a primary source in this dissertation.

<sup>455</sup> About the nature of Indian God, James Adair in line with his argument of the Jewish origins of the Native Americans, observed: “The ancient heathens, it is well-known, worshipped a plurality of gods—Gods which they formed to themselves, according to their own liking, as various as the countries they inhabited, and as numerous as, with some, as the days of the year. But these Indian Americans pay their religious devoir to *Loak-Ishtohoollo-Aba*, “the great beneficent, supreme, supreme, holy spirit of fire,” who resides (as they think) above the clouds and on earth also with polluted people. He is with them the sole author of warmth, light, and all animal and vegetable life.” Williams, *Adair’s History of the American Indians*, 20. Most contemporary Indians including those who are now Christian continue to affirm this idea

African society was also structured by the degree of closeness to the worship of the religions of the ancestors,<sup>456</sup> but African concept of God was not monotheist, but bi-theist.<sup>457</sup> That is the reason why I argue that African religion was fundamentally characterized by the concept of a man's god and a woman's god, and these two gods were foreign to each other in terms of space and time.<sup>458</sup> In terms of hierarchy such decentralization of God equalized (for lack of better word) the gender relations in Africa. Indeed, as far as gender relations are concerned, traditional Africans did not conceive gender relations in terms of equality versus inequality as the Western counterparts did.<sup>459</sup>

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that "Like Israel, Native America believed in the oneness of God; it saw God as the creator of all existence." Steve Charleston, "The Old Testament of Native America," in Treat, ed. *Native and Christian*, 77.

<sup>456</sup> Mbiti found that "Africans are notoriously religious, and each people has its own [inherited] religious system with a set of beliefs and practices. [Ancestral] Religion permeates into all the departments of life so fully that it is not easy or possible always to isolate it. A study of these religious systems is, therefore, ultimately a study of the peoples themselves in all the complexities of both traditional and modern life." Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 1.

<sup>457</sup> The term bi-theist is meant to capture the idea that African religion seems to be along gender lines to the extent that African religious officers or those that Mbiti called "specialists, in virtue of their specialized office, knowledge and skill in religious matters (Ibid., 218)," are "both men and women." (Ibid., 218)

<sup>458</sup> Some African gods seem to be bi-sexual in the sense that men and women can implore the same god for intervention. However, at a closer look, the argument of the gendered worship of gods prevails because in these rare circumstances, both men and women are competent to address those gods directly or be the representative of those gods for both men and women. In other words, there is no instance of a religious worship where men would be put in a certain position of power over women and vice versa. All religious worships are independent in nature, which makes me argue that the religious world of Africa is bi-sexual.

<sup>459</sup> Deborah Stone captured the concept of equality in the West when she had offered "a mouthwatering bittersweet chocolate to distribute in a public policy class (39)." Although Stone affirmed that "It is important to keep in mind from the outset that equity is the goal for all sides in a distributive conflict," several challenges to her method of distribution resulted from "how the sides envision[ed] the distribution of whatever [the cake] is at issue (39)." On gender ground, she said, the "men insist[ed] that the cake be divided in two equal parts, with half going to men (who comprise one-third of the students in the class) and half going to the women. *Unequal slices but equal blocs* (40)." As a result of this experience, Stone reflected that "In any distribution, there are three important dimensions: the recipient (who gets something?), the item (what is being distributed?), and the process (how is the distribution to be decided upon and carried out?) (42)." Deborah Stone, *Policy Paradox: The Art of Political Decision Making*, revised edition (New York: W. W. Norton, 1988, 1997, 2002).

These Africans thought of gender relations as parallel power relations in which each gender ruled its kind according to in-house rules.<sup>460</sup>

Therefore, it is important to understand what I call the structure of God in traditional Africa. Indeed, “the most minimal and fundamental idea about God found in all African societies” seemed to be the “notion of God as the Supreme Being.”<sup>461</sup> And yet, Mbiti recognized that “apart from a few comprehensive studies, our written information about the concepts of God held by individual peoples is incomplete.”<sup>462</sup> Thus, if we accept that “African knowledge of God is expressed in proverbs, short statements, songs, prayers, names, myths, stories and religious ceremonies,”<sup>463</sup> we will have to accept that African knowledge of God was deeply gendered, at least in West Africa. One example of such a gendered society was the traditional Igbo secret societies that Don Ohadike described:

Some secret societies were exclusively for men, some for women, and others for both sexes. Very little is known about the secret societies because the men and women who joined them took their oath very seriously. Besides, the Igbo were averse to divulging information that might hinder the effectiveness of their secret societies; many of them functioned as the mouthpieces of ancestors, oracles, and spirits.<sup>464</sup>

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<sup>460</sup> There is no doubt that distribution has been contentious in Africa throughout history, but equality is almost absent in the language of sexual relations in Africa. That is, it is almost unheard of among Africans to classify men and women on one scale of distribution. Men and women usually talk about a man’s this or that and women talk about a woman’s this or that, and if the debate over equality ever arises, it is within the sexes and not between them. In Africa, I have seen cooked chicken being divided by our mother into “men’s part—from the head to the middle” and “women’s part—from the middle to the hide” with some complexity as some chicken legs may end up among men and some chicken breast may end up among women. I will come back to how modern African men and women have changed this gender conception.

<sup>461</sup> Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 37.

<sup>462</sup> *Ibid.*, 37-38.

<sup>463</sup> *Ibid.*, 38.

<sup>464</sup> Ohadike, “Igbo Culture and History,” in *Things Fall Apart* by Achebe, xxx.

Rev. John Wilson wrote that “The people of Southern Guinea [including the Mpongwe among whom he worked] have many secret associations. One of the most prominent among them is the association called *Nda*, and is confined to the adult male population...As soon as it is known that he has entered the village, the women and children hurry away to their rooms to hide themselves.”<sup>465</sup> Wilson added that “The women of the Mpongwe country, on the other hand, have an institution called *Njembe*, which is a pretty fair counterpart to that of *Nda*...The *Njembe* make great pretensions, and, as a body, are really feared by men...as their performances are always veiled in mystery.”<sup>466</sup>

Thus, traditional Africans may have had the idea of a Supreme God, but they did not address this God directly. They addressed him or her through mediating gods that become the most real gods that receive the worship.<sup>467</sup> The same phenomenon was among the Mpongwe:

The Mpongwe word for God is *Anyambia*...Next to God in the government of the world, according to their notions, are two spirits, *Ombwiri* and *Onyambe*, the former good and gentle, the latter hateful and wicked...Almost every man has his own *Ombwiri*, for which he provides a small house near his own. Next to these two come two other classes of spirits, the worship of whom form the most

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<sup>465</sup> Wilson, *Western Africa*, 395.

<sup>466</sup> *Ibid.*, 396.

<sup>467</sup> John Leighton Wilson, the ABCFM missionary to West Africa observed this phenomenon in the entire West Africa: “These [the Jalof, a tribe in the Senegambia], as in almost every other portion of pagan Africa, believe in one Supreme Being, who, they suppose is too far removed, or is too indifferent to feel much concern in the affairs of men—that by some means or other, the government of the world has fallen into the hands of subordinate, some of whom are good and some evil; and the only religious worship in which they ever engage is directed to these spirits, the object of which is to conciliate their favor or ward off their displeasure.” *Ibid.*, 78.

prominent feature in the superstitious practices of the country. One of them is known by the term *Abambo*, and the other *Inlaga*. *Abambo* are the spirits of the ancestors of the people, and *Inlaga* are the spirits of the strangers, and have come from a long distance. These are spirits with which men are possessed.<sup>468</sup>

The worship of these gods also was gender-specific to the extent that men worshipped the men's gods they knew, and women worshipped the woman's gods they knew and neither sex had any power<sup>469</sup> in the other sex's religious world.

Thus what should we make of Peter Stearns's query that, "What happens when a society that emphasizes women's obligation to be deferential to men encounters people from another society that believes that women are by nature more moral than men?"<sup>470</sup> I think the first society in the question characterizes well the society of Christian missionary society like that of Rev. John Leighton Wilson, but the second society does

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<sup>468</sup> Ibid., 387-88.

<sup>469</sup> Power in traditional Africa, although this concept is difficult to translate into their languages, flowed from their concept of God. First, "His [God's] power is seen in practical terms (40)." Secondly, "God's omnipotence is seen in his exercise of power over nature (41)" and "all things (50) that he "created (50)." Thirdly, God created spirits. These "Divinities," as Mbiti termed them, "are on the whole thought to have been created by God, in the ontological category of the spirits. They are associated with him [God], and often stand for His activities or beings in charge of...major objects or phenomena of nature (98)." Thus, "The spirits in general belong to the ontological mode of existence between God and man (97)." Their function is to take to God whatever concerns with nature or spirits men and women may have, as well as intervene on behalf of members of the society. There were "two categories of spiritual beings: those which were created as such, and those which were once human beings [the living dead who can be any deceased member of African society] (97)." Fourthly, there are a few African people who become "'specialists," in virtue of their specialized office, knowledge and skill in religious matters [that is, in the art of obtaining the favors from the spirits or divinities in the name of God for those Africans who request them] (216)." Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 98. In conclusion, power in African society was inherently divine as most traditional Africans believed no one had a skill unless he or she was blessed with it by God through the spirit or divinity and then through specialists, examples of which being the rainmaker, the medicine man, the king, the priest. Ibid., see chapter 15 "Specialists." To the extent that men and women had gods exclusive to their respective sexes, each sex retained and exercised its power in which case words such as domination, oppression, hegemony characterizing power relations in general are inadequate for traditional African gender relations. This is certainly the reason why traditional African women did not take the family names of their husbands upon marriage, but retained their original family name as a sign of independence.

<sup>470</sup> Stearns, *Gender in World History*, 1.

not coincide with the traditional African society.<sup>471</sup> Stearns also noted that people may be particularly reluctant to surrender the standards of defining femininity and masculinity, even when pressed by a society that seems exceptionally powerful and successful.<sup>472</sup>

As I have tried to demonstrate in this dissertation, Europeans were not seen as “powerful” as a race, nor were they seen as “successful” in their gender relations by Africans as the process of change in African gender construction will show. Change in African gender construction is better understood through the method of parallel agency whereby the choices of missionaries and African converts are explained independently

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<sup>471</sup> Even in the case of matrilineality which owed its existence in Africa to the fact that so-called kings could not be sure about their own paternity of their sons, the issue has never being moral but biological: there could be no doubt whatsoever in traditional African society about the maternity of a woman. In this political decision, as students of archeology of gender in Africa are urged by Fekri Hassan to understand, “The biological capacity of “woman” to bear children and the biological transformation of her body and body-function in association with this biological capacity is fundamental (267).” However, as he aptly put it, “To search for an essence of “woman,” or for that matter of “man” is futile.” Fekri Hassan, “Toward Gender in an Archeology of Gender in Africa,” in Kent, ed. *Gender in African Prehistory*, Chapter Fourteen, 267. In their study of “Men and Women in a Market Economy, 1775-1995” among the people of Banda, a village-people in Ghana, one of the most famous “matrilineal” society in West Africa, Ann Stahl and Maria and Maria Das Dores Cruz found that “Cash-cropping is often perceived as a man’s domain; however, there are no proscriptions against Banda women establishing farms, and indeed, some Banda women have become successful cash-crop farmers. For example, beginning in the mid-1980s, the Pioneer Tobacco Company began to encourage large-scale production of tobacco...Men were heavily invested in yams and calabash as cash crops and were reluctant to switch to tobacco. Women were first to take up the Pioneer scheme...” Ann Stahl and Maria and Maria Das Dores Cruz, “Men and Women in a Market Economy: Gender and Craft Production in West Central Ghana, ca. 1775-1995,” in *Ibid.*, Chapter Eleven, 223. This parallel agency was a potential at the core of the traditional African gender construction, and therefore makes the language of domination, oppression, hegemony inappropriate in traditional men and women relations in traditional Africa. This language stems from the following missionary legacy: “The women on this part of the coast are the chief laborers, the men doing little more for the support of themselves and their families than carry the articles of merchandising to trading marts and vessels that pass along the coast. Journal of Mission, 1834, Report of the State of the Colony of Liberia, Papers of the ABCFM, Reel 149, Frame 54.

<sup>472</sup> Stearns, *Gender in World History* , 3. As I have tried to demonstrate, Europeans were not seen as “powerful” as a race nor were they seen as “successful” in their gender relations by Africans as the process of change in African gender construction will show.

and in connection to each other. Indeed, on the missionary side, gender relations were not a priority in their mission.<sup>473</sup>

This was the reason why although Rev. John Wilson's reports to the Board were replete with references to African gender relations, their actual conversation with Africans rarely included African gender relations. For example, although Rev. John Wilson was averse to polygamy he never confronted the kings he met on the issue of their wives.<sup>474</sup> This was because in Gabon as elsewhere in Africa, the polygamous Africans

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<sup>473</sup> The original letter of the ABCFM to Rev. John Leighton Wilson congratulating him on his acceptance to go to Africa suggests that African gender relations were not a direct target to the extent that the missionaries understood polygamy to be a gender issue: "Eight years ago the Board, by a formal resolution, enjoined upon the Prudential Committee to embrace the "earliest opportunity for establishing a mission in Africa...Since that time, until your disposition to consecrate, yourself dear brother, to the liberation of Africa from the thralldom of ignorance and sin became known to the Committee....." DuBose, *Memoirs of Rev. John Leighton Wilson*, 58.

<sup>474</sup> Indeed, polygamy may have been indigenous to Africa, but it seemed to have taken unprecedented turns with long distance trade. Ibn Battuta made descriptions which suggests that polygamy was associated with wealth accumulated in long distance trade. In Mali for example, Ibn Battuta reported extensively about the lives of Sultans such as Mansa Suleiman, successor of Mansa Musa. Said Hamdun and Noel King, *Ibn Battuta in Black Africa* (Princeton, NJ: Markus Wiener, 1994), 57. Most of these Sultans were muslim many times for the sake of trade. In the fourteenth century, Mansa Suleiman had "four wives and concubines, who are about a hundred in number. On them are fine clothes and on their heads they have bands of silver and gold with silver and gold apples as pendants." Ibid., 52. The fine clothes of the women were usually made of "fine Egyptian material (Ibid., 37)," and the Sultan himself liked to parade in robes made of "Roman cloth (Ibid., 48) or surround himself with "Egyptian embroidery." Ibid., 47. In Gabon, polygamy was also closely associated with wealth. Rev. John Wilson observed that "In the first place, polygamy is confined in a great measure to the maritime tribes, who have the means of multiplying their wives." Wilson, *Western Africa*, 266. While kings indulged in polygamy, the lower classes indulged in prostitution, which seemed to have been introduced in West Africa with the European trade. David Patterson quoted George Bruel, one of the French contemporaries, as regretting that "Unhappily, this group [the Mpongwe] is dying out because of alcoholism, abortion, and syphilis. Civilization seems to be harmful to these people, who learn more of our faults than our virtues." K. David Patterson, "The Vanishing Mpongwe: European Contact and Demographic Change in the Gabon River." *Journal of African History*, Vol. 16, No 2 (1975): 217-238, 234. Also Patterson quoted the early seventeenth-century navigators as complaining that "Mpongwe women were "much addicted to Leacherie and Uncleanesse and sometimes actually chased reluctant sailors." Ibid., 228. By the end of the century, remarked Patterson, Willem Bosman, an English observer, noted that "the women conducted "a publick trade with their Bodies, exposing their Favours to Sale at a very cheap Rate. And where they fear no Danger, they will readily relieve the languishing Lover for a Knife or a Trifel of that value." Ibid., 228-29. This practice continued in the nineteenth century as "a lucrative supplement to the trade in ivory, dyewood, and slaves" when new practices such as "Concubine for hire...for fees ranging from 15 to 25 francs a month" were introduced



included most of the times the king and other noblemen<sup>475</sup> on whom Wilson relied for protection and for influence<sup>476</sup> among their people for the benefit of the mission.<sup>477</sup>

On the other hand, Africans who adopted Christianity only discovered later the foundation of the gender construction of the missionaries. Again this belated awareness of Christian prohibition of polygamy was directly related to the missionaries' strategic silence about African polygamy on the ground.<sup>478</sup> However, there were layers in the change which the traditional neutralized African gender construction went through. The changes span a whole spectrum that can be summarized as follows.

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with the consequence that "at least by the nineteenth century, the Mpongwe had a very high incidence of venereal diseases." Ibid., 229.

<sup>475</sup> Wilson observed that a "man's importance and respectability in society depends, here as elsewhere on in Africa, upon the number of wives; and the only limit imposed upon the number is the ability to purchase them. The wealthier men of the Gabun have from have from twenty to fifty. The late King of Cape Lopez is said to have had more than two hundred...In the first place, polygamy is confined in a great measure to the maritime tribes, who have the means of multiplying their wives." Wilson, *Western Africa*, 266.

<sup>476</sup> This was the strategy from the beginning as this report on the exploration tour reveals: "Mr. Wyncoop and myself went ashore to see the town and confer with the king about the establishment of schools. Grand Sester is one of the largest and most important native towns on the coast...[p.56] we were conducted soon after we landed to the presence of the king. He is an old man. Nothing remarkable about his person. He wore a loose gown that covered almost the whole of his body. We stated to him the object of our visit to his town with which he seemed pleased, and said he would be ready to make any arrangements for the accommodation of a mission as he arrived. After our interview with the king, we were conducted to the government apartment to see him on the same subject. What authority he exercises in the town, we could not satisfactorily ascertain. He is a very aged man and seemed much more anxious for trade. "Messrs J. Leighton Wilson and Stephen Wyncoop to the Prudential Committee of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions," Report of the state of the Colony of Liberia, March 24, 1834, Papers of the ABCFM, Unit 2, vol. 1, Reel 149, Frame 27.

<sup>477</sup> Wilson also underestimated the resilience of the practice of polygamy: "We are disposed to think that the superstitions of Africans will be among the smaller obstacles to the spread of Christianity among them. The truth concerning them is they possess little or no religion and in this respect they are peculiarly ready for the reception of the Gospel." Ibid. He also commented that "Polygamy is a serious obstacle to Christianity, but where on earth don't people exhibit national traits opposed to Christianity?" Ibid., 48.

<sup>478</sup> I have not found a single public sermon to the West Africans, and for that matter to the Cherokees, which was designed to get these "heathens" to abandon the practice of polygamy.

On one extreme were those traditional African men and women who were already old, married in the polygamous regime with many children. When they became Christian, they had fewer maneuvers even if they wanted to adopt the missionary gender regime of one husband, and one subservient wife. On the other extreme were those young traditional African boys and girls who went to missionary schools and became wholeheartedly Christian. When their process of Christianization was complete, and when they were of age to marry, they had completely adopted the gender regime of the missionaries, that is, Christianity as I described when discussing the gender conceptions of the missionaries.

Similarly, the African traditional gender proper which depended on the traditional bi-theist religion has gone through change that span a whole spectrum as well. It was rare for traditional Africans in charge of African traditional religious worships like Okonkwo (the main character of Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*) would convert to Christianity and abandon their male gods. As Chinua Achebe put it, these were emotional choices they could hardly make: "What moved Obierika (Okonkwo's age-mate) to visit Okonkwo was the sudden appearance of the latter's son, Nwoye, among the missionaries in Umuofia."<sup>479</sup> The same could be said of female traditional religious priests. On the other extreme, some if very few traditional boys and girls like Nwoye have managed to recast the allegiance of

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<sup>479</sup> Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, 101. Okonkwo preferred to commit suicide as a man rather than surrender his manhood, which would be equal to abandoning his fathers' gods. *Ibid.*, 147.

their manhood to the Christian gender regime. The vast majority of traditional African converts are in the middle like Thelma Awori's father.<sup>480</sup>

In conclusion, there are several precautions one needs to take when investigating gender relations in Africa. One needs to pay attention to the time of the investigation, the religious history of the missionaries, Cherokees and Africans involved in the investigation, and of course the agency of these groups through the method of parallel agency. This method allows the investigation to focus on each group independently, but also in a connected fashion. A test of this method and its findings would be to be able to approximately place contemporary Cherokees and West Africans for example on a scale from least Christianized to most Christianized.

Thus where would we place an African feminist, to only take this example, who affirmed that "True feminism is an abnegation of male protection and a determination to be resourceful and reliant? The majority of black women in Africa and the diaspora have developed these characteristics, though not always by choice"?<sup>481</sup> I would say that this statement comes from an African woman who, like Elizabeth Cady Stanton quoted in *Atheism: A Reader*, rejects the Biblical story of Adam and Eve and the gender regime that it has supported throughout the ages and therefore is less Christian than Mrs. Jane Elizabeth Wilson, the wife of Rev. John Leighton Wilson whose female students she

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<sup>480</sup> She said about him: "My father was a first-generation literate...After finishing elementary school at Kpolokpele [Liberia], he worked as a catechist-evangelist for the Lutheran Church...Since he is a tribal man my father is well versed in the traditional ways of his people [which probably include membership in some traditional male secret societies]" Awori, "The Revolt against the "Civilizing Mission": Christian Education in Liberia," in Berman, ed. *African Reactions to Missionary Education*, 119-120.

<sup>481</sup> This statement is from Filomina Steady whom Carole Boyce Davies says is the author of "The only formulation of a feminist theory for African women." Carole Boyce Davies, ed. *Ngambika: Studies of Women in African Literature* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1990), 6-7.

reared so that they would become like her and accept entirely the biblical story of Adam and Eve. Thus, if “All history begins with the necessary and inescapable observation of change around us,” I hope to have followed John Edward Philips’s advice of “Writing African [gender] history...finding out the nature, extent and pace of that change and trying to explain it.”<sup>482</sup>

### Conclusion

My findings point to timelessness in missionary gender conceptions,<sup>483</sup> substantial change in Cherokee gender conceptions and only average changes in African gender conceptions. Little if any of these lasting changes in Cherokees’ and Africans’ gender conceptions was the result of missionary imposition. Shift in gender conceptions among these natives was more the result of their authoritative adaptations of Christianity as they

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<sup>482</sup> John Edward Philips, “What is African History?” in *Writing African History*, ed. by idem (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2005), 25.

<sup>483</sup> This is also because most missionaries like Rev. John Leighton believed that Christianity elevated the status of women, and that only the native women needed to be elevated to the height of Christian women. On his tour to Africa, he wrote that: “The griegrie system is a source of profit to a class of men of some influence, and its most important end with the majority of men is to keep women in strict subordination to their husbands. But when it is known that Christianity is directly opposed to it, and will, if it gets a footing, destroy the “craft” of the men, and [raise the women to equality with them] to respectability in society, it is altogether probable that that opposition will be excited.” “Messrs J. Leighton Wilson and Stephen Wyncoop to the Prudential Committee of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions,” Report of the state of the Colony of Liberia, March 24, 1834, Papers of the ABCFM, Reel 149, 31.

understood it from the words and actions of the missionary. No external limits on such adaptations were significant enough to supersede Cherokee and African authority. The gender encounter between the missionaries of the ABCFM and the Cherokees and West African is therefore a story of parallel agency, which no single group can claim as its own, in its favor, or to its detriment. Was it the case with the missionary education?

#### CHAPTER 4: MISSIONARY EDUCATION AMONG THE CHEROKEES AND THE WEST AFRICANS

This chapter assesses the impact of the ABCFM's policy of "Civilization before Christianization" on Cherokees and West Africans' relationship to formal education. This policy made the ABCFM missionaries dependent on the already "civilized" Cherokees and West Africans for the success of the Christian missions. Those Cherokees and West Africans dominated missionary schools, and because they were made central to the conversion of their fellow Cherokees and West Africans through the ABCFM Lancastrian school model, Cherokees and West Africans were even more emboldened to pursue agendas in formal education that suited them many times in defiance of missionary expectations. This parallel agency has its roots in missionary adoption of the policy of "Civilization before Christianization," which ignored Cherokee and West African determination to embrace formal education on their own terms in spite of missionaries' expectation.

##### The ABCFM Missionary Policy of Civilization before Christianization

The history of formal education suggests that from the ancient times to at least the nineteenth century, schools were reserved for the upper-classes of society who could afford such luxury. For example, the Sophists, ancient Greek philosophers, "received pay for teaching such practical techniques of persuasion as rhetoric, dialectic and

argumentation in the mid-fifth century B.C.E.”<sup>484</sup> Most medieval Western schools were modeled after ancient Greek and Roman schools, and only the moneyed elite could afford them. Distribution of literacy was along class lines, as argued by Peter Burke: “65 percent per cent of the craftsmen were literate, compared to about 20 percent of the peasants, in Narbonne and the surrounding countryside in the late sixteenth century.”<sup>485</sup>

Since most medieval Western schools were operated by churches, one could argue that the elitist conception of formal education in pagan antiquity transferred to early modern Christian Europe. Indeed “Before the emergence of universities, the liberal arts had been taught in cathedral and monastery schools. The purpose of these schools was to train the clergy.”<sup>486</sup> This training of church leadership also inspired the training of a secular European leadership: “By the eleventh century and twelfth century, cathedral schools also began to provide lectures for nonclerical students and they broadened their curricula to include some training for purely secular vocations.”<sup>487</sup>

During the Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth century, the gap between the educated elite and the non-educated peasantry widened even further. All over Europe, the “godly [Protestants] tried to create a new popular culture;”<sup>488</sup> and “a high priority was to

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<sup>484</sup> Donald Kagan, et al. *The Western Heritage. Volume One: To 1740* . Eighth ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 2004,) 89.

<sup>485</sup> Peter Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* , Rev. Reprint (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 1978, 1994), 251.

<sup>486</sup> *Ibid.*, 272.

<sup>487</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>488</sup> Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe*, 223.

make the Bible available to ordinary people in language which they could understand.”<sup>489</sup> However, by all estimations, “historians have concluded that [only] a substantial minority of ordinary people in early modern Europe were in fact able to read.”<sup>490</sup> In most parts of Europe, “it was the second half of the period, 1650-1800, which showed dramatic rises in literacy.”<sup>491</sup> And yet “in England,” for example, “it [only] rose from 30 percent in 1642 to 60 percent in the second half of the eighteenth century.”<sup>492</sup>

European elitist conceptions of formal education were also transferred in the English colonies of America. Wayne Urban and Jennings Wagoner state that

Educational policies and practices in the Chesapeake and coastal Carolina were also shaped by deliberate attempts to transplant familiar English customs and institutions to the new world. Most southern colonists tended to accept without question the prevailing European precept that education was essentially a private [and elite] matter, a family concern.<sup>493</sup>

Some of the European elitist practices included but were not limited to “literary patriotism.”<sup>494</sup> Indeed, as formal education contributed to elevate the status of students and their families, it also contributed to elevate peoples and their nations. For example, as Liah Greenfeld explains, French scholars sought to give France a French language “in the

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<sup>489</sup> Ibid.

<sup>490</sup> Ibid.

<sup>491</sup> Ibid.

<sup>492</sup> Ibid.

<sup>493</sup> Wayne J. Urban and Jennings L. Wagoner, Jr., *American Education: A History* (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 1996, 2000), 22. See also Lawrence A. Cremin, *American Education: The Colonial Experience, 1607-1783* (New York: Harper and Row, 1970).

<sup>494</sup> Liah Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), 78.



atmosphere of a growing appreciation of ‘mother’ tongues in general” in Europe, and as a result, in the fourteenth century the French of Paris “became an object of ardent love among scholars and men of letters.”<sup>495</sup>

Thus in France, Christianity appropriated the pagan elitist approach to formal education. The result was an elitist formal education elevated to the status of divine and chauvinistic belief.

The claim of French cultural superiority was likewise born in the minds of a few scholarly dreamers. It was predicated on the stature of the University of Paris in medieval letters and on the related notion *translation studii*. The schools of Paris, which numbered among the most illustrious centers of theological studies in the West, were incorporated into a university at the beginning of the thirteenth century.<sup>496</sup>

The educated elite of England developed their own rhetoric of English supremacy. Liah Greenfield affirms that like their predecessors of the Elizabethan era, later “writers stressed the merits of the English language and literature and insisted on their superiority to classical and French languages and literature, which were considered the standards of excellence of the time.”<sup>497</sup>

In the new US republic, the European patriotic conception of formal education was Americanized. Founding fathers like Noah Webster suggested that in the task of forming “our national character,” “it now becomes every American to examine the modes of education in Europe, to see how far they are applicable in this country and whether it is not possible to make some valuable alterations, adapted to our local and political

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<sup>495</sup> Ibid., 99.

<sup>496</sup> Ibid.

<sup>497</sup> Ibid., 78.

circumstances.”<sup>498</sup> Although Webster rejected the European practice of using the Bible as a schoolbook in America,<sup>499</sup> he still defended the idea that formal education could infuse the American youth with “an inviolable attachment to their country.”<sup>500</sup>

The elitist conception of formal education was defended the founding fathers of the U.S. republic. Although Carl Kaestle would disagree with my interpretation, his contention, “The nation’s Founding Fathers...pinned their hopes of on the creation of a republic, a representative form of government in which the general will would be refined and articulated by the **best men [emphasis mine]**,”<sup>501</sup> seems to support my argument. Indeed, since the property-tax requirement even for the white male to vote was not seriously challenged until the Jacksonian era, one could argue that the “meritocratic principles” defended by “Jefferson’s plan for a general system of education” were conceived within an elitist framework. That’s why when Urban and Wagoner explain that Jefferson “believed that his scheme would provide opportunity for virtuous and talented youngsters, members of the ‘natural aristocracy’ who were to be found in every segment of society,”<sup>502</sup> the most important element in this explanation is “natural aristocracy.” Since the “natural aristocracy” was to be found in “every segment of society,” one can argue that the “best men” of Founding Fathers such as Jefferson’s

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<sup>498</sup> Noah Webster, “On the Education of Youth in America, Boston, 1790” in Fraser, ed. *The School in the United States: A Documentary History*, 35.

<sup>499</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

<sup>500</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

<sup>501</sup> Carl F. Kaestle, *Pillars of the Republic: Common Schools and American Society, 1780-1860* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983), 6.

<sup>502</sup> Urban and Wagoner, Jr., *American Education: A History*, 74.

referred to by Kaestle above were likely to come from the upper-classes in every segment of society. In other words, in the new U.S. republic, class preceded merit.

The elitist conception of formal education also found its way into the ideology of the common school movement expounded by Horace Mann. This is what James Fraser expresses when he writes that

Two important anchors stabilized and strengthened the common school movement. One was an assumption, articulated by Mann in his Twelfth Report, that a generic Protestantism would serve the needs of the nation well. As historian Timothy L. Smith has written of the “common faith,” which lay behind the emergence of the common school, “By the middle of the nineteenth century, leading citizens assumed that Americanism and Protestantism were synonyms and that education and Protestantism were allies.”...The second equally important anchor of the common school movement was the replacement of the traditional male schoolmaster with the much lower-paid female schoolteacher.<sup>503</sup>

By the time that the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions launched its Cherokee mission in 1817, most Americans agreed that the role of formal education was to train an elite and patriotic youth. I argue in this chapter that due to the heavy Christian outlook of the United States in the early nineteenth century, and due to the strong influence of gender on the work of missions, missionary formal education among the Cherokees and West Africans was extremely elitist. This education was also heavily informed by the Christian gender structure of female subjection to the male rule within the family, as I described in Chapter Three on gender relations.

Even the apparently secular common school movement was deeply affected by the missionary formal education model. Horace Mann, the “father of the Common

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<sup>503</sup> Fraser, *The School in the United States*, 49.

School,<sup>504</sup> equated formal education with Protestant education, and his movement replaced the traditional male schoolmaster with “the much lower-paid female schoolteacher.”<sup>505</sup> James Fraser was correct to observe this shift,<sup>506</sup> but one has to be careful not to assume that missionary women teachers worked for pay. Most of them did not.<sup>507</sup> Nor should one assume that because the job of school teacher was low paid, therefore it signaled some kind of oppression for women in the work of missions.

Teaching, as I argued in Chapter Three on gender, was one of the areas of the missionary work that missionary women assertively claimed as their own. Teaching became distinctively a female employment with the pinnacle of the foreign missionary impulse in America in the early nineteenth century. As I have also argued in Chapter Three, Christian women who accompanied their husbands on the foreign missions to the Cherokees and West Africans were at the beginning of this movement. Far from seeing teaching as well as their overall position on the mission stations as oppressive, these Christian missionary women were staunch defenders of the gender roles prescribed in the Adam and Eve story of the Genesis. Consequently, they accepted their positions as good

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<sup>504</sup> Urban and Wagoner, Jr. *American Education: A History*, 101.

<sup>505</sup> Fraser, *The School in the United States*, 49.

<sup>506</sup> “The second equally important anchor of the common school movement was the replacement of the traditional male schoolmaster with the much lower-paid female schoolteacher.” Fraser, *The School in the United States*, 49.

<sup>507</sup> Jane Bayard, Rev. John Wilson’s wife, and her sister, Margaret, who married James R. Eckard and went to India as a foreign missionary were wealthy. However, as DuBose says, “Instead of the life of luxury in their Southern home, with maids to perform every service, the carriage waiting at the door and the servants treating them like princesses...The sisters became interested in the Sandwich Islands, [and] offered themselves to the American Board to be sent there.” DuBose, *Memoirs of Rev. John Wilson*, 43. The missionary impulse of these women preceded their marriage. Indeed, marriage was an opportunity for them to fulfill their dreams since the Board of the ABCFM would not send unmarried ladies to the missionary field. (Ibid.) Therefore, Mrs. Jane Wilson did not become a missionary teacher for pay but for her God.

wives of their husbands and good mothers of the mission and took utmost satisfaction in their successes at being helpmeets to their husbands. While their husbands were busy with sermons and other strategies of Christianization at the mission station, these Christian missionary women took the roles of teaching the Cherokee and West African boys and girls in the mission schools. Before long, they had personalized the teaching positions in ways that their husbands respected.<sup>508</sup>

In sum, Horace Mann's common School movement was not the cause of the feminization of teaching, but the result of the conquest of the profession of teaching by Christian missionary women in general. The two school advertisements below are good examples of these changes they introduced nationwide before Mann's movement took off.

#### BOARDING AND DAY SCHOOL

Mrs. Sandwich and Mr. Caldwell,

Having united their Female Academies, respectfully announce that their Winter Arrangements will commence in Augusta, in the first Monday in October, at the house on Reynoldstreet, nearly opposite the former residence of Major Phinizy. The several branches of polite and useful Female Education are taught by experienced instructors, who flatter themselves that the conduct of this seminary will insure to it a commensurate share of patronage. A Lady from England, is engaged to teach the French Language, Music, and Painting. **Lessons will also be given to those who are desirous of learning that useful branch of majestic economy [emphasis is mine].** A careful attention will be given to the manners and to the moral deportment of the pupils entrusted to their care; and no efforts of theirs will be wanting to promote and facilitate their general improvement. During

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<sup>508</sup> Wilson expressed his gratitude to his wife when he wrote in 1836 that "The progress of the children in the schools [at Fair Hope, Cape Palmas, Liberia] is most satisfactory. Some of those who have only had three months' instruction can read with tolerable ease. All this I attribute, under the blessing of God, to Mrs. Wilson's talent for teaching, and the happy faculty she has of making every one about her cheerful and contented." Ibid., 81.

the Summer months, the School will be removed to the Sand-Hills, a pleasant and healthful situation, a few miles from the city. Augusta, sep. 17 [1819].<sup>509</sup>

#### CLINTON ACADEMY

The Subscriber having purchased a convenient and healthy situation adjoining the town of Clinton, will open a School on the second Monday in November, for giving instruction in those branches of Education which are usually taught in Academies. As Mrs. Ticknor will take a part in the School, the female department will be committed, principally to her care. **Should we meet with that encouragement which the population, wealth and respectability of Jones and the neighboring counties, seem to promise [emphasis is mine]**, we hope, by our attention, and by the employment of assistants, that our institution would not, in point of respectability and usefulness fall far below those of the kind already established in other parts of the state.

O. Ticknor

Oct. 19, 1819

P.S. Board for a few little girls may be had in my family.<sup>510</sup>

The stressed words in the passages also reveal that the shift in the gender of the school teacher was not accompanied by a shift in the elitist conception of formal education. Formal education remained predominantly for upper-classes<sup>511</sup> until the common school era. In 1635, the Boston Latin became the first school in the British colonies; however, the upper-class assumptions guiding the colonial schools was only visible in 1647 with the monetary “fines” that Massachusetts imposed on towns which

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<sup>509</sup> *Georgia Journal*, Tuesday, November 2, 1819, in National Archives, RG 75, Letters Received by the Office of the Secretary of War Relating to Indian Affairs, 1800-1823, M-271, Roll 3, 1820-1821, Frame 230.

<sup>510</sup> *Ibid.*, 240.

<sup>511</sup> “Class” in the United States is different than “class” in Europe. Louis Hartz, *The Liberal Tradition in America* (New York: A Harvest/HBJ Book, 1955), 5. By upper class here, I simply mean the people who could afford to send their children to school. This is what Arlo Brown expressed when he wrote that the English colonial education “fitted three general types: the Southern states urged education for the upper classes, the less homogenous middle colonies adopted a more parochial school system, and the more homogenous and intensely religious New England adopted common school type.” Arlo Ayres Brown, *A History of Religious Education in Recent Times*, Reprinted ed. (New York: The Abingdon Press, 1924), 31-32.

failed to uphold the elitist schooling tradition.<sup>512</sup> In the same year, the state of Massachusetts issued a School Ordinance that every town of fifty families should have an elementary school and every town of one hundred families should have a grammar school preparing students for the University.<sup>513</sup> However, one can probably guess what was meant when the state said that admission to these schools was upon conditions of “fitness.”<sup>514</sup>

Even when policy makers thought about purging formal education of its elitist assumptions, they were conflicted. This is what Urban and Wagoner illustrate when they note that there seemed to be an uneasy tension between American Enlightenment<sup>515</sup> reformers’ “rising faith in the potential of education or enlightenment as the key weapon in the fight against ignorance and injustice,” and their belief that “education embodied both democratic and meritocratic principles,” and should be limited to the “members of”

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<sup>512</sup> The Massachusetts School ordinance of 1647 imposed a “five pound” fine on towns that failed to implement the following order: “*It is ordered*, That every township in this jurisdiction, after the Lord hath increased them to the number of fifty householders, shall then forthwith appoint one within their town to teach all such children as shall resort to him to write, read.” Quoted in Bown, *History of Religious Education*, 35.

<sup>513</sup> Ibid., 35.

<sup>514</sup> “...*It is further ordered*, That where any town shall increase to the number of one hundred families or householders, they shall set up a grammar school, the master thereof being able to instruct youth, so far as they may be fitted, for the university.” Ibid.

<sup>515</sup> “[During the course of the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries] the constellation of ideas that eventually became known as the Enlightenment provoked momentous changes in nearly every aspect of Western society. Traditional assumptions regarding religion and philosophy—the latter then encompassing the domains of natural and physical sciences, politics economics, psychology, educational theory, and more—were altered in dramatic and profound ways by the Enlightenment doctrines. In all of Western history, few ideas have proven more forceful, for good or ill, than those unleashed by the Enlightenment,” 62.

what Thomas Jefferson, in his plan for a general education, called “natural aristocracy.”<sup>516</sup>

Even when Jefferson seemed to propose education for the masses, he meant in fact education for “all the free [white] children;”<sup>517</sup> and whenever he suggested education for “all the free children, male and female,” he made another class distinction between males and females. White males were usually trained in politics, military and economics, and Jefferson believed that the class of women ought to be trained in the “domestic arts,”<sup>518</sup> such as music, painting, French, manners, morals like those advertised in the *Georgia Journal* above.<sup>519</sup>

It is apparent that formal education in America was deeply influenced by the Christian gender order outlined in Chapter Three. Formal education was divided along religious lines with Christians above non-Christians, along Christian gender lines, with husbands ruling wives, along class lines, with the rich on top of the poor. This is the model of formal education that the missionaries of the ABCFM transferred to the Cherokees and West Africans in the early nineteenth century.

On March 3, 1819, missionaries received official support from the government with the passing of the Civilization Fund Act.<sup>520</sup> This was an important help from the

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<sup>516</sup> Ibid., 74.

<sup>517</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>518</sup> Urban and Wagoner, Jr., *American Education: A History*, 87.

<sup>519</sup> Ibid.; *Georgia Journal*, Tuesday, November 2, 1819, National Archives, RG 75, Letters Received by the Office of the Secretary of War Relating to Indian Affairs, 1800-1823, M-271, Roll 3, 1820-1821, Frame 230.

<sup>520</sup> “An Act making provision for the civilization of the Indian tribes adjoining the frontier settlements:



government, if late, for as Arlo Brown cogently states, “The story of religious education in the American colonies is the story of the development of general education as well. The two movements were inseparably united for the simple reason that the colonists had never known of their being otherwise.”<sup>521</sup> However, for the missionaries this concrete gesture<sup>522</sup> from the government demonstrated significant progress from the time the Northwest Ordinance of July 13, 1787, had nominally recognized that “Religion, morality, and knowledge being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged.”<sup>523</sup>

What was the formal education policy of the missionaries of the ABCFM among the Cherokees and West Africans? Did it change in the process of the Christianization of these natives? What impact did the Cherokees and West Africans have on the formal educational policies of their missionaries?

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Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America, in Congress assembled, That for the purpose of providing against the further decline and final extinction of the Indian tribes, adjoining the frontier settlements of the United States, and for introducing among them [Indians] the habits and arts of civilization, the President of the United States shall be, and he is hereby authorized, in every case where he shall judge improvement in the habits and condition of such Indians practicable, and that the means of instruction can be introduced with their own consent, to employ capable persons of good moral character, to instruct them in the mode of agriculture suited to their situation; and for teaching their children in reading, writing, and arithmetic, and performing such other duties as may be enjoined, according to such instructions and rules as the President may give and prescribe for the regulation of their conduct, in the discharge of their duties.

And be it further enacted, That the annual sum of ten thousand dollars be, and the same is hereby appropriated, for the purpose of carrying into effect the provisions of this act; an account of the expenditure of the money, and proceedings in execution of the foregoing provisions, shall be laid annually before Congress.” “United States Congress, Civilization Fund Act, March 3, 1819,” in Fraser, *The School in the United States*, 46-47.

<sup>521</sup> Brown, *A History of Religious Education in Recent Times*, 29.

<sup>522</sup> By making available ten thousands dollars “for introducing among them [Indian tribes] the habits and arts of the civilization,” this Act became the first federal funding of formal education. Fraser, ed. *The School in the United States*, 47.

<sup>523</sup> “United States Congress, Northwest Ordinance, July 13, 1787,” in *ibid.*, 46.

### Formal Educational Policy of the ABCFM among the Cherokees

In the early nineteenth century, the formal educational policy of the missionaries of the ABCFM to the Cherokees was elitist. However, the main reason why the elitist framework of American formal education survived in the missionary education of the Cherokees was not because missionaries were so powerful or so competent imposing this framework on the Cherokees, as the missionaries themselves believed.<sup>524</sup> The Cherokees were certainly under serious constraints in their choice of formal education, but none of these constraints were the result of any kind of exercise of power on the part of the missionaries.<sup>525</sup> The constraints had more to do with the historical forces that had already shaped American formal education as well as the civilizing mission of the missionaries.<sup>526</sup>

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<sup>524</sup> William Strong, editorial secretary of the Board of the ABCFM in 1910, translated well the assumption of the missionaries of the ABCFM from 1810 to the present. He described the beginnings of the Cherokee mission in the following terms: "In January 1817, Rev. Cyrus Kingsbury arrived at the first location among the Cherokees, on the southern border of Tennessee, close to Georgia line, the region of Chattanooga... The plan of operation was definitely announced: to establish schools in different parts of the tribe under missionary direction and superintendence; to teach common school learning and the useful arts of life and Christianity; so gradually to make the whole tribe English in language, civilized in habits, and Christian in religion." Strong, *The Story of American Board*, 36.

<sup>525</sup> Gustavo Benavides used Max Weber's definition of power in his article, "Religious Articulations of Power." This is what he wrote: "In this essay, "power" will be broadly understood, following Weber's definition, as the chance to impose one's will against the resistance of others. Whether this imposition is exercised by those who already are in a position of power, or whether an attempt is made to impose one's will against established groups, the central characteristic of power remains the same: power is a tension between interests, ideologies, classes, or individuals, and is always defended and contested, using all the weapons—physical and ideological—at the group's disposal." [http://www.netlibrary.com/nlreader.dll?bookid=7363&filename=Page\\_1.html](http://www.netlibrary.com/nlreader.dll?bookid=7363&filename=Page_1.html); internet source; accessed on June 6, 2006.

<sup>526</sup> Indeed, the actions of both Cherokees and the missionaries were subject to historical constraints, which were hardly of the exclusive making of either group. Gustavo Benavides explained such structural constraints on the interactions of powers in the following words: "At the same time, this give and take takes place not in a vacuum but within structures that are themselves constituted by power relations. Indeed, individuals, groups, classes, and nations engage in activities aimed at maximizing their prestige, wealth,

I have already made the case for the elitist history of formal education in the history of the West. As far as the civilizing mission was concerned, the alliance between the ABCFM and the US government was crucial to the transposition of the elitist framework of the missionary formal education to the Cherokees. The alliance was also crucial in making this elitist framework a unified model, thereby giving no other choice to the Cherokees who were willing to be educated but the adoption of the elitist framework, as I show below.

Rev. Cyrus Kingsbury, the missionary to the Cherokees, struck that alliance in 1816 before he took his first visit to the Cherokee country to introduce to them the subject of the missions. In Washington, DC., he introduced his project to the head of the departments of government dealing with the Indian affairs after which the Secretary of War, by order of President James Madison, officially promised to him that:

In the first instance, the Agent (for Indian Affairs) will be directed to erect a comfortable school house, and another for the teacher and such as may board with, in such part of the nation as will be selected for the purpose. He will also be directed to furnish two ploughs, two hoes, and as many axes for the purpose of introducing the art of cultivation among the pupils. Whenever he is informed that female children are received, and brought into the school, and that a female teacher has been engaged, capable of teaching them to spin, weave, and sew, a loom and half a dozen spinning wheels and as many pair of cards will be furnished. He will be directed from time to time to cause other school-houses to be erected, as they shall become necessary, and as the expectation of ultimate success shall justify the expenditure. The houses thus erected, and the implements of husbandry and of the mechanical arts which shall be furnished, will remain public property to be occupied and employed for the benefit of the nation. If the persons who are about to engage in this enterprise, should abandon it, the buildings and utensils which shall have been furnished, may be occupied by any teachers of good moral character. The only return which is expected by the

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etc., in a space structured hierarchically, that is, according to preexistent relations based on unequal access to goods, status, ritual purity, or anything that a group defines as desirable.” Ibid.

President is an annual report of the state of the school, its progress, and its future prospects.<sup>527</sup>

The news of this alliance did not reach the Cherokees, but its spirit did. Indeed, after this promise, the ABCFM regularly encouraged the Cherokee chiefs to apply to the government for the funding of schools in the Cherokee nation. The best way to secure those funds, the missionaries advised, was for the Cherokees to pose as the ones who were autonomously making requests that the government send missionaries for the sake of introducing formal education among them. For example, after commencing the Cherokee mission in 1817, Rev. Cyrus Kingsbury was visited by “Rev. Elias Cornelius, an agent of the Board” in September of that year.<sup>528</sup> Kingsbury reported that “Mr. Cornelius soon after attended a grand council of the nation, at which the establishment of the mission was approved, and the Cherokee delegation at Washington was instructed to ask assistance of the President in educating their children.”<sup>529</sup>

Another way in which the alliance between the ABCFM missionaries and the US unintentionally guaranteed the survival of the elitist framework of formal education among the Cherokees was the fact that the Board of the ABCFM placed itself in a subordinate relationship to the US government. In fact, although the ABCFM was well established as a private Christian organization with one mission to India (1812), one

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<sup>527</sup> Quoted in Tracy, *History of American Missions*, 62.

<sup>528</sup> Tracy, *History of American Missions*, 67.

<sup>529</sup> *Ibid.*, 67.

mission to the Cherokees (1817),<sup>530</sup> and one mission to the Choctaws (1818) before the US Congress passed the Civilization Fund Act on 3 March 1819, the ABCFM rushed to apply for the Civilization Fund, thereby establishing the precedent for their dependence on the government:

Our establishments, actually commenced in the Indian Country are three: one at Brainerd, one at Talloney in the Cherokee Nation, and one at Eliot on the yalo Busher in the Choctaw Nation. The establishment at Brainerd commenced, or rather on the ground began to be cleared in January 1817. The first tree for that of Eliot was felled in August 1818. At Talloney, the beginning was made only a few weeks ago...Permit me therefore to submit distinctly—Will the government erect or authorize the erection of the necessary buildings for three establishments, one in each of the two unoccupied districts of the Choctaw nation, and one in the Chickasaw nation, similar to the establishment visited by the president at Brainerd?<sup>531</sup>

Shortly thereafter, Samuel Worcester, the Secretary of the ABCFM reiterated this trend to John Calhoun: “But as I have had occasion to state in former communications, so I shall now be permitted to repeat that in the commencement of these establishments the expenses are heavy; and never can the liberal aid and the government be more seasonable for us than at present time.”<sup>532</sup> The type of aid the Board asked reinforced its dependence on the government even more, for the government quickly assumed a position of control by fixing and defining the conditions of its grants:

The houses thus erected, and the implements of husbandry and of the mechanical arts which shall be furnished, will remain public property to be occupied and employed for the benefit of the nation. If the persons who are about to engage in

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<sup>530</sup> Samuel Worcester to John Calhoun, November 3, 1819, in National Archives, RG 75, Letters Received by the Office of the Secretary of War Relating to Indian Affairs, 1817-1819, M-271, Roll 2, Frames 1602-1610.

<sup>531</sup> Ibid.

<sup>532</sup> Ibid.

this enterprise, should abandon it, the buildings and utensils which shall have been furnished, may be occupied by any teachers of good moral character. The only return which is expected by the President is an annual report of the state of the school, its progress, and its future prospects.<sup>533</sup>

In addition, the board of the ABCFM allowed the government to define the nature of its aid, the extent of its aid, and the timing of its aid: “What aid in this respect and in other respects will the government think proper to grant us? An answer as soon as convenient will be of importance to our measures.”<sup>534</sup> The board of the ABCFM also allowed the government to time its work, fix its direction and schedule. This was what Calhoun meant when he warned Rev. Cyrus Kingsbury that “The only return which is expected by the President is an annual report of the state of the school, its progress, and its future prospects.”<sup>535</sup>

This annual report would seriously handicap the work of missions rather than promote it. Indeed, although the ABCFM itself met every end of August to prepare an annual report, its report concentrated on the quality of the work of missions on the ground; however, when it came to the annual report for the government, the ABCFM did not hold any meeting, and the Secretary of the Board who wrote most of these reports was forced to focus on the quantitative performance of the missions.<sup>536</sup> Kingsbury did

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<sup>533</sup> Ibid..

<sup>534</sup> Ibid.

<sup>535</sup> Ibid.

<sup>536</sup> The annual report for the Board focused discussion on how to improve the quality of the work of missions, whereas in the annual report of the Board for the government, the Secretary focused on how many converts and churches, how many school boys and girls they have so far obtained. The risk of this quantitative report was that it exaggerated the power of the missionaries and the results of the missions. The nature of such fabrication and exaggeration is apparent in these words of the secretary in one of his

write some of these reports, and when he did, they took the same turn for the same reason: the reports were “required as a basis for the distribution of the fund appropriated by Congress for the Civilization of the Indians.”<sup>537</sup> These reports were quantitative instead of qualitative as usual was because many missionary boards competed for the distribution of the Civilizing Fund’s \$10,000.

To sum up, the alliance of the missionaries and the US government contributed to naturalize for the missionaries the assumption that formal education was expensive. Therefore, they assumed that only the Cherokee elite<sup>538</sup> could afford the civilizing efforts of the missionaries and the U.S. government. For example, the first children that Rev. Cyrus Kingsbury received in his Cherokee mission school were from that elite. These children were like The Ridge’s children, John Ridge, Nancy Ridge because most of them were “\_ white,” and could almost “all speak the English language well.”<sup>539</sup>

It becomes apparent that the second but minor reason that the missionaries succeeded at transposing the elitist framework to the Cherokees was because the Cherokees who sought missionary formal education were Cherokees who had already taken advantage of their leadership in their own society to consolidate an elitist niche

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reports to the government: “**all** are men of sterling character, capable, industrious, and cheerful and ardently engaged in promoting the benevolent design. The women are of like spirit and character. Great care indeed is taken that none of different spirit and character be employed [emphasis mine].” Ibid. See Chapter Two for further discussion of the consequences of these two approaches.

<sup>537</sup> Tracy, *History of American Missions*, 79.

<sup>538</sup> See the definition in the next paragraph.

<sup>539</sup> Cyrus Kingsbury to Samuel Worcester, June 30, 1817, Letters and Papers of the Board, Papers of the ABCFM, Unit 6, Vol. 3, Reel 738, Frame 31.

among them before the early nineteenth century.<sup>540</sup> Usually these Cherokees were full-blooded headmen<sup>541</sup> or half-breed<sup>542</sup> Cherokees who had reaped the most benefits from

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<sup>540</sup> These Cherokees were fewer in number, as Boudinot explained in Chapter One. Traditionalists, mostly full-blooded and of a lower class, had emigrated to Arkansas. Those Cherokees who remained in their territory east of the Mississippi were mostly of mixed ancestry and of a higher class. Elias Boudinot, “An Address to the Whites,” in Purdue, ed. *Cherokee Editor*, 71.

<sup>541</sup> Among such Cherokees were The Ridge—later known as Major Ridge, when Andrew Jackson appointed him major—and his son John Ridge, both on the list, above, of Kingsbury’s first students. Theirs is an excellent case illustrating the frontiers of the Cherokee elite. According to Thurman Wilkins, “Although the Ridges...had some amount of white blood, they customarily styled themselves ‘full-blooded Cherokees.’” Wilkins, *Cherokee Tragedy*, 4. Indeed, the Ridges affirmed this in a vindication paper with regard to their signing of the Treaty of 1835, which led to the trail of tears. Describing themselves apparently to the US government in the third person plural, they wrote: “They were full-blooded Cherokees.” Ibid. However, The Ridge’s “mother was a half-blood woman of the Deer clan; her father, a Scots frontiersman...Her Husband, The Ridge’s father, was noted for his prowess as a hunter, and among the Cherokees the hunter was honored next to the warrior. His name remains in doubt. Perhaps it was Oganstota...” Ibid., 7. The reason that the Ridges preferred to identify themselves as full-blooded was related to the fact that their father had joined a war party sent by the chief Old Hop and had taken a scalp of a French Indian of the Illinois-Wabash on the Kaskaskia River. As a result, explains Wilkins, “It would become a family tradition to claim descent “from a long line of Cherokee Chiefs and Warriors.” Ibid. At a little over twenty one, The Ridge had worked his way to chieftom. In 1796 his neighbors chose him to represent Pine Log at the tribal council at Oostanula. Ibid., 28. According to Wilkins, “The Ridge distinguished himself the next year by suggesting to his peers that certain aspects of the traditional Blood Law be abolished.” Ibid., 29. If Wilkins is correct, this is because “He [The Ridge] had begun more and more to sense the value of human life and come to feel that the laws and institutions of the whites, in insuring more protection for the individual, were clearly superior in many respects to the ways of the Cherokees.” Ibid., 30. “Thus,” continues Wilkins, “early in his public career The Ridge became a civilizing influence upon his fellow Cherokees.” Ibid., 31. Wilkins adds that “Sometimes in his early twenties, possibly in 1792, he [The Ridge] married Susanna Wickett...Her Indian name seemed to have been Sehoya.” Ibid., 31. Wilkins also reports that “a Moravian missionary later described [her] as “naturally high-spirited” and “much bent on riches and greatness.” Ibid., 32. Wilkins further observes about Major Ridge that “As time passed, The Ridge pursued more and more the material comforts of civilization, although he remained illiterate, always signing documents with his mark.” Ibid., 34. What The Ridge had not been able to do, he hoped his children would. “On May 14, 1817,” but on May 24, 1817 according to Rev. Cyrus Kingsbury above, “He [Major Ridge] appeared at Brainerd...with his two children—Nancy, sixteen, and John, fourteen—whom he had brought to join the score of other scholars there.” Ibid., 98. Because of John Ridge’s background, the reader should not be surprised that he grew up to follow in the footsteps of his parents by promoting formal education.

<sup>542</sup> Those of mixed-bloods were also an important component of the Cherokee elite. As we saw with Major Ridge, it was not so much the ‘pureness’ of the blood as the long line of chieftom that landed Cherokees among the elite. Although John Ross, the incumbent chief of the Cherokee who opposed the Major’s Treaty party, rarely called himself a full-blood, his position shows that by the second decade of the nineteenth century many members of the Cherokee elite were of mixed-blood but maintained full-blood ideology. That is, most members of the Cherokee elite found it more useful to identify ideologically with the Cherokee condition when addressing a Cherokee audience, and more useful to identify ideologically with their white blood when addressing American officials whose racial views also encouraged such a posture.



trade and land deals with the Americans and had become economically, politically, if rarely religiously, powerful. Usually these Cherokees made the missionary station their mingling site.<sup>543</sup>

Mingling was easy because Rev. Cyrus Kingsbury's missionary station was small covering the space of the "farm of an aged Scotsman,"<sup>544</sup> and operated like a family. The school was also small, with few (twenty-six) students.<sup>545</sup> In 1819, "at Brainerd about a hundred Cherokee youths and children of both sexes are lodged and fed, and instructed, and in a considerable part clothed at the expense of the establishment."<sup>546</sup> Worcester added that "[t]o inure them to industry is a main point of attention. But as the President has himself honoured this establishment with a visit, it is needless to go into details."<sup>547</sup> Kingsbury and other missionary men were in charge of recruiting students and converts, as well as holding prayer sessions or preaching on the Sabbath. Women were in charge of the kitchen, the teaching of the mission school boys and girls: "The girls will be taught by

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<sup>543</sup> "Since these leaders constituted the social, political, and economic elite of the Cherokees and the Choctaw nations, the success of the missions of the American Board rested on the willingness of this elite to accept the missionaries and their Gospel." Lewit, "*Indian Missions and Antislavery Sentiment*," *Mississippi Valley Review* 50, 40.

<sup>544</sup> Journal of Missions, Unit 6, Reel 737, 18.3.1.: Cherokee Missions, Vol. 2, 1817-1824, Journals, Letters, Joint Communication, Papers of the ABCFM, ABC 18: Missions on the American Continents 1811-1919, Frame 5; Wilkins, *Cherokee Tragedy*, 98.

<sup>545</sup> "The missionaries stated to you their wish to establish a school on the eastern side of the Cherokee Nation. To their proposals you postponed a reply until your return to Washington when it would be considered. I have received no estimate of the expenses for that object. They have however commenced on a small scale which can be made to meet whatever may eventually be allowed, if anything." Return Meigs to James Monroe, September 17, 1819, in National Archives, RG 75, Letters Received by the Office of the Secretary of War Relating to Indian Affairs, 1817-1819, M-271, Roll 2, Frame 1381.

<sup>546</sup> Samuel Worcester to John Calhoun, November 3, 1819, in National Archives, RG 75, Letters Received by the Office of the Secretary of War Relating to Indian Affairs, 1817-1819, M-271, Roll 2, Frame 1605.

<sup>547</sup> *Ibid.*, 1606.

women and the boys will be instructed by men in reading, writing, arithmetics, grammar, geometry, mathematics, and philosophy of nature in general, or in other words the laws of physical nature and practical chemistry will be essential as applicable to the useful arts.”<sup>548</sup>

A third reason that the missionaries were able to transpose the elitist, formal educational policy of the missionaries of the ABCFM to the Cherokees was that it was as gendered as education was throughout the nation.<sup>549</sup> For example, Joseph Tracy, the first historian of the ABCFM in 1840, identified dressmaking as a female job. He said that

The customary dress, or rather want of dress, of the Cherokee children was a hindrance to their attendance at school. Many parents were destitute of the skill requisite to prepare suitable clothing. Every article of apparel, if purchased, cost twice as much as in New England. The female members of the mission were overburdened with other labors, and could not provide clothing for 50 or 60 children. Benevolent ladies at the north, therefore, proposed to furnish clothing for the pupils gratuitously.

Cherokee student clothes were not in fact free. Tracy reported about this subject and his words are worth quoting here, especially when he noted that

finally, public notice was given, that donations of this kind were needed. The notice stated that generally the parents would gladly pay for the garments furnished to their children; so that their value would in fact be given to the Board,

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<sup>548</sup> Henry Drinker to the Secretary of War, January 15, 1821, in National Archives, RG 75, Letters Received by the Office of the Secretary of War Relating to Indian Affairs, 1800-1823, M-271, Roll 3, 1820-1821, Frame 980.

<sup>549</sup> Indeed, Arlo Brown observed that “near the close of the colonial period,” three types of schools—the “Dame School,” the “School of the Three R’s,” and the “Latin-grammar school—were common to all parts of the United States. [1] The “Dame School,” conducted by some woman in a private home, where the youngest children were taught their letters and the simplest elements of reading and writing; [2] the “School of the Three R’s,” or common school, where reading, writing, and arithmetic were the principal subjects; [3] the Latin-grammar school, believed by many to be the most efficient part of the school system in this period. In this school, Latin was given especial prominence, but other cultural subjects selected to prepare one [usually boys] for college were taught.” Brown, *History of Religious Education in Recent Times*, 36-37.

for the general objects of the mission. Children's clothes, too, would often purchase articles from the natives, which the mission family needed.<sup>550</sup>

An additional reason that the missionaries could transpose the elitist framework of formal education was due to their strategy of Christianizing the Cherokees. It seemed to have been a general practice among missionaries to 'civilize' the natives first, then to Christianize them.<sup>551</sup> The ABCFM and Rev. Cyrus Kingsbury did not deviate from this practice; they sought first to build the school and then to build the church. As a corollary of this practice, Cherokee chiefs and Cherokee students gave more importance to the opportunity of getting formal education than to the opportunity of receiving the missionary religion.<sup>552</sup>

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<sup>550</sup> Tracy, *History of the American Missions*, 72.

<sup>551</sup> Rev. John Leighton Wilson, the ABCFM missionary to West Africa in 1834, seemed to be describing and refuting this practice when he wrote in 1856 that there are some Americans missionaries who objected to missions to Africa on grounds that "the aborigines of Africa are so turbulent and savage in their habits that no missionary could live among them, except so far as he could enjoy the countenance and protection of some civilized power, which the natives would hold in fear...[and that] it is, in reality, but the revival of that oft-refuted idea, that civilization must precede Christianity in reclaiming the heathen tribes of the earth." Wilson, *Western Africa*, 509. In this sense, the alliance between the ABCFM and the US government makes even more sense in the establishment of missionary schools before missionary churches among the Cherokees (see below). This missionary practice of civilizing the natives before Christianizing them in with the Society of Friends in 1801 when they brought blacksmiths for example in order to help promote the instruction of the Native Americans of Philadelphia in the "more useful and comfortable ways of the white people" before any church was built. Henry Drinker and others to Henry Dearborn Philadelphia, December 31, 1801, in National Archives, RG 75, Letters Received by the Office of the Secretary of War Relating to Indian Affairs, 1800-1823, M-271, Roll 1, 1800-1816, Frame 771.

<sup>552</sup> This is what we should understand in Wilkins's comment on the news of Kingsbury's creating a school among the Cherokees, "No Cherokee was happier over this development than Major Ridge." Wilkins, *Cherokee Tragedy*, 98. And despite The Ridge's excitement and his overall inclination for the government and the missionaries' civilizing program, he adopted schooling first and only adopted Christianity late in life: "'Christian employments'" did not mean that The Ridge had yet renounced all Indian ways, all Indian ideas, or that he was ready to embrace the Christian religion as preached among the Cherokees by several missionaries. That step would come only after many years; it would be taken first by Susanna, and in The Ridge's case not until after a residence of three decades at Oothcaloga." *Ibid.*, 35.

The Lancasterian model on which the missionary school was predicated upon was the fifth reason why the missionaries unconsciously transposed the elitist framework of formal education to the Cherokee elite students, and so easily: “The schools [among the Cherokees] were organized after the Lancasterian pattern, a method devised by an English scholar, Joseph Lancaster, in which the old order or more advanced students served as monitors and taught the younger, thus reducing the number of foreign teachers and making possible a large number of scholars.”<sup>553</sup> This model of teaching made an unintentional impression on the minds of the Cherokee students. They perceived that in the chain of command of the message, Cherokee teachers came first and the missionaries, second. Indeed, each new Cherokee student interacted more with the older students and developed a sense of community independent of the one that the missionaries intended. If we consider that the missionary alliance with the US government led the Cherokees to perceive the missionaries secondary, at least when it came to securing the funds for schools,<sup>554</sup> and the fact that the Lancasterian school model also unintentionally demoted

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<sup>553</sup> Strong, *The Story of the American Board*, 36-37.

<sup>554</sup> Wilkins explains, “The cause of Cherokee education had... made modest progress when the Cherokee delegation was approached in Washington by Reverend Cyrus Kingsbury, a Congregational... They were delighted when he appealed to the president for financial assistance...” Wilkins, *Cherokee Tragedy*, 97. Constantly appealing to the US government for funding Cherokee schools caused the Cherokee elite and their children at the mission station to perceive the missionaries as secondary players in the making of the Cherokee school policy. When the news of the Cherokee removal first reached the pro-civilization Cherokee chiefs, they proposed various trade-offs not with the missionaries but with the US government. One of these tradeoffs concerned the schools. Reiterating that they were committed to the ‘civilization and preservation’ of their nation, the chiefs stated in the preamble of the 1819 treaty, “The Treaty cedes a large tract of land to the United States, in full satisfaction for all lands on the Arkansas, given to the emigrating part of their nation [the traditionalist Cherokees]; reserving out of that tract, 100,000 acres, as a school fund, to be sold in the same manner as the public lands of the United States: the proceeds to be invested by the President of the United States, and the annual income to be applied “to diffuse the benefits of education among the Cherokee nation on the side of the Mississippi [the pro-civilization Cherokees].” Tracy, *History of the American Missions*, 77.

them to a secondary position with regard to teaching influence, one can argue that missionaries were relegated to an even lower position when it came to wielding influence in the conversion process.<sup>555</sup>

The example of two Cherokees, Charles Hicks and Charles Reece, illustrates the fact that the missionary alliance with the US government and the missionary adoption of the Lancastrian school model not only contributed to undermine the influence of the missionaries in the conversion model, but also, most importantly, contributed to crystallize the elitist framework of formal education in the minds of the Cherokees at the expense of conversion to Christianity.

Hicks was a Cherokee of mixed ancestry, who served as “interpreter for Col. Return Meigs, the American Agent to the Cherokees.”<sup>556</sup> He was once praised by a Moravian missionary who said about him that “his concept of matters spiritual and his sympathetic approach to them is unusual in this country.”<sup>557</sup> According to Wilkins, “Hicks reciprocated the esteem of Moravians and became their first convert.”<sup>558</sup> If we

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<sup>555</sup> Indeed, any time a new student (usually seven-years-old or older) entered the school, he or she knew that missionaries were subordinate to the US government from the talk in the Cherokee towns and from their parents’ attitudes towards formal education, as with The Ridge. Once in the mission school, the Lancastrian school model brought them closer to their fellow Cherokee elite students (the older children) than to the missionaries. Tracy, *History of the American Missions*, 100. This situation reinforced their sense of elitism as students started to compete among each other for first position in the missionary esteem. Finally, by the time the students get to the message of Christianity where the missionaries reign supreme, the devotion of the students to the missionaries is not one guided by piety, but one guided by elitist ambition. The influence of the missionaries in the process of conversion was undermined even further because the missionaries were naïveté about their power over the Cherokees; they therefore did not discover this parallel order of things, much less act upon it, thinking that “the truth was silently at work.” Ibid. See Chapter Two for further discussion.

<sup>556</sup> Wilkins, *Cherokee Tragedy*, 36.

<sup>557</sup> Ibid.

<sup>558</sup> Ibid.

should believe Wilkins, Hicks was also an informant to the Cherokee Agent who “would later call him “a man of as much information as any one in the nation.”<sup>559</sup> The missionaries agreed with this assessment of Hicks and were flattered that he was “quite familiar with the best English authors,” and that “He was an able judge of matters pertaining to the political affairs of the Indians and has an understanding of the ways and seems to know what is best for them.”<sup>560</sup>

The Moravian mission commenced at Springplace in May 1801 had been giving instruction to between 40 and 50 students,<sup>561</sup> but at the time of Kingsbury’s arrival the church had “only two Cherokee members; a woman, their first convert, who had been baptized about eight years before, and Mr. Charles R. Hicks, said to be second in rank, and first in influence among the chiefs of the nation, who had been a member for five years.”<sup>562</sup> Indeed, Hicks’s influence had nothing to do with his piety but everything to do with the fact that he was probably educated, could certainly speak English, and was always seen by other Cherokees with Meigs. Because the ability to speak English and Meigs himself was the most visible symbols of power projected by the US government and the missionaries, most members of the Cherokee elite sent their children to school to be better equipped to compete among each other for political and economic powers. Rarely did I find reports that emphasized Cherokees’ eagerness for piety stronger than

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<sup>559</sup> Ibid.

<sup>560</sup> Wilkins, *Cherokee Tragedy*, 36.

<sup>561</sup> Tracy, *History of the American Missions*, 65.

<sup>562</sup> Ibid.

Cherokees' eagerness for formal education. In fact, the contrary was always true. This is also evident in the story of Charles Reece.

Reece was also a mixed-blood who could speak English.<sup>563</sup> He became the personal interpreter of Rev. Kingsbury on Sabbaths.<sup>564</sup> On November 28, 1817, Kingsbury wrote, "I cannot omit to mention, that the Lord has greatly encouraged us by some drops of mercy, which have fallen around us. Three Cherokees, one a member of our school, give, I think I may say, comfortable evidence of piety."<sup>565</sup> Reece was that man. Joseph Tracy, the first historian of the ABCFM in 1840, elaborates further about Reece:

The Cherokee man was a half-breed, named Charles Reece, who could speak English. He had lately received from the President [James Monroe] an elegant rifle, as a reward for his bravery at the battle of Horseshoe, where he, with two others, swam the river in the face of the enemy, and brought off their canoes in triumph.<sup>566</sup>

William Strong, the editorial secretary of the ABCFM in 1910, writes about Reece, "It was impressive to watch some of the converts, like that husky Cherokee half-breed, Charles Reece, once swimming the river in the face of his enemies to seize their canoes, now bowing before the gospel and becoming one of the early helpers of the mission."<sup>567</sup> Indeed, Reece began helping the missionaries on January 27, 1818, a

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<sup>563</sup> Ibid., 67.

<sup>564</sup> Ibid., 66.

<sup>565</sup> Cyrus Kingsbury to Samuel Worcester, June 30, 1817, Letters and Papers of the Board, Papers of the ABCFM, Unit 6, Vol. 3, Reel 738, Frame 31.

<sup>566</sup> Tracy, *History of the American Missions*, 67.

<sup>567</sup> Ibid., 37.

Sabbath, when he housed for the night Milo Hoyt<sup>568</sup> and David Hall<sup>569</sup> who had gone out to visit Cherokee families.<sup>570</sup> Hoyt and Hall held a meeting that day and “Several of the natives were present. Mr. Reece acted as interpreter, and made some remarks of his own. All were serious. One woman wept freely, when told [by Reece] of the sinfulness of man, the sufferings of the Savior, and forgiveness through his blood.”<sup>571</sup>

Although Reece was baptized on February 1, 1818, with his household and admitted to the communion of the church,<sup>572</sup> his position of esteem did not come from his piety--in fact, in his role as interpreter, the missionaries assumed he was interpreting Kingsbury’s words. Rather, he was more influential than Kingsbury because he spoke English and was seen as the one without whom the message of Kingsbury would have been lost. The weeping woman during Reece’s interpretation of Hoyt and Hall’s sermon was more grateful to Reece than to Kingsbury--if she were to emulate anyone, it would be Reece. This order of things helped undermine the influence of the missionary and elevate the status of educated Cherokees such as Reece and, by the same token, the elitist framework of formal education.

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<sup>568</sup> Milo Hoyt married in February 1820 Lydia Lowry, “the pious and intelligent daughter of the [Cherokee] chief with whom Mr. Kingsbury first conversed at Washington.” Tracy, *History of American Missions*, 85. Hoyt was appointed by the Board to establish a school on the Chattanooga on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of April of the same year. Ibid.

<sup>569</sup> Mr. Hall was the one who was appointed to organize the school at Taloney in 1820. Ibid., 78.

<sup>570</sup> Ibid., 70.

<sup>571</sup> Ibid.

<sup>572</sup> Ibid.



The story of John Arch illustrates this situation best. Along with Reece, he occasionally served as an interpreter for ABCFM missionary Daniel Buttrick when Buttrick preached.<sup>573</sup> In 1819, the Cherokees were divided between ‘pro-civilization’ (Cherokees of Upper Towns), who embraced the U.S. civilization program, and traditionalists (Cherokees of Lower Towns).<sup>574</sup> Although both groups were threatened with removal to Arkansas, only the traditionalists were willing to go.<sup>575</sup> The threat to the pro-civilization Cherokees was met with great disappointment by the missionaries as well. “This year,” wrote Joseph Tracy, “the Cherokee mission was threatened with serious evils, if not utter extinction, by the action of the general government.”<sup>576</sup>

Very few of the pro-civilization Cherokees had remained uncorrupted by the U.S. government. However, Tracy managed to put a good face on this situation by saying that “Hicks, who had been much depressed while struggling, with feeble hopes, against the influence, intrigue and bribery, which he found at work to effect the removal of his people, was full of joy and gratitude to God.”<sup>577</sup> In addition, despite the fact that Kingsbury’s mission church had only been organized on March 28, 1819, with only ten members of the mission church, Tracy said, “The spiritual prosperity of the mission continued.”<sup>578</sup> Tracy thereby joined the ABCFM missionaries their naïveté about their

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<sup>573</sup> Ibid., 100.

<sup>574</sup> Ibid., 77.

<sup>575</sup> Ibid.

<sup>576</sup> Ibid., 76.

<sup>577</sup> Ibid., 77.

<sup>578</sup> Ibid., 78.

power. Tracy pointed to John Arch as an example to justify the mission's "spiritual prosperity." He said:

One of the converts admitted at Brainerd deserves particular notice. His name was John Arch. He was born and had always lived near the white settlements, on the border of North Carolina. According to his own account, he had attended school for a short time in his childhood, and had learned to spell a little. After he left school, he had a desire to learn to read, and studied his spelling-book at times till it was worn out; after which he had forgotten the little that he once knew. Being at Knoxville last Christmas, he saw Mr. Hall and heard from him, that a school had been established for the instruction of the Cherokees. He determined to come; and after traveling 150 miles on foot in seven days, arrived at Brainerd on the 26<sup>th</sup> of January. He did not know his own age, but supposed it to be 25. He could converse in English, and his countenance indicated a mind capable of improvement; but he had the dress and dirty appearance of the most uncultivated part of his tribe; his age and wild and savage aspect seemed to mark him as one unfit for admission to the school. But it was difficult to refuse him. He readily agreed to the terms of admission and continuance. He cheerfully sold his gun, his only property, and the dearest treasure of an Indian, to procure suitable clothing. He was admitted on trial. He applied himself diligently to his studies, and made good proficiency. He soon showed a thoughtful concern for his soul, and appeared desirous to know the way of life, and to walk in it. In October, his father came to take him away; but at the earnest request of John and his instructors, after staying a few days and becoming acquainted with the mission, willingly permitted him to remain. In November, he was examined as a candidate for admission to the church, and employed as an interpreter to Buttrick. At this time he said he felt inclined to tell the Indians about God and the Saviour, but he knew so little that he thought it would not please God; and he desired to obtain education, that he might be able to do it. He was baptized the next April."<sup>579</sup>

It appears to me that Arch's story illustrates perfectly my argument that the Cherokees in general, and John Arch in particular, clearly perceived that mission school was a great opportunity to better oneself--or better yet, to join the Cherokee elite. As his story shows, this was the primary motivation that brought him to school. It is only later

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<sup>579</sup> Ibid., 78.

that he learnt about Christianity, and there is no convincing element in this story that John Arch was the epitome of the “spiritual prosperity that continued,” as Tracy said. Rather, the story seems to be confirmation that the Cherokees had perceived that the missionary framework of formal education was elitist, and those who wanted to join the club knew it was the way to go.

It is in this sense that Tracy and other ABCFM missionaries did not catch the subtlety in Arch’s language when he insisted that he needed education in order to preach to his people. Did he need such a skill, especially when we consider the evidence of the woman Reece brought to tears? Did he need such a skill in light of the evidence that “By 1816 [only] two or three hundred Cherokees had been exposed to English instruction in the three R’s” at the only Moravian School among them?<sup>580</sup> It seems that Tracy and the missionaries were blinded by the naïveté about their own power, and that had they not been, they would sensed that John Arch was just using them, as most Cherokee elites had done, to achieve his grand scheme of joining the circle of the Cherokee elite.<sup>581</sup>

In sum, because formal education was a completely new paradigm among the Cherokees, the Cherokees easily adopted the elitist, gendered framework of the American formal education. As far as the agency of the educated Cherokees was concerned, I believe that most of them sought formal education for their own elitist purposes

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<sup>580</sup> Wilkins, *Cherokee Tragedy*, 97.

<sup>581</sup> One should not therefore be surprised that “After the Cherokees’ removal to Indian Territory, the members of the National Council took measures to keep Cherokee students out of mission boarding schools and to operate its own, secular educational institutions.” Devon A. Mihesuah, *Cultivating the Rosebuds: The Education of Women at the Cherokee Female Seminary, 1851-1909* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 18.

independent of the missionary ones. However, those educated Cherokees, as well as those just starting formal education, lacked the necessary information about the elitist and sexist history of the formal education offered to them. I wonder if such knowledge would have had a different impact on the enthusiasm of the pro-civilization Cherokees for formal education. One thing that I find intriguing, however, is the fact that the educated Cherokees adopted the elitist and sexist framework of the American and missionary formal education as gospel truth, even after the trail of tears.<sup>582</sup>

#### Formal Educational Policy of the ABCFM among the West Africans

In the early nineteenth century, the formal educational policy of the ABCFM missionaries to the West Africans was also elitist. Indeed, the elitist framework of the American formal education fared even better in West Africa because of a stronger alliance of Western missionaries and their host governments than missionaries to the Native Americans and the U.S. government.<sup>583</sup> In addition, this situation had prevailed for

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<sup>582</sup> Miheuah still observes that “in 1843, the success of many mixed-blood merchants convinced Cherokees who had been reluctant to send their children to school that education could help them rise from ‘ignorance to intelligence’ and from ‘obscurity to distinction.’ Others believed that the white man’s education would help their children become “qualified for any business in life, whether civil or political.” Ibid., 19. It is not surprising that no one listed Christianity as their goal to achieve with education?

<sup>583</sup> All the missionary associations in the U.S., including the ABCFM, allied with the U.S. government because the government was the only power that regulated the relationship of non-Native citizens with the members of the Native American societies. For example, “when the new United States was formed, both the Articles of Confederation and the U.S. Constitution recognized Indian tribes as distinct political bodies, separate from the individual states and from other foreign nations. Under the Constitution, the federal government reserved to itself, as the supreme sovereign government, the right to ‘regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes.’ Individual states are forbidden from making treaties and any treaties made by the federal government ‘shall be the supreme Law of the Land.’” <http://www.oneida-nation.net/treaties>; internet source; accessed on May, 2006. However, the situation was different in Africa. There were various Western governments which claimed colonies in Africa, and each of these governments tended to give the prerogative of planting a missionary station in their colonies to missionary associations of their own countries. Most missionary associations in Sierra

longer in West Africa than it had in the Cherokee nation, since even before the ABCFM missionaries had arrived: “The Church of Rome deserves great praise for the zeal she displayed in following up all the Portuguese and Spanish discoveries of the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries with effort to extend the Christian faith.”<sup>584</sup> In Portuguese Angola and Kongo, “Churches, cathedrals, monasteries, and colleges, were erected in great numbers.”<sup>585</sup>

Like the Cherokee missionary elitist education, the West African elitist missionary education overrode the Christian faith. Just as the US government’s pursuit of land from the Cherokee Nation overwhelmed the Christian cause, so did the Western government’s pursuit of West African lands and riches. Rev. John Leighton Wilson observed with regret that in the Western ventures in Africa,

It was not...long before the love of gain prevailed over all religious scruples. It is related that two Englishmen, John Tintam and William Fabiaan, fitted out an expedition to trade to Africa as early as 1481, but were restrained from carrying out their purpose in consequence of an embassy sent from John II. To Edward, king of England, warning him against the proceedings of his subjects, and reminding him that Africa was exclusively a Portuguese possession, both by right of discovery and in virtue of Papal bull.<sup>586</sup>

Like the elitist framework in the missionary education of the Cherokees, that of the West Africans endured. Despite Wilson’s sorrow that the Western governments’

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Leone were British, most in Liberia were American, most in Kongo were Portuguese, most in Senegal were French, and so on and so forth. Wilson, “Christian Missions in Western Africa,” *Western Africa*, Chapter Five.

<sup>584</sup> Wilson, *Western Africa*, 480. See also the rest of Chapter Five, “Christian Missions in Western Africa,” in Wilson’s book.

<sup>585</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

<sup>586</sup> Wilson, *Western Africa*, 46.

greed prevailed over all religious scruples, he never abandoned the idea of an alliance between missionaries and governments. Even after retiring from the missionary field of West Africa, Wilson still urged such cooperation. After making the comment on the zeal of the Church of Rome, he insisted that “Had Protestant nations [governments] and the Protestant Church pursued the same work with half the zeal and steadiness, the moral aspect of the world at the present time would have been very different from what it is.”<sup>587</sup>

As among the Cherokees, the missionaries among the West Africans associated civilization with the elitist framework of formal education. That is, a West African moved from his low native uncivilized status to a higher civilized status with formal education. By implication, a West African native rose a little higher from his low status to a slightly higher civilized status even if he or she was not formally educated but only had contacts with a civilized person. In other words, at the time of Wilson’s exploration tour to Liberia in 1833, the level of civilization of the West Africans was low: “We do not know that any special or permanent influence has been exerted upon the character of the natives by their intercourse with American settlers. They have been familiarized with the habits and customs of civilized life and disciplined to more thorough habits of industry.”<sup>588</sup>

However, like his colleagues at the Cherokee mission, Wilson was concerned about how to make the effects of civilization permanent among the few educated West African class: “We seen several instances of natives who had been educated in Europe or

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<sup>587</sup> Ibid., 480.

<sup>588</sup> J. Leighton Wilson and Stephen Wyncoop to the Prudential Committee, Report of the State of the Colony of Liberia, March 24, 1834, Papers of the ABCFM, Unit 2, Vol. 1, Reel 149, Frame 20.

America who had renounced their habits of civilized life and are living in the habitual practice of the most odious vice of their uninstructed countrymen.”<sup>589</sup> His examples of such natives within the West African educated class were interesting if ironic:

One native who had spent eight years in England prosecuting his studies, soon after he returned to his native home commenced the slave trade and continued it many years. He has now renounced it on he says moral principle, but we are inclined to think from motives of interest. A native woman who was educated in New England writes, reads and speaks English with ease. We saw her like the rest of her sex in Africa almost naked. Other examples of similar kind come under our observation.<sup>590</sup>

One might ask why Wilson insisted that these educated Africans “had renounced their habits of civilized life and are living in the habitual practice of the most odious vice of their uninstructed countrymen.” The Atlantic slave trade was conducted by so-called civilized Europeans,<sup>591</sup> so the African who became a slave trader upon his return from England could have actually been upholding rather than renouncing the habits of civilized life. Was it surprising that the elitist framework of formal education led the educated Africans to want integration into this elite slaver class?<sup>592</sup>

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<sup>589</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>590</sup> Ibid.

<sup>591</sup> Wilson himself writes, “They [the Portuguese] were the first of all nations of Europe to engage in this inhuman traffic [slavery], and the last, as all the world knows, to abandon it....If we can not but admire the energy and courage they displayed in bringing to the knowledge of the civilized world countries which were not known to exist, equally impossible would it be not to execrate the meanness which could induce them to sacrifice the inhabitants of those countries to the cupidity of the rest of the [civilized] world, instead of fostering and protecting them.” Wilson, *Western Africa*, 43.

<sup>592</sup> After all, slavery was practiced by most European countries. I maintain that the slave-trading African who had been educated in England should be considered striving for these standards of civilization with his adoption of the slave trade. Even Africans with minimal exposure to Europeans were likelier to adopt the slave trade. Indeed, while Wilson was on the Grain coast (also known at the time as the Liberian or Kru coast--region from cape Massurado to Grewe, a point on the seacoast, ten miles east of Cape Palmas according to Wilson), he noticed that “The Kru people, with the exception of those [more civilized ones] about Bassa, have never been engaged in the foreign slave-trade; nor is there any domestic slavery among

Like his colleagues in the Cherokee nation, Wilson did not abandon the idea of educating some more West Africans in the arts of civilized life despite his disappointment in the educated class. For his exploratory tour of Liberia, the ABCFM board had asked him to determine “how far may educated natives be expected to aid spreading the gospel over Africa and is it expedient to send [educated] Africans from the United States for this purpose.”<sup>593</sup> After his investigation, he reasoned that:

it seems too highly desirable that a small number of children of suitable character should be sent out for this purpose mentioned. They would be serviceable to the mission in various ways. They would readily acquire the language of the country and aid the native children not only in their studies, but in acquiring manners of the simple arts of civilized life.<sup>594</sup>

As had his colleagues among the Cherokees, Wilson made formal education the first step toward making the effects of “civilization” last with West Africans, the second step being Christianization. Only a select few educated African-American would qualify, he thought: “Much pain...ought to be taken in the selection of suitable [African American] children for this purpose. If they should prove vicious, they would do more

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them, except to a very limited extent. How they came to escape the blighting effects of this pernicious traffic, it is not easy to understand. They were as much exposed to the temptation of participating in it as any other people on the sea-coast.” *Ibid.*, 118. Wilson rejected the argument that the Kru people may have been spared by foreigners, and argued, “It is more probable that the sturdy, independent character of the people themselves made this traffic impossible.” *Ibid.*, 119. Independence of character, one should note, was the road to remain “uncivilized,” or to fall back to “un-civilization.” Wilson constantly calculated the disposition of Africans to Western civilization by their inclination to adopt Western ways. About the West Africans on the coast, he exulted that, “I have never seen a more docile and teachable people than these Africans appear to be.” *Journal of Mission, Report of the State of the Colony of Liberia, Papers of the ABCFM, Reel 149, Frame 47.* Once educated for example, Africans were expected to remain civilized by their continuous dependence on Western teachings. This is why I do not understand why Wilson thought that the educative native above who adopted the slave trade had become “uncivilized.” Wilson’s inconsistency illustrates very well the irony of the ideology of civilization in the early nineteenth century.

<sup>593</sup> J. Leighton Wilson and Stephen Wyncoop to the Prudential Committee, April 18, 1834, Report of the State of the Colony of Liberia, Papers of the ABCFM, Reel 149, Frame 34.

<sup>594</sup> *Ibid.*



harm than good.”<sup>595</sup> He wanted the same care taken in selecting a few African teachers:

“It is also, in our view, highly desirable to take coloured teachers from this country. The greatest care, however, should be exercised in their selection also.”<sup>596</sup> On top of this precaution, educated West Africans that would qualify as teachers would still need further supervision by white men:

They ought always to be under the inspection and direction of white men and never allowed while sustaining this office of missionary, in any form, to engage in any secular business whatsoever except what the mission may demand. We suggest this because we know that several coloured persons who have been sent from Europe and the United States as missionaries to Africa without any connection to any white men have turned out badly and others have become so entirely absorbed by secular business as to lose sight entirely of the object of the mission.<sup>597</sup>

Like his colleagues among the Cherokees, Wilson believed that civilization should precede Christianization. Although Wilson seemed to reject the idea that “civilization must precede Christianity in reclaiming the heathen tribes of the earth,”<sup>598</sup>

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<sup>595</sup> Ibid.

<sup>596</sup> Ibid.

<sup>597</sup> Ibid., 33-34.

<sup>598</sup> Wilson was actually reacting to the following order of things. When the ABCFM, who sent Wilson to Liberia on the assumption that the Americo-Liberians and the coastal natives were “civilized” but lacked Christianity, and other missionary boards argued that “Civilization must precede Christianity,” they meant that until a place was “civilized,” the process of Christianization could not start. Concerning West Africa, Wilson sought to convince the missionary community that it was preferable that civilization precede Christianity, but his experience showed that missionaries could still be sent to even the most untouched areas of West Africa. He wrote, “If what has frequently been affirmed be true—that white men can not live in Africa [on account of its lack of civilization]—then Christians are exonerated from their obligations to contribute to the support of such, and ministers of the Gospel are released from obligation to devote themselves to this work...No one, who has given attention to the subject, can be ignorant of the fact that, of the numerous missionary stations established in that country during the last fifteen years, the majority of them are located, not only beyond the jurisdiction of all civilized governments, but many of them in situations where no civilized government on earth could render them aid, however, urgent might be their distress.” Wilson, *Western Africa*, 508-510.

he did not reject the idea that only the most civilized could perform satisfactorily the task of Christianizing West Africa.<sup>599</sup> The task of this elite force would be to redress a series of problems including the fact that “The preachers in the [Liberian] Colony are, we believe, without exception men of business—their hearts are bent upon making wealth. Their education is insufficient to make them profitable teachers.”<sup>600</sup> Because “Under such embarrassments it is not probable that religion would flourish,” Wilson insisted that “Preachers are needed in the Colony whose exclusive business it will be to attend to the spiritual improvement of the people.”<sup>601</sup>

It was questionable where Wilson would find such preachers in West Africa, especially when he himself was not one of them,<sup>602</sup> and when most native Africans who sought Christian education were in fact aspiring to become like the African traders,<sup>603</sup>

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<sup>599</sup> “Is it practicable, and is it the duty of the Christian Church, to carry on missionary operations in West Africa by the agency of white men? I answer this question affirmatively; and I do so after mature deliberation and with unhesitating confidence...I believe that the presence and superintendence of white missionaries are indispensably necessary; it must be a long time, judging from the present aspect of affairs, before their agency can safely be dispensed with.” *Ibid.*, 505.

<sup>600</sup> J. Leighton Wilson and Stephen Wyncoop to the Prudential Committee, Report of the State of the Colony of Liberia, March 24, 1834, Papers of the ABCFM, Unit 2, Vol. 1, Reel 149, Frame 19-20.

<sup>601</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>602</sup> Wilson was a missionary was a missionary, but he was also a “naturalist,” “member of the Royal Oriental Society of Great Britain...frequently consulted on the important scientific questions” because he studied gorillas. Wilson was also a politician because during the French conquest of Gabon, he used various stratagems including helping King Glass draft a petition to the Queen Victoria of England asking for help against French King Louis Phillipe in Gabon. He was a politician despite his later claim that he had told the French officer who had pressed him on the question that “we had nothing to do with the political affairs of the country...” DuBose, *Memoirs of Rev. John Leighton Wilson*, 163.

<sup>603</sup> Wilson reported in the *Missionary Herald* that “The native merchants, through whose hands the trade of ivory, redwood, ebony, bees-wax, and gum copal passes, are, for uneducated men, much more respectable than any I have known in Africa.” *Ibid.*, 145.

colonial officers and their aides. Furthermore, the “men of God,” including Wilson were all leading a luxury life.<sup>604</sup>

The King sent some of his men to show me a situation which he has pointed out for mission premises and he is to send me five or six boys in the course of a few days out of whom I am to choose two to be connected with the school here until they have a teacher for themselves. What are we to think my dear Bro of the importunacy of these people? Admit that their wish to have a teacher arises from no other than motives of peculiar gain, still does it not show that the hand of God has made the opening for us?<sup>605</sup>

As with the Cherokees, an important reason that the elitist framework of formal education survived among the West African was the fact that even when missionaries like Kingsbury and Wilson understood that the Cherokee and West African natives were only interested in using formal education as an opportunity to climb the social ladder, they still

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<sup>604</sup> Wilson observed about the Mpongwe among whom he was to build his station: “The people, taken together or en masse, I believe, are more civilized than any natives I have seen before on the coast. The men wear shirts and cloths which reach to their ankles...The women wear cloths which cover almost the whole bodies.” *Ibid.*, 131. King Glass is featured on the cover of Wilson’s *Western Africa* in a shirt and tie to illustrate this level of civilization. There is no doubt that shirts and ties were borrowed from Europeans, and nothing was to prevent these natives from emulating Wilson’s conspicuously luxurious life in the years following 1843: “The house in which I live contains six rooms...Helen is the cook, but next week she will be put to washing, and I will have a hired cook. I shall have one boy to bring wood and water. A third is to be employed as my fisherman, and promises to furnish a daily supply for the mission families. A fourth is to be market-boy, to purchase plantains, yams, chickens, etc. Each one of these is to receive about twenty dollars *per annum*.” *Ibid.*, 132. Here, Wilson seemed to have adjusted to a type of luxury that was already well entrenched on the West African coast when he was on his exploration tour in 1833, but which he seemed to have been offended by at the time. For example, he wrote in his “Report of the state of the Colony of Liberia” on March 24, 1834: “The natives in the bounds of the colony [of Liberia] are literally the “hewers of wood and drawers of water” for the colonists. Very little manual labor or any kind of drudgery is performed except by them. They are employed as servants in families, and are required to perform all kind of domestic duty. They receive moderate compensation for their services, and generally treated with kindness.” “Messrs J. Leighton Wilson and Stephen Wyncoop to the Prudential Committee of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions,” “Report of the state of the Colony of Liberia,” March 24, 1834, Papers of the ABCFM, Reel 149, 20. Besides, one of the officers of a man-of-war who visited the Wilson’s at the Liberian station of Fair Hope “reported to the Missions Rooms, in Boston, that the missionary’s salary ought to be reduced, as they were living in luxury.” DuBose, *Memoirs of Rev. John Leighton Wilson*, 76.

<sup>605</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

downplayed their capacity to achieve their goals. These missionaries were always confident that the hand of God would triumph in the end, as Wilson maintained.

However, it is evident in Wilson's book *Western Africa* that despite the confidence of missionaries in the godly guidance of their own hands, the results of their missionary efforts were sometimes disappointing. Although it was rare for missionaries to admit their own failures, Wilson's comment on the Catholic missions is revealing:

No part of Western Africa is so well known to history as the kingdom of Kongo...from its earliest period of discovery by the Portuguese up to the present moment, it has always borne the lead in the foreign slave, in all probability, has furnished a larger number of victims for the markets of the New World than any other region of Africa whatever....But the circumstance which, above all others, has contributed to give it interest in the eyes of the civilized world, is the fact that it has been the stage upon which has been achieved one of the most successful experiments ever made by the Church of Rome to reclaim a pagan people from idolatry. For more than two centuries the kingdom of Kongo, according to the showing of the missionaries themselves, was as completely under the influence of Rome as any sister kingdom in Europe; so that if the inhabitants of that country are not now, in point of civilization and Christianity, what Rome would have them to be, or all that a pagan people are capable of being made under the training, the fault lies at her own door.<sup>606</sup>

Because most missionaries including Rev. John Leighton Wilson considered education as the first step towards civilization, the second step being Christianization,<sup>607</sup> most of their general impressions about each other concerned the ultimate goal they were

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<sup>606</sup> Wilson, *Western Africa*, 314.

<sup>607</sup> After he retired from the missionary field, Wilson reported about the mission work in Liberia in the following terms: "The missionary societies of this country, in their efforts to promote the cause of education and religion among the Liberians, are doing a work of indispensable importance to the welfare of the people. It may be regarded as a providential circumstance, too, that these societies, in consequence of the unhealthiness of the climate, which renders it impracticable to employ a large number of white laborers, are under the necessity of using the agency of colored men chiefly in carrying on this work. These we do not regard as yet qualified to take the principal management of missionary affairs. They may, however, under proper superintendence, render important aid, and ultimately the work may be entrusted entirely to their hands." Wilson, *Western Africa*, 409.

all pursuing: Christianity. Therefore, to understand how Rev. John Wilson of the ABCFM, for example, developed and implemented his policy of education, I found it interesting to trace his process through his analysis of the Portuguese Catholic missions of Kongo. The advantage of this method will be to compare Wilson's own process of education of the Africans with that of the Portuguese Catholic missionaries that he described. This method will allow me to draw a parallel between the agency of Wilson's West Africans and the Catholic Africans.<sup>608</sup>

In Wilson's words, the Portuguese presence in Kongo was not superficial.

Nor was Papacy established in Kongo in a hasty or superficial manner. It was a work at which successive companies of missionaries labored with untiring assiduity for two centuries. Among these were some of the most learned and able men that Rome ever sent forth to the pagan world. It was a cause, too, that always lay near the heart of the kings of Portugal, when that station was at the climax of power and wealth. The Royal sword was ever ready to be unsheathed for its defense, and her treasures were poured out for its support without stint.<sup>609</sup>

The same can be said about the ABCFM that Wilson led. The ABCFM benefited from such protection among the Native Americans in general,<sup>610</sup> and this relationship

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<sup>608</sup> That is, the West Africans among whom Wilson worked, including the Grebo in Liberia and the Mpongwe in Gabon. Since Wilson rarely reported on the challenges these West Africans posed to his schooling and Christianization policies, hearing him talk at least about the Catholic West Africans might allow the reader to have a peak at Wilson's own experience. This will be the last piece of evidence in support of my argument that formal education in West Africa was elitist, and might be a more convincing explanation of why the many West Africans, drawing on Rev. John Wilson's Lancastrian method, adopted schooling more enthusiastically and en masse than they adopted Christianity.

<sup>609</sup> Wilson, *Western Africa*, 329.

<sup>610</sup> Rev. Cyrus Kingsbury had gone to the Cherokees with Secretary of War Andrew Jackson to announce his object of the mission. Since then Kingsbury benefited from the protection of the United States, and when he did not get it, he did not hesitate claim it. In his annual report of the schools written on October 30, 1823, Rev. Cyrus Kingsbury included in his letter to the Secretary of State John Calhoun the following Post Scritum: "It has occurred to me that a short communication at this time from the government through the agent might be of great service in removing the apprehensions and prejudices which some of the natives appear to entertain respecting our ultimate object. It is often reported among them that we have a secret and entirely selfish design in coming here and that when we have acquired sufficient property we shall leave the

worked so well that it was continued in Africa. Indeed, the U.S. government or its right hand, the American Colonization Society was probably the one that applied to the ABCFM for Wilson to be appointed governor of Liberia as he told his wife before his exploration tour to Liberia in 1833: “An application has been made to the Board for me become Governor of Liberia; what think you Jane? ‘Governor Wilson’—how does it sound? I love the privilege of preaching the gospel too much to give it a serious consideration.”<sup>611</sup>

Wilson’s reaction was probably what most missionaries, including the Catholic missionaries, would have done. A common question that most missionaries also asked of each other was to know if a mission enterprise was successful or not. Thus, after assuring his reader that the Catholic mission was not a hasty and superficial enterprise in Kongo, Wilson asked: “But what has become of this church with all its resources and power? Where are the results of this spiritual conquest that cost so much, and of which Rome had boasted in such unmeasured terms of exultation?”<sup>612</sup> Of course, this question has been asked of the ABCFM.<sup>613</sup>

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country and take it with us. I believe no communication has come directly from the Government to the Choctaws relative to schools and the subject of educating their children.” Cyrus Kingsbury to John Calhoun, October 30, 1823, in National Archives, RG 75, Letters Received by the Office of the Secretary of War relating to Indian Affairs, M-271, Roll 4, 1822-1823, Frame 715.

<sup>611</sup> DuBose, *Memoirs of Rev. John Leighton Wilson*, 54.

<sup>612</sup> Wilson, *Western Africa*, 329.

<sup>613</sup> Although it was not central to my research to ask such a question, reading historians of the ABCFM like Joseph Tracy and William Strong who were concerned with such a question has helped me understand how important such a question was in missionary circles. Joseph Tracy in 1840 wrote in his preface, “It is obvious that a work of this size cannot narrate all the interesting events that have occurred in the operations of the Board and its missions. The most that can be done, is to give such a selection as shall best show the general character and results of each mission, and of the whole system.” Tracy, *History of the American Missions*, 3. William Strong in 1910 introduced his book as one in which “all that is attempted here is to

The answers to this question of what might have become of a missionary enterprise varied, and Wilson's answer to the question of what might have become of the Catholic mission in Kongo was not typical:

To answer these questions impartially, the friends of Rome must acknowledge that they constructed a spiritual edifice in the heart of this pagan empire that could not stand in its own strength; the moment the hand which reared and for a time upheld it was taken away, it fell to pieces. Nay more, to acknowledge the whole truth, not only has this great spiritual edifice crumbled to the dust, but it has left the unfortunate inhabitants of that country in as deep ignorance and superstition, and perhaps in greater poverty and degradation, than they would have been if Roman Catholicism had never been proclaimed among them.<sup>614</sup>

This passage reveals that sometimes missionaries did not acknowledge their failures, or sometimes they did not acknowledge the scope of the deleterious effects of their failures. The same can be said of the missionaries of the ABCFM, including Wilson who modeled his schools on the same Lancastrian school model operating among the Cherokees, as when he suggested to the board that educated Black Americans or West African helpers should be placed under the superintendence of a white man. I argue that one of the deleterious consequences of the Lancastrian model on the perception of formal education in Africa has been the transplantation of the elitist framework of formal education.<sup>615</sup> In addition, although Chapter Three demonstrates how the feminization of

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tell the story of the American Board: How it came to pass; what it set out to do; and, in such degree as space will allow and as can be put into words, what it has done." Strong, *The Story of the American Board*, v.

<sup>614</sup> Wilson, *Western Africa*, 329.

<sup>615</sup> The Lancastrian school model transform the educated class of Africans into an elitist society, expert at assimilating European manners and fond of pursuing the status of civilization. Wilson was able to observe these effects, although he did not acknowledge their origin in the Lancastrian school model. He said about the people in Gabon among whom he planted his second mission in 1842: "The organ of imitation is largely developed in their natures, and it is easy for them to copy and practice the best specimen of manners with which they are brought in contact. Four-fifths of the adult male population speak the English or

teaching was conducive to the consolidating the elitist framework of formal education, I am now curious about what effects this feminization might have had in Africa since Mrs. Wilson had “the charge of and supervision of the native schools both male and female, and is very fond of teaching.”<sup>616</sup>

Of course, most missionaries would argue that simply coming into contact with the Christian missionaries was in itself a benefit that necessarily elevated the African people. Even the Catholic mission that Wilson considered a resounding failure still received credit for elevating the African people that came into contact:

One thing, at least may be affirmed without fear of contradiction, that, in point of industry, intelligence, and outward comfort, the people of the Kongo, at the present day, can not compare with thousands and millions of other natives along the coast of Africa, whose forefathers never heard even the name of the Christian religion.”<sup>617</sup>

One should not be surprised by Wilson’s report about his own success in Gabon, for example.

When the missionaries first arrived at the Gabon the people were immured in the profoundest heathenism. They had no Sabbath, no sanctuary, no Bible, and had scarcely heard of the name of the Saviour of the world. Now the Sabbath is known and outwardly observed by a large proportion of the people in the vicinity of the older stations. The Sabbath bell brings together a goodly assembly of orderly worshippers. More than one hundred youths have received a Christian education, some of whom are employed in promoting the cause of religion and education.”<sup>618</sup>

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French language with tolerable ease, but not with accuracy. Since the establishment of Christian schools among them, a large number of the rising generation have learned to speak and write the English language with ease and readiness.” Wilson, *Western Africa*, 292-293. Research on how the political and economic crises in Liberia and Gabon could be traced to the Lancastrian school model of the early nineteenth century will be instructive on this matter.

<sup>616</sup> DuBose, *Memoirs of Rev. John Leighton Wilson*, 81.

<sup>617</sup> Wilson, *Western Africa*, 329-330.

<sup>618</sup> *Ibid.*, 502.



However, whether it is the failure of the Catholic mission or the success of Wilson's mission, the questions about the process of Christianization in which missionaries were interested also interest me. About the failure of the Catholic mission, Wilson asked, "But how is all this to be accounted for? Has Romanism too little spirituality to bear transplanting to a pagan soil? Or is the African race incapable of being Christianized or raised to any considerable degree of civilization?"<sup>619</sup> He then added, "These are questions in which others besides Roman Catholics are interested. The friends of Protestant missions may well despair of the evangelization of the world, if their labors are to be as protracted and to be attended with as few permanent good results."<sup>620</sup>

Wilson attributed the failure of the Catholic mission to its intrinsic errors of doctrine, thereby suggesting that the fate of the missions in West Africa, whether Catholic or Protestant, could very well have been linked to deeper causes that West Africans could not have fathomed.

In accounting for this failure there is no necessity to suppose that it arose either from the want of vitality in Romanism itself, or from the want of religious susceptibilities on the part of the negro race. To maintain the latter assumption would not only be at variance with abundant proofs to the contrary, but would be a serious impeachment of the power and sovereignty of Divine grace itself. It would be equally preposterous to say that Romanism has no vitality whatever. However much it may be encumbered with error and superstition, it has, nevertheless, vitality enough to maintain its own existence, as its own past history abundantly proves. Whether it has power to propagate itself among the pagan

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<sup>619</sup> Ibid., 330.

<sup>620</sup> Ibid.

nations of the earth in the present age of the world, is a question that admits of serious doubt.<sup>621</sup>

The fact that the ABCFM missions, including that of Wilson's were Calvinist at heart certainly made them breeding grounds for the elitist framework of formal education that led to the impression held by West Africans that missionaries like Wilson represented an opportunity to increase social status, in opposition to missionaries' aim which was to give them an opportunity to increase their spiritual status.<sup>622</sup> Furthermore, just as Wilson believed that "One of the real causes, as we believe, which contributed to the extinction of the Roman Catholic religion in Kongo, was the countenance which it always extended to the foreign slave-trade,"<sup>623</sup> I believe a major cause for why few educated people qualified to be missionaries even in the United States was the elitist framework of formal education.<sup>624</sup>

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<sup>621</sup> Ibid.

<sup>622</sup> David W. Kling described the theological outlook of the ABCFM in the following terms: "The theological influence of the New Divinity in the formation and character of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) is uncontested among scholars of American religious history and missions. Since the mid-nineteenth century both partisans of missions and nearly all scholarly observers have attributed the origins of the modern American Protestant missionary spirit to the writings of Jonathan Edwards and his self appointed heirs, those Congregational ministers who came to be called New Divinity men (11)." Then Kling explained that "In the aftermath of the Great Awakening, the most visible party within New England Congregationalism was the Edwardseans or the "New Divinity." Criticized as theological innovators, the New Divinity men identified themselves as Calvinists and the rightful heirs of the Puritan tradition who were seeking to revive or "improve" traditional Calvinist doctrines, to make them "consistent" in meeting the intellectual challenges of their day." David W. Kling, "The New Divinity and the Origins of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions," in Shenk, ed. *North American Foreign Missions, 1810-1914: Theology, Theory, and Policy*, 18.

<sup>623</sup> Wilson, *Western Africa*, 332.

<sup>624</sup> About this elite missionary class in the United States, Wilson wrote: "If the number of colored men in this country capable of meeting these high demands is considerable, we know it not. There is a small number of such now in the African field, and we cheerfully award them the praise of great self-denial and extensive usefulness. But the idea of gathering up [educated] colored men indiscriminately in this country, and setting them down upon the shores of Africa, with the design or expectation that they will take the lead in diffusing a pure Christianity among the natives, deserves to be utterly rejected by every friend of Africa.

Wilson explained how the Roman Catholic missionaries might have seen a difference between their “corrupted religion”<sup>625</sup> and the superstitions of the people of Kongo, but the people of Kongo did not. According to Wilson, this situation may have caused the people of Kongo to hold onto their superstitions.

A Roman Catholic of discernment may possibly see an essential difference between the heathenish customs that were abolished and those that were substituted in their place, but we seriously doubt whether the simple-minded people of the Kongo were ever conscious of any material change in their code of superstitious rites, or derived any essential advantage by the exchange.<sup>626</sup>

The same can be said of Wilson who might have seen a difference between Christian formal education and formal education for the sake of secular business, but many natives of West Africa did not. It is highly unlikely that the man who asked Wilson, on Wilson’s 1833 African tour, to take his son to America<sup>627</sup> was pursuing Christianity, just as the kings and noblemen were not pursuing Christianity when they requested schools from Wilson. He correctly recognized that their “importunacy” about schools in their district was out of “motives of peculiar gain.”<sup>628</sup>

Indeed, these people had long been accustomed to pursuing these secular gains, and had identified white people, including missionaries, as an opportunity to increase

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A proposition to transport white men, in the same indiscriminate manner, to some other heathen country, with the view of evangelizing the natives of that country, would be regarded, to say the least, as highly extravagant.” *Ibid.*, 507.

<sup>625</sup> *Ibid.*, 340.

<sup>626</sup> *Ibid.*, 339.

<sup>627</sup> *Journal of Mission, Report of the state of the Colony of Liberia, March 24, 1834, Papers of the ABCFM, Reel 149, Frame 50.*

<sup>628</sup> *Ibid.*, 137.

such gains.<sup>629</sup> In that sense, Wilson presented the peoples of Gabon with a system of formal education which was as elitist as the one they had envisioned. Therefore, the following description Wilson provided about the Catholic missions' unsuccessful attempt to present the peoples of Kongo with a new religious system applies to Wilson himself.

It was the great error of the missionaries, perhaps we should say the grand defect of Romanism, that they presented the benighted inhabitants of Kongo with a system of superstitious observances so nearly allied, both in spirit and form, to the one which they aimed to extirpate. It was utterly impossible that one of two systems so nearly related could ever have supplanted the other; and all, therefore, for which the inhabitants of Kong were ever indebted to the missionaries, was for a burdensome accession to those superstitious ceremonies that had already crushed them almost into dust...Knowing this to be the case, we are not surprised that this corrupted religion found no permanent lodgement in their hearts, and produced so few beneficial changes in the state of society.<sup>630</sup>

Wilson insisted that “The fact that the people occasionally showed great zeal for the outward observances of their adopted religion, is no proof whatever that they ever possessed any sincere attachment for it, or that they had in the least relaxed their hold

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<sup>629</sup> For example, in Gabon, where Wilson worked and where children of the kings and noblemen were the first students of the missionary school, “Four-fifths of the adult male population speak English or French language with tolerable ease.” Wilson, *Western Africa*, 293. These European languages were languages of business and have remained so to this day. The people of the Gabon were divided along their allegiance to one language or another according to their interest in trade. Wilson gives a sketch of the peoples of Gabon: “Those on the north side are near to each other, and are known as King Glass’s and King Qua Ben’s people (292)...One of the chiefs is the principal trade man among the Glass people, and is known by the name of Toko (293). The people on the south side were known as King William’s and King George’s people, the former being located near the mouth of the river, and the latter about thirty miles higher (292)...One of the chiefs of the principal settlement on the south side of the river, of the name of Rapantyambe, known among the English men and Americans by the name of King William, and by the French as King Dennie (293). Dennie had always been a favorite with the French, while Toko was dislike for his over-partiality to the English; the former spoke the French with great facility, and the latter the English, and hence their respective partialities (295). These two men, though ostensibly friends, have always been earnest rivals, especially in matters of trade (296). The love of trade is their ruling passion, and they evince a capacity for carrying it on which is truly surprising for uneducated men (297.” Wilson settled among King Glass’s people, who were pro-English. A portrait of King Glass is juxtaposed to the title page of Wilson’s book showing not a religious king but a rich and civilized king. This should be enough evidence that the secular investments of the people of Gabon in missionary education overwhelmed its religious ones.

<sup>630</sup> Wilson, *Western Africa*, 340.

upon the old.”<sup>631</sup> Likewise, it can also be argued that the fact that the people of Liberia or Gabon occasionally showed great zeal for the outward observances of the Sabbath, as Wilson claimed earlier, is itself no proof these people were attached to it, or that they had in the least relaxed their hold upon their old beliefs of making the mission school a stepping stone to riches.<sup>632</sup>

Wilson aptly described the agency of the Catholic Kongolese with regard to why they might have opted for such duplicity, which may apply to Wilson’s Protestant Liberians and Gabonese as well. He wrote about the Catholic Kongolese with rare precision:

It was their interest, or they thought it their interest, to make a display of zeal. It was important for them to enjoy the favor of the missionaries, and they had no fears that their own religion would be contaminated by contact with Romanism, and no danger of its being lost from occupying a subordinate and less conspicuous position. If they showed all due reverence for the rites and ceremonies of the Romish Church in the presence of the missionaries, they were not less punctilious in performing the rites of their own in their absence. As but few of the missionaries ever made themselves acquainted with the language of the country, the natives had special advantages for playing off this double game.<sup>633</sup>

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<sup>631</sup> Ibid., 340.

<sup>632</sup> Wilson was the first witness of this state of affairs in Liberia, where he said all the preachers—including Protestant preachers this time--were without exception men of business. “All the outward performances,” he said, “are regularly attended to, but we fear that the substance of genuine religion is much wanting. If our fears are properly grounded, we can readily trace up this decision to a very obvious cause. The preachers in the Colony are, we believe, without exception men of business—their hearts are bent upon making wealth. Their education is insufficient to make them profitable teachers.” “Messrs J. Leighton Wilson and Stephen Wyncoop to the Prudential Committee of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions,” Report of the state of the Colony of Liberia, March 24, 1834, Papers of the ABCFM, Unit 2, vol. 1, Reel 149, 19-20. This statement is in agreement with that of Edward Berman, who observed that “Africans were no less averse to using missionaries for their own purposes than the missionaries were for theirs. African reasons for attending mission schools varied, but most were related to well-defined political, social, or economic goals.” Berman, ed. *African Reactions to Missionary Education*, xi-xii.

<sup>633</sup> Wilson, *Western Africa*, 341.

It was also in the interest of the students of Wilson's school to be adroitly diplomatic about their interests if they wanted to make them reality. To the extent that the coastal West Africans believed that playing this double game would ensure for them a high status in society, the price was bearable. This is what we can expect all these coastal people who were importuning Wilson about schools to have at least done. Definitive evidence of all the coastal people's playing this double game is sparse in Wilson's writing because this subject is not an attractive one. However, that Wilson did report that he had excommunicated one native at one time<sup>634</sup> and that there were always many students in missionary schools and yet very few members of the church should be enough evidence.<sup>635</sup> In addition, the fact that Wilson continued to insist on the screening of the native helpers and their supervision by white men after his sojourn in West Africa is also

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<sup>634</sup> Papers of the ABCFM, Reel 150, 40.

<sup>635</sup> Of his seven years in Liberia, Wilson says, "During that time seven stations and outstations were formed, at each of which a day-school was established, and stated preaching was commenced; a church was organized at the first and principal station, which at one time embraced more than thirty members, of whom more than four-fifths [24] were natives; a large boarding-school for both sexes was kept up for more than six years." Wilson, *Western Africa*, 501. Mrs. [?] White, a missionary who stayed with the Wilsons gave a slightly more precise count of the converts and the school inmates in which the gap between the two is more visible. Wilson gave his synopsis, above, in 1856 while Mrs. White reported in 1835, just a year after commencing the Liberian mission, that "On last Sunday afternoon we attended service with the natives. Mr. Wilson speaks to them through an interpreter. The scene was more interesting than I had imagined such a one could be. The audience consisted of about twenty native children from the schools, with about as many men, among whom were the king and several of his head men. A number of women stood at the windows and looked in during most of the service. Mrs. Wilson's school is extremely interesting. She has twenty-five native children, and they spell and define remarkably well. There are now in the day-schools more than a hundred children, and the number could increase to any extent whatever, were the teachers enough to instruct them." Dubose, *Rev. John Leighton Wilson*, 83. DuBose quoted Wilson giving yet another different "summary of their [Wilson and his Wife] seven years' work at Cape Palmas was given afterwards by Dr. Wilson: "A church of forty members organized; more than a hundred youth educated..." Ibid. In Gabon where only two stations were formed in fourteen years, the statistics for converts were even fuzzier probably because of a wider gap between them and the students: "The Sabbath bell brings together a good assembly of orderly worshippers[how many?]. More than one hundred youths have received a Christian education, some of whom are employed in promoting the cause of religion and education." Wilson, *Western Africa*, 501-502.

supplementary evidence.<sup>636</sup> All this circumstantial evidence taken together points to the distinct possibility that many native students and churchgoers were players of the double game.

This situation seems to have endured. In 1975, Thelma Awori explained how the people in Liberia had used the missionaries in the pursuit of their elitist opportunities:

Missionaries have played a major role in education in Liberia...my father and maternal grandfather came under their influence...My father is now an ordained minister of the Lutheran Church. Since he is a tribal man my father is well versed in the traditional ways of his people. At that time, however, adherence to certain traditional beliefs and practices was considered retrogressive. To a certain extent the same is true today. Attendance at school and assimilating Western culture and Christianity, on the other hand, was considered progressive. My mother comes from a similar background to my father's, only one generation advanced...We were very religious in our day, my contemporaries and I.<sup>637</sup>

Although I have found no such testimony from Liberia, there is no reason to believe that Wilson's West Africans were different from the Lutheran Liberians that the generations described by Thelma Awori typify. Despite Wilson's precautions, which it must be said were developed after the mission to Liberia was launched, his preoccupation with West Africans sincerity in the missionary field points to a similarity. In this sense, we can posit that Wilson's argument that the Catholic missionaries in Kongo failed because they did not study the character of the Kongolese people is yet another piece of

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<sup>636</sup> Wilson dedicated his last chapter to this question about "The agency devolving on White men in connection with missions to West Africa." Wilson, *Western Africa*, Chapter Six.

<sup>637</sup> *Ibid.*, 119-130. The editor's note also states that "Among the black republics of Africa, only Liberia and Ethiopia are self-professed Christian states," 118. Thus, it is not exaggerated to say that Liberia's independence in 1847 as an official statement of the secular mission of self-determination coincides with Liberia's discovery of its religious mission, because only such a step coupled with the missionary abnegation could explain Liberia's position as a self-proclaimed Christian state today.

evidence that Wilson overestimated his own impact on the Liberian and Gabonese peoples.

If missionaries had studied the character of the people more thoroughly, and adapted their instruction to their wants, instead of endeavoring to make every thing bend to the lifeless and frigid demands of Romanism, the probability is that they would have done them real good, and would not themselves have been so easily duped by their dissimulation. The natives were perfectly aware of their ignorance in this respect, and they did not hesitate to turn it to good account, in acting out one of the most remarkable farces that has ever been recorded. It cost no effort to appear easy and natural in a character foreign to their own—to maintain their own private views and principles inviolate in strict consistency with the outward exhibition of views and principles of the very opposite character—in other words, to appear to be zealous Roman Catholics, when in reality they were but the most besotted pagans on the face of the earth.<sup>638</sup>

Just as Wilson used as evidence of the failure of the Catholic missionaries the fact that “The missionaries themselves seem occasionally to have had some misgivings about the sincerity of their converts; they repeatedly expressed apprehensions that they might, at some time, revert to the pagan worship of their forefathers,”<sup>639</sup> we can use his own references to his apprehensions that the educated peoples of Liberia and Gabon might revert to the trade worship of their forefathers as evidence of their double game. Just as he was convinced that “The attempt which they [the Catholic missionaries] made to brace up their authority and enforce the demands of Romanism, by practicing upon the credulity of the people, did not tend materially to avert this dreaded result,”<sup>640</sup> I am convinced that Wilson’s insistence to put the West African students and preachers under

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<sup>638</sup> Wilson, *Western Africa*, 341.

<sup>639</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>640</sup> *Ibid.*, 342.



the superintendence of white men did not avert their pursuit of wealth at the expense of religion.

Wilson wrote about the Catholic missionaries that

They naturally supposed they were in possession of a field so wonderfully promising for the exercise of miraculous powers. What they could not affect by the bare exercise of authority, or by the ordinary powers of persuasion, they hoped to accomplish by the exercise of their pretended miraculous gifts; and a great were the marvels they performed in this hidden corner of the world.<sup>641</sup>

Perhaps Wilson did not perform miracles to awe the Liberian and Gabonese people, but he did do everything in his power seduce them. As for the kings of Liberia, he reported that “We took all the pains we could to impress the minds of the kings and his people with the fact that the mission is to be entirely distinct from the colony and will be identified with the interests of the natives.”<sup>642</sup> In Gabon, he went out of his way to throw his support behind King Glass against, the French which caused him to get his mission station bombarded in the French reprisal campaign against King Glass.<sup>643</sup>

It is true that at the beginning of this clash with the French, Wilson received no comfort other than to “rely upon the United States flag for protection.”<sup>644</sup> It is also true

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<sup>641</sup> Ibid.

<sup>642</sup> J. Leighton Wilson and Stephen Wyncoop to the Prudential Committee, Report of the state of the Colony of Liberia, March 24, 1834, Papers of the ABCFM, Unit 2, vol. 1, Reel 149, Frame 25.

<sup>643</sup> Wilson wrote that in this campaign “a thirty-two pound shot was thrown into our church, where the [French] commander had every reason to suppose that our school was assembled, and not more than fifty paces from our door, near which my family was standing.” DuBose, *Rev. John Leighton Wilson*, 165. As we can see, the Church and the school were one entity, and Wilson’s involvement in the conflict that opposed King Glass and the French by helping the former and his people draft petitions to the French governor of Senegal M. Bouet, the King of France Louis-Philippe, and Queen Victoria of England give us a glimpse at some of the extra-missionary strategies Wilson might have used to gain the respect of the people of Gabon for the sake of their recruitment in his schools and churches. Ibid., 161.

<sup>644</sup> Ibid., 163.

that due to the US disinterest in Gabon, Wilson was left to fend for himself as a “private citizen,”<sup>645</sup> a condition which was hardly discernible with Wilson’s colleagues among the Cherokees. This is probably why Wilson thought that the protection that the Catholic missionaries received from the king of Portugal led to their demise in Kongo:

The king and the chiefs, who were indebted to the missionaries for alms and all the power they possessed, could well afford to exert that power in enforcing the commands of the church. The missionaries could any time pledge the assistance of the King of Portugal to maintain them in authority, and it was as little as they could do in turn to support the spiritual authority of the missionary fathers. And from the moment the missionaries had recourse to the civil arm for aid, they threw aside every other means of promoting the interests of religion. The severest laws were enacted against polygamy; the old pagan religion, in all its forms and details, was declared illegal, and the heaviest penalties denounced against all who were known to participate in celebrating its rites.<sup>646</sup>

There is no doubt that King Glass did not receive his power from Wilson, but his throne was certainly reinforced by his alliance with Wilson as we saw with the episode of the petitions. As a result, Wilson could not exercise the influence that the Catholic missionaries might have exercised in Kongo where, if we believe Wilson’s words, the Kongo chiefs received their powers from the missionaries. In this sense, there was a contrast between the esteem the people of Gabon had for Wilson and the hatred the people of Kongo had for the Catholic missionaries:

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<sup>645</sup> Wilson asked himself, “How far a private citizen has the right to use the flag of his nation as a means of protection in such circumstances as we were placed in, I have not the means of knowing with certainty.” Ibid., 166. He asked all the commanders of the United States vessels that had successively visited the Gabon Coast the same question, “all of whom had means of judging of the merits of the question, and it was the concurrent opinion of all of these gentlemen that we had a right to use the flag as an expression of our neutrality, and they all expressed the confident assurance that it would be respected by the French.” Ibid. Obviously, it was not, and Wilson received French fire, a predicament that his colleagues in the Cherokee nation could not have imagined.

<sup>646</sup> Wilson, *Western Africa*, 344.

The acts of tyranny could not fail to awaken hatred and resentment in the minds of the people against their religious teachers, and especially so as it was done to enforce the observance of a religion for which they felt no attachment...The common people revenged themselves in several instances by abandoning the missionaries with whom they were traveling in the gloomiest woods, with the expectation that they would be devoured by wild beasts...And it was not long before they had to abandon traveling altogether, and confine themselves to a few localities where the people were more friendly. Ultimately they had to leave the country altogether, and we need be at no loss to account for the almost simultaneous disappearance of all the religion they had propagated in that country...We can only compare it [the Roman religion] to a magnificent edifice that fell to pieces because it had no foundation upon which to rest, or to a beautiful exotic that withered away because it had take no roots in the soil of the country.<sup>647</sup>

This quote makes evident that the difference between Wilson and the Catholic missionaries was only matter of strategy. The Catholic resorted to tyrannical force, while Wilson preferred superintendence of white men for West African students and preachers. Both the Catholics and Wilson might well have been struggling with how to reduce the deleterious effects of the elitist framework of formal education of which polygamy, trade, political and social power were visible symptoms. As Islam was thriving in West Africa in the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries,<sup>648</sup> the elitist framework of formal education

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<sup>647</sup> Ibid., 345-346.

<sup>648</sup> Timothy Insoll provides a thorough survey of Islam in Africa south of the Sahara, as he follows its course “in a multi-source approach, beginning with the earliest area of Muslim-African contacts in Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa.” Timothy Insoll, *The Archeology of Islam in Sub-Saharan Africa* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 35. Thus, “Beginning in the tenth century there is an increase in archeological evidence attesting to contacts with the Muslim world” along “trade routes and trade centres” in the Western Sahel. Ibid., 220. This region was north of the Western Sudan and Forest which included Mali, the 14<sup>th</sup> century Muslim empire of the renowned Sudiata Keita, Mansa Musa and the like. Ibid., 318. This was the region from where Mandingoes that Wilson encountered in Liberia brought the Mohammedanism he found so threatening: “It is probable that in some parts of West Africa, Mohammedan religion will present a very serious obstacle to the progress of Christianity.” “Messrs J. Leighton Wilson and Stephen Wyncoop to the Prudential Committee of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions,” Report of the state of the Colony of Liberia, March 24, 1834, Papers of the ABCFM, Reel 149, 31. The central Sudan region on which Gabon bordered was dominated by the kingdom of Kanem-Borno which in thirteenth century had Islam as its “majority religion.” Insoll, *The Archeology of Islam in Sub-Saharan Africa*, 274. In other words, Wilson was well aware of the heavy Muslim presence in West Africa

with which the missionaries were unconsciously operating might have contributed to reinforce the fashion of formal education started with Islam.<sup>649</sup>

### Conclusion

Due to the fact that missionary framework of formal education was not a totally new paradigm among the West Africans, the elitist, patriarchal framework of the American formal education was adopted by the West Africans with more alterations than among the Cherokees. However, the agency of the educated Cherokees and West Africans was limited to their seeking missionary formal education for their own secular purposes first and religious purposes second. Although West Africans had been exposed to the elitist framework of formal Islamic education, they, like the Cherokees, lacked the necessary information about the elitist and sexist history of formal education among their educators. In that sense, those West Africans and Cherokees who pursued formal education from the missionaries operated more assertively in their pursuit of the perceived high status that they assumed that missionary education was about. Many missionaries have missed this picture of the education of the West Africans and

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to the extent that he once reported that his “time was taken up in the study of Arabic” as a part of his training to go to West Africa. DuBose, *Memoirs of Rev. John Leighton Wilson*, 53.

<sup>649</sup> Insoll points out the elitist framework of Islamic formal education: “As [Jack] Goody notes writing “as a means of communication with the supernatural powers,” was recognized among all aspects of society in the [West African Sudan and forest] region—non-Muslims, Muslims, non-literate and literate (1968b:202). Magical and practical (the two are equally interlinked) benefits could be derived from literacy, and as [Lamine]Sanneh (1994) argues, non-Muslim populations often appropriated Arabic phrases before converting to Islam.” *Ibid.*, 347. Insoll also indicated that “the Mande [also known by many other names including Mandingoes] were possibly the most successful agents in spreading Islam away from the urban centers and throughout the Western Sudan and forest zones. Great traders, they also succeeded in establishing what N. Levtzion (1986b:12) has defined as “lines of communication,” Islamic learning networks which linked the main centres “to the remotest rural Muslim.” *Ibid.*, 331.

Cherokees either out of a naïve illusion about their own power or out of frustration that the formal education they offered the Cherokees and West Africans did not lead to their conversions in ways they had designed for these native peoples. However, as Wilson said, the fault lies entirely with them because they chose to bring the Cherokees and West Africans to God through a path of formal education of which they unfortunately ignored the meanders. As a result, the educated Cherokees and West Africans reigned supreme in their choices of elitism, sexism, religious eclectism that many missionaries still have not come to terms with.<sup>650</sup>

What light can the religious communication between the missionaries and the native shed on the power relations between these groups?

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<sup>650</sup> See my discussion in Chapter Two on Christianizations of the phenomenon of Cherokee and African initiated Churches.

CHAPTER 5: RELIGIOUS COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE ABCFM  
MISSIONARIES AND THE CHEROKEES AND WEST  
AFRICANS

Is there any such thing as religious communication? Do Christians utilize a uniquely Christian way of communicating among themselves and with non-Christians? If yes, what would be the rationale for such a unique method of communication? And if there is no uniquely Christian way of communication, then what is the nature of inter-Christian communication and Christian communication with non-Christians, and how do their fundamental life commitments shape their respective communication practices? This chapter probes the ABCFM missionaries' strategies of communicating the gospel to the Cherokees and West Africans, and Cherokees and West Africans' strategies of communicating their responses to the missionaries. I argue that Cherokees and West Africans responses to missionary communication of the gospel were strategically calculated to advance their agendas in spite of missionaries' will. This parallel agency has its roots in missionaries' concept of communication of the gospel as influence, which ignored Cherokee and West African's concept of communication as influence as well.

The ABCFM Missionaries' Concept of Communication of the Gospel

I argue that the study of the views of communication held by the ABCFM missionaries, the Cherokees and the West Africans points to a common ground of communication: the communication history of each of these three cultures shows first that each culture assumed that the capacity to communicate was human and universal. I

found no significant difference in the fundamental concept of communication between the ABCFM missionaries and the Cherokees and West Africans. For example, if we take the term *mission* in a lay sense, few non-Christian Cherokees or West Africans would disagree with the following Christian description of a mission:

A mission is any definite object upon which anyone is sent. The term “Mission”, therefore, makes necessary four things: (1) There must be a person who sends, let us say a “sender”. (2) There must be someone whom the sender sends, that is, “the one sent”. (3) There must be someone to whom he is sent. (4) There must be a purpose for which he is sent, that is, the object to be accomplished.<sup>651</sup>

A case study of the dynamic of communication among the ABCFM missionaries demonstrates that the messenger in the missionary culture transmitted a message to the destined source in hopes that the recipient source would show outward evidence that he or she had received the message, understood it as intended, and would implement it to the satisfaction of the messenger.<sup>652</sup> In 1820, for example, the ABCFM created a newspaper, *The Missionary Herald*, for the purpose of persuasive communication among the missionary community. In the words of Joseph Tracy at the annual meeting of the Board at Hartford, Connecticut in 1820,

The Prudential Committee were directed to publish the Missionary Herald at the expense of the Board. Hitherto, agreeable to a proposal made by Mr. [Jeremiah] Evarts, its editor, at the second annual meeting, the profits of the work, after

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<sup>651</sup> Berry, *A Century of Missions of the African Methodist Episcopal Church*, xv.

<sup>652</sup> The ABCFM, which named the mission station at Chickamaugah after David Brainerd shared the beliefs that underlay his mission enterprise: “The sinners...whatever their condition and circumstances may be, it is of present obligation upon them to accept the gospel-call, and their instant duty to come in...They are to exhibit the unspeakable advantages that will attend a compliance with the gospel.” Dwight, *Memoirs of Rev. David Brainerd*, “Sermon Preached at the Ordination of Mr. David Brainerd, a Missionary to the Indians on the Board of New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania,” by Ebenezer Pemberton, A. M. of the Presbyterian Church in the City of New York, 22-23.

deducing a reasonable amount for editing, had been devoted to the promotion of missions under the direction of the Board.<sup>653</sup>

Communication for the ABCFM missionaries was considered effective if they were able to persuade the friends of the missions that the natives had changed because of it.<sup>654</sup> Most communications of the missionaries to the missionary community articulated this missionary concept of communication. Tracy, for example, captured this logic of missionary communication in his description of the state of missionary work among the Cherokees in 1822:

There was more or less seriousness, during that year, at all the stations. At Brainerd, there were a few instances of conversion, and additions to the church. At Taloney, there lived five brothers, by the name of Sanders, descendants of a white man, who had wandered to that place from New England more than fifty years before. They had grown up, and some of them become old, in all the ignorance and barbarism of the people around them. Some of them for a time had been prominent opposers of the mission. Gradually they became interested, attentive, penitent, decided, active, and influential in promoting the knowledge and belief of Christianity. One circumstance is

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<sup>653</sup> Tracy, *History of the American Missions*, 80-81. A library was also created for this purpose: "On the 4<sup>th</sup> of November, the Committee resolved to commence the collection of a Missionary Library, to be composed of works appropriate to its design and name. A notice in the Herald for December invited donation of books." Ibid., 96. Tracy's own book was designed to "give such a selection as shall best show the general character and [good] results of each mission, and of the whole system." Ibid., 10.

<sup>654</sup> Most communications focused on the results rather than the process of communication. The ABCFM certainly assumed that all friends of the missionary community knew what type of message was being delivered, that the power of God would act on the natives, and all that needed to be reported was the outcome of this transaction. Rev. Leighton Wilson made such an assumption when he referred to the "power of the Gospel" in his address to the missionary community about the "The Agency Devolving on White Men in Connection with Missions to West Africa." Wilson, *Western Africa*, 509. His Chapter V, "Christian Missions in West Africa" was a detailed account of the results of such missions.



worthy to be recorded, as showing the change which missionary labors had already wrought among the Cherokees. In one of his letters, giving accounts of individual cases of peculiar interests, Mr. Hall reminded the Corresponding Secretary that several persons in the neighborhood were subscribers to the Missionary Herald, and that nothing ought to be published concerning any individual, which it might injure him to read. For this reason, by very brief notices of this work of grace were published.<sup>655</sup>

Likewise, case studies of the dynamics of communication among the Cherokees and among West Africans demonstrates the same desired chain of events that the missionaries desired: that the messenger transmitted a message in hopes that the recipient would show outward evidence that it had received the message, understood it as intended and would implement it.

The concept of communication among the Cherokees can be deciphered from their religious ceremonies since according to James Adair, “all the nations of the Indians are exceedingly intoxicated with religious pride,”<sup>656</sup> Adair reported in the eighteenth century that in the traditional Cherokee world,

When the *archi-magus*, or any one of their magi, is persuading the people, at their religious solemnities to a strict observance of the old beloved, or divine speech, he always, he always ... urge[s] them, with the greatest energy of expression he is capable of, a strong voice, and very expressive gestures, to imitate the noble actions of their great and virtuous forefathers, which they performed, in a surprising manner, by their holy things, and a strict observance of the old, beloved speech.<sup>657</sup>

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<sup>655</sup> Tracy, *History of the American Missions*, 108.

<sup>656</sup> Williams, *Adair's History of the American Indians*, 34.

<sup>657</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

Adair also reported that as much as the *archi-magus* could give instructions hoping that they would be followed by his fellow Cherokees, the Cherokee people expected the communication of their *archi-magus* with God would be effective, because “the religious, beloved men are also supposed to be in great favor with the Deity, and able to procure rain when they please.”<sup>658</sup>

When the ground is parched, their *rain-makers*, (as they are commonly termed) are to mediate for the beloved red people, with the bountiful holy Spirit of fire. But their old cunning prophets are not fond of this religious duty, and avoid it as long as they possibly can, till the murmurs of the people force them to the sacred attempt, for the security of their own lives. If he fails, the prophet is shot dead, because they are so credulous of his divine power conveyed by the holy Spirit of fire, that they reckon him an enemy to the state, by averting the general good, and bringing desolating famine upon the beloved people.<sup>659</sup>

In Africa, it is possible that many Christians missions were seen as the equivalents of the Cherokee *archi-magus*.<sup>660</sup> Rev. John Leighton Wilson reported that the Kongo

king and his chiefs always vied with each other in their attendance upon the mass, and there was scarcely a single outward ceremony of the Church which they did not scrupulously perform. Wherever the priests went, it was the duty of the chief to send a messenger around the village to notify the people of his arrival, and direct them to come and have their spiritual wants attended to. If he failed to perform this duty, he was displaced from office, or compelled to do penance.<sup>661</sup>

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<sup>658</sup> Ibid., 89.

<sup>659</sup> Ibid., 89-90.

<sup>660</sup> John Mbiti called the people equivalent to the *archi-magus* in Africa “specialists” in virtue of their specialized knowledge and skill in religious matters...[P.217] “all over Africa, we can see the importance of rainmaking. Certain conclusions emerge which we may summarize as follows...When the rainmaker fails to produce rain, this can lead not only to the loss of his prestige but may even endanger his life...From many parts of Africa it is reported that both people and rainmakers know for certain that only God can ‘make’ or ‘produce’ rain. Therefore, rainmakers play the role of intermediaries, whatever else they might do to enhance their position and activities.” John Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (New York: Anchor Books, 1970), 236.

<sup>661</sup> Wilson, *Western Africa*, 328.

### Communication as Influence

As with the Cherokees, a good place to determine the concept of communication in the African world is in the realm of religion. According to John Mbiti, most Africans, like the Cherokees, were very religious. His description of the function of “mediums” provides an excellent means to understand the West African concept of communication:

The main duty of the mediums is to link human beings with the living dead and the spirits. Through them messages are received from the other world, or men are given knowledge of things that would otherwise be difficult or impossible to know... Their distinction is the ability to be “possessed” or get in touch with the spirit world, but this also depends on the “willingness” of the departed or other spirits to get “into” them and communicate through them.<sup>662</sup>

Altogether, the evidence points to the fact that the ABCFM missionaries, the Cherokees, and the West Africans all conceived communication in the same way as influence. This model is also what Shannon and Weaver’s *Mathematical Theory of Communication* (1949) attempts to indicate with the statement, “communication as the transmission of messages.”<sup>663</sup> Indeed, while this book was “widely accepted as one of the seeds out of which Communication studies have grown,” their mathematical model could usefully be characterized as a dry one since it was concerned with such technological communication devices as the telephone.<sup>664</sup> However, it is not difficult to understand why Shannon and Weaver’s work was ground breaking. After all, they were engineering a means of communication not for machines but for human beings. As the three levels of

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<sup>662</sup> Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 224-225.

<sup>663</sup> John Fiske, “Communication Theory,” *Introduction to Communication Studies*, 2d ed. (London: Routledge, 1990), 6-23

<sup>664</sup> Ibid.

problems the authors identify in the study of communication show—“technical problems, semantic problems, effectiveness problems”<sup>665</sup>—Shannon and Weaver and others faced an unprecedented methodological challenge: what method can satisfactorily account for human communication?

My readings of Christian publications and non-Christian reflections on human communication have led me to two observations: first, that preoccupation with the study of human communication antedates Christianity<sup>666</sup> and, second, that the conceptualization of communication seems to have remained constant among the Christian missionaries in general.<sup>667</sup> If the concept of communication as influence was not born with the advent of Christianity and was not exclusive to the Christian world, it is safe to posit that what we saw in our reading of the interactions of the ABCFM missionaries and the Cherokees and West Africans was that there was a common ground on which the Christian missionaries and these non-Christians negotiated their message transactions. Let us focus our investigation on the communication patterns of these cultures before their respective encounters.

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<sup>665</sup> Ibid.

<sup>666</sup> For educated Christians in the early Middle Ages and their students, the union of faith and reason was taken for granted. That was the tradition in the monasteries of Augustine and some other Fathers of the Church. Also “remnants of pre-Christian thought (Aristotelian in particular) acceptable to the church, were studied with a reverence almost as great as that given to the Bible.” David L. Edwards, *Christianity: The First Two Thousand Years* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1997), 234.

<sup>667</sup> In his preface to the revised edition of Eugene A. Nida’s much acclaimed *Message and Mission: The Communication of the Christian Faith*, rev. ed. (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1960), Charles Kraft, a professor of Christian Communication and author of *Christianity in Culture* (1979) wrote that “The basic thrust and emphasis [of the book] remain the same, since the task of communicating God’s news to the people of this world does not materially change despite the invention of new media and the increasingly rapid techniques for widespread communication. In two thousand years people have not invented any new sins nor have found any substitute for the grace of God through Jesus Christ, since “there is no other name under heaven given to people by which we must be saved (xi).”

In accordance with the point about the study of communication predating Christian reflections on communication, the following historical sketch is necessary. According to Christopher Simpson, communication research became a “distinct discipline within sociology...between 1950 and 1955.” He emphasizes that “today it [communication] underlies most college-and graduate-level training for print and broadcast journalists, public relations and advertising personnel, and the related craftspeople who might be called the ‘ideological workers’ of contemporary U.S. society.”<sup>668</sup>

Simpson recognizes, however, “both the concept and the term ‘communication’ had evolved from a far richer tradition than the cramped model offered by [Walter] Lippman and [Harold] Lasswell.”<sup>669</sup> Thus, backtracking from Lippman and Lasswell’s concept of “communication as domination” in the 1950s will help trace the communicational background of the ABCFM before their encounter with the Cherokees and West Africans.

Simpson informs us that “for Lasswell, the study of all social communication could be reduced to ‘who says what to whom with what effect’—a dictum that is practically inscribed in stone over the portals of those U.S. colleges offering communication as a field of study.”<sup>670</sup> He goes on to say, “Some academic and

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<sup>668</sup> Christopher Simpson, “Defining Psychological War” and “World War and Early Modern Communication Research,” *Science of Coercion: Communication Research and Psychological Warfare: 1945-1960* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 3-30.

<sup>669</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>670</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

commercial roots of U.S. communication studies can be traced back as far as the eighteenth century.<sup>671</sup> However, Simpson insists that the tradition of communication emphasized transmission of messages and in that sense, was “distinct from Lippman and Lasswell’s conception of communication as a medium for giving directions.”<sup>672</sup>

Communication between the missionaries of the ABCFM and the Cherokees, and the West Africans points to both aspects of communication--that is, communication as transmission of message and communication as giving directions. This is what church historian Joshua Egwuonwu Akuma explains when he writes that the “failure of the early Portuguese Mission in the Bakongo” was because “the missionaries demanded that their converts adopt a monogamous pattern of marriage. This requirement and demand was not easy for Africans whose culture demanded polygamy.”<sup>673</sup>

Yet it is important to note that communication among these groups was actually more complex than these two aspects allow. For example, among the missionaries,

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<sup>671</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>672</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>673</sup> Joshua Egwuonwu Akuma, *A Handbook of Church History* (Early, Medieval and West African) (Aba, Nigeria: Assemblies of God Press, 2002), 70-75. James Adair reported polygamy among the Native Americans: “The Indians are so fond of variety, that they ridicule the white people, as a tribe of narrow-hearted, and dull constitutional animals, for having only one wife at a time.” *Williams, Adair’s History of the American Indians*, 145-146. Although polygamy cannot be definitively be held as the single cause for any outcome of Christianization among the Native Americans, there are reports that polygamy was a bone of contention between the missionaries and the Native Americans. One of Vine Deloria, Jr.’s ancestor, Francoise whose Christian name his Yanktons fellows transformed into Saswe, grandson of Phillipe des Lauriers whose name itself was anglicized as Deleria and the daughter of a Yankton headman, “attended church regularly himself but was not allowed to make any formal affiliation because he was married to three Sioux women.” James Treat, “Introduction” to Deloria, Jr., *For this Land*, 6. The Presbyterian missionaries mentioned in this incident were likely to have been affiliated with the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions as they were before the split in 1837. Earl R. MacCormac, *Missions and the Presbyterian Schism of 1837*, Church History, Vol. 32, No 1 (March 1963): 32-45, 33.

communication used orality alongside writing.<sup>674</sup> Among the Cherokees and West Africans, communication was based on orality but was also multiform.<sup>675</sup> Thus the apparent conflicts of communication between Christian missionaries and Native Americans and Africans did not derive from a divergent view of communication, but rather from the fact that the missionaries' views of communication were fundamentally the same as the Cherokees' and West Africans': all three groups understood communication as influence. The following discussions of missionaries, Cherokees, and West Africans about their ways of communicating will be the last illustration of this point.

In the words of missionaries, "when Jesus was about to leave His disciples, He uttered the immortal words: 'Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel, teaching all nations and baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy

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<sup>674</sup> Wilson, for example, reported that in Liberia "the [Grebo] language was reduced to writing, of which a Grammar and a Dictionary, in part, were published—the Gospels of St. Matthew and Mark, the life of Christ, and various other religious books, were translated into it for the use of those who had been taught to read." Wilson, *Western Africa*, 501. Although Wilson translated these works into the Grebo language, he could not speak it fluently and was obliged "to speak to them [the Grebo audience on the Sabbath] through an interpreter." DuBose, *Memoirs of Rev. John Leighton Wilson*, 82. Thus in his attempt to communicate the gospel, Wilson and Cyrus Kingsbury for that matter were constantly exploring ways in which their communication might be effective.

<sup>675</sup> Cherokees did not have writing until Sequoyah invented his syllabary. [www.cherokee-nc.com](http://www.cherokee-nc.com); internet source; accessed on September 5, 2005. However, it would be an exaggeration to think that Cherokees have abandoned orality in favor of writing. In West Africa, Amadou Ampate Ba, an African autodidact author, captured the importance of orality in West African society when he declared that, "when an old man dies, it is a library that has burnt." See, G. Asfar, "Amadou Ampate Ba and the Islamic Dimension of the West African Literature" in *Faces of Islam in African Literature* ed. by Kenneth Harrow (Portsmouth, NH: Heiemann, 1991), Chapter Nine.

Ghost.”<sup>676</sup> The Secretary-Treasurer of the Missionary Department of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, author of these words goes on to conclude that

This is the continual mission of the church and there can be no letting up. There is no such thing that mission work will be over, for mission means not only to reach the unreached but to teach the untaught and to win all men to allegiance of Jesus. As each new generation comes upon the scene of action, there in new task for missions; for each new generation must be converted, must be indoctrinated, must be taught to serve [sic].<sup>677</sup>

Born in the era of the “democratization of American Christianity,”<sup>678</sup> the AME Church was nonetheless the product of the church of the white missionaries itself. Its founder, Richard Allen, broke away from St. George Methodist Episcopal Church, Philadelphia in 1787 in protest against racial discrimination. Yet one of the first missionary destinations of the AME was Haiti,<sup>679</sup> the newly independent black nation that according to the American press had ousted the white master with the help of the “satanical voodoo.”<sup>680</sup>

When David Brainerd, the first missionary to the Indians in 1744 was ordained in Newark, New Jersey, Reverend Ebenezer Pemberton, pastor of the Presbyterian Church in the city of New York, reminded Brainerd:

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<sup>676</sup> Berry, *A Century of Missions of the African Methodist Episcopal Church*, xv. Rev. John Wilson addressed the missionary community about the importance of embracing Christian missions in Africa with the same “command of our Saviour: “Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.”” Wilson, *Western Africa*, 517. DuBose quotes such a call from Wilson in DuBose, *Memoirs of Rev. John Leighton Wilson*, 38.

<sup>677</sup> *Ibid.*, xx.

<sup>678</sup> Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity*, 107.

<sup>679</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.

<sup>680</sup> Since New Orleans was looked upon as the prestigious center of conjuring, the term “voodoo” was extended to conjuring and conjurers throughout the United States regardless of the term’s original reference to African-Haitian cults. Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, 80.



While our Lord Jesus resided in this lower world, he preached the glad tidings of salvation, and published the kingdom of God; confirming his doctrine by numerous and undoubted miracles, and recommending his instructions by the charms of spotless life and conversation. He sent forth his apostles to pursue the same design of gospellizing the people, and furnished them with sufficient powers to proselyte the nations to the faith. He also appointed a standing ministry, to carry on a treaty of peace with rebellious sinners, in the successive ages of the church, to continue till the number of the redeemed is completed, and the whole election of grace placed in circumstances of spotless and perfect happiness.”<sup>681</sup>

This speech established among Christians in general the historical syllogistic legitimacy of missions as well as the context in which Christian theories of the communication of the gospel were born. For one thing the source of Christian agreement—Christ’s missionary injunction—was also the source of Christian disagreement, in that discussion over strategies of communicating the gospel had been not only doctrinal but also generational. This was the point Rev. John Wilson raised when he asked, “Is it befitting our high calling, is it consistent with our obligations to our Saviour, to spend our time in constructing theories that never have succeeded, and probably never will, while the inhabitants of Africa are perishing by thousands for want of the Gospel? To those who rely on training colored men in this country for this great work, we bid them God-speed....”<sup>682</sup>

As a result, missionaries have adopted particular strategies of communicating the gospel that in turn have been modified after their trials on the ground. The history of Christian communication of the gospel was similar to what Eugene Nida observed about church history: “More often than not the critical stage in the life of a church is reached

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<sup>681</sup> Sereno Edwards Dwight, *Memoirs of Rev. David Brainerd: Missionary to the Indians on the borders of New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania*, 18.

<sup>682</sup> Wilson, *Western Africa*, 517-518.

not in the early years, but when the so-called ‘second generation’ problems arise.”<sup>683</sup> The first generation of missionaries seemed to have proposed that the communication of the Gospel among the natives be preceded by civilization. Wilson’s response:

It will borne in mind that all of them [missions], except those of Sierra Leone and Gambia, have been founded within the last twenty years. The places selected for most of these were not only on new and unbroken ground, so far as all missionary influence was concerned, but many of them were located in the bosom of heathen tribes who had enjoyed scarcely any intercourse with the civilized world.<sup>684</sup>

The command of “the Saviour” that missionaries gave as their rationale for perceiving communication as influence is a story that operated for Christians with the assumption that the written word had an “aura” that resists distortion.<sup>685</sup> Stories among the Native Americans operated in traditional society with an assumption that the storyteller had been influenced by the spirit of the story. As a result, the storyteller was only passing that “Influence”—with a capital ‘I’—in other words, the purpose of the story. In that sense, Native American stories changed in time and no one claim exclusive authorship for them. While Christians claim that in order for the Christian story to conserve the truth of the revelation and remain timeless and true to the intent of the first author (Jesus Christ), the Native Americans maintained that in order for a Native

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<sup>683</sup> Eugene A. Nida, *Message and Mission: The Communication of the Christian Faith*, 8.

<sup>684</sup> Wilson, *Western Africa*, 513.

<sup>685</sup> “The authenticity of a thing is the essence of all that is transmissible from its beginning, ranging from its substantive duration to its testimony to the history which it has experienced. Since the historical testimony rests on the authenticity, the former, too, is jeopardized by reproduction when substantive duration ceases to matter. And what is really jeopardized when the historical testimony is affected is the authority of the object.” Walter Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction” in *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed., ed Gerald Mast, et al. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 666.

American story to conserve its truth, the speaker did not matter; the only thing that mattered was the spirit of the story as it descended from generations to generations. James Adair reported that “their old men are tenacious of their ancient rites and customs; imagining them to be sure channels through which all temporal things flow to them, and by which the opposite evils are averted.”<sup>686</sup>

In a nutshell, the resilience of the channel of communication between the elder<sup>687</sup> and the others among the Native Americans was guaranteed through its sacred aura. That aura commended the elders to always have the best interest of the younger members at heart when communicating with them. This was because the transaction happened at the level of spirit where both elder piety and filial piety were the two preconditions for the validation of Cherokee communication. Adair also reported that

It ought to be remarked, that they [Indians] are careful of their youth, and fail not to punish them when they transgress. Anno 1766, I saw an old head man, called the *Dog-King* (from the nature of his office) correct several young persons—some for supposed faults, and others by way of prevention... The grey-haired corrector said, he treated him in that manner according to ancient custom, through an effect of love, to induce him to shun vice, and to imitate the virtues of his illustrious forefathers, which he endeavoured to enumerate largely: when the young sinner had received his supposed due, he went off seemingly well pleased.<sup>688</sup>

Another extremely important component of the Native American communication was that the elders as well as the young people had both the duty to maintain the sacredness of this aura. That is, as elders taught youth by experience, youth could also teach elders in realms outside the elders’ experiences, all of which should be done within

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<sup>686</sup> Williams, *Adair’s History of the American Indians*, 165.

<sup>687</sup> Capitalization is meant to capture the aura of the Native American communication model.

<sup>688</sup> Williams, *Adair’s History of the American Indians*, 163-164.

the assumption that each side had the best interests of the other at heart. Vine Deloria Jr. discusses an incident in John Neihardt's *Black Elk Speaks* (1932), "Black Elk (a famous and respected Sioux Elder) shared his visions with John Neihardt because he wished to pass along to future (Indian) generations some of the reality of Oglala (Sioux) life and, one suspects, to share the burden of visions that remained unfulfilled with a compatible spirit."<sup>689</sup>

The difference between the validation logics of the Christian written word, the ethic underlying Christian communication, and the sacred Indian oral word or the ethic underlying Indian communication, was captured by Deloria in a critique he addressed to the criticism leveled by some (Western or Westernized) readers of Neihardt's *Black Elk Speaks* (1932):

Present debates center on the question of Neihardt's literary intrusions into Black Elk's system of beliefs and some scholars have said that the book reflects more of Neihardt's than it does of Black Elk. It is admittedly, difficult to discover if we are talking with Black Elk or John Neihardt, whether the vision is to be interpreted differently, and whether or not the positive emphasis which the book projects is not the optimism of two poets lost in the modern world and transforming drabness into an idealized world. **Can it matter? [Emphasis is mine]**. The very nature of great religious teachings is that they encompass everyone who understands them and personalities become indistinguishable from transcendent truth that is expressed. So let it be with *Black Elk Speaks*. That it speaks to us with simple and compelling language about an aspect of human experience and encourages us to emphasize the best that dwells within us is sufficient. Black Elk and John Neihardt would probably nod affirmatively to that statement and continue their conversation. It is good. It is enough.<sup>690</sup>

The structure of the West African communication will appear through a discussion among Africans about their academic traditions. Traditional African

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<sup>689</sup> Vine Deloria, Jr., *For this Land*, 223.

<sup>690</sup> *Ibid.*, 234.

communication also shared the common ground of communication with the Christian missionaries and the Native Americans. West Africans also conceived of communication as a means of influence. While some Africans, such as Cheikh Anta Diop, have claimed that Ancient Egypt as the first African and world civilization that developed writing and philosophy, some other Africans, such as Adu-Gyamfi, hailed Wole Soyinka's work, winner of the 1986 Nobel Prize in Literature, as the epitome of orality in writing.<sup>691</sup> Soyinka himself called his style of writing "double writing"<sup>692</sup> as a way to acknowledge the influence of his traditional Yoruba (oral) culture and his British (written) Christian and colonial education. Without repudiating the cultural and political claim of Egypt's Africanness, or the colonial, Christian, or Muslim legacies in Africa, one can affirm that West Africa's traditional channel of communication was orality.

Orality in Africa, as among Native Americans, depended on a veneration of mutuality and the sacredness of the spoken word. Whether it descended from Ancestors<sup>693</sup> to Youth or from Youth to Elders, or laterally from peer group to its peer group, or even from peers to peers within groups, the word (what Saussure called "parole")<sup>694</sup> was sacred. It carried its own proof and incarnated its own force, and was

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<sup>691</sup> Adu-Gyamfi Yaw, "Orality in Writing: Its Cultural and Political Significance in Wole Soyinka's *Ogun Abibiman*," *Research in African Literatures* 33, (fall 2002): 104-124.

<sup>692</sup> *Ibid.*, 105.

<sup>693</sup> Capitalization is meant to capture the aura of the West African communication model.

<sup>694</sup> "Parole is actual speech, the speech acts that are made possible by the language... Parole is the 'executive side of language' and for Saussure involves both "the combinations by which the speaker uses the code of the linguistic system in order to express his own thoughts" and "the psychological mechanisms which permit him to externalize these combinations" (Course, 14; Cours, 31)." Jonathan Culler, "Saussure's Theory of Language," in *Ferdinand de Saussure*, rev. ed. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), 40.

therefore sufficient in and for itself. That is to say, the speaker could not distort the word because the word was spirit: either the speaker had the spirit and would necessarily hand it down, or he or she did not have it, in which case, there was no passing it down. Africans who subscribed to the aura of the oral word did not just burden their word with sacrality, they also embodied Influence of the word. Because they had been influenced by the spoken word, West Africans sought to influence with the spoken word.

Although a work of fiction, Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958) embodies the spirit of West African communication. In addition, in a historical and insider rendition of Igbo culture, Don Ohadike, an Igbo professor of African history at Cornell University, describes the "social and political structures" of early Igbo society.<sup>695</sup> An excellent explanation of the communication among the Igbos appears in his description of how information was passed along from generation to generation in what he called "secret societies":

Some secret societies were exclusively for men, some for women, and others for both sexes. Very little is known about the secret societies because the men and women who joined them took their oath of secrecy very seriously. Besides, the Igbo were averse divulging information that might hinder the effectiveness of their secret societies; many of them functioned as the mouthpieces of ancestors, *egungun*, might appear and pronounce a verdict, in Chapter Ten of *Things Fall Apart*, Oracles, and spirits. In important judicial matters, masked ancestors (the *egwugwu* emerge to hear a series of legal cases. When that happened, no one contested their judgment, because on one could pretend to be wiser than the ancestors or the spirits. And no one ever disclosed the identity of the individual behind the mask, even if he happened to recognize the voice or the walk of a particular elder."<sup>696</sup>

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<sup>695</sup> Ohadike, "Igbo Culture and History," in *Things Fall Apart* by Achebe, xxx.

<sup>696</sup> Ibid.

After considering what could be satisfactorily addressed as communication between the Christian missionaries and the Native Americans, and the missionaries and West Africans, my study supports the claim that these three cultures shared the view that viewed communication is influence. The challenge remains to determine *how* each culture communicated its influences in the interactions between missionaries and Native Americans and missionaries and West Africans. As these three cultures connected in the Atlantic through the circulation of Christian missionaries between the Native Americans and the West Africans, the conflicts might be best explained from the perspective of communication as influence rather than from a perspective of Christian hegemony where communication was seen as a Western prerogative of influence. One way to achieve such explanation is to study power as communicated by the missionaries in order to discover the power of the Cherokees and the West Africans. In the following section, I will apply this analysis to Rev. John Leighton Wilson, missionary to West Africa, who has written extensively about the missions in general and his mission in particular. I will use the method of content analysis.

### Communicating Powers

Research on the topic of Western missionaries in general and missionaries of the ABCFM in particular has been conceived in two related ways: one trend has been to study Western missionaries as “civilized” and the non-Western peoples as

“uncivilized;”<sup>697</sup> the other trend, related to the first, has been to construe the power relationship between the two groups as one between “powerful” and “powerless”:

All eyes [of the Africans] are upon the European; they grow round with wonder as he is seen building his railways and bridges, threading the forest with telegraph and telephone and metalled highway, where before was only bush path, so narrow that two men might not walk abreast...And so in every receptive mind the question burns: whence has the white man gotten these things, and what is the secret of his power? The Negro has no doubt as to the answer. It is because the white man can read and write, because (as we should say) he has been educated. When the heathen see how their own people are changed by attending the mission school...and how they gain something of the white man’s power as they embrace his religion, the general keenness to “learn book” beggars description. Their reading is the Bible. There they discover Christ. “I know I am a man, because I feel I am a sinner.” The experience of the Negro who said that becomes the experience of many Negroes. So the movement turns Christward.<sup>698</sup>

Despite the tendency to pose the history of missionaries in foreign lands as a struggle between powerful Western missionaries and powerless natives,<sup>699</sup> some recent

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<sup>697</sup> On March 3, 1819, a Civilization Fund Act was issued by the United States Congress, “for introducing among them [Indians] the habits and arts of civilization,” “United States Congress, Civilization Fund Act, March 3, 1819,” in Fraser, *The School in the United State*, 46-47. Various Western and non-Western scholars have used this framework. Among the most influential Western scholars apart from the missionaries themselves have been William McLoughlin, who wrote *Cherokees and Missionaries, 1789-1839* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995), in which he argues that proximity with the Cherokees, for example, caused the missionaries to defy the national frontier myth of “savages” and “civilized” in order to “conquer” Cherokee religion and culture with the Bible and Western civilization (1-13). In addition, Vine Deloria Jr.--elected by *Time* on September 9, 1974, along with Billy Graham as one of the eleven religious leaders and scholars who were “shapers and shakers of the Christian faith”—argues, “One of the major problems of the Indian people is the missionary” because “missionaries approached the Indian tribes in an effort to bring them into Western European religious life.” Vine Deloria, Jr., *For this Land*, 22-23. Emerging African scholars on Christianity such as Harvey Sindima called for a need to “transcend [...] ideological distortions of the history of African Christianity...[because] what is often given as church history is actually the history of the expansion and domination of Western civilization.” Sindima, *Drums of Redemption*, xii.

<sup>698</sup> *Church Missionary Society*, 1920, No 648327.

<sup>699</sup> Hollywood has also played a major role in reinforcing the idea of a struggle between civilized Western missionaries and uncivilized natives in movies like *Stanley and Livingstone* (1939), *The Inn of the Sixth Happiness* (1958), *Zulu* (1964), *Hawai* (1966) as explained Mary Taylor Huber and Nancy C. Lutkehaus in *Gendered Missions*, 4.



scholars have scrutinized more closely missionary work in foreign lands and the recent phenomena of indigenous Christianity.<sup>700</sup> Unfortunately, while these scholars have richly expanded the conceptual nature of power,<sup>701</sup> their works have remained too grounded in theory and been too Western in their framework. In other words, the research of these Western scholars has contributed to a deeper understanding of how power operates, but do Native American or West African historical concepts of power fit into, say, the “four faces of power” outlined by Peter Digeser?

Research is too scanty and vague to allow us to answer this question in the affirmative.<sup>702</sup> The tendency to assume that Western categories of knowledge are universal ignores the cultural roots of power. This tendency comports epistemological risks of error with possible consequences of misguided policy that could have heavy human costs for Westerners as well as for non-Westerners.<sup>703</sup> This present dissertation

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<sup>700</sup> A group of scholars argued that a new form of Indigenous Christianity emerged after Indigenous people “adopt[ed] and adapt[ed] Christianity,” thereby recognizing not powerlessness of the natives, but power on their part. Nicholas Griffiths and Fernando Cervantes, ed. *Spiritual Encounters: Interactions between Christianity and Native Religions in Colonial America* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), 7.

<sup>701</sup> The question of power has preoccupied thinkers in Western Civilization since the Greeks. Renaissance philosophes like Machiavelli speculated on the nature of power, but did not close the question; nor did the social scientists like Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, or the contemporary Michel Foucault. Peter Digeser summarized these evolutions of the conception of power in an excellent article, “The Fourth Faces of Power,” *The Journal of Politics* 54, no. 4 (November 1992): 977-1007; Sociologists like James C. Scott have offered penetrating and groundbreaking analysis of the power and “weapons of the weak” in *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*; Per Anderson takes this argument even further in, “A Theology of Power: Being beyond Domination,” *The Journal of Religion* 76, no. 3 (July 1996): 489-490.

<sup>702</sup> Western historians have only recently recognized the use of oral history. Purdue, *Nations Remembered*, xii.

<sup>703</sup> Imperialism and its human costs are discussed in Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993).

addresses these issues and is part of a larger effort to discover the cultural concepts of power during the missionary work among the Native Americans and Africans.

A problem facing this present research is the current bias of most Western scholars toward writing, arguing that Native Americans and Africans wrote little would enable us to track their own conceptions of power. One possible solution has been to use oral histories.<sup>704</sup> While aware of the potential of oral stories to that end—which I will exploit elsewhere—I propose to investigate in this present project the possibility of studying the power of the missionaries and the natives from the missionary records.

My definition of missionary power relies on Peter Digeser’s article, “The Fourth Face of Power,” in which he describes the four faces of power. My research of missionary and native power, however, uses only the first three “faces of power” because they all have the following assumption in common: “The first three faces of power agree at some level that A exercises power over B when A affects B in a manner contrary to B’s interests.”<sup>705</sup> The fourth face of power (Michel Foucault’s conception of power which argues that “power is everywhere”) is not useful for this study.<sup>706</sup>

I will therefore study missionary power in terms of positive and negative power. By *positive* power, I mean any broad statement of missionary control of the communicative transactions with the native peoples. By *negative* power, I mean any

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<sup>704</sup> Purdue, *Nations Remembered*, xii.

<sup>705</sup> Peter Digeser, “the Fourth Face of Power,” *The Journal of Politics* 54, no. 4 (November 1992): 977-1007, 980.

<sup>706</sup> *Ibid.*

broad statement of missionary lack of control of the communicative transactions. I will study Native American and African power in the same way. By positive native power, I mean any broad statement by the missionaries of native peoples' conscious control of the communicative transactions with them. By negative native power, I mean any broad statement by the missionaries of any lack of control of the communicative transactions with the native peoples because of the latter's conscious interference.

### Purpose of Study

The purpose of this research is to test the assumption by many missionaries, historians, and social commentators that the ABCFM missionaries had more power than did the Cherokees and West Africans:

In a paper read at the annual meeting of 1844 on "The Present Duty of the Church to the Heathen World," Secretary Treat [of the ABCFM] argued that it was in the power of Christians to evangelize the whole world in less than fifty years. He estimated the Board's share of the non-Christian world at sixty million.<sup>707</sup>

In 1810 the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions was founded. After sending its first missionaries to India, in 1817 the ABCFM sent Rev. Cyrus Kingsbury to establish a mission station among the Cherokees (Chickamauga, later renamed Brainerd) near Chattanooga, Tennessee.<sup>708</sup> In 1834 the ABCFM authorized John Leighton Wilson, a former student at the Columbia Theological Seminary of South

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<sup>707</sup> Strong, *The Story of the American Board*, 160.

<sup>708</sup> Tracy reported that in 1818 "As the health of Mr. Evarts required relaxation and travel, it was thought advisable that he should visit the Cherokee mission. During his visit, he acquired much important information, consulted fully with brethren concerning the affairs of the mission, decided that Chickamaugh should thenceforth be called Brainerd..." Tracy, *History of American Missions*, 71.

Carolina (now in Decatur, Georgia) to establish a mission station at Cape Palmas on the Coast of West Africa in today's Liberia.<sup>709</sup>

Despite overwhelming signs of inexperience in the business of foreign missions and little guarantee that the missionaries would achieve the results of conversion of the natives as they envisioned it, missionaries indiscriminately sent reports from missionary fields detailing the unfolding of their power. In West Africa, for example, Wilson reported such exercise of power in the following dialogue in his diary on Wednesday February 5, 1833. He wrote:

“Friday 7<sup>th</sup>--Sailed this morning from G. Bassa—had a long and interesting conversation with two Kroomen. They joined together against me in a strenuous argumentation in behalf of their gregries. I asked one whose gregries I held in my hand why he wore it. He replied promptly, “Gregrieman give me to keep me from drown.” Whilst I was trying to show him that it was nothing more than a piece of horn and wholly incapable of rendering him any service, the other interrupted me and pointed to a Greek Testament which I held in the other hand and said, “That your gregrie, you sabby it (understand it) and it take care of you—but it not take care of black man, cause me no sabby it--” But pointing to the gregrie in my hand “me sabby it. And it take care of us. It no take care of white man cause he no sabby it.” After I explained to him that I did not trust in that book to take care of me, but that it pointed out my duty to trust in God, and that it taught also that whoever trusted in any thing like a horn, they would perish with it, they wanted to know what the white man book did teach. I explained to them at length what the Bible taught about the Creation of our first parents—the introduction of sin into the world and the agency which the Devil exerted in the world. One of them exclaimed with emphasis then the “Devil make fool of black men make him trust in gregrie that keep him from drowning [*sic*].”<sup>710</sup>

The research questions I address are: How did missionaries identify their power or lack thereof? How did missionaries identify native power or lack thereof? What link did

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<sup>709</sup> James A. Patterson, “Wilson, John Leighton,” *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions* ed. by Anderson, 742-43.

<sup>710</sup> Papers of the ABCFM, Unit 2, Reel 149, 46-47.

the missionaries establish between their powers and the powers of those they intended to convert? During the centennial of the ABCFM, a pamphlet was issued in all Sunday schools to raise missionary awareness in students for the purpose of raising money from them but also to assure them of the power of the ABCFM in the execution of the mission entrusted by Jesus Christ. For that assurance, students were made to sing “A Century of Success” on American Board Day, October 30, 1910.<sup>711</sup> Then students were to perform a role play in which the supplement teacher was to “assign to one class not younger than twelve years, the teacher to train the speakers carefully to be in charge. Don’t let the parts be read. Speak slowly and naturally. Tell it as a story to arouse interest.”<sup>712</sup>

On the other hand, Native Americans in general, and Cherokees in particular publicized in the 1970s the idea of a Native American struggle to recover their lost power. James Treat, a renowned Native American writer and activist, called the 1970s “the Red Power Era.”<sup>713</sup> The conquest of the “Red Power” was to be a totalizing process

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<sup>711</sup> “Opening Hymn: Onward Christian Soldiers.” Then the supplement teacher was to sing “What does the “Board” do?” and the school was to reply “First of all, it has sent out six hundred missionaries to far away lands where Christ is not known—heroic Soldiers of the Cross, teaching, healing, helping all men everywhere.” Department for Young People and Education, American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, *1810-1910: A Century of Success*, no 62574, 2. Then the school was to sing: “Did you know there are half a million people there [‘our island’ or foreign lands]? Twenty years ago they were worse savages than in any of our mission fields. Head hunters and cannibals lived in the Island.” Then the supplement was to sing: “If it is as hard as that aren’t we afraid to tackle the task?” The school was to reply in song: “For just such a task, Christ said, “Lo, I am with you alway.” His power makes mission possible. Ibid., 5.

<sup>712</sup> Ibid., 4. A third speaker was to say: “...Then look at Africa. We are gathering the children into schools, teaching the boys to be good farmers and carpenters, while the girls learn to sew and keep house as we do...” A fourth speaker was to say: “Do you ever think that every dollar we invest in these children across the seas will do ten times as much good as in this country?...For every dollar the American Board invests in medical missions each year, there are twenty-one cases treated in the hospitals abroad. Five cents will relieve agony and suffering as only Christian doctors can. Everyone ought to have a part in such an investment.” Ibid.

<sup>713</sup> Treat, *Around Sacred Fire*, 14.

because the loss of power had also been total. At the religious level, William Baldrige in an essay he wrote for a compilation of essays edited by James Treat for the purpose of conquering the lost power, called for an end to “colonial Christianity,”<sup>714</sup> while arguing that “the 500-year war against Christian colonialism...is a struggle for justice that unavoidably becomes a struggle for power.”<sup>715</sup> Even the most Christian purist of all, Adrian Jacobs, agreed with this struggle to make Christianity “culturally relevant” if only Native American Christians would understand that “[this] does not mean compromising the truth [that] there is only one way to God and only one mediator between God and man—Christ Jesus.”<sup>716</sup> The following discussion is a test of the assumption by both missionaries and some native scholars that missionaries had more power than the natives, which allowed them to dominate them.

At the time the mission of West Africa was put underway in 1833,<sup>717</sup> the ABCFM was in “a period of adolescence”<sup>718</sup> in its work of missions. At the seminary, Wilson

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<sup>714</sup> William Baldrige, “Reclaiming our Histories,” in “Reclaiming our Histories,” in *Native and Christian: Indigenous Voices on Religious Identity in the United States and Canada*, ed. by Treat, 85.

<sup>715</sup> *Ibid.*, 86-87.

<sup>716</sup> Adrian Jacobs, “The Meeting of the Two Ways,” in *Native and Christian: Indigenous Voices on Religious Identity in the United States and Canada*, ed. by Treat, 18

<sup>717</sup> “The letter of Dr. [Benjamin B.] Wisner, one of the Secretaries of the American Board, of the date January 5, 1833 [to John Wilson]...read as follows: “I was much gratified yesterday by the receipt of your letter of the 25 ult. Glad to have the evidence that you have made up your mind that, Providence permitting, you will be a missionary, and that you will go to Africa; on a mission to which country, by young men from the Southern States, my heart has been for some time set. Your letter, I regard as an offer of yourself to the Board for such a mission, and as such I will communicate it to the Prudential Committee when I shall receive the testimonials of your professors.” DuBose, ed. *Memoirs of Rev. John Leighton Wilson*, 39.

<sup>718</sup> William Strong entitled the eighth chapter of his book, “The Period of Adolescence” in which he argued that “Quietly but steadily the Board kept growing during this first period [1810-1850] of little more than a generation (151)...So that by 1850 the American Board was honored the world round. Its place, its work,

imagined the world to be engaged in spiritual wars and that he need a strong “development of spiritual life” as he was preparing to go to Africa. This was the idea he communicated to his fiancé in a letter after he volunteered as the head missionary to West Africa: “Are you ready to hear that I have ‘volunteered for war’?,” Wilson asked her on December 29, 1832, “I have, but it is to the American Board and to contend with the powers of darkness in Africa. I have been preparing to wield the ‘the sword of the spirit,’ and have neither skill nor wish to handle the broadsword.”<sup>719</sup>

In this way, Wilson construed his powers to have unbounded limits as long as he continued to benefit from God’s grace: “Give me the blessing and presence of God, and I would sooner be in the deserts of Africa or the cold regions of Greenland than in the most refined society and affluent circumstances without the comforts of religion.”<sup>720</sup> Here, it is important to notice that Wilson did not say that he, as an individual, was more powerful than Africans.<sup>721</sup> He and other missionaries believed they received their power from God.

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its efficiency, its prestige, and its claim were all established.” Strong, *The Story of the American Board*, 151-162.

<sup>719</sup> DuBose, ed. *Memoirs of Rev. John Leighton Wilson*, 46.

<sup>720</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.

<sup>721</sup> According to Lamin Sanneh, professor of missions and world Christianity and history at Yale Divinity School, this is a belief espoused by many Christians today, especially those in the “liberal ... tradition,” which they state before denouncing the supposed power imbalance supposedly between the powerful missionaries [like John Wilson] and the powerless Africans. In Sanneh’s words, “Much of the standard Western scholarship on Christian missions proceeds by looking at motives of individual missionaries and concludes by faulting the entire missionary enterprise as being part of the machinery of Western cultural imperialism.” Sanneh makes this statement on April 8, 1987, in his article, “Christian Missions and the Western Guilt Complex” published in the *Christian Century* out of concern for this “guilt complex about missions which I have since come to know so well after living more than two decades in the West. I have found Western Christians to be very embarrassed about meeting converts from Asia or Africa, but when I have repeated for them my personal obstacles in joining the church, making it clear that I was in no way pressured into doing so, they have seemed gratefully unburdened of a sense of guilt (1).

As a corollary, Wilson saw himself not as a sovereign in the kingdom of missions, but rather as an instrument of God who only obeyed the orders of the son of God: “Are we not laid under infinite obligations to him [Jesus Christ] who has loved us with an everlasting love, and ought I now to hesitate about obeying his command, ‘Go teach all nation’?”<sup>722</sup>

One might wonder how, in this context, a Western (Christian) guilt complex developed, or how liberal Christians came to the assumptions that the missionaries “regularly used their superior cultural advantage to instill a sense of inferiority in natives.”<sup>723</sup> How can we explain that “There is a widespread tendency in the West to see missions as destroyers of indigenous cultures or else as alien cultural agents from the West”?<sup>724</sup>

#### Purpose Statement

The purpose of this research is to test those assumptions by many missionaries, historians, and social commentators that missionaries of the ABCFM, for example, were more powerful than the West African converts and that they therefore coerced the West Africans into becoming Christians against their desires.

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[http://www.religion-online.org/cgi-bin/researchd.dll/showarticle?item\\_id=143](http://www.religion-online.org/cgi-bin/researchd.dll/showarticle?item_id=143); internet source; accessed March 8, 2006, 1-2.

<sup>722</sup> DuBose, ed. *Memoirs of Rev. John Leighton Wilson*, 38.

<sup>723</sup> Lamin Sanneh, “Christian Missions and the Western Guilt Complex,” [http://www.religion-online.org/cgi-bin/researchd.dll/showarticle?item\\_id=143](http://www.religion-online.org/cgi-bin/researchd.dll/showarticle?item_id=143); internet source; accessed on March 8, 2006, 2.

<sup>724</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.



### Preview of Areas to be Addressed

Different methods have been employed by historians, missiologists, and other scholars of missions to look into the story of mission work in Africa. Most students of these cross-cultural relations have weighed variously the power of each group, and the conclusions seem overwhelmingly to point to the fact that missionary work was a relationship between powerful missionaries and powerless natives. Although some historians have argued a more complex case than this, their scholarship nevertheless has supported a consensus on missionary hegemony and a native subalternization as I showed in the Introduction.

Antonio Gramsci's "History of the Subaltern Classes" has influenced many students of missionaries in this second category. These scholars have used Gramsci's notion of hegemony and his ideology (both attempted refinements of Karl Marx's conceptions of the history of the working classes and the ideology of capitalism) to understand missionaries' leadership among the natives.<sup>725</sup> Gramsci's contention that "the supremacy of a social group manifests itself in two ways, as 'domination' and as 'intellectual and moral leadership,'" has served to explain the structure of the missionary "hegemony."<sup>726</sup> In this Gramscian proposition the material forces and the ideologies are

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<sup>725</sup> John and Jean Comaroff, *Ethnography and the Historical Imagination* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview, 1992) and Harvey J. Sindima, *Drums of Redemption: Introduction to African Christianity* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1994) are some of the best cases.

<sup>726</sup> John and Jean Comaroff, *Ethnography and the Historical Imagination*, 130.

not separate, as Karl Marx thought, but are mutually inclusive, the heads and tails of the same coin.<sup>727</sup>

This Marxist shift that occurred in social theory, where the analysis of the masses replaced the analysis of the individual, has necessarily had quantitative implications.<sup>728</sup> However, as John Tosh once advised, “The prospect that lies before historians, then, is not the solution of major questions by quantitative means, but new possibilities of synthesis, in which statistical inference is combined with the perceptions of traditional ‘qualitative’ history.”<sup>729</sup> Some historians have heeded this advice, but have done so in more traditional areas of inquiry like economic history, political history, social history, gender history, and the like.<sup>730</sup>

In the meantime, quantitative and qualitative studies have been absent in the study of the history of missions. While there is a wealth of literature on the history of missionary communication,<sup>731</sup> I have looked in vain for a quantitative and qualitative analysis of a history of missionary communication. Christopher Simpson believes this is because communication research only became a “distinct discipline with sociology ...

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<sup>727</sup> Antonio Gramsci, (i) *History of the Subaltern Classes*; (ii) *The Concept of “Ideology”*; (iii) *Cultural Themes: Ideological Material*, in *Media and Cultural Studies: Keywords*, ed. by Durham and Kellner (Malden, Mass: Blackwell, 2001), 43-47.

<sup>728</sup> Some historians have tried to quantify the power of the missionaries. Tosh, *The Pursuit of History*, 160.

<sup>729</sup> *Ibid.*, 176.

<sup>730</sup> Thomas C. Holt, “Reconstruction in United States Textbooks,” *The Journal of American History* 81, no. 4 (March 1995), 1641-1651.

<sup>731</sup> Eugene Nida is one of the pioneers with *Message and Mission: The Communication of the Christian Faith* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1960).

between 1950 and 1955.”<sup>732</sup> Therefore, as a fairly recent discipline, it has been much influenced by the political studies of Harold Lasswell, one of the first communication scholars: “For Lasswell, the study of all social communication could be reduced to ‘who says what to whom with what effect’—a dictum that is practically inscribed in stone over the portals of those U.S. colleges offering communication as a field of study.”<sup>733</sup>

Although many mission scholars before the 1950s had been communicating the gospel before Lasswell, most of them would fit in his model of social communication, although as mentioned above, missionary communication was more complex than this model supposes. Most missionaries like Wilson had been confronted with the question of knowing how to spread the Christian influence among the non-Christians. Wilson even wrote and dedicated a book to this subject in 1856, which he concluded with this appeal: “I offer but a single motive, in conclusion, why we should engage more heartily in this work ... Indeed, nothing seems to be wanting, but to lay aside our cowardice, and advance, in reliance of our Great Captain, to secure a certain and glorious victory.”<sup>734</sup>

Throughout the missionary history of the ABCFM and later,

The basic thrust and emphasis [of Nida’s book] remain the same, since the task of communicating God’s news to the people of this world does not materially change despite the invention of new media and the increasingly rapid techniques for widespread communication. In two thousand years people have not invented any

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<sup>732</sup> Christopher Simpson, “Defining Psychological War” and “World War and Early Modern Communication Research,” *Science of Coercion: Communication Research and Psychological Warfare: 1945-1960* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 3-30.

<sup>733</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>734</sup> Wilson, *Western Africa*, 524-527.

new sins nor have they found any substitute for the grace of God through Jesus Christ.<sup>735</sup>

If it is true that the mission of communicating the Christian faith has not changed since the birth of Christianity, it is no less true that the way of communicating the Christian faith has changed over the years. Even when Henderson Reid quotes David Read's *The Communication of the Gospel* with the latter arguing that "the preacher exists to communicate [the gospel],"<sup>736</sup> Reid still felt the need to write a dissertation on "ways in which two-way communication in small groups may strengthen the impartation of the gospel through preaching."<sup>737</sup>

In that sense, what has interested scholars other than theologians has been to understand the forces at play in the process of imparting the gospel. Is the preacher the medium that determines the meaning of the message, in which case it would be concluded that the preacher has "power" over his audiences?<sup>738</sup> Before we can answer this question, a discussion of the cultural background of the concept of power is imperative. Indeed despite the internationalization of the concept of "power,"<sup>739</sup> it has

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<sup>735</sup> What makes this observation credible is the fact that its author, Charles Kraft, is a professor of Christian communication and author of *Christianity in Culture* (1979), and was selected to write the preface to the revised edition of Eugen A. Nida's much acclaimed *Message and Mission: The Communication of the Christian Faith*, Charles Kraft, "Preface" to *Message and Mission* by Nida, xi.

<sup>736</sup> Clyde Henderson Reid, *Two-Way Communication Through Small Groups in Relation to Preaching* (Boston: Boston University School of Theology, Th.D., 1960), 3.

<sup>737</sup> *Ibid.*, 3-4.

<sup>738</sup> According to Peter Digeser, there is a large consensus in the West on the definition of power which posits that "A exercises power over B when A affects B in a manner contrary to B's interests." "The Fourth Faces of Power," *The Journal of Politics* 54, no. 4 (November 1992): 977-1007.

<sup>739</sup> Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, one of the pioneers of the subaltern studies in India worked with the Western understanding of power outlined in Digeser's article quote above. In her article, "Can the

remained culturally Western.<sup>740</sup> The definition of power, “to be able,” given by the Online Etymology Dictionary, has permeated the Western popular understanding of the concept so much so that even when it is not clearly defined upfront,<sup>741</sup> it is assumed.<sup>742</sup>

If we recognize that the definition of power is Western, we are then forced to admit that there is a Western cultural influence of the concept of power, especially when it is transposed in foreign lands.<sup>743</sup> It is in response to this concern that many African scholars, struggling with Western cultural imperialism, have advocated a displacement of

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Subaltern Speak?” she proposes to discover if the subaltern is able to speak on his own. She then argues that the subaltern cannot speak within the constraints of Western cultural imperialism because he or she cannot resist the power the Western colonizer which denies him such voice. Gayatri Spivak in *The Postcolonial Studies Reader*, ed. Ashcroft Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin (London: Routledge, 1995), 24-28.

<sup>740</sup> According to the Online Etymology Dictionary, the origin of the meaning of the word “power” dates back to 1297. Then it meant, “to be able.” Since then, “power” has taken various other meaning in the West but has retained this core meaning ‘to be able.’ <http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=power>; internet source; accessed on Marc 9, 2005.

<sup>741</sup> Judi Chamberlin and Aart H. Schene complained in the *Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal* that “Nearly every kind of mental health program claims to “empower” its clients, yet in practice there have been a few operational definitions of the term.” Judi Chamberlin and Aart H. Schene, “A Working Definition of Empowerment,” *Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal* 20, no. 4 (Spring 1997), 43.

<sup>742</sup> Although Chamberlin and Schene accused others of leaving “empowerment” undefined, the only difference between their defined concept of empowerment and the undefined concept of empowerment of others is slim. This difference can be reduced to the simple fact that the latter group left “empowerment” undefined while Chamberlin and Schene attempted to define it. Indeed, it is true that “empowerment” is not defined when “conservative US politicians have promoted welfare “reforms” by claiming that cutting the benefits will “empower” recipients (who would thus, presumably be self-sufficient);” however, the fact that Chamberlin and Schene and “a group of consumer/survivor self-help practitioners” “defined empowerment as having ... decision making power...” does not clarify the concept of empowerment any better. The bottom line is that both groups still work with “power” meaning “to be able.” Ibid., 44. In short, the definitional discussion of Chamberlin and Schene shows how commonplace the usage of the meaning of “power” has become in the West.

<sup>743</sup> Chamberlin and Schene noticed that “when I have spoken abroad, I find that the word is usually not translated; the translator merely repeats “empowerment” in English, perhaps hoping that the listeners will be able to draw some meaning from the context.” Ibid. 43-44.

the West from the center of study and its replacement with Africa.<sup>744</sup> In this context, it becomes difficult to balance the Western accounts of missionary power against their African counterparts, especially when we continue to assume that Africans understood the Western definition of power at the time of missionary interactions.

Another difficulty, for an African scholar, is to find ways to solve this equation without falling into the trap of cultural chauvinism. In other words, how can an African scholar arrive at conclusions that could meet the criteria of universal validity and reliability in the academic world? One possible answer is to use content analysis. Some historians of color have already used this method with great success, but these scholars are American.<sup>745</sup> How can an African scholar work with the missionary documents in order to calculate the power of the missionaries and the Africans without being biased one way or the other?

### Conclusion on Communicating Powers

Although content analysis has not been applied to the field of missionary studies in history, it holds the promise of checking the biases of scholars to a significant degree.

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<sup>744</sup> The pioneer of this position has been Cheikh Anta Diop who has inspired the Afrocentric movement in the United States with scholars such as Asante Molefi Kete. In addition, some American scholars had found it necessary to hear the African perspective in order to balance the missionary perspective. Edward Berman is one such scholar; he is the editor of *African Reactions to Missionary Education* in which Thelma Awori has her "Revolt against the "Civilizing Mission," 119.

<sup>745</sup> Thomas C. Holt, an African-American historian, has used a content analysis to do a "review" of the "Reconstruction in United States Textbooks" with great success (1961) and with "striking" conclusions (1965). Thomas C. Holt, "Reconstruction in United States Textbooks," *The Journal of American History* 81, no. 4 (March 1995), 1641-1651. The article was published by *The Journal of American History*, one of the most prestigious journals in U.S. History. His article is also included in Kimberly A. Neuendorf, *The Content Analysis Guidebook* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2002), 262.

It can help identify discursive gaps in the missionary writings, which could be filled by an African discourse of power. As missionaries and the natives blended to form a new coalition of Christians, there is no reason not to expect an expansion of the conceptual worlds of each group. In this way, the method of content analysis should help us confirm or refute the assumption that Western missionaries were more powerful than their African converts and give new meaning to the Western guilt complex identified by Sanneh. I will use a qualitative and quantitative content analysis on the discourse of Rev. John Leighton Wilson in Africa not only because he wrote a book containing an institutional discussion of missions as well as his personal opinions while Rev. Cyrus Kingsbury did not, but also because Wilson worked in Africa which because of the Christian story that Africans are descendants of Ham and slavery has been the theater of more discourse of power.

### Qualitative Content Analysis

Let me repeat here that despite overwhelming signs of inexperience in the business of foreign missions and little guarantee that the missionaries would achieve the results of conversion of the natives as they envisioned it, missionaries frequently sent reports from the field detailing their power. Recall John Wilson's diary entry concerning his own such exercise of power in West Africa, for example. Wilson wrote the entry during his exploratory tour of West Africa for the prospective of the establishment of a missionary station, so one can understand his optimism. However, this passage, even taken with his reports after the tour, is not enough to understand fully how his power

evolved in the missionary. Fortunately, Wilson lived long enough (seventy-five years)<sup>746</sup> to describe his unique<sup>747</sup> experience in a book, *Western Africa. Its History, Condition, and Prospects*,<sup>748</sup> published in 1856. Reading both sources not as three separate reports (one from the tour and one from missionary field reports), but as one single report documenting the evolution of Wilson's conception of power, I hope to answer the following research questions: How did missionaries identify their power or lack thereof? How did missionaries identify native power or lack thereof? What link did the missionaries establish between their powers and native powers?

Before explaining how I investigated these questions, I include here a brief description of the text that I used. The first text is the "Report of the State of the Colony

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<sup>746</sup> James A. Patterson, "Wilson, John Leighton," *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions*, ed. by Anderson, 742-43.

<sup>747</sup> "Wilson wrote, "There is no want of knowledge of the facts which led to the discovery of Western Africa, the manifold efforts that have been made to plant European colonies along her shores, the scenes of violence that have been enacted there in connection with the foreign slave trade or the persevering efforts that have been made to put an end to it; but beyond these general facts very little is known, even at the present day, of the actual state of the country. The interior life of the people, their moral, social, civil, and religious condition, as well as their peculiar notions and customs, have always been a sealed book to the rest of the world ... Little or no reliance could be placed on any information derived from Africans who were brought to this country in former years as slaves. They had no knowledge of the country, except of the particular district in which they were brought up. Besides, it was long after they were brought to America before they acquired sufficient knowledge of the English language to impart what information they had, that all the freshness of their early recollections had passed from their minds, or were so mixed up with the bewildering associations of their new houses, that they could not give any reliable account of their native land." Wilson, *Western Africa*, iii-iv.

<sup>748</sup> "The writer has spent between eighteen and twenty years in the country. He has had opportunity to visit every place of importance along the sea-coast, and has made extended excursions in many of the maritime districts. He has studied and reduced to writing two of the leading languages of the country, and has enjoyed, in these various ways, more than ordinary advantages for making himself acquainted with the actual condition of the people. He claims for his book the merit of being a faithful and unprecedented record of African society." *Ibid.*, iv.



of Liberia” dated March 24, 1834.<sup>749</sup> I focused on the part of the report that deals with “How Far the Colony will aid in Disseminating Christianity in Africa (20-23)”<sup>750</sup> because this part projected the power relationship between Wilson and the West Africans. I also considered a part of the report,<sup>751</sup> included in the “Journal of Leighton Wilson on a Missionary Tour to Western Africa in the Year of 1834,”<sup>752</sup> describing a meeting that took place on Wednesday 12, 1834 between Wilson and the kings of the coast.

The second text I used in this study was Wilson’s 527-page-book mentioned above about which he said: “The design of this volume is to give information about a portion of the world of which very little is truly known.”<sup>753</sup> Opposite the title page is a drawing of “Toko,<sup>754</sup> a Gabun<sup>755</sup> Chief” of Mpongwe people.<sup>756</sup> Because Wilson’s book

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<sup>749</sup> “We were instructed by the Committee to spend as much time as we could during our visit to the West African Coast at Monrovia, partly for the purpose of acquiring information concerning the state of the colony, as it has become a subject of such deep and vital interest in the US and so intimately connected with the scheme which shall hereafter be adopted for the evangelization of Africa, that we have thought its importance such as to demand a separate report.” Report of John Leighton Wilson and Stephen R. Wyncoop to the Prudential Committee of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, March 24, 1834, Received April 18, 1834, Papers of the ABCFM, 11.

<sup>750</sup> Ibid., 20-23.

<sup>751</sup> “This morning we went ashore to see the kings of Cape Town,…” Ibid., 50-54.

<sup>752</sup> Ibid., 38.

<sup>753</sup> Ibid., iii.

<sup>754</sup> Toko is a “man of higher grade of moral character,” wearing a European hat on his braided hair, an ear ring in the left ear, and a European-style shirt with a loose tie, and he appears to have posed for the drawing. “Among those who grew up to maturity before any of the advantages of education were brought within their reach, were several men of remarkable character, a brief sketch of a few of whom will not be uninteresting, especially as their characters will illustrate the natural capacity of this race for improvement.” Ibid., 293.

<sup>755</sup> “The Pongo, or Gabun Coast, as it is now called, extends from the Kamerun River, 4 degrees north latitude, to Mayumba, 3 degrees south latitude. It is upward of four hundred miles in length from north to south, varies in breadth from sixty to two hundred miles, and lies between the Atlantic on the west and the Sierra del Crystal Mountain on the east. The country receives its name from the Pongo or Mpongwe people,

turned out to be a description of other personal experiences not related to his direct interaction with the West Africans, I limited my study to only those parts of the book that directly deal with the subject of missions, only using some information in the non-selected parts of the books as background information when necessary. Thus, my study concerned Chapter Five in Part Four titled “Christian Missions in Western Africa” (pp. 481-527) and Chapter Six in Part Four entitled, “The Agency Devolving on White Men in Connection with Missions to West Africa” (pp. 505-527).

### Coding Process

In the writings of Rev. John Leighton Wilson, I looked for any straightforward reference to missionary power to convert the “heathen African” (Category **M** for Missionary power), and any straightforward reference to the heathen African’s preventing in any kind of way the missionaries from achieving their aim (Category **HA** for Heathen African power). This method is based on the synthesis of power relationship provided by Peter Digeser in his article, “The Fourth Face of Power,” in which he argued that “The first three faces of power agree at some level that A exercises power over B when A affects B in a manner contrary to B’s interests.”<sup>757</sup> Thus applying this synthesis of power to the first category (**M**), I obtained the following reformulation: “Missionaries

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who, in former years, were the dominant race in this region of country, but who are now very much reduced to in number and power, and are to be found only along the banks of the Gabon River.” Ibid., 283.

<sup>756</sup> “A Christian mission was established among these people in 1842 by the author and two other missionaries under the auspices of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions.” Ibid., 298.

<sup>757</sup> Peter Digeser, “the Fourth Face of Power,” *The Journal of Politics* 54, no. 4 (November 1992): 977-1007, 980.

exercise power over the Heathen Africans when the Missionaries affect the Heathen Africans in a manner contrary to the Heathen Africans' interests--assuming these interests are to remain heathen.”

As a result, any sentence from Wilson's referring to anything missionaries did that involved the heathen African natives was coded as a reference to missionary power. The following is an example of such sentences and the way I would code them (in bold):

According to the Annual Report of the [Church Missionary] Society for 1855, the mission **(M)**, in Sierra Leone Colony alone, numbers fifteen stations **(M)**, connected with which there are 3354 communicants **(M)**. Nor will their educational operations appear less remarkable **(M)** when it is known that they have now in active service as many as eighty-eight native teachers **(M)**, as many as fifty nine common schools **(M)**, one grammar-school for boys **(M)**, another for females **(M)**, and one seminary in which the Latin, Greek, and Hebrew languages are successfully taught **(M)**—the whole number of pupils in these various schools being near six thousand **(M)**. The work of translation has been going on at the same time.<sup>758</sup>

Thus, in this passage, I coded ten references to missionary power. Note that the last sentence is about translation and is not considered a reference to missionary power because it does not involve the heathen Africans in a way that would verify Digeser's synthesis of power.

On the other hand, applying Digeser's synthesis of power to the second category of heathen African power (HA), I obtained the following reformulation: “Heathen Africans exercise power over the Missionaries when the Heathen Africans affect the Missionaries in a manner contrary to the Missionaries' interests—assuming these interests are to implement the missionary program.”

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<sup>758</sup> Wilson, *Western Africa*, 489.

Consequently, sentences of the following type are considered references to Heathen African power (coded in bold):

In consequence of the death of the King of Abeokuta, who had received Mr. Townsend [the missionary of the Church Missionary Society] with so much kindness, and the disturbances in the country growing out of it, the missionaries were detained eighteen months at Badagry **(HA)**...Subsequently, the town was nearly destroyed in war, and the mission was transferred to Lagos **(HA)**, thirty six miles to the eastward **(HA)**, and a more convenient point by which to reach Aabeokuta **(HA)**.<sup>759</sup>

In this passage, I coded four references to the power of the Heathen Africans. Note that the death of the King did not constitute a reference to the power of Heathen Africans until the mention that missionaries suffered as a result of it. Also note that in the last sentence, I coded “thirty six miles to the eastward” as a reference to the power of heathen Africans because Wilson meant to give a further idea of the hardship that the missionaries faced on top of transferring the mission to Lagos.

Finally, I focused on reading through photocopies of the two chapters in Wilson’s book two times looking for such references to missionary and heathen African powers. One thing that struck me on a first reading of these chapters was Wilson’s writing style. It was very descriptive but structured around a simple and unique pattern. He tended to analyze each mission at three levels: (1) the history of its involvement in Africa, (2) the difficulties it encountered, and (3) the results it obtained. Therefore, I decided that Wilson’s chapters could be summarized in the following four (4) themes, coded **A**, **B**, **C**, and **D**.

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<sup>759</sup> Ibid., 490.

**A)** Christianity is more powerful than African religion; therefore, a Christian person, whether white, missionary, European, or black has more power than a heathen African. A sample of this theme would be as follows:

Heathen nations of the present day have none of the elasticity and energy of character that distinguished the great civilized heathen nations of antiquity. They have no recuperative energy, by which they can rise to importance in the world. They have sunk too low in sin to be reached by any arm shorter or less powerful than that of the Gospel ... the ultimate attainment of our great object—the conversion and salvation of Africa—there can be no doubt, so long, as Jehovah is enthroned in power.<sup>760</sup>

**B)** Christianity is more powerful than African religion; therefore, true white Christian missionaries from Protestant nations hold ultimate power over heathen Africans.<sup>761</sup> A sample of this theme would be as follows:

All that we can reasonably hope to accomplish will be to give Christianity a firm footing there, to train up men on the ground who may be relied upon to carry the glad tidings of salvation to the darker and more remote corners of that great continent. In accomplishing this task, however, I believe that the presence and superintendence of white missionaries are indispensably necessary; and it must a long time, judging from the present aspect of affairs, before their agency can safely be dispensed with.<sup>762</sup>

**C)** Christianity is more powerful than African religion; however, Christian missionaries may still fail in front of heathen Africans not because of an African's

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<sup>760</sup> Wilson, *Western Africa*, 526-527.

<sup>761</sup> “If the number of colored men in this country [the U.S.] capable of meeting these high demands [of mission work] is considerable, we know it not. There is a small number of such now in the African field, and we cheerfully award them the praise of self-denial and extensive usefulness. But the idea of gathering up colored men indiscriminately in this country, and setting them down upon the shores of Africa, with the design or expectation that they will take the lead in diffusing a pure Christianity among the natives, deserves to be utterly rejected by every friend of Africa. A proposition to transport white men, in the same indiscriminate manner, to some other heathen country, with the view of evangelizing the natives of that country, would be regarded, to say the least, as highly extravagant.” *Ibid.*, 507.

<sup>762</sup> *Ibid.*, 505.

superior power but because of the lack of true Christian faith on the part of the white European missionary. A sample of this theme would as follows: “Whether it [Romanism] has the power to propagate itself among the pagan nations of the earth [like the Kingdom of the Kongo discussed in Chapter Seven, Part IV] in the present stage of the world is a question that admits serious doubt.”<sup>763</sup> Thus,

For more than two centuries the kingdom of the Kongo, according to the showing of the missionaries themselves, was as completely under the influence of Rome as any sister kingdom in Europe; so that if the inhabitants of that country are not now, in point of civilization and Christianity, what Rome would have them to be, or all that a pagan people are capable of being made under her training, the fault lies at her own door [it was a “corrupted religion”<sup>764</sup>].<sup>765</sup>

**D)** Africans have caused the work of mission to slow down, be displaced, or stopped. A sample of this theme would be as follows: “In consequence of frequent collisions between the colonists and the natives [in Liberia], which kept the minds of the latter in an unfit state to receive religious impressions...the mission was transferred to the Gabun in 1842.”<sup>766</sup> Murder of missionaries, war among natives, religious resistance all were coded as references to Heathen African power.

On my second reading, I underlined each power reference and assigned it the letter **A**, **B**, **C**, and **D** in the margin to signify reference to an expressed power relationship belonging to one of the four categories above. For each page, I wrote at the

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<sup>763</sup> Ibid., 330.

<sup>764</sup> Ibid., 340.

<sup>765</sup> Ibid., 314.

<sup>766</sup> Ibid., 501.

top of the page the number of times Wilson referred to **A**, **B**, **C**, and **D** for easy comparison.

## Results

When recounting the history of the involvement of Catholic missions in Africa (Kongo), Wilson's language that emphasizes what I will call a "neutralized" power of the missionaries over the heathen Africans. For example, Wilson referred to Catholic missionary power when he wrote, "Her [the Church of Rome] labors in that portion of Africa were commenced almost simultaneously with the first discovery of the country, and were continued, with a few slight interruptions, for more than two centuries, but without any permanent or abiding results."<sup>767</sup> However, although he acknowledged that "sickness and other untoward influences operated against them [the Catholic missionaries],"<sup>768</sup> he attributed the failure of these missionaries to an intrinsic lack of power of Catholicism:

Toward the close of the eighteenth century, a renewed effort was made by French Catholics to establish the Romish faith, especially at Asaini and Loango. But these efforts proved still futile. On the arrival of the missionaries at Loango, they found that the people had not only abandoned all the outward forms of the Romish religion, but were sunk as deep in paganism as they had ever been. At the same time they found them so treacherous and savage that they could not live among them without constant peril of their lives.<sup>769</sup>

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<sup>767</sup> Ibid., 482.

<sup>768</sup> Ibid.

<sup>769</sup> Ibid.

Wilson mentioned next that “about fourteen years since,” Barron and Kelly attempted another mission with these results: “On account of difficulties that had arisen between the colonists [of Cape Palmas, Liberia] and the natives, which, in their opinion made it an unpromising field of missionary labor, the mission to this place was given up.”<sup>770</sup> Another Catholic mission attempt in the Gabon lasted, “but as yet without having made any decided impression on the people for whom it was organized.” Wilson associates the power of a mission with the effect it had on the natives, which amounts to saying that in this case the missionaries did not exercise their power over the natives. On the other hand, Wilson does not clearly indicate whether or not it was the Africans’ actions that caused the Catholic missionaries to fail in making an impression on them. In this case, I consider the last reference as a *neutralized* missionary power because in the end, no missionary power was exercised.

When discussing the Protestant missions, Wilson tended to assign power overwhelmingly to the Protestant missionaries over the heathen Africans. The Church Missionary Society scored around 70 percent of victories in their power contest with the heathen African natives, and the Wesleyans of England scored all the victories—he did not mention of a single action of the heathen Africans that prevented the Wesleyans from achieving their goals. This holds true for the English Baptist Missionary society, the Basle Missionary Society, the United Presbyterian Synod of Scotland, the American Baptist Union, the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions, the Methodist Episcopal Church, and the Protestant Episcopal Foreign Missionary Society.

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<sup>770</sup> Ibid., 483.



There are around 33 mentions of victories of the ABCFM, compared to approximately 6 mentions of heathen African power. There are eleven mentions of victories of the American Missionary Association compared to 1 mention of heathen African power.

Chapter Six, Part IV (“The Agency Devolving on White Men in Connection with Missions to West Africa”) contains approximately 59 references to missionary power against approximately 10 references to the Heathen African power.

#### Discussion

Although Chapter Five includes descriptions of the difficulties of the Christian missions, the references to missionary power outnumbered by far the references to Heathen African power. This means that Wilson’s message, even in the cases where I might least expect it, was overwhelmingly full of references to missionary power. However, the fact that Wilson’s message did mention some failures of the missions due to direct action of the native Africans, which invites more reflection.

Indeed, the second variable—**B**) Christianity is more powerful than African religion; therefore, only true white Christian missionaries from Protestant nations hold ultimate power over heathen Africans—does not appear until Wilson’s discussion of the conditions in which mission work would have had better chances of success. His insistence on this variable suggests that Wilson may have exaggerated the power that the missionaries had over the Africans.

In other words, missionary power and heathen power could not be understood in their proper proportions studying only the missionary documents. Importantly, however, Digeser's synthesis of power makes it possible to glimpse the power that the non-Christian Africans exercised on the missionaries. From that point of view, it becomes clearer why, according to the second variable, Wilson called for a tighter screening of missionaries and why he demanded that the missionaries be white. In other words, the biggest problem to missionary success was not the climate of West Africa but the power of the heathen African to prevent the missionaries from achieving their goals.

While Wilson's report on his tour to Africa contains no mention of African power at all, the book he wrote after eighteen years in Africa does include references to the power of the non-Christian Africans. This suggests that the method of studying Wilson's message in time is effective in revealing aspects of the power relationship that neither source alone could have revealed and points to the possibility of increasing the number of sources in order to increase the chances of uncovering a clearer idea of the power of missionaries and of Africans. Because Digeser's synthesis of power was predicated on interests being frustrated as an indicator of power, my qualitative content analysis tends to include broad characterizations of power and its absence thereof. I wonder whether a narrower characterization of power and absence would give the same results.

## Quantitative Content Analysis

### Text

As for the quantitative analysis, the text I used in this study was Wilson's 527-page-book *Western Africa. Its History, Condition, and Prospects*. Again, because his book includes descriptions of personal experiences not unrelated to his direct interaction with the West Africans, I limited my study to only Chapter Five and Six, which deal directly with the subject of missions. From these pages, I randomly selected a total of 500 clauses for my quantitative content analysis.

### Quantitative Coding

Note: see appendices for codebook and coding sheet, and description and explanation of coding process.

### *Unit of Analysis*

The unit of analysis was every clause that occurs in the two chapters. Because I am interested in finding the number of times a variable occurs, I decided to code for the minimum unit of meaning in which Wilson's statement involved the action of a non-Christian African. Such minimum unit of meaning is a clause. In other words, I coded for clauses rather than sentences because Wilson's sentences can be complex, compound, and compound-complex, containing two or more clauses pointing to two or more different categories to code.

This is the case in the following sentence: "**The station is still kept up by a native missionary**; but the people, who are Mohammedans, show but little disposition,

as yet, to conform to the requirements of the Gospel” (p.489). According to my coding scheme, the first clause in bold belongs to category **(a) A statement made by a missionary claiming to have implicitly or explicitly changed an African/many Africans in any way, and should be checked as 2-Implicit change of a non-Christian African or many non-Christian African**, if Wilson mentioned any type of work missionaries had already completed among non-Christian Africans regardless of whether this work lasted or not. Here a reference to a “native missionary” was considered as Wilson’s implicit information for the reader in this clause that some change had already been accomplished on one non-Christian African.

On the other hand, according to my coding scheme, the second clause, “but the people, who are Mohammedans, show but little disposition, as yet, to conform to the requirements of the Gospel,” belongs to category **(d) A mention of any African action which prevented the success of missionary work, and should be checked as 2-Implicit mention of any African action which prevented the success of the work of missions**, if the coder guesses that Wilson meant that a missionary died, a missionary station slowed down, a missionary station was abandoned as a result of one or many native action or involvement in an action.

### *Categories/ Variables*

My method of determining which categories or variables to code was based on the rich scholarship that addresses the question of power, especially in Western civilization. For the interest of quantitatively analyzing the power relationship between the Christian

missionaries and the non-Christian Africans, I relied on the synthesis of power relationship provided by Peter Digeser in his article, “The Fourth Face of Power” in which he argues, “The first three faces of power agree at some level that A exercises power over B when A affects B in a manner contrary to B’s interests.”<sup>771</sup> However, for precise coding purposes, I decided that “affects” means “changes,” and used change as my first variable.

Below is the list of my categories and variables in my coding scheme.

### *First category*

**(a) A statement made by a missionary claiming to have implicitly or explicitly changed an African/many Africans in any way.** For example: “According to the Annual Report of the Society for 1855, the mission, in the Sierra Leone Colony alone, numbers fifteen stations, connected with which there are 3354 communicants” (p.489).

Here I coded for any:

*1-Explicit change of a non-Christian African or many non-Christian Africans*—If the missionary mentions the word “change” as a verb, a noun, an adjective, or an adverb in the sentence with the meaning that missionaries changed a non-Christian African or many non-Christian Africans. Note that a non-Christian African includes an African who practices other religions that are not Christianity. For example, a Muslim or Mohammedan practices Islam, so is non-Christian.

*2-Implicit change of a non-Christian African or many non-Christian Africans*—If the missionary mentions any type of work missionaries have already completed among non-Christian Africans regardless of whether this work lasted or not.

9-Unable to determine

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<sup>771</sup> Peter Digeser, “The Fourth Face of Power,” *The Journal of Politics* 54, no. 4 (November 1992): 977-1007, 980.

*Second category*

**(b) A missionary one-sided planning of an action yet to be performed involving a non-Christian African or many Africans.** For example, “At that time the United Brethren sent out a converted mulatto, of the name of Christian Proten, to the Gold Coast, to make known the Gospel to the aborigines in that part of the country” (p.483).

Here I coded for any:

*1-Plan to Christianize non-Christian Africans*\_\_ If the missionary uses the word any words like “Christ,” “Gospel,” “church,” or their derivatives with the meaning of bringing Christianity to non-Christian Africans. I coded for all plans, including talk about the Christianization of non-Christian Africans. For example, a successful or failed attempt to Christianize is still a plan to Christianize. Note that a non-Christian African includes an African who practices religions other than Christianity. For example, a Muslim or “Mohammedan” practices Islam, so is non-Christian.

*2-Plan to educate non-Christian Africans:* If the missionary uses the word “educate” or any derivative *only*. I made no assumptions about whether a certain action was educational or not.

*3-Plan to translate African languages:* If the missionary uses the word “translate” or any derivative *only*. I made no assumptions about whether a certain action was educational or not.

9-Unable to determine

*Third category*

**(c) Any form of allusion to the contribution of a non-Christian African to the success of missionary work (this is the default choice if “change” as in category (a) above appears in a clause with the word “success” or any derivative).** For example: “In consequence of the death of the King of Abeokuta, who had received Mr. Townsend [the missionary] with so much kindness...” (p. 490). Note that in this sentence, the missionary means that the kindness of the king of Abeokuta contributed to the building of a missionary station among the king’s people.

Here I coded for any:

*1-Discussion of success of mission work without any allusion to the contribution of heathen African*—If the missionary mentions the word “success” or any derivative *only* and there is *no mention* of one or many non-Christian Africans as contributors to the

success of the missionary work in any form. For example: “missionaries built a church...”

*2-Discussion of success of mission work with explicit allusion to the contribution of heathen African*—If the missionary mentions the word “success” or any derivative **only** and there is mention of one or many non-Christian Africans as contributors to the success of the mission work in any form. For example: “Missionaries successfully instructed the native Africans to build a church.”

*3- Discussion of success of mission work with implicit allusion to the contribution of heathen African*—If the missionary mentions any word with the meaning of sympathy, help, contribution, intercession, collaboration of a non-Christian African like the kindness of the king as in the first example in this category repeated below. Note that because of the harsh conditions of missionary work, any of these actions on the part of the missionary were noted with favor by missionaries and should be categorized as contributions to the success of missionary work. Also note that these types of actions do not necessarily occur in the domain of say, the building of a mission house. Even helping a missionary off the boat onto dry land was a contribution to the success of missionary work. For example: “In consequence of the death of the King of Abeokuta, who had received Mr. Townsend (the missionary) with so much kindness...” (p. 490). Note that in this sentence, the missionary means that the kindness of the king of Abeokuta contributed to the building of a missionary station among the king’s people.

9-Unable to determine

#### *Fourth category*

**(d) A mention of any African action which prevented the success of missionary work.** For example: “At the same time, they [the missionaries] found them [heathen Africans] so treacherous and savage that they [the missionaries] could not live among them [heathen Africans] without constant peril of their lives” (p. 482).

Here I coded for any:

*1- Explicit mention of any African action which prevented the success of the work of missions*—If the missionary mentions “murder” or its derivatives, “abandon” or its derivatives, or “move” and its derivatives, with the meaning that a non-Christian “murdered” a missionary, a non-Christian caused the mission to be “abandoned,” or a non-Christian caused the mission to be “moved.”

*2-Implicit mention of any African action which prevented the success of the work of missions*—If the coder guesses that the missionary means that a missionary died, a

missionary station slowed down, a missionary station was abandoned as a result of one or many native action or involvement in an action.

9-Unable to determine

### Conclusion

I read through photocopies of the two chapters in Wilson's book twice looking for such references to missionary and non-Christian African powers. The two Chapters, as mentioned above, are Chapter Five, "Christian Missions," in Part IV (pp. 481-504), and Chapter Six, "The Agency Devolving on White Men in Connection with Missions to West Africa," also in Part IV (pp. 505-527). As I also mentioned above, I found Rev. John Wilson's writing style to be highly descriptive and structured around a simple and unique pattern. He tended to analyze each mission at three levels: (1) the history of missionary involvement in Africa, (2) the difficulties missionaries encountered, and (3) the results they obtained. Therefore, I decided to look for two main themes: evidence of missionary power and evidence of non-Christian African obstruction to missionary power, which is how the four themes above emerged.

### Coding process

**Training:** I first explained my coding book to James, a fellow student in spring of 2006 at Georgia State University in my Content Analysis class, with Dr. Jaye Atkinson,



in which we were both learning the method of content analysis. I then made sure he understood the coding scheme<sup>772</sup> very well.

**Practice:** Once I was confident that James had understood what a clause was, I asked him to repeat to me the four categories we were coding for and their respective variables. When I felt he had mastered the categories and the variables, we practiced on various examples of complex sentences like this one: “On account of difficulties that had arisen between the colonists and the natives (check 9), which, in their [the missionaries’] opinion, made it an unpromising field of missionary labor (check 2), the mission to this place was given up (check 1).”<sup>773</sup> After discussing this sentence, we agreed that there are three (3) clauses, and all three were mentions of African action that prevented the success of missionary work; in other words, category (d). We satisfactorily practiced on another example: “At the same time, they [the missionaries] found them [non-Christian Africans] so treacherous and savage that they [the missionaries] could not live among them [Africans] without constant peril of their lives (p. 482).”

After this practice, I instructed James to read the text and code at the same time I was coding. I encouraged him to consult the coding book as often as possible and to only code clauses he was sure belonged to one of the categories in the codebook and on the coding sheet. In other words, he did not code clauses that he could not clearly determine that the meaning pertained to any of the category listed above.

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<sup>772</sup> See Appendix 1, 2, 3.

<sup>773</sup> The parenthetical information (Check, 9, 2, 1) refers to how we coded these clauses.

**Adjustments:** I had to make various adjustments so that we would come to code the same number of clauses. I omitted from the sample those clauses that we could not code with certainty rather than putting them in the “9-unable to determine” category. The resolution to translate *power* into *change* was also another adjustment I made. Another adjustment I made was to include derivatives of certain words, as I realized that Wilson’s speech style was metaphorical and varied. The biggest challenge was to make sure that James and I coded almost the same number of clauses in complex sentences—with a maximum difference in number of clauses between us that would be 1 and therefore negligible. Although I understood that accomplishing this would be difficult, I decided that it would be a reliable way to code because most complex clauses had three clauses and the likelihood of coding at least two out of the three clauses was high, as the practice suggested.

### *How Coding Proceeded*

1. 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> coders coded how much?  
James coded 10% of the clauses; that is, 50 clauses out of 500 clauses.
2. What is inter-coder reliability?
  - a. % agreement  
I calculated inter-coder reliability for each variable (See table)

	VARIABLE 1	VARIABLE 2	VARIABLE 3	VARIABLE 4
CODER 1'S # OF CLAUSES	50	50	50	50
CODER 2'S # OF CLAUSES	50	50	50	50
PAO % AGREEMENT	43/50=0.86	46/50=0.92	45/50=0.9	48/50=0.96
PAE	1/3=0.33	1/4=0.25	1/4=0.25	1/3=0.33
1-PAE	1-0.33=0.67	1-0.25=0.75	1-0.25=0.75	1-0.33=0.67
PAO-PAE	0.53	0.67	0.65	0.63
<u>PAO-PAE</u> SCOTT'S PI	0.79	0.89	0.86	0.94

TABLE: Inter-coder reliability

#### b. Plan for Statistical Analysis

*Frequency information reported.* I am reporting the *mean*—that is, the average of the measures. I discovered the evidence of missionary power was by far more present than the evidence of African obstruction to the power of missionary in missionary texts.

*Statistical test of significance.* I ran the statistical test of correlation and found that the more Wilson emphasized the power of the missionaries, the less he omitted African contribution to missionary work.

### Qualitative and Quantitative Analyses Combination Conclusion

Looking at the kind of information qualitatively and quantitatively, I made several discoveries. Qualitatively, the missionary power and non-Christian African powers cannot be understood in their proper respective proportions if we study only the missionary documents. Using Digeser's synthesis of power makes it possible to glimpse the power that the non-Christian Africans exercised on the missionaries. Quantitatively, this window on African power that the qualitative method opened clarifies the need to use African sources.

In addition, the average of the measures suggested that the number of times Wilson referred to an African contribution to the success of missionary work was quite present. This finding seriously challenges to the previous scholarship, which expounded missionary domination. Although missionary references to African's preventing the success of missionary work outnumbered missionary references to non-Christian African's contributing to that success, African power seems present, if in a proportion that still need proper elucidation. The statistical test of correlation showed that the more missionaries emphasized their power, the more they omitted Africans' contribution to missionary work. This alone suggests that African power might have been glossed over.

Thus, because the qualitative analysis opened a window on African power, which the quantitative method clarified, and finally because the rationale for missionaries glossing over Africans remain to be elucidated, I am more likely to use both qualitative and quantitative methods for future studies of missionary and native powers. However, I must admit that qualitative content analysis has a more interpretive power than does

quantitative content analysis. For example, for my project, if I want to argue that Digeser's synthesis of power that I used to conduct my study was Eurocentric, it will serve me better to use a qualitative content analysis. Doing so will enable me to demonstrate based on the content of Digeser's article that this concept of power reflects a European worldview; I will just have to determine a definition of power from an African perspective based on the content of African texts and compare these results with the results revealed with Digeser's article.

Unfortunately, the literature directly related to the history of mission I reviewed does not include any content analysis. This absence of qualitative or quantitative content analysis of missionary work may be because mission historians probably believe that content analysis is precisely what they have been doing, a belief Kimberly Nuendorf dismisses as "a myth."<sup>774</sup> The other reason that content analysis has been neglected is that content analysis itself is not only a new method developed in recent years,<sup>775</sup> but is also viewed as belonging to exclusively the discipline of Communication.

The top three things that I learned conducting these content analyses are:

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<sup>774</sup> "Myth 2: The term content analysis applies to all examination of message content. The Truth: it does not apply to every analysis of message content, only those that meet a rigorous definition. Clearly, calling an investigation a content analysis does not make it so." Nuendorf, *The Content Analysis Guidebook*, 4.

<sup>775</sup> Nuendorf informs us, "Content analysis has a history of more than 50 years of use in communication, journalism, sociology, psychology, and business. Its methods stem primarily from work in the social and behavioral sciences, but its application has reached such distant areas as law and health care. Ibid., xv.

1. The method of content analysis is a method still being developed. The peremptory assertion of Nuendorf that there is no such thing as qualitative content analysis illustrates this point.<sup>776</sup>
2. Quantitative and qualitative analysis have singular advantages, which, if properly combined, will contribute to making a study stronger in terms of scholarship. For example, in my study the quantitative content analysis was useful amplifying the window on African power that the qualitative content analysis had opened. The combination of the two makes the argument for a balance of missionary sources more compelling.
3. The quantitative method is a more tedious method with less impressive results regarding explanatory power. In that sense, the qualitative method seems superior to the quantitative method in content analysis.

In all, content analysis, whether qualitative or quantitative, promises to make for a great academic career. As a historian who craves for interdisciplinary skills, content analysis illustrates my theory of parallel agency: missionaries and West Africans both exercised an authoritative agency in their encounters with each other on the missionary field. Although missionaries and many scholars have taken the power and domination of the missionaries for granted, content analysis has demonstrated that the power of Africans has been glossed over in the power discourse of these commentators but remains vibrant under these rubbles of academic fabrications for us to discover.

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<sup>776</sup> “There are many forms of analysis—from frivolous to seminal—that may be applied to the human production of messages. Content analysis is only one type, a technique presented by this book as systematic and quantitative.” Ibid.

## DISSERTATION CONCLUSION

No study has ever compared the missionary campaigns of the ABCFM among the Cherokees and the West Africans. Most studies focus on missionaries versus Cherokees or West Africans. They usually emphasize the conflict between missionaries and indigenous peoples. As a result, these studies devolve into a tally of winners and losers.<sup>777</sup> My examination of these three groups using the analytical category of parallel agency shows that the ABCFM board had conceived and planned to execute the Christianization of the Cherokees and West Africans without ever consulting them. The board had envisaged these natives to be objects to be acted upon. Despite this constraint, Cherokees and West Africans managed to pursue independently their interests, which sometimes coincided with and sometimes diverged from the interests of the missionaries.

Indeed, the board launched its mission to the Cherokees at a time when public opinion in the United States was most in favor of the idea that non-Europeans had to be “civilized” before being Christianized. The board took advantage of the policy window the U.S. government opened with its civilizing fund to create schools in the Cherokee nation beginning in 1817. The schools operated on the Lancasterian school system, which was also in vogue in the early nineteenth century. This system was similarly applied to

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<sup>777</sup> James Adair, an eighteenth-century white settler, reports cautioning some Indians about “present troublesome missionaries” that disturbed the “former peace and quiet” among Native Americans. Williams, *Adair’s History of the American Indians*, 479. William G. McLoughlin, on his part, regretted that the ABCFM missionaries encouraged the Cherokees to follow the U.S. government’s advice and remove West of Mississippi rather than using their influence to prevent the removal of the Cherokees. William G. McLoughlin, *Cherokee Renascence in the New Republic* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986), 447. The same idea that the West Africans might have lost their cultural integrity from their contacts with the missionaries is also a central assumption, for example, in Mandelbaum, Jonna-Lynn Knauer, *The Missionary as a Cultural Interpreter*, (Ph.D. dissertation, Georgia State University, 1986,) 181. See also John and Jean Comaroff, *Ethnography and the Historical Imagination* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview, 1992).

the dynamic of converting the Cherokees, as each student was eventually expected in the church with the students they had taught in the Lancasterian school. The ABCFM missions subsequently encompassed five Native American societies.

By 1835, these tribes were known as the “Five Civilized Tribes.” Today the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek, and Seminole are ninety percent Christians.<sup>778</sup> Therefore, one can argue in retrospect that, on the one hand, the plan to “civilize” the Cherokees before Christianizing them worked better in the long duree. On the other hand, if I look at the split between the so-called “Indian churches” and their American mother churches, I can argue that the plan to “civilize” the Cherokees and then Christianize them failed in the long duree. The missionaries just did not achieve their goal of single-handedly assimilating the Cherokees into an American Christian civilization.

The reason for this failure is the fact that Cherokees pursued the program of civilization and Christianization in order to secure their lands from the mounting threat of the neighboring whites. Cherokee leaders in general encouraged the civilization and Christianization of their people, but could not agree on how to save their lands. In 1817, Cherokees of the lower towns moved to Arkansas west of Mississippi in a last attempt to save the remaining lands and their new Cherokee identity. Cherokees of the upper towns preferred to remain in the east and increased the visibility of their efforts to “civilize” and Christianize in order to achieve that purpose. They sent their children to missionary schools, joined the missionary church, and passed laws abolishing “un-civilized and unchristian” practices such as polygamy. They created writing, adopted a constitution

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<sup>778</sup> See *World Christian Encyclopedia*.



modeled on that of the United States, operated a newspaper and so on. In the words of Purdue, they were faced with a “difficult choice: fight to the bitter end or accommodate the intruders and promote the acculturation of their people”?<sup>779</sup> Cherokees, whether they were “progressive” or “conservative” dominantly pursued their goal of saving their lands and identity. They all adopted various “progressive” or “conservative” strategies for that purpose. In my opinion, whether they used weapons, removed to Arkansas, or stayed in the east to accommodate the intruders and promote the acculturation of their people, they all faced difficult choices or life-and-death choices.

Unfortunately, their choices of civilization and Christianization sometimes could not ensure them security. Not even their adoption of slavery as a sign of civilization was sufficient to secure them peace. If the southerners could call them brothers in that regard, the northern abolitionists called them “barbarians” and pressured the board to expel them from the church.<sup>780</sup> The same fate met those Cherokees who stayed in the east and became known as one of the “civilized tribes.” They were disillusioned with their choice when they were violently removed in what is euphemistically known as the trail of tears. A lot of blood was shed and a lot of souls were lost on this trail with more than 2,000 Cherokees dying on 116-day-trip<sup>781</sup> to Oklahoma on average. The pressure on Cherokee lands continued until the last frontier of Oklahoma closed.

Because of my finding that ABCFM missionaries pursued their interests with the support, but also independently, of the Cherokees, and because of my finding that the

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<sup>779</sup> Purdue, ed. *Cherokee Editor*, 3.

<sup>780</sup> Strong, *A Story of the American Board*, 52.

<sup>781</sup> Wilkins, *Cherokee Tragedy*, 322-328.

Cherokees also pursued their interests in a similar fashion, I have determined that it was best to conceive the power relationship of these groups in the conversion process as a parallel agency. The same is valid to say about the ABCFM missions in West Africa. The collaboration between Wilson and West Africans resulted from the independent pursuits of their respective interests. Since the ABCFM board in Africa did not benefit from the support it received from the U.S. government in the Cherokee nation, it became more reliant on the West African kings, interpreters, and teachers to operate its Lancasterian schools and churches. The effect of the West African agency on the ABCFM strategies is visible in the fact that Wilson insisted during his tour to Liberia and after he left Africa that it was the responsibility of white Christians to take the lead of Christianization of West Africa. In his reasoning, West African Christian volunteers were not ready to take full charge of the Christian campaign there.

West Africans despite Wilson's single-handed plans managed to pursue like their Cherokee counterparts their interests, which sometimes coincided with and sometimes diverged greatly from Wilson's. Many West Africans did become "genuine" Christians, adopted the Christian gender system through their marriage according to the principle of the bible, and saw themselves as part of the elite class of "civilized" Africans whose mission was to bring the rest of Africa under their influence. However, because of the general practice on the coast of associating Westerners with trade and because of Wilson's strategy of building schools before building churches, a greater number of West Africans favored the benefits of secular civilization more than Christianity.

From the birth of the ABCFM in 1810, the board has relied on devoted missionaries like Kingsbury and Wilson who have claimed many times that they were ready to die for their respective heathens in order to fulfill Jesus Christ's command to his followers to go and bring unevangelized souls everywhere in the world to the house of God. As a result of this mindset, missionaries have given the impression that all they needed for the execution of this command was their determination, their faith, and some money and the natives were going to follow them in the church, one of them expresses here.

The whole history of our missions demonstrates that their ultimate success depends far more, humanly speaking, on the qualifications of those who form them than upon the numbers of laborers. A few men, eminently holy, and devoted to their work, with vigorous minds, well disciplined, and richly stored with useful knowledge, discreet and judicious in their plans and measures, full of esteem and affection for each other, and of compassionate kindness for the perishing heathen, accustomed to steady, patient toil and with physical constitutions capable of sustaining it, will, by the blessing of God, accomplish far more in training up native laborers, and guiding them in their work, exerting an extensive and commanding influence over the people among whom they dwell, and preparing the way for great and blessed changes in the manners, habits, and institutions of unevangelized men than a multitude who do not rise above mediocrity in these respects, or of whom some are very deficient in any of them.<sup>782</sup>

The truth is things did not happen this way. The experience of missionaries in the Cherokee nation and West Africa invites a revision of this excessive missionary perception of their power. William McLoughlin had already correctly pointed out that proximity of the Cherokees and the U.S. government played a role in missionary

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<sup>782</sup> Strong, *The Story of the American Board*, 157.

policy,<sup>783</sup> and the absence of such proximity between the West Africans and the U.S. government confirms his observation. The U.S. government remained an important resource for the missionaries to the Cherokees, even though the missionaries found its removal of the Cherokees injurious to the Cherokee mission. As a whole, missionaries sustained more pressure from the U.S. government in the Cherokee mission, which affected the way Cherokees engaged their mission work sometimes willfully and sometimes with suspicion.

In West Africa where there were no such pressures, missionaries achieved some quick results.<sup>784</sup> West Africans, therefore, converted more willfully. No U.S. or West African central government put pressure on the people to adopt Western civilization and Christianity as a matter of survival. In this sense, things did not fall apart in West Africa as the ABCFM expected, nor as Chinua Achebe claims they did among the Igbo people of south eastern Nigeria in *Things Fall Apart*. During Wilson's work in West Africa, people in Liberia or Gabon negotiated the changes in their cultural and religious identity at their own pace and very much on their own terms. Sometimes they reaped many benefits from the "arts of civilized life," sometimes they wreaked much havoc on themselves, as "disappearing" Mpongwe people of Gabon could testify.<sup>785</sup>

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<sup>783</sup> McLoughlin, *Cherokee Missionaries*, 1-13.

<sup>784</sup> Strong, *The Story of the American Board*, 126.

<sup>785</sup> Wilson, *Western Africa*, 291-92.

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## APPENDIX A: What is a clause?

### Sentence Types

“Sentences are classified in two ways: according to their structure (simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex) and according to their purpose (declarative, imperative, interrogative, and exclamatory).”

### Sentence Structures

Depending on the number and types of clauses they contain, sentences are classified as simple, compound, complex, or compound-complex.

Clauses come in two varieties: independent and subordinate. An independent clause contains a subject and predicate, and it either stands alone or could stand alone. A subordinate clause also contains a subject and predicate but functions within a sentence as an adjective, an adverb, or a noun; it cannot stand alone.

1-Simple sentence: A simple sentence is one independent clause with no subordinate clauses.

Independent clause

Example: Without music, life would be a mistake.

2-Compound sentence: A compound sentence is composed of two or more independent clauses with no subordinate clauses. The independent clauses are usually joined with a comma and a coordinating conjunction (and, but, or, nor, for, so, yet) or with a semicolon.

Example: **One arrow is easily broken**, but **you can't break a bundle of ten**.

Note: Independent clauses are in bold.

3-Complex sentence: A complex sentence is composed of one independent clause with one or more subordinate clauses.

Example: **If you scatter thorns**, don't go barefoot.

4-Compound-complex sentences: A compound-complex sentence contains at least two independent clauses and at least one subordinate clause. The following sentence contains two independent clauses, each of which contains a subordinate clause.

Example: Tell me **what you eat**, and I will tell **you what you are**.

Note: Subordinate clauses are in bold, but “Tell me what you eat” is an independent clause, just as “I will tell you what you are” is another independent clause.



### Sentence Purposes

Writers use declarative sentences to make statements, imperative sentences to issue requests or commands, interrogative sentences to ask questions, and exclamatory sentences to make exclamations.

Example: Declarative: The echo always has the last word.

Imperative: Love your neighbor

Interrogative: Are second thoughts always wisest?

Exclamatory: I want to wash the flag, not burn it!<sup>786</sup>

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<sup>786</sup> This section to be mastered by second coder has been reproduced from Diana Hacker, *A Writer's Reference*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1999), 421-22.

## APPENDIX B: Coding sheet

## Analysis of Missionary Power

**Unit of data collection:** every clause

Check all that apply:

**(a) A statement made by a missionary claiming to have implicitly or explicitly changed an African/many Africans in any way.**

]1-Explicit change of a non-Christian African or many non-Christian Africans

]2-Implicit change of a non-Christian African or many non-Christian Africans

]9-Unable to determine

**(b) A missionary one-sided planning of an action yet to be performed involving a non-Christian African or many Africans.**

]1-Plan to Christianize heathen Africans

]2-Plan to educate heathen Africans

]3-Plan to translate heathen African languages

]9-Unable to determine

**(c) Any form of allusion to the contribution of a non-Christian African to the success of missionary work (this is your default choice if “change” as in category (a) above appears in a clause with the word “success” or any derivative).**

]1-Discussion of success of mission work **without** any allusion to the contribution of heathen African

]2-Discussion of success of mission work **with explicit** allusion to the contribution of heathen

]3-Discussion of success of mission work **with implicit** allusion to the contribution of heathen African

]9-Unable to determine

**(d) A mention of any African action that prevented the success of missionary work.**

[ ]1- Explicit mention of any African action which prevented the success of the work of missions

[ ]2-Implicit mention of any African action which prevented the success of the work of missions

[ ]9-Unable to determine