

# Theology on the Web.org.uk

*Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible*

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

**PayPal**

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

---

A table of contents for the *Africa Journal of Evangelical Theology* can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_ajet-02.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_ajet-02.php)

# THE EARLY HISTORY OF CHURCH COOPERATION AND UNITY IN KENYA

Watson A. Omulokoli<sup>i</sup>

## INTRODUCTORY OVERVIEW

The theme of co-operation and unity among Christians is not only taken for granted in the Bible, but is also deep-seated therein. Moreover, Christians are strongly urged to recognize, embrace, and foster it in their dealings with one another. This being the case it is commendable that from the time of its introduction and establishment in Kenya, Christianity has exhibited a strong spirit of cooperation and unity among its constituent Churches and Christian groups. Occasionally there have been interruptions to this trend here and there, but cumulatively, the pace has been maintained from the earliest times to the present.

There are many spheres of the Church's existence in Kenya in which co-operation and unity have been demonstrated. In addition to such spiritual spheres as evangelism and Christian nurture, the Church in Kenya has forged togetherness in tackling every realm of man's life and well-being. Although it is often taken for granted on the local scene, the level of co-operation and unity which pertains in Kenya is such a unique phenomenon that there are few nations in the world which can rival Kenya's experience. This is a priceless, singular, and all-important legacy which we must consciously safeguard and nourish.

---

<sup>i</sup> Professor Watson A. O. Omulokoli is the former Chaplain and Associate Professor in the Department of Religious Studies in Kenyatta University, Kenya. He earned his BTh in Biblical Studies and BA in Theology from Warner Pacific College in Portland, Oregon; his MA in Church History from Wheaton Graduate School in Wheaton, Illinois, in 1967; and his PhD in Church History from the University of Aberdeen in Scotland in 1981.

In a real sense, the fact of co-operation and unity among churches in Kenya dates back to the time of the pioneer missionaries, Johann Ludwing Krapf, and his associates, Johann Rebmann and James Erhardt. This becomes clear when it is realized that these early missionaries were German Lutherans who came to initiate Christian work in East Africa under the auspices of a British Anglican Church group, the Church Missionary Society (CMS). Not long after succeeding in establishing CMS work, beginning in 1844, the same Krapf was instrumental in introducing Methodist work in East Africa in 1862. At that time, he helped direct a group of Methodists to the Kenyan coast where they opened their station at Ribe under the charge of Thomas Wakefield.

After being confined to the coast of Kenya for about fifty years, Christian endeavours moved into the interior in the 1890's. From then up to the mid -1910's there was an influx of Christian Missions into the densely populated regions of central and western Kenya. Once they began settling down in their respective territories of focus, they realized and envisioned the need for working out strategies towards co-operation and unity in their missionary endeavours. While it is true that a multiplicity of Christian Churches is a significant feature of Christianity in Kenya, it is equally true that the story of co-operation and unity among these bodies is a distinctive and important landmark in the history of Christianity in the country. In the early stages, the efforts originate from Vihiga and Maseno in western Kenya, before moving to Nairobi and Kikuyu in central Kenya.

### **INITIAL FOUNDATIONS IN WESTERN KENYA**

In 1919, the head of Anglican Church work in western Kenya, Archdeacon Walter Edwin Owen, commented on how, with the exception of Roman Catholics, the various Christian Missions in western Kenya were working under commendable comity agreements and in mutual cooperation with one another.<sup>1</sup> This state of goodwill and common fellowship was almost as old as the existence of these bodies in the region. They seem to have been drawn together essentially on three grounds. In the first instance, they recognized and wanted to demonstrate their common allegiance to Jesus Christ. Secondly, they were aware that they shared the objective of spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ as the supreme aim of their respective groups. Then thirdly, they wanted to minimize any conflict among themselves while establishing the Christian faith in the territory under their

care. Their solidarity was cemented in two pioneer conferences on co-operation and unity as held at Vihiga and Maseno.

### **PIONEER CONFERENCE AT VIHIGA (End of 1907 -Beginning of 1908)**

#### **1. Preparations and Implementation:**

When the earliest steps at co-operation and unity among Christian groups in western Kenya were taken, it was Owen's predecessor, Rev. John Jamieson Willis,<sup>2</sup> who was in the forefront of these efforts in a very focused manner. When the idea of creating fraternal links was first broached in the autumn of 1907, it was received with much enthusiasm. Before long, the need to come together "both for prayer and for consultation as to lines of future work" led to wider possibilities. The immediate results came with arrangements for holding a five-day conference at the Friends Africa Mission (FAM)<sup>3</sup> station at Vihiga in the period straddling the end of 1907; then beginning of 1908.<sup>4</sup> It is a tribute to the far-sightedness of the men involved in this endeavour that before the celebrated World Missionary Conference at Edinburgh in 1910,<sup>5</sup> they had already embarked on the adventure of co-operation in their Christian missionary endeavours in western Kenya.

The Conference went on as planned with an average attendance of twenty for the various sessions. The majority of those present were missionaries of bodies that were already working in western Kenya, but still there were some missionaries who, although from outside the geographical limits of this region, had close identification with work there through varied means of association. Those present included such groups as Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) who observe the Sabbath on Saturdays, Baptist groups like Africa Inland Mission (AIM) with their emphasis on adult baptism based on the confession of faith in Christ, the Quakers with their disavowal of the necessity of any mode of outward baptism, and the Anglicans whose adherence was to infant baptism in the main. Yet despite these differences, as the conference progressed, those involved began to see "how deep and real is the unity which underlies all the more superficial differences."<sup>6</sup>

On one hand, the missionaries were concerned with the people among whom they were working. On the other hand, they sought to deal with the

relationship among themselves as different missionary groups. With regard to the people, they tried to deal with two issues. First, to display a united front by eliminating any competitive conflicts. Second, they aimed at reducing probable bewilderment by agreeing on “ the first principles of what they were to teach them.”<sup>7</sup> In the sphere of the relationship between the various groups, they set out to discuss openly and frankly how to work together with mutual understanding, without surrendering their particular distinctives and positions.

## **2. Programme and Discussions**

During the conference itself, the programme was made up of a number of elements. To begin with, the opening sessions of each day were devotions which included Bible expositions from the First Epistle of John as conducted by Mr. C. E. Hurlburt of the Africa Inland Mission. Following a short tea-break, there was what Willis described as the conference proper. Here, the mornings were devoted to discussion on three areas of concern. The afternoons were then set aside for dealing with language questions and work. In the words of Willis, mornings involved

- (1) Our relations to the powers, that be
  - (2) Our relations to one another as missionaries
  - (3) Our relations to the natives
- (a) The presentation of the Gospel to the primitive tribes, the elementary missionary work;
- (b) the training of child races, or the educational side of missionary work.<sup>8</sup>

## **3. Key Accomplishments**

Among other accomplishments, they agreed on the formula of recognizing converts of sister missions with the same full-fledged acceptance that they were given there. Regarding the area of language and translation, they came to the understanding that spelling should be standardized with all translations centralized. It was agreed that linguistic work in Ololuyia would be co-ordinated by Mr. E.J. Rees of the FAM at Vihiga and that of the Dholuo by Rev. J.J. Willis of the Church Missionary Society (CMS) at Maseno. In this connection, it was strongly felt that unless it was unavoidable, the books used in the various missions should be the same everywhere.

One of the more sensitive and tricky issues was that of entering into comity agreements by demarcating spheres of operation. If a settlement

were reached, it would stem the problem and confusion that would have arisen out of overlapping of territories of work. In the end, a tentative understanding was agreed upon. It stated that, "Subject to the approval of the authorities of the missionary societies involved we decided on a definite participation of the territory among us, in order to avoid, where possible, creating unnecessary confusion in time to come".<sup>9</sup>

The conference provided a worthwhile platform for enriching fellowship, corporate prayer, and beneficial discussion. Apart from the definite agreements reached, the missionaries were encouraged to discover from interaction in this conference that in one direction, the things which separated them were minor and superficial, while in another direction they learnt that the common factors which they shared were many and deep. The result was that this conference left them with an impetus to plan more meetings for mutual prayer, fellowship, and consultation in the future. Willis gave a summary of this conference of 1907-1908 at Vihiga as follows:

It was purely local conference attended by the representatives of different missionary societies working in Kavirondo. It discussed purely local and practical difficulties. It decided on a common policy in regard to language problems, the use of *lingua franca*, the unification of native dialects, the submissions of translations to one centre, a common method of spelling, the same names for God for Spirit for soul, and the like.<sup>10</sup>

### **UNITED MISSIONARY CONFERENCE AT MASENO (January 4-8, 1909)**

#### **1. Prior Arrangements**

In tune with the wishes of those who attended the first ever conference on co-operation and unity in Kenya as held at Vihiga at the end of 1907 and the beginning of 1908, their call for continued consultation resulted in a second follow-up; one at the CMS Maseno station on January 4-8, 1909.<sup>11</sup> Attending it were twenty-seven missionaries from eight different Missionary societies.<sup>12</sup> Although, like the previous one at Vihiga it was essentially for bodies working in western Kenya, there were some outside representatives such as Dr. Henry E. Scott of the Church of Scotland Mission (CSM), Kikuyu.<sup>13</sup> For this reason, in addition to issues peculiar to western Kenya, the deliberations took into account a wider spectrum. On

the whole, this conference built on the gains of earlier agreements and went a step further by making more definite substantive proposals for the Missions.

Prior to the conference, the prime mover of efforts at cooperation and unity, Rev. John Jamieson Willis of the Church Missionary Society (CSM), Maseno, wrote a letter outlining what the conference aimed at covering. This was essential in order to allow those coming to have "a fairly clear idea" of what was to be discussed ahead of its commencement. The letter concludes with a prayer that, "God Himself by His Spirit may direct all our consultation."

## 2. Programme Details

The programme itself commenced on the evening of 4<sup>th</sup> January, 1909, with an address by Mr. Arthur Chilson of the FAM, and ended with a closing address by Mr. Willis R. Hotchkiss of the Lumbwa Industrial Mission (LIM), on 8<sup>th</sup> January. Each day began with a devotional meeting for one and a half hours. These were based on daily readings followed by the Evangelical Alliance for the week of prayer, January 3-9.<sup>14</sup> After a short tea-break, the main business of the conference then followed. It ran as follows:

- |                 |                              |  |
|-----------------|------------------------------|--|
| 5 <sup>th</sup> | 10.45-12.15<br><br>2.00-4.00 | Special Subject. Native custom and thought.<br>Nilotic: Paper by Mr. A. Carscallen (SDA)<br>Bantu: Paper by Mr. F. Richardson (SACIM)<br>Men: Discussion on above papers<br>Ladies: Work among women and girls |
| 6 <sup>th</sup> | 10.45-12.15<br><br>2.00-4.00 | Special Subject: Mission in western Kenya<br>Ten minute reports on work in Mission Stations<br>Discussion on the Reports   |
| 7 <sup>th</sup> | 10.45-12.15<br><br>2.00-4.00 | Special Subject: Our aims and ideals<br>Paper by Rev. J.J. Willis (CMS)<br>Language discussion: Nilotic and Bantu groups   |
| 8 <sup>th</sup> | 10.45-12.15<br><br>2.00-4.00 | Special Subject: Missionary Methods<br>Paper by Dr. H. E. Scott (CSM)<br>Discussion on Missionary Policy in Kenya <sup>15</sup>  |

### 3. Results and Outcome

At the end of the conference a number of conclusions were reached and some very detailed resolutions passed.<sup>16</sup> In the area of language, efforts were made to translate the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, the Apostles' Creed, and the hymns which were in current usage in the various Missions working in western Kenya. With regard to education, three decisions were made. First, the conference took steps to appoint two of its members to represent the constituent groups from western Kenya on the Missionary Education Board for Kenya. Second, it was passed that *Kiswahili* be used in schools for advanced education, but the wider issue of a common language in schools was forwarded to the Missionary Education Board for discussion and decision. Third, it was strongly recommended that boarding schools be established for boys and girls respectively, but situated at different stations. For those who were interested in becoming Christians, it was important that they commit themselves to abandoning certain practices and to embracing others as spelt out. Before admission to Church membership, they were to undergo two years of instruction in the basics of the Christian faith, together with evaluation and scrutiny of their lives and character.

In preparation for the conference, Willis had sent word to the CSM in Uganda that they would need an expert to advise on language matters during the deliberations. In this regard, Mr. F. Rowling was dispatched to go and handle the assignment. At the end of the conference, his view was that, "The most striking feature of the whole conference was undoubtedly the deep desire for unity and harmony manifested most prominently."<sup>17</sup> In a later assessment of the achievements made, one CMS missionary in western Kenya, Mr. A.E. Pleydell, pointed out that despite the hurdles that remained to be surmounted, these endeavours represented a step in the right direction towards the attainment of the desired "unity and comity in missions".<sup>18</sup> All this was indeed in line with the greatest legacy of the Maseno Conference. This was contained in its key resolution which stated that, "this conference regards the development, organization and establishment of a united, self-governing, self-supporting, and self-extending native Church as the ideal of our missionary work."<sup>19</sup> These words were to be echoed in all conferences on the cooperation and unity of the Church in Kenya.<sup>20</sup>



## **TRANSITION FROM WESTERN TO CENTRAL KENYA**

### **1. Foundations in Western Kenya**

Following the Vihiga and Maseno conferences, the next and third conference was planned for the year 1910 at the Friends' Africa Mission (FAM) station of Kaimosi. These arrangements were overtaken by events when the churches in Central Kenya came on the scene of activity. As a result, the Kaimosi conference did not take place, with the focus shifting from western Kenya to central Kenya. It now became obvious that the Vihiga and Maseno conferences would remain the only and last conferences of this nature to be held in western Kenya. All the same, even when the theatre of operations moved to central Kenya, it was underscored that the pioneer endeavours of Vihiga and Maseno served as the birth, nursery, and foundation of all future efforts in cooperation and unity among Churches in Kenya.<sup>21</sup>

### **2. Kijabe Conference**

In between the two western Kenya conferences, there was one country-wide conference at the Africa Inland Mission (AIM) station of Kijabe in the autumn of 1908. Willis attended this conference in which the emphasis seems to have been on approaching work among the indigenous people from the same perspective "rather than each Mission impressing on the young African Church forms of worship and doctrines peculiar to themselves".<sup>22</sup> The attendance was about sixty, of whom Willis wrote, "Most of those present, as indeed, are the majority of the more recent missionaries to East Africa (Kenya), were Americans".<sup>23</sup> Although discouraging the pursuit of differences and appealing for emphasis on what is common, this conference did not come up with any clear-cut strategies or resolutions in the direction of cooperation and unity among the Churches. These were first articulated clearly and unequivocally at the Maseno conference.<sup>24</sup>

### **3. Plans for a Conference in Nairobi**

Although there had been projections for a third conference in western Kenya at Kaimosi in 1910 as a follow up on the first one at Vihiga and the second one at Maseno, this did not materialize. This was because at the conclusion of the Maseno conference in January 1909, Dr. H. E. Scott had announced plans for a country-wide conference in Central Kenya in Nairobi in June 1909.<sup>25</sup> The missionaries from western Kenya turned their focus on

this conference. Accordingly, at the end of their deliberations at Maseno, they chose delegates to represent western Kenya at the forthcoming Nairobi Conference.<sup>26</sup>

### **UNITED MISSIONARY CONFERENCE, NAIROBI (June 7-11, 1909)**

In accordance with prior plans, the various Missions in Kenya held a United Missionary Conference at the Railway Institute in Nairobi on June 7-11, 1909.<sup>27</sup> It had initially been anticipated that His Excellency, the Governor of Kenya, would open the conference. In his absence, the responsibility was given to an eminent visiting educationist, Prof. J. N. Frazer of Bombay, India.<sup>28</sup> Formally referred to as Principal Frazer, he gave the opening conference address and then declared it officially opened. Frazer went on to preside over the proceedings of the first day of the conference on Tuesday, 7<sup>th</sup> June, 1909.

Although there had been other earlier conferences at Vihiga in 1907-1908, and Kijabe in the autumn of 1908, in terms of lineage, the real predecessor of the Nairobi conference was the Maseno Conference in January 1909. Indeed, Maseno not only set the tone and inspiration for the Nairobi conference but it also provided the actual background structure and content. Firstly, the Nairobi conference, received wide and enthusiastic publicity at Maseno. Secondly, key delegates and participants were also identified there in advance. Third, and most crucially, the content of the proceedings and conclusions of Maseno served as the central foundations of the preparatory programme details of Nairobi.<sup>29</sup>

#### **Conference Proceedings**

The groups listed as present were eight,<sup>30</sup> including the Africa Inland Mission (AIM), the Church Missionary Society (CMS), the Church of Scotland Missions (CSM), the Friends Africa Industrial Mission (FAIM, Kaimosi), the United Methodist Mission (UMM), the Lumbwa Industrial Mission (LIM), the Seventh Day Adventist (SDA), and the Friends Industrial Mission (FIM, Pemba). The largest numbers came from AIM, CMS, and CSM, followed by FAIM (Kaimosi), and UMM, while the smallest in number were from LIM, SDA, and FIM (Pemba), with one person each.<sup>31</sup> Although wider participation was open to "the general

public as well as members of the Conference”, the right to vote was “confined to members of Missionary Societies who have signed the conference roll”.<sup>32</sup>

The deliberations of the conference were arranged thoughtfully and systematically with particular subjects assigned for different days. The first day was spent in presentations and discussions on educational matters. The second day was dedicated to issues dealing with the indigenous Church, with the third day focusing on customs of the indigenous people. Each day, resolutions were made to conclude the preceding discussions. On the final day these resolutions were reviewed and agreed upon as the basis of common operation. The first seven resolutions dealt with education, while the eighth to the fifteenth had to do with the indigenous Church, and the sixteenth to the nineteenth were connected with indigenous customs.<sup>33</sup>

Each day the conference commenced with a devotional service conducted by delegates who had prior notice of their assignment. The service ran from 9.00 to 10.00 a.m. and was immediately followed by the main conference business. On the first day 7<sup>th</sup> June 1909, Rev. Marcus Falloon conducted the devotional service. On the second day, 8<sup>th</sup> June, it was Dr J. W. Arthur (CSM) who was in charge. On the third day, it was the responsibility of Rev. Lee H. Downing (AIM), while Mr. W.R. Hotchkiss (LIM) took the fourth and the last full day, 10<sup>th</sup> June.

In the same way in which care was taken to distribute duties to delegates from different Missions with regard to devotions, steps were taken to ensure diversity in presiding over the meetings. After the first day when Principal Frazer was in the chair, the second day went to Archdeacon R. H. Walker (CMS), the third day was handled by Rev. Charles E. Hurlburt (AIM) with Rev. Dr. H. E. Scott (CSM) taking the fourth and the last day. Whoever was in the chair presided over proceedings for the entire day.<sup>34</sup>

### **Resolution and Recommendations**

Among the resolutions which emerged out of this conference, those dealing with the indigenous Church were of special significance with regard to cooperation and unity. They arose out of a lengthy and thorough presentation by Willis, together with a lively and concerted discussion by the delegates. On the second day, Wednesday, with Archdeacon R. H.

Walker presiding, Willis read his paper entitled, "The desirability of a common Native Church". It dealt with all the salient points in detail and then pre-emptively went on to answer any anticipated objections that might be raised against the proposed scheme of cooperation and unity. He concluded by giving the live options as two: that of "a united Christian church, inclusive of all", and the fall back position of "a federation of Churches uniting for social, educational, linguistic work, and the like but maintaining a position of practical independence".<sup>35</sup>

Willis had outlined four basic essentials, which he considered as the minimum requirements for the proposed united Native Church. When he was through with his paper, the missionaries were asked to respond specifically to any constraints that their sending societies might harbour against these ideals. Of the seven bodies represented, five expressed their willingness to accept the four essentials as presented by Willis. As already envisaged by Willis himself, the two Quaker groups were forthright in expressing reservations about two of the presented articles, the one of the two Sacraments, and that of the ordained ministry.<sup>36</sup> With appropriate elaborations, Willis outlined the four as:

1. The Bible, as our common standard of appeal
2. The Apostles' and Nicene Creeds, as expressing our common faith
3. The two Sacraments, Baptism and the Lord's Supper
4. A duly ordered and safeguarded Ministry.<sup>37</sup>

Of all the resolutions passed at the conference, the one most directly linked to efforts at cooperation and unity was resolution VIII, which stated that "the orderly development, organization, and establishment of a united, self-supporting, and self-propagating Native Church be a chief aim in all mission work".<sup>38</sup> Of interest is the fact that although agreed upon at Nairobi, it in essence originated from Maseno,<sup>39</sup> and was at the very centre of discussions at Kikuyu in 1913, and subsequently at Kikuyu also in 1918.

### **Post-Conference Discussions**

To continue deliberations on the feasibility of a united Native Church, it was proposed and agreed under resolution XII that a committee be appointed to deal with the issue. Employing the criterion of proportional

representation of the delegates present, those chosen by their groups to represent them were three from the CMS, two from the AIM, and one each from CSM, FAIM (Kaimosi), FIM (Pemba), UMM and the SDA.<sup>40</sup> Eventually this Native Church Committee chose a sub-committee consisting of Rev. H.E. Scott (Chairman, CSM), Rev. C.E. Hurlburt (AIM), Rev. J.J. Willis (CMS), and Mr. W. R. Hotchkiss(LIM).<sup>41</sup> In this saga of the continuing venture in cooperation and unity so much progress had been made that this committee was given specific guidelines as to the way forward. In the words of Willis, "A representative Committee of all the Missions concerned had been appointed to consider the whole matter, and draw up, if possible, a feasible basis of union, and failing that federation."<sup>42</sup>

The committee chosen in Nairobi in 1909 continued with its work after the conference. A number of meetings held in 1910 were especially fruitful.<sup>43</sup> At each stage, the committee kept the constituent Missions abreast of its discussions. Eventually, the committee came up with "a general scheme of missionary federation" as a prelude to the ultimate formation of a united Native Church. The scheme consisted of three parts. The first part had proposals of what would be "a basis of union for future united church." The second section dealt with what would be envisaged in "a scheme for missionary federation". The third part was made up of "proposals for consideration by the missions on common forms and usages which might be adopted". It is clear that the options were actually two, one dealing with "a basis of union" and the other outlining what would be entailed in a "federation" of missions.<sup>44</sup> Part three simply dealt with details of what might need to be considered in forging the groups together.

This three-part scheme was prepared by the committee for presentation at "the next representative Conference arranged for January, 1911."<sup>45</sup> When the proposals were duly presented to those present, the outcome was not encouraging in that, "The 1911 Conference ended in deadlock."<sup>46</sup> Those involved had no difficulties with one another, or with the thrust of cooperation and unity in general. Problems in the sphere of details were central to the breakdown, especially when viewed in the light of the traditions of the sending mother Missions or Societies. While enthusiastic about the prospects of a united Native Church in Kenya, the participating missionaries had to take into account the views of the home boards of their Missions, with whom they kept in constant touch regarding the ongoing deliberations. By and large, the home boards preferred a cautious

approach, especially when it came to full-fledged union.<sup>47</sup> It was on these grounds that one of the two options worked out by the committee in 1910 and presented to the representative conference of 1911, the one dealing with federations, proved to be the more favourable one. In the final analysis, it is the one, which was agreed upon as the priority recommendation for the next conference of 1913 at Kikuyu. The transition between 1909 and 1913 was summarized as follows:

In June 1909 the whole subject of a possible United Church was discussed at a Representative United Missionary Conference held in Nairobi and at which definite Resolutions with regard to it were adopted. A committee representing the various Missionary Societies working in BEA was appointed and they drew up in 1910 the Memorandum of the proposed constitution of (1) a United Native Church and (2) a Federation of Missions. It was this Memorandum which formed the basis of discussion by the Conference (of 1913) and which finally adopted with a few minor alterations the second of the two schemes.<sup>48</sup>

## END NOTES

---

<sup>1</sup> W.E. Owen, "Missionary Work Amongst the Kavirondo", *Uganda Notes*, July 1919 pp. 67-68

<sup>2</sup> R. Macpherson, *The Presbyterian Church in Kenya* (Nairobi Presbyterian Church of East Africa, 1970), p. 49.

<sup>3</sup> Watson Omulokoli, "The Historical Development of the Anglican Church Among Abaluyia, 1905-1955" (unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Aberdeen, 1981), pp. 66,90. It is instructive that Vihiga was opened in February, 1905 by Willis of the CMS, and handed over to the FAM in January 1906.

<sup>4</sup> J.J. Willis, Maseno, January 14, 1908, in *Willis Papers* (London: Lambeth Palace Library), p. 181. Two grave mistakes have been made by those who have written about the history of co-operation and unity among Churches in Kenya. First, the Vihiga Conference has been totally ignored in most sources. Secondly, those who have mentioned this first ever conference of this nature have erroneously pointed out that it was at Maseno in 1908. The truth of the matter is that this first conference was at Vihiga in 1907-1908, and that the second and only conference at Maseno was held on January, 4-8, 1909.

<sup>5</sup> W.T. Gairdner, *Edinburgh 1910: An Account and Interpretation of the World Missionary Conference* (London: Oliphant, Anderson and Ferrier, 1910), pp. 281.

<sup>6</sup> Willis, Maseno, January 14, 1908, in *Willis Papers*, p. 181.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 182

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Report of the Conference of Missionary Societies in British East Africa, Kikuyu, July 23-26, 1918, in *Owen Papers* CMSA Acc. 83 Z3.

<sup>11</sup> G.H. Mungeam (Compiler), Kenya: *Selected Historical Documents, 1884-1923* (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1978), p. 148.

<sup>12</sup> F. Rowling, "A Missionary Conference in Kavirondo, B.E.A." in *Uganda Notes*, March, 1909, No. 119, p. 41. Here Rowling lists them as, "The Church Missionary Society, the Church of Scotland Mission (Kikuyu), the Africa Inland Mission (Kijabe), the Friends' African Industrial Mission, the African Compounds Mission, the Seventh Day Adventists, the Mission in the Lumbwa country, and the Friends' Mission". All that is needed is to streamline the identity of the groups.

<sup>13</sup> R. Macpherson, *The Presbyterian Church in Kenya*, p. 50. There is indication here that among those attending were Dr. H.E. Scott and Dr. J. W. Arthur of the CSM.

<sup>14</sup> G.H. Mungeam, *Kenya Selected Historical Documents*, p. 149.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid. With some notations of my own for clarification.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 150. The detailed resolutions passed were in two categories. Those passed at the General Conference, and those passed in the Meeting of Men Only.

<sup>17</sup> F. Rowling, "A Missionary Conference Kavirondo, B.E.A.", in *Uganda Notes*, March 1909, p. 41.

<sup>18</sup> Pleydell's Annual Letter, On Furlough, February 3, 1910, No. 60.

<sup>19</sup> G.H. Mungeam, *Selected Historical Documents*, p. 150. This is Resolution 1 of the General Conference. This is what F. Rowling has in mind when he writes of "With the object of working towards building up of a strong African Church in the future, to be self-supporting, self-governing, and self-extending, and united on all essentials of the Christian Faith". F. Rowling, "A Missionary Conference", p. 41.

<sup>20</sup> Subsequent conferences in Nairobi (1909), Kikuyu (1913), and Kikuyu (1918) follow this text faithfully. In this connection, M.G. Capon makes two mistakes. First, he omits this Maseno conference and attributes to Kijabe, calling it a third conference at Kijabe in 1909. Secondly, he goes on to credit this resolution with his "Kijabe 1909". M.G. Capon, *Towards Unity in Kenya: The Story of Co-operation between Missions and Churches in Kenya, 1913-1947* (Nairobi: Christian Council of Kenya, 1962), p.11.

<sup>21</sup> R. Macpherson, *The Presbyterian Church in Kenya*, pp. 49-50.

<sup>22</sup> M.G. Capon. *Towards Unity in Kenya*, p. 11.

<sup>23</sup> Willis, Maseno, November 11, 1908, in *Willis Papers*, p. 211.

<sup>24</sup> M.G. Capon, *Towards Unity in Kenya*, p. 11. The point has already been alluded to that Capon omits the Maseno Conference, substitutes it with one at Kijabe in 1909, and then goes on to attribute this key Resolution of Maseno to his "Kijabe 1909".

- 
- <sup>25</sup> F. Rowling, "A Missionary Conference in Kavirondo, B.E.A.", in *Uganda Notes*, March, 1909, p. 42.
- <sup>26</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>27</sup> G.H. Mungeam, *Selected Historical Documents*, p. 151.
- <sup>28</sup> John Anderson, *The struggle for the School: The Interaction of Missionary, Colonial Government and Nationalist enterprise in the development of formal education in Kenya* (Nairobi: Longman, 1970), p. 36.
- <sup>29</sup> R. Macpherson, *The Presbyterian Church in Kenya*, p. 50.
- <sup>30</sup> Horace R.A. Philip, *A New Day in Kenya* (London: World Dominion Press, 1936) p. 27
- <sup>31</sup> G.H. Mungeam, *Select Historical Documents*, p. 172.
- <sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 151
- <sup>33</sup> Ibid., pp. 152-171. Most of the information regarding this conference is taken from Mungeam.
- <sup>34</sup> Ibid., pp. 151-169. There is a slight confusion on dates, with Friday being referred to as 11<sup>th</sup> (p.171), while Tuesday is 7<sup>th</sup> (pp. 151-152).
- <sup>35</sup> Ibid., pp. 152-161. See also, Capon, *Towards Unity in Kenya* p. 11.
- <sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 161
- <sup>37</sup> Ibid., 157.
- <sup>38</sup> Ibid., 170. See also, Capon, *Towards Unity in Kenya*, p.11.
- <sup>39</sup> Ibid., pp. 154-155
- <sup>40</sup> Ibid., p. 161
- <sup>41</sup> Ibid., p. 169
- <sup>42</sup> Willis, Maseno, June 24, 1909, In *Willis Papers*, 226.
- <sup>43</sup> R. Machpherson, *The Presbyterian Church in Kenya*, 52
- <sup>44</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>45</sup> Ibid. see also, Capon, *Towards Unity in Kenya*, p.12
- <sup>46</sup> Ibid. see also, Capon, *Towards Unity in Kenya*, p.12
- <sup>47</sup> M. G. Capon, *Towards Unity in Kenya*, p.12. This includes a quotation of a November, 1910 Resolution by a CMS committee in England.
- <sup>48</sup> G. H Mungeam, *Select Historical Documents*, p. 182.



*keeping up with contemporary Africa . . .*

## **BookNotes for Africa**

*BookNotes for Africa* is a twice-yearly specialist journal offering reviews of recent Africa-related publications relevant for informed Christian reflection in Africa.

Each issue of *BookNotes for Africa* contains 40+ one-paragraph evaluative reviews of titles selected especially for likely interest to theological educators and libraries in Africa and worldwide.

Now in its ninth year of publication, *BookNotes for Africa* has already provided learned reviews for more than 500 recent Africa-related titles. The journal thus represents a uniquely handy, affordable means of keeping current with contemporary Christian reflection in Africa.

*BookNotes for Africa* is jointly sponsored by distinguished theological colleges in Nigeria, Kenya, South Africa, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Reviews are provided by a team of contributors drawn from throughout the continent and overseas. A simple mode of production enables modest subscription rates for the intended readership.

Subscriptions are organised on a 2-year cycle (4 issues), with airmail posting included. For addresses within Africa the rate for 2 years is US\$8; for addresses overseas the rate is US\$12. Back issues are available at \$3 a copy in Africa, and \$4 a copy overseas. Cheques should be drawn on a US bank, and made payable to "BookNotes for Africa" (or you may propose a practicable alternative). Send all inquiries and subscription orders to: *BookNotes for Africa*, PO Box 250100, Ndola, Zambia.