

PATTERNS OF MISSIONARY EXPANSION ENTERPRISE IN AFRICA: A REFLECTION

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Abstract

The research work defined the missionary expansion enterprise as all efforts made by the Christian Missionaries to consciously spread the gospel and Christian civilization. The research work examined the impact of the gospel values in inculcating spirituality, morality and intellectualism in the lives of the converts. The research work is relevant to the contemporary Africans especially now that there are rampant corruption, spiritual barrenness, moral decadence and education without character. The core objective of this study is therefore to examine the platforms of missionary expansion enterprise in Africa and the zeal to rout the crescent by unfurling the banner of the cross, which was one of the most inspiring emotions supporting the historical missionary enterprise. Findings showed that the missionaries aroused national consciousness from negative and positive perspectives through missionary support for colonialism in Africa, missionary support of colonial aggression, the gospel values and mission education. The method of approach is historical and descriptive in nature.

Keywords: Missionary, Expansion, Africa, Analysis, Bible, Cross, Crescent

Introduction

It must be stated from the outset that when the missionaries went to Africa, their primary aim was to propagate the gospel of Jesus Christ to Africans, although some of them ended up propagating their own particular culture and brand of Christianity rather than the unadulterated gospel. Spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ means a

frontal attack on traditional beliefs, system of governments and customs that are oppressive to the missionaries.

The early planters of Christianity did not intend to enter into the thoughts world and patterns of the Africans, into their religious psychology, their ethos, and ethical conceptions and values. Struck and shocked by those gross and transient aspects of our culture, the missionaries shuddered and glossed over the positive merits of our cultural institutions. Christian missionaries in their invisible if inculpable anthropological ignorance of the Africans conceived or seemed to have conceived their mission as that of imparting not only the Christian religion, but also culture and civilization-and the Western civilization precisely.

The battle of the cross and the crescent and other local studies revealed certain major characteristics which formed a pattern in missionary expansion. When the humanitarians and evangelicals turned their attention to overseas mission and away from alleviating the dismal by-products of early industrialization in England, they had to depend on the aid of the colonial governments.

Research Objectives

The objectives of the study include:

To investigate the patterns of missionary expansion enterprise in Africa and the challenges posed by the expansion in Africa.

To examine the basis of the missionary expansion that made Christianity to thrive in Africa.

To create the awareness to the world about the encounter between Christianity and African culture.

To investigate the various instruments of maintaining unity in the African Christian communities

To also examine the implications of the contemporary challenges towards the development of the church in Africa

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study basically stems from the fact that it

addresses the issues that threatened the collective existence of Christian communities, and offers a valid and insightful resource material those future scholars especially church historians can consult to gain useful information on the patterns of missionary expansion African communities.

Methodology

This research employed the use of primary and secondary sources to obtain data. The primary source involved oral interviews while secondary source entail books, journals, and extant materials. These furnished the researcher with the basic information that was necessary for the comprehension, understanding, and analysis of the relevant issues discussed in this work. The research is also based on the deconstruction theory. In this work, this theory was objectively used to reconstruct the contemporary realities in line with the historic principles and ethics of the conflict and cohesion in mission communities in Africa. Deconstruction theory as used in this work envisaged that perhaps if misunderstanding occurs, it deemed it necessary to apply the George Simmel and Lewis Coser's theory respectively. This is because the foundational cause of the problem lies in the influence of culture and modernism. To Simmel's basic approach can be described as “methodological relationism”, while to Lewis Coser (1956), conflict not only generates new norms, new institutions, but it is said to be stimulating directly in the economic and technological realm.

The clash of civilization theory (Huntington, 1993) propounded the theory of the clash of civilization perspective. He specifically states that his work is not intended to be a work of Social Science but rather a new paradigm for the understanding of the post-cold war evolution of global politics. He explains that the world was kept in equilibrium by the alliances that squared off during the cold war, but the collapse of the Soviet bloc threw this balance out of the Hitler. Now, instead of geo-political alliances, culture and cultural identities coupled with religious, ethnic and national identities are shaping the patterns of cohesion, disintegration, and conflict in the

post-cold world wars. Huntington claims that these identities are at their broadest level best conceived of as civilizations that have been primarily identified with the world's great religions. The way to avoid crisis from this perspective is to keep the civilization from clashing.

Literature Review and Hypotheses

Patterns of Missionary Expansion Strategies in Africa

The Christian presence has not routed the gods of the fathers and the Church is already faced by hostile secularism. The zeal to rout the crescent by unfurling the banner of the cross was one of the most inspiring emotions supporting the historical missionary enterprise. Men generously donated their lives and money to this end.

In the Gambia, Sierra Leone, Northern Ghana and Northern and Middle-Belt Nigeria, reinvigorated Islam in the Post Jihad period reformed its administrative structure and exhibited such political expertise that the colonial powers of both France and Britain had to bargain with it. In Northern Nigeria, indeed, the British apparently went so far as to guarantee that Christian missions would not be permitted to proselytize in the Muslim emirates (Kalu, 1980). Buell (1928) has argued that, 'On the face of it, the pledge not to interfere with the Muslim religion did not confer a monopoly upon that religion or pervert other religions from competing with it for adherents. Ayandele (1966) agrees that the pledge "meant that Muslim would not be forced to accept Christianity; it did not imply that missionaries, in their capacity as Christian teachers and British subjects would not be allowed liberty to operate in Muslim districts" (p.515).

The battle of the cross and the crescent and other local studies revealed certain major characteristics which formed a pattern in missionary expansion. Firstly, when the humanitarians and evangelicals turned their attention to overseas mission and away from alleviating the dismal by-products of early industrialization in England, they had to depend on the aid of the colonial governments.

Thus, Fowell Buxton had to enlist government interest for the 1841 'civilizing' mission. Unfortunately, the needs for both parties did not always coincide. Allies sometimes later became opponents, yet the missions generally expanded as the colonial governments opened up the interior.

Secondly, the missionary expansion tended to depend on possible channels of communication. Navigable waterways determined the earliest pathways of missions. The missions to the Northern borders of West Africa were an exception. As Ayandele (1966) has argued, events such as the death of the missionary-disposed General Gordon in Khartoum, the establishment of a Mahdist regime there, the long imprisonment of the French Catholic priests by the Khalifa who routed the Western puppet ruler Emin Pasha, and all inflamed Christian ardour to do battle with Islam. Thirdly, high mortality, the opposition of traditionalist, a dearth of human and maternal resource and restrictive official policy, slowed the pace of expansion and sometimes forced the missionaries to huddle close to the coast. This was especially true in Sierra Leone and the Gambia (Prockett, 1965). Fourthly, in certain areas missionaries suffered the tantalizing prospect of being invited in only to be rejected later when the true nature of their aims became apparent, and when the social order and the supremacy of rulers seemed to be threatened. Thus, Chief Amarchree of New Calabar (Elem Kalabari) in the Niger Delta invited in the Church Missionary Society (CMS) in 1875, but in 1885 the mission was forced to withdraw to Okirika. During this period the CMS converted less than seven adults and their success was limited to school children who were predominantly of slave origin. They had been invited, because the presence of white men on the Western part of the river paid economic dividends. Political instability culminated in a civil war, the weak finances of the Kalabari mission, and the threats of the *So Alabo*, the head of the traditional priesthood, all combined to ruin the missionaries' hopes. Similar circumstances led to the closure of the missions in Brass, Ouidah and Porto Novo.

Fifthly, missions expanded rapidly or waited cautiously because of the pressure of competition. When the Protestants agreed to carve up Nigeria into spheres of influence, some missions like the Presbyterians around Onitsha and nearby Ogidi, the CMS was forced by the insurgent Catholicism of the Holy Ghost Fathers after 1885 to intensify evangelization. By the end of the first decade of the 1900s both missions had fought for every inch of the way into the interior of Igboland (Ekechi, 1972), though it is also true that the British expedition to destroy the Aro Long Juju oracle had cleared the path for more rapid missionary expansion. Missionary rivalry, however regrettable, nevertheless intensified the rate of missionary expansion. High competitive pressure forced the pace and, conversely, low pressure bred slow progress. In the Gambia the Methodists spent many years nursing three stations, but as soon as Hannah Kilham, the Quaker educationalist and others of the Society of Friends opened schools, the Methodists in the Gambia were roused to action.

The competition on the Cross River Basin between the Primitive Methodists, the Qua Iboe mission and the United Free Church missionaries (Presbyterians) assumed classic proportions. Christie, the fire-brand Methodist, devoted much of his letter-writing during 1909 to describing the details of the battle over one of the stations, Ikot-Epkene. In spite of Guttery's advice for caution, Christie dug in and declared to fight to the end. Sixthly, the pattern of expansion was very much influenced by the availability of dedicated indigenous agents and patrons.

It must be pointed out that the upsurge of missionary activity in this period arose from many factors which are usually captioned with the slogan "For Glory, Gold and God". The quest for political and military glory touched off the scramble for colonies and the need for stabilizing the presence of each Christian European power. The scramble was also for gold and markets—a quest intensified by the industrial revolution and supported by the mixed mercantilist and free-trade theories. Philanthropic and evangelical groups sought to

further God's divine economy. Thus, anti-slavers jostled with proponents of legitimate trade in advocating a Bible and Plough programme (Gallagher, 1958). Evangelicals like members of the Clapham Sect, and spiritual pietists in Western Europe shared the same goal as the black Back-to-Africa movement in the USA. While some were obeying the great command to go into all the world baptizing and making disciples before the eschaton, others wanted to recreate the lost African glory. It is easily assumed that obedience to the great command to go into all the earth making disciples and baptizing was the greatest invitation for the enterprise.

Many of these black nationalists like Alexander Crummell believed that Africa could be redeemed through religion (Kalu, 1980). Liberated slaves were only too anxious to carry the new religion to their native homes. By these impulses, missionary bodies blossomed in Britain, Europe and America as the grand missionary enterprise got under way. The high mortality rate among the first religious adventurers did not help to dispel the image of Africa as the white man's grave.

However, it was not easy to recruit men and women willing to go overseas. Admittedly, technological invention and numerous voyages of discovery and trade brought the needs of the heathen lands closer to European homes. After a stint in the mission field a candidate was sometimes sponsored for university training. Thus, G.T. Basden went to Onitsha as an ordained missionary and returned two years later to read for a BA degree at Durham University. The chance of eventually being sponsored to go to university, together with the opportunity to travel and to acquire social prestige motivated candidates to offer their services. Candidates were also influenced by friends and relatives, and by missionary meetings, sermons and mission literature, such as Swan's *Letters on Missions*, Mungo Park's and Livingstone's *Travels*, Gorgerley's *The Pioneers* and Brown's *History of Missions*. Worthy of note, too, are the tricks employed in the undignified scrambling for spheres of influence by various missions. It has been

argued by Ekechi (1969) that missionaries founded schools as a means of competition. In the race the number of adherents counted for more than the number of true converts.

Finally, the crucial element in the history of Christianity in Africa is the variety of responses of African communities. It is not an easy matter of categorizing the responses as positive or negative. Rather, it involves a careful understanding of the process of religious change from a viable religious and social order to a Christian perspective. The reactions must be placed along a spectrum ranging from total rejection through medial positions to total acceptance.

The Christian village system introduced by the Holy Ghost Fathers led by Fr. Lutz in Igboland, Nigeria, helped to established Christian villages at Aguleri, Ikem, Ossamori and other parts of Igboland which in turn helped Catholic expansion in Igboland. Lejeune himself did use catechists and sent them in groups to Aguleri, Ikem, Igbariam and Ossamori, but they were only regarded as a temporary measure and an attempt to keep pace with the Protestants who were spreading rapidly over the region. This method of evangelism was later changed and replaced by education introduced by Fr. Lejeune (Clarke, 1980). Henry Venn's missionary policy of self-supporting, self-extension, self-governing and autonomous congregations coupled with Buxton's Bible and plough helped also for the expansion of Christianity in Africa. The 3Cs namely Christianity, commerce, and civilization introduced by Christian missions helped to expand the gospel in Africa. Those Africans embraced any these 3Cs invariably became Christians.

The establishment of Model farms in the interior was meant to teach Africans how to develop their interior and their natural resources, and to supplant the slave trade with legitimate trade. To Okeke (2006), Thomas Buxton's advocating that the missionaries should take the plough and Bible into the interior while they preach the gospel. While agricultural experts would also go with the plough to set out a model farm for the growing of cotton and other economic crops, anthropologists were to be included to study the language of

the people.

According to Idowu (1968), Africa had known the Europeans as people with immense power, wisdom, and wealth. Europeans had demonstrated their power either as tormentors of Africans before whom the latter were entirely powerless; or as their deliverers whose benefactions appeared to be inexhaustible. In commercial wares brought by Europeans, in their bearing and comportment, there was every sign of wealth, and of this wealth Africans were already having a taste in the gifts brought to them by explorers. In relation to this, the missionaries conferred a status upon their converts: they were in a class by themselves. Even today in Abeokuta Christians in Nigeria are called 'the bookish ones' or 'the people with books' (Idowu, p. 424). Christianity is a religion with a prestige value. Christians were in the forefront of a new enlightenment throughout the continent and they and their children set the fashion which the impressionable Africans followed. Christianity enabled people to earn their livelihood in 'clean' jobs, a situation which was greatly exploited by the church. Chiefs became friends of missionaries and either professed Christianity themselves or surrendered their children for education and baptism, undoubtedly because of expected political or material benefits; but the church found this acceptable and rejoiced at it.

In his interpretation of Church Missionary Society (CMS) history, Henry Venn emphasized the close connection between the antislavery movement and Society origin (Shenk, 1983). In his book titled, 'The African slave trade and its remedy', Sir Thomas F. Buxton, the greatest leader of the abolitionists after the death of William Wilberforce, insisted that the full ransom of Africa was to be found in her fertile soil. He suggested the establishment of a settlement at the confluence of the rivers Niger and Benue to act as an agricultural training center for Africans. Christianity was to be introduced as a necessary aspect of this programme to bring about the moral and spiritual regeneration of Africans. Hence Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton advocated the principle of the 'Bible and plough'

slogan which caught the imagination of the next generation. Venn became an energetic exponent of the Buxton's doctrine of the 'Bible and plough' (Nmah, 2010).

Hence, Venn planned to bring young Africans to England for training in commerce and the professions. Through this effort young men developed skills in producing and marketing cotton, brick and tile-making, building, medicine, printing, agriculture, and navigation (Shenk, 1983). Training in practical arts was also introduced in 1845 in order to encourage "the social and religious improvement of Africa by means of her own sons" (Shenk, 1983, p. 68). Shifted to training in the practical arts and also encouraged African initiative in Africa. Venn encouraged local congregations to be self-supporting, self-propagating and self-reliance instead of depending on funds from England.

Venn and friends believed that production of a major cash crop for export was required. They selected cotton to introduce cotton production in West Africa. They brought Africans to England for training in the manufacturing and marketing of cotton and brought machinery of processing the raw materials in Sierra Leone and Yoruba land. The grown eventually built warehouse at the ports to expedite shipment from Lagos and Freetown. Regular shipping started between West Africa and Manchester. CMS involvement in various education programmes no doubt proved also more important for future development. The Victorians attributed Britain's recent economic and social change to a rising middle class (Nmah, 2010).

Again, civilization around the mission house affected those who have close contact with the missionaries, the converts and their friends and relatives to some extent, the emigrants above all (Ajayi, 1975). According to Ajayi, "Civilization in this case involves linguistic studies, adult education and Sunday schools, primary education and boarding schools, industrial education, training of missionary grammar schools in Lagos, apprenticeship schemes,

missionary influence on building, printing, health service and civilization around the mission house” (pp. 126-163). Missionary enterprise in this manner brought about national consciousness or in other words the rise of Ethiopianism 1875-1890, which is the cradle of African nationalism among other benefits (Ayandele, 1966). Mission enthusiasts saw the 1857 Niger Expedition as indispensable in opening the way to Buxton's Bible and plough doctrine. Crowther selected six sites on the river for mission stations. According to Shenk (1983), “Venn said, it is clear that we must fill up the distance between Lagos and the Niger with civilization, through missionary operations and lawful commerce and Christianity.

In August 2003 the Kenyan Methodist Samuel Kobia was elected General Secretary of the World Council of Churches. The Lutheran World Federation is led by Ishmail Noko from Zimbabwe and the General Secretary of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, Setri Nyomi, came from Ghana. So at the beginning of the 21st century the three major Protestant ecumenical institutions are headed by Africans. Today most Anglicans live in Africa, thus turning the former “Church of England” by numerical majority into African Church. Great was the disappointment among many Roman Catholics in Nigeria and South Africa that after the death of John Paul II in April, 2005, and during the resignation of Pope Benedict XVI, no African was elected as their successor-despite the importance of Catholic Christianity on the continent (Koschorke, 2004).

That there is a “shift of centers” of World Christianity from North to South is repeated in current ecumenical debates like a mantra evoking a picture of the growing polycentric structure of World Christianity. Christianity has been polycentric from its very beginnings, and Africa early emerged as one hub. This is the case not my for the ancient churches of Ethiopia and Egypt, which also played a prominent role in the more recent development of African

Christianity.

Examples are drawn from the Anglican Church in Nigeria, Uganda, Kenya, Congo, South Africa and the Sudan. In the rather different context of South Africa, where the ideology and praxis of apartheid was given legitimacy by Christian church leaders, members of the Anglican Church such as Trevor Huddleston, Theophilus Hamutumpangela or Desmond Tutu, were at the forefront of the fight against apartheid. Thus the Anglican Communion in the continent represents manifold varied links between 'Christian and African identity.'

Again, there are three brands of African Christian identities namely:

1. Long established African-initiated and charismatic-influenced churches such as those linked to William Wade Harris or Garrick Braide in the first quarter of the 20th century.
2. "Classical Pentecostals" of Western origin which have been operating in Africa since 1907 when the first Afro-American Pentecostal missionaries arrived in West Africa from the USA.
3. New Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches which become widespread phenomena since the 1970s.

Traditional African Initiated Churches (AICs) and classical Pentecostals are clearly differentiated and as a rule have no organizational links. At the same time "North American Pentecostalism's root in African American religion made the transplanting of its central tenets" easier to graft in South Africa. Yet the new Pentecostal Churches of the '70s, despite numerous links to the USA, are in no way replicas of American patterns due to the "many innovations made by these movements" to adapt to the African context. AICs make up the majority of Christians in several African countries and, moreover, are "an extremely important component of World Christianity". The development of African Theologies and the paradigm of theology of reconstruction which effect the changed situation at the end of the century were the demands on the Churches and the Christians of the continent.

African theologians try to mediate between the Bible and Africa by synthesizing biblical and African worlds, independently of 'mediating' (European) theologies. They are convinced of a deep seated "analogy" between biblical and African world views-a perspective grounded and expressed both in the belief in spiritual forces as a central element in both traditions and in the "radical continuity between the biblical concept and the traditional African understanding of God. African notions of God seem much more appropriate than Christian categories-or at least the categories of the missionaries and Western theologians who reduced God to a mere intellectual concept without any reference to the African context.

Analyses of Missionary Expansion Enterprise in Africa

The centrality of the Bible in African Christianity has been pointed out in many contributions. Citing Ayandele, Babalola (1988) averred that Christianity seemed a much greater disturber of the African society especially its denunciation of polygamy and other important African custom and institutions that could be tolerated with the impression that Africans could not become Christians unless they become Europeanized. The missionaries failed to study African worldview. That is African strong feeling of common participation in life, a common history, and destiny, their believe in the spirit world and the relationship between the spirit world and the physical world (O'Donovan, 1996). In respect of traditional marriage, Iwe (1985) suggested that the church should institute research into the nature, motives and circumstance of the polygamous tendencies among its members instead of condemning it outright. Specifically, he wants the Church to examine African cultural background; whether polygamy as an institution is irrevocably, absolutely and irreconcilable opposed to the biblical data of the New Testament, and also what is the essential nature of the unity of a true Christian marriage? To expatiate his point, Iwe (1985) mentioned the factors of childlessness, economic ability and social acceptability to be taken into consideration when examining polygamy in the context of African traditional values. To him, the

Church should concern itself with promoting human conscience which is the pivot of personality development and political maturity. No wonder Marxist-Leninist theory claimed that religion is false consciousness, an illusory reflection of the world resulting from class division (Shelly, 1984).

In the course of the missionary expansion, the missionaries encountered some challenges. These include human problems. That is lack of missionaries who have adequate educational and theological training that was necessary for their work. There was also language problem. What the indigenous people heard from the interpreters of English language could be described as a mere caricature of the message the missionaries intended to convey to Africans. There was also the problem of health hazards. Malaria militated against the missionaries, which resulted to a very high mortality rate among the missionaries. Africa was regarded as white man's grave. The missionaries' method of approach in their mission was unrealistic in that they demanded nothing less than effective colonization of all religions to be converted where any success were been achieved.

Communication was another problem that slows down missionary activities in Africa. The dense forest of Africa made it impossible for the penetration of the missionaries into Africa. The absence of “network roads” restricted missionary expansion. They contended themselves staying along the coast. Added to this natural impediment was the opposition of the traditional rulers who were against expansion of Christianity in interior. They were afraid of losing their political and economic power.

Financial challenge was another problem that hindered the progress of missionary activities. The missionaries derived bulk of their resources from colonial government, business houses and philanthropic organizations. Nevertheless the missionaries were chronically in need of money to carry out their work. Because of this problem, they got involved in slave trade as a means of balancing

evangelization and supporting themselves. The missions Board established in Lisbon in 1693 to check the decay of overseas missionary was said to have been financed by the tax on the sale of 700 slaves each year. Ships belonging to the Jesuit order were usually loaded with slaves on their way from Angola to Brazil (Babalola, 1988). Thus the viability of the missions depended largely on trade-including slave trade. Since the missionaries depended on the colonial government and business houses for finance, in return missionaries were expected to promote the interest of their sponsors.

Previously European Missionary work in Africa had been dependent on colonial or commercial expansion. Again, rivalry among the various missions and denominations came out to be combatants in a battle field rather than seeing themselves as “fishermen” fishing the lost souls. The case in point is the often clash between the Church Missionary Society and Roman Catholic mission in Igboland in Africa especially in Nigeria; and the rivalry between Qua Iboe mission and United Freed Church of Scotland around Calabar, Uyo and Ibino in Nigeria too.

However, Christianity introduced the virtues of honesty and integrity highly indispensable aspects of the principles of justice. In 1827, Fourah Bay Teacher Training College was built in Sierra Leone and was upgraded to the status of a university in 1876 and provided University education to students from various West African countries. The C.M.S. financed higher education in West Africa and provided the institutions with qualified teachers from Europe. Majority of the conversion took place during schooling. A good Christian was expected to have knowledge of the Bible, ability to sing hymns and recite catechisms. He must be able to communicate orally and in writing.

Conclusion

This research work ends the study with a summary and conclusion. This work, “Patterns of missionary expansion enterprise in Africa: a

reflection” has tried to examine the patterns of missionary strategies for expansion enterprise in Africa.

Some of the methods of expansion include Christian village, education, evangelism, slave colony, and subjugation of African values and consequent colonization of Africa by the Western powers. I realized that the initial motive of the missionaries was to introduce what they called 3cs namely commerce, civilization and Christian (Northcott, 1993). These three factors represented three levels of activity namely the missionary, the trader, the diplomat and the settler. These three factors also constitute the mission of the people of England to the rest of mankind. Hitherto the missionaries activated by a sense of love exported everything including their church's name, their form of organization, their liturgy, their hymns, their vestments, their church architecture and the like, to churches in the mission-field (Scherer, 1964).

The gospel was consequently ascribed the miraculous power to produce conversion, and the missionaries unwittingly interpreted Christianity to mean the same thing as Western civilization. The two were inextricably combined and they produced a distorted view of the original religious missionary motive of expansion. At this point one will not commit felony if one is to describe the unfriendly posture, the whole episode of the missionary activities as provocative that incensed the Africans to political, economic and social-cultural nationalism.

However, the missionaries through their activities introduced education, civilization, the building up of the Christian medical service. The medical services clearly occupied a second place in missionary activity (Baur, 2005). Education was considered a direct response to Christ's commission, “Go and teach all nations”; healing diseases seemed to have been an activity used mostly to support Christ's own teaching mission. In the recent past, when people spoke of missions, they usually had in mind the mission schools. Equally for many, perhaps too many missionaries, the

schools were the most important institutions. For the historian, schools could well be used as the barometer of Africa's development. From this point of view, the time up to World War 1 (1900-1920) could be called the age of the bush school; the time between the wars (1920-1940) the age of the primary school; the time after World War II (1945-1960) the age of the secondary school; and with independence there came the age of the university. Parallel to this development there went a growing missionary involvement in education.

The *bush schools* were and remained entirely the work of the missions, and they were generally run at a very low cost. They were usually below standard and that too many pupils forgot the Three R's faster than they learnt them. But then almost every mission station had also a central school where the more gifted pupils could reach a higher standard that enabled them to become catechists, learn a craft or find employment with the government or the settlers. But the immediate purpose of the school was to make many converts.

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