

REVIEW: Charles W. Weber, *International Influences and Baptist Mission in West Cameroon: German-American missionary endeavor under international mandate and British colonialism*, Studies in Christian Mission 9. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1993. pp.xi, 176; 24 illustrations. \$67.75.

As every student of Africa knows, educational systems played a crucial part in the emergence of African self-identity and laying the groundwork for nationalism. In this thoughtful study Professor Charles Weber of Wheaton College (Illinois) has added to our fund of knowledge about this by carefully and concisely analyzing the formation and development of schools by Baptist missionaries in the area of the former German colony of Cameroon, which Britain administered under a League of Nations mandate between 1922 and 1945. He places the institutional history of the Baptists' school system in two larger contexts: the transference of colonial rule from one European power to another and the assumption of responsibility by American Baptists of earlier German mission work. The study also focuses on the stresses produced by the colonial government's desire for an 'adaptionist' programme (one that preserved the 'useful elements' of African culture while providing for community development by improving agriculture, local industry and self-rule) and the missionaries' emphasis on education which would serve evangelistic purposes and thus was more 'literary' in character.

Although some material does exist on the general topic of education in Cameroon, the author opted for a case study of the Baptists, because they were a small but tightly organized group and possessed an essentially untapped body of archival material. This enabled him to work more closely at problems arising from the tensions between Anglo-American and German missionaries and the evolution of separate German Baptist mission agencies both in Germany proper and in North America. A further feature of the work is its concentration on three generations of Baptist leaders in Cameroon, Carl Bender (1869-1935), Paul Gebauer (1900-77), and George Dunger (1908-). Also noteworthy in the last years was Laura Reddig (1912-). Each of the three men was born in Germany, emigrated to the United States and became citizens, joined the German Baptist denomination (now the North American Baptist Conference), and developed an individual approach to missionary work based on an appreciation of African culture.

The first part of the book is a historical narrative of the Baptist work from its beginnings in the mid-nineteenth century to World War I. Weber then presents the history of the interwar years through the endeavours of these three missionaries. This is followed by chapters examining Baptist educational policy as it was shaped by the requirements of the British colonial administration and the League of Nations and the mission's North American constituency. He shows that all three men had a high regard for traditional African culture but regretted its erosion due to the influences of Westernization. In their view, education was the way to help Africans to adjust to these pressures, since it provided training in spiritual, academic and vocational areas. In addition, they fostered the idea of self-sustaining local churches that linked education to evangelism. The missionaries permitted Cameroonians to make their own church decisions and encouraged them to evangelize their own people, whose language and customs they understood. In other words, the primary task was training leaders for schools, churches and evangelism.

Further, these missionaries sought to help their supporters in North America understand Africa better by providing fair and balanced presentations of African society. They wanted to preserve the inherent worth of the African way of life, protect it from the detrimental aspects of Western culture, and show how Christianity could accentuate and rejuvenate the cultural integrity of African societies. Although some paternalism was involved on the part of the three because they did maintain the superiority of Christianity, still they admired African culture and were respectful of and dependent upon their Cameroonian colleagues. Thus, the study challenges the stereotype of the overly paternalistic missionary who disregarded the indigenous culture and uncritically opposed it with the tenets of Western civilization. Although the book may be narrow in focus, it nevertheless belongs in every good library with holdings in mission studies and Africana.

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A LETTER TO WILLIAM BROCK FROM DAVID LIVINGSTONE

A copy of this letter, dated Kongone Harbour, 12 November 1859, was recently sent to the assistant editor by Mr Alastair King, Brock's great-great-grandson, whose mother gave the original to the University of East Anglia.

My Dear Friend, Having this day finished my first perusal of your admirable memoir of an admirable man, which by the way you forgot to send after me, I feel that I must write to you. No wonder you were affected in preaching the funeral sermon of the good and great General Havelock. Such a lovely character - so exalted a christian - and yet so human - so sympathizing, and yet so brave. I can enter better into your feelings now, and I trust this labour of love of yours will become a blessing unto many.

Here we are away from the exciting themes which agitate the public mind at home, and we are working towards a great object in the hope that the Lord may in mercy accept our services and grant us our desires. At first matters appeared untoward but these very hindrances now promise to turn out signally in our favour. We have been longer in the lower portion of the river than we anticipated but our opportunities for observing the fever - and trying the plan which I followed when alone have been more numerous in consequence, and I believe we can now cure the disease quickly and without (in general) loss of strength to the patient. This is one of the greatest boons our expedition will have to shew. We cannot however cure the brandy fever but country fever and it are two diseases.

Then we have been led to go up the Shire and we found that this river comes out of a large Lake called Nyassa. The region bathed by Lake and river is one of the finest cotton countries in the world - there are no frosts to cut off the crops as in America and instead of the unmerciful toil required in the slave states one sowing of foreign seed serves for three years crops. In the cotton country we have highlands which present changes of climate within a few miles of each other for we can ascend from the Shire valley where the thermometer stands about 96° in the shade and the river water is 81°-84° or like a warm bath at home to a heights [sic] of from 3000 to 7000 feet - well cultivated and peopled too, in the course of a short days journey. The people even now cultivate