The West Indian Mission to West Africa:

The Rio Pongas Mission,

1850-1963

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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University of Toronto

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Abstract

This thesis investigates the efforts of the West Indian Church to establish and run a fascinating Mission in an area of West Africa already influenced by Islam or traditional religion. It focuses mainly on the Pongas Mission’s efforts to spread the Gospel but also discusses its missionary hierarchy during the formative years in the Pongas Country between 1855 and 1863, and the period between 1863 and 1873, when efforts were made to consolidate the Mission under black control and supervision. Between 1873 and 1900 when additional Sierra Leonean assistants were hired, relations between them and African-descended West Indian missionaries, as well as between these missionaries and their Eurafican host chiefs, deteriorated. More efforts were made to consolidate the Pongas Mission amidst greater financial difficulties and increased French influence and restrictive measures against it between 1860 and 1935. These followed an earlier prejudiced policy in the Mission that was strongly influenced by the hierarchical nature of nineteenth-century Barbadian society, which was abandoned only after successive deaths and resignations of white superintendents and the demonstrated ability of black pastors to independently run the Mission.

Instrumentalism aided the conversion process and the increased flow of converts threatened both the traditional belief systems and social order of the Pongas Country, resulting in confrontation between the Mission and traditional religion worshippers, while the lack of more legitimate trade in the Pongas Country and allegations of black missionaries’ illicit sexual
relations and illegal trading caused the downfall of John Henry A. Duport, the Mission’s first black Head Missionary.

In the late 1800s, efforts to establish a self-supporting, self-generating, and self-propagating church together with initiatives toward African agency in the Pongas Country failed. However, it was French activities and eventual consolidation of their interests in the Pongas Country from 1890 and their demand that Mission schools teach in French, together with successful recruiting of Mission students by the Roman Catholics and Muslim clerics in Guinea, that finally crippled it. Thus, by 1935 when the Gambia-Pongas Bishopric was established in the hope of rescuing the Mission, this gender-biased Christian enterprise in West Africa was already a spent force.
Acknowledgements

In the Fall of 2000, I enrolled in a graduate history course on Post-Emancipation in the Caribbean at Toronto’s York University. Before the commencement of one of the lectures, I had an informal discussion with Professor David Trotman about what I was planning to write my doctoral dissertation on. I told him that it would be a continuation of the slave trade along the banks of The Gambia River between mid-fifteenth and mid-nineteenth centuries – an issue I wrote on to obtain my Master of Arts degree in history at the University of Toronto. Noting that it was a fascinating topic, Trotman highlighted that it is also one that many scholars already dealt with and perhaps I could contribute even more to themes in African history by conducting more research and writing about the efforts of West Indian missionaries of African descent in West Africa. Knowing that this is a topic that has been least fully written on, I took the challenge, and as they say, “the rest is history.”

For the success of this work, I am grateful to my supervisors and committee members, Professors Martin A. Klein, Stephen Rockel and Melanie Newton for reading and commenting on chapter after chapter and generally offering helpful advice, as well as helpfully pointing me in the right direction of research literature that saved me several mistakes. Most importantly, I thank them for their assiduousness, understanding, patience and unwavering support as I struggled and continue to do so with my medical problems while writing this thesis. Also, my sincere gratitude goes to Moses Klein, Mrs. Suzanne Klein, and Ms. Ansuya Rockel for their support. Together with their husbands, Mrs. Klein and Ms. Rockel accorded me the most individual encouragement, moral and financial support in Toronto. I am also indebted and grateful to my colleague, Dr. Lansana Gberie who also read some of my chapters and offered new insights and directions. I would particularly like to thank Professor Thomas Mathien of the
University of Toronto’s Transitional Year Programme (TYP) for kindly reading all the chapters and suggesting a number of improvements. Not only was Tom careful and efficient, he was also patient and good humored even under the severe duress caused by my impatience for his feedback. Of course none of these individuals is responsible for any mistakes or shortcomings that remain, and their help or contribution is more evident since some of them have reached different conclusions from mine.

Also, the completion of this thesis would not have been possible without a great deal of support and help in one way or the other of various institutions and other individuals in Toronto (Canada), London and Oxford (England), and Serrekunda (The Gambia). I would like to thank the doctors, nurses and staff of Toronto’s St. Michael’s Hospital for continuing to carefully and efficiently deal with my medical problem. Most importantly, I am grateful to the University of Toronto’s Department of History for both moral and financial support in the form of the Carmen Brock Fellowship of which I was the first and three-time recipient. I would like to particularly thank the late Professor and philanthropist Peter Brock who donated money to set up this Fellowship on behalf of his late wife. I am also thanking Professors Eric Jennings, Nakanyike B. Musisi and Sean Hawkins and other faculty members and staff of both the History Department and School of Graduate Studies (SGS) for their support and patience. Professors Rona Abramovitch, Agi Lukacs, Maureen Fitzgerald and other TYP staff and faculty provided both financial and moral support and I appreciate their generosity. I am also grateful to Jamang Touray, Mama Giyana, Amadou Kandeh, Ansumana Camara, Nuha Kijera, Mamadi Colley, Amidou Goudiaby, Denise Clarke, Collette Thompson, Asiatou Barry, Diyanatou Barry, Fatoumata Jallow {Yaa Sheriff}, Ramatoulie Jallow, Muna Askar, Siphilise Ndlovu (Pee),
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(Karafa) in Germany, Modou in Spain, Omar (Kalmendo), Dodou, Ebrima (Tombong) and Meta all of who are currently residing in Serrekunda with their own families. Lastly, I am grateful to my best friends in Serrekunda – Cherno B. Jarju commonly known as C-Boy, Bakary M. A. Tamba, Mbemba Badjie commonly known as Papiya and Tijan Bojang for their support. These guys are my “eyes and ears” in The Gambia.
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<td>BMS</td>
<td>Baptist Missionary Society</td>
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<td>BPP</td>
<td>British Parliamentary Papers</td>
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<td>CCC</td>
<td>Commerce Christianity Civilization</td>
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<tr>
<td>CLR</td>
<td>Copies of Letters Received</td>
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<td>CLS</td>
<td>Copies of Letters Sent</td>
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<tr>
<td>CMS</td>
<td>Church Missionary Society</td>
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<td>CO</td>
<td>Colonial Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>DGRP</td>
<td>Diocese of Gambia and Rio Pongo</td>
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<td>DSL</td>
<td>Diocese of Sierra Leone</td>
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<tr>
<td>DWIC</td>
<td>Dutch West India Company</td>
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<tr>
<td>EC</td>
<td>English Committee</td>
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<td>FO</td>
<td>Foreign Office</td>
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<td>FWIC</td>
<td>French West India Company</td>
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<td>GNA</td>
<td>Gambia National Archives</td>
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<td>GPM</td>
<td>Gambia Pongas Magazine</td>
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<td>KG</td>
<td>Kew Gardens</td>
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<td>KK</td>
<td>Kristi Kunda</td>
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<tr>
<td>LMS</td>
<td>London Missionary Society</td>
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<td>MF</td>
<td>Mission Field</td>
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<tr>
<td>NOOC</td>
<td>North Oxford Overseas Centre</td>
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<td>Public Records Office</td>
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<td>RHL</td>
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<td>SGS</td>
<td>School of Graduate Studies</td>
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<td>SPCK</td>
<td>Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge</td>
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<td>SPG</td>
<td>Society for the Promotion of the Gospel</td>
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<tr>
<td>TYP</td>
<td>Transitional Year Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>UGC</td>
<td>Upper Guinea Coast</td>
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<td>URD</td>
<td>Upper River Division</td>
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<td>USPG</td>
<td>United Society for the Promotion of the Gospel</td>
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<td>VOC/EIC</td>
<td>East India Company</td>
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Introduction

The Rio Pongo area in the West African state of Guinea is now relatively unimportant economically. For hundreds of years, however, the strategically placed river settlement was an important base of the Atlantic slave trade. Once the British abolished the slave trade in 1807, Pongas became the place of one of significant experiment in Christian missionary activities in West Africa in the nineteenth century, with the extensive – almost exclusive – use of West Indians of African descent, freed slaves or descendants of slaves, spearheading an important Anglican mission.¹

This fascinating but ultimately failed Christian Mission, lasting for more than a century in a West African area already greatly influenced by Islam and traditional forms of religious worship, is the subject of this dissertation. In spite of its obvious interest and long duration, however, the Rio Pongas Mission has been little studied; in fact, scholars of missionary enterprises in West Africa have only studied its first fifty years of existence. This dissertation is aimed at providing a more complete, nuanced and systematic study of the Rio Pongas Mission from the date of its conception in 1850 into the 1900s. The study particularly focuses on the last fifty years of the Mission’s existence.

¹ This was only one of four similar missionary efforts in West Africa. The first mission under the auspices of the Baptist Missionary Society was established in Fernando Po and Cameroon’s in 1841. The Scottish United Presbyterian Mission to Old Calabar followed closely in 1846. Both Societies’ initiatives in Africa using Jamaican agents of African descent and their European leaders began in Jamaica and later, the idea was taken up by their home boards in Great Britain. The third missionary enterprise that also used Jamaicans of African descent and their European leaders was the Swiss-based Basel Missionary Society with its experiment in the Gold Coast in 1843. Its initiative was partially attributed to the Moravian missionaries in Jamaica. As will be discussed in detail, the fourth – the Rio Pongas Mission, using West Indian agents of African descent and their European leaders had an initiative that originated and remained with the West Indian Church (Anglican) in Barbados. However, this enterprise received financial support from the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (S.P.G) in England and other interested parties. For more details on the first three initiatives, see Bela Vassady, “The Role of the Black West Indian Missionary in West Africa, 1840-1890” (Ph.D. dissertation, Temple University, 1972).
Literature Review

Although there is a wealth of materials, including writings by missionaries who served in Rio Pongas, on the mission, only a handful of scholars have done work on the subject. Although these scholars have done excellent research on the Mission, it is obvious that their studies do not provide a comprehensive and systematic analysis of the Mission in its entirety. This study is not only meant to provide such analysis, but will do so by engaging with the existing studies.

The historiography of the Rio Pongas Mission effectively began with the publication of *The Martyr of the Pongas* by the Rev. Henry Caswall, the first Secretary of the English Committee of the West Indian Church Association for the Furtherance of the Gospel in Western Africa. However, this is primarily a biography of the Rev. Hamble James Leacock rather than the history of the Mission. Caswall provided details on the life and Episcopal work of Leacock in the West Indies and the United States of America, as well as his involvement in the early months of the establishment of the West Indian Mission in West Africa. However, because Leacock died eight months after the founding of the Mission on the banks of the Rio Pongo, *The Martyr of the Pongas* relates only that short initial period of its existence in its account. Nevertheless, the book

\[\text{References}\]


3 The English Committee was formed in England in 1855 to help the projected West Indian missionary enterprise in Africa. Its power that tended to overshadow the local Mission Board of the West Indian Church Association for the Furtherance of the Gospel in Western Africa, was curtailed in 1868. See Titus, “The West Indian Mission”, p. 108.
sheds great light on the preparation for the project in the West Indies, the departure of the two missionaries for West Africa, their arrival in Sierra Leone, the British colony that was their initial destination, and their establishment in the Pongas country.

After Caswall’s publication, several decades elapsed before any other major work appeared. *Fifty Years in Western Africa* by A. H. Barrow, also a Secretary of the English Committee, covers a substantial portion of the early history of the Rio Pongas Mission. What is relevant here, however, is that despite the great value of the records Barrow provides of the activities of the West Indian missionaries from the establishment of the Mission in the Pongas country in late 1855 to 1900, he deliberately omits many details from his publication. Admitting his action, Barrow stated that:

> The original intention to give a faithful record of all events has not, however, been carried out, as just half of the manuscript has had to be set aside in order to bring the book down to its present proportions. This will account for the omission of a large number of incidents and the somewhat journalistic form of the closing chapters.⁴

In consequence, Barrow’s study is not a very comprehensive and systematic discussion of this West Indian missionary enterprise in its entirety.

Like Barrow, C. F. Pascoe⁵ deals with the first fifty years of the Rio Pongas Mission. Summarizing the Mission’s activities in almost ten pages, Pascoe argues that the West Indian missionaries’ spread of Christianity in the Pongas Country resulted in the progress in industry. He also argues that in the first ten years alone, the Mission had improved the religious and social conditions of indigenous populations in the Pongas country and had also won many converts.⁶

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⁴ Barrow, *Fifty Years*, p. iv.
⁵ See Pascoe, *Two Hundred Years*, Vol. I.
⁶ Ibid., p. 265.
Pascoe further argues that the West Indian missionaries of African descent were able to live and work under a climate “in which the white man languished and died”.  

In the article titled “The West Indian Mission to Africa: Its Conception and Birth,” Noel Titus discusses the origin of the entire West Indian mission to West Africa. He holds that it was not the intention of the proponents of the mission to Africa to have West Indians of African descent in the leadership role of this venture. Even though the entire missionary project was meant to be a compensation to Africa for the continent’s role in the development of the West Indies through the trans-Atlantic slave trade, Titus argues, West Indians of African descent were earmarked for inferior roles within the projected mission.  

As Titus observes: “The much publicised project was not one aimed at developing [Black] leadership.”

While discussing other West Indian missionary ventures in West Africa, such as the Baptist and Presbyterian Missions originating from Jamaica, C. P. Groves provides only a four-page summary of the Rio Pongas Mission as an Anglican contribution to the spread of the Gospel on the continent. Overall, he maintains that West Indian missionary enterprises in West Africa were made possible as a result of the generous contribution by West Indians of African descent. Commenting on the generosity and resilience of these missionaries, Groves states that:

Had their first and only concern been for themselves they could scarcely have been blamed. Without a traditional social structure and language of their own to link them with their past, denied the status of marriage but encouraged to breed their kind, torn at their masters’ convenience from those to whom they were bound by ties of natural affection, it would not have been surprising had the springs of generosity dried up. But the evidence to the contrary is plain to read.

7 Ibid.
9 Ibid.
10 Groves, The Planting of Christianity, Vol. Two, p. 44.
O’Connor makes a mere passing reference to the Rio Pongas Mission. However, he does point out that the salaries of the first two Rio Pongas missionaries were unequal at the time of the Mission’s establishment. He notes that before it was later rectified, the White missionary’s salary was six times that of his Black colleague.\footnote{O’Connor et al. \textit{Three Centuries of Mission}, p. 75.} O’Connor also testifies that John Henry A. Duport, the veteran West Indian missionary of African descent performed his missionary duties exceptionally well before he died in 1873. Although West Africa of the nineteenth century was known as the “White Man’s Grave”, O’Connor notes that it has equally been the “Black Man’s Grave”.\footnote{Ibid.} Commenting on the impressive service of some of the veteran West Indian missionaries of African descent at the Rio Pongas Mission, O’Connor notes that:

They represented an impressive turnaround, for if these missionaries’ forbears had appeared at all in SPG’s records, it would have been as Christian names only on the baptism lists in the slave plantations.\footnote{Ibid.}

Bela Vassady’s 1972 doctoral dissertation is the only study to date that attempts a systematic, but partial, analysis of the Mission’s work.\footnote{Vassady, “The Role.”} In effect, it is the first and only scholarly treatment of the Rio Pongas Mission. In chapter five of this dissertation, Vassady surveys the early attempts to run the Mission through white local supervisors assisted by subordinate West Indians of African descent. His discussion also covers the period of the formative years – a period that witnessed a shift from the policy of white control and supervision and black subordination and assistantship to an all-black staffed and supervised enterprise. However, Vassady does not discuss the social background that strongly influenced the original policy of white supervision and black subordination, a policy that reflected the racialized and hierarchical nature of Barbadian society of the nineteenth century.
In his discussion of the relationship between the missionaries of the Rio Pongas Mission, especially West Indians of African descent and the local Eurafricans\textsuperscript{15}, Vassady rightly argues that the relationship was an often fraught one. He points out that not only did the chiefs resent what they perceived as overbearing attitudes on the part of West Indian missionaries, but they also preferred white Englishmen because of the legitimate trade and prestige the chiefs thought Europeans could bring to the areas under their control. Although Vassady underscores the Eurafrican chiefs’ preference for Englishmen because of their perceived ability to bring legitimate trade, he does not examine the role that the West Indian missionaries played in the promotion of this trade as a means of establishing it in place of the dreaded traffic in human beings. Vassady also notes the friction between West Indian missionaries of African descent and the Western-educated Africans, especially teachers and catechists from Sierra Leone, who came to the Rio Pongo area to assist in times of personnel shortage. Vassady, however, does not fully examine the Barbadian factor.

Jerome S. Handler has perceptively analyzed the plight of freedmen (people of African descent) in Barbados within the Anglican Church from the close of the eighteenth century to 1834. Handler writes that they were denied positions of leadership, responsibility and prestige.\textsuperscript{16} Handler further points out that, as members of the subordinate group, nothing, not even wealth, occupation, education, career, or leadership, was sufficient to place them anywhere other than

\textsuperscript{15} These were either descendants or the offspring of African women and European and American merchants or slave traders in the Rio Pongo area.

below whites in the hierarchy of Barbadian society.\textsuperscript{17} This structural prejudice, Vassady notes, made work elsewhere, in particular in Africa, extremely attractive to people of African descent in Barbadian society in the nineteenth century: it not only provided them with the (idealistic) opportunity to help “regenerate” the continent, but also an opportunity to fulfill their dreams of finding in Africa the status and authority denied them at home.\textsuperscript{18} Thus, having found such status and authority in the Rio Pongas Mission, Vassady argues, these West Indian missionaries of African descent were reluctant to allow Western-educated Africans to hold positions, which might jeopardize their own leadership and prestige among indigenous populations.\textsuperscript{19} The present study will look more closely at the monopoly of authority by the West Indian missionaries of African descent in the Rio Pongas Mission – a monopoly that was bitterly contested by Western-educated Africans and thus became one of the principal causes of friction between the two groups.

Vassady’s dissertation highlights issues such as the initial and uneasy relationship between the Rio Pongas missionaries and “indigenous Susu”\textsuperscript{20} chiefs, who had been both Muslims and slave traders at the beginning of the Mission. He argues that the appearance of British subjects in the area immediately aroused suspicion on the part of these chiefs.\textsuperscript{21} Their concerns were well founded. Since the abolition of the slave trade in 1807, the British had waged a fierce war against the trade from their base in neighbouring Sierra Leone. According to

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{17} Handler, \textit{The Unappropriated People}, p. 195. \\
\textsuperscript{18} Vassady, “The Role”, p. 242. \\
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid. \\
\textsuperscript{20} For lack of a better one, this term is used to differentiate the local chiefs of both African parentage often referred to in other studies as “pure Susu” from their mulatto counterparts. \\
\textsuperscript{21} Vassady, “The Role”, p. 94.
\end{flushright}
Thompson, the Susu rulers of the Pongas Country had enriched themselves from the slave trade and saw their livelihood under threat.\textsuperscript{22}

\textbf{Proving their Critics Wrong}

This study will show that the contention that West Indians of African descent lacked the solid character and sound judgment necessary for unsupervised missionary enterprise in Africa, made by European missionaries at the time,\textsuperscript{23} was malicious and false. I will demonstrate that many West Indian missionaries of African descent showed that they were as competent and resilient as the best of their European colleagues. The assumption of the so-called moral flaws of West Indians of African descent, I will show, stemmed from the colour prejudice and racial hierarchy of Barbadian society of the nineteenth century – a period in which members of the subordinate group were commonly denied positions of leadership, responsibility and prestige within the Anglican Church.\textsuperscript{24} I argue that it was this colour prejudice and hierarchy that members of the Church of England and its appendage, the West Indian Church, attempted to recreate in the Rio Pongas\textsuperscript{25} Mission in West Africa.\textsuperscript{26} Chosen as subordinate assistants to White superintendents of the Rio Pongas Mission, West Indian missionaries of African descent rose to the challenge and eventually controlled and supervised the entire Mission.

\textsuperscript{22} Rev. H. P. Thompson, \textit{Into All Lands}, p. 331.
\textsuperscript{23} For details, see Titus, \textit{The West Indian Mission}.”
\textsuperscript{24} Jerome S. Handler, \textit{The Unappropriated People}, p. 195. Religion in Barbados was monopolized by the Church of England and as Handler points out, “Anglicanism was, for all intentions and purpose, the state religion”(Ibid., p. 162).
\textsuperscript{25} Although the river is known as the Rio Pongo, the missionary project was called the Rio Pongas Mission. My research has not revealed how the name came about, but I suspect it to be a mispronunciation by the English.
\textsuperscript{26} The West Indian Mission was established among the Susu ethnic group on the banks of the Rio Pongo River about a hundred and fifty miles north of Sierra Leone in December 1855. The name Rio Pongo (mud river) was given to it in the fifteenth century by the Portuguese slave traders.
To demonstrate the competence and resilience of the West Indian missionaries of African descent within the Rio Pongas Mission, this study will examine the formative years of the Mission, the period when it was controlled and supervised by White superintendents; the consolidation period under the sole control and supervision of West Indian missionaries of African descent; and the relationship between these missionaries and their local Eurafrican chief hosts and Western-educated Africans from Sierra Leone. As the Rio Pongo area\(^{27}\) was one of the last strongholds of the traffic in human beings in West Africa, the contribution of the West Indian missionaries towards the extinction of the trans-Atlantic slave trade in areas under their influence, and their efforts to replace the human cargoes with legitimate commodities will also be investigated. Finally, the study will examine the French interest in, and eventual occupation, of the Pongas Country, and the impact of French colonial policies on the Mission.

The study also critically examines the recruitment and ordination of Western-educated Africans during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the new African agency\(^{28}\) - an attempt that was meant to replace the West Indian native agency.\(^{29}\) The adoption of self-supporting initiatives to sustain the Mission due to the depletion of funds caused by the decline of the sugar industry in the West Indies is also considered. Natural disasters, such as the hurricanes that hit the West Indies at the close of the nineteenth century, played a crucial role in worsening an already bad situation in the sugar industry, and led to a policy shift in favour of self-supporting schemes for the Mission.

\(^{27}\) Hereafter referred to as the Pongas Country.  
\(^{28}\) This involved the recruitment of western-educated Africans to assist or replace West Indian missionaries of African descent.  
\(^{29}\) This involved native West Indians, particularly those of African descent who were recruited in the West Indies for the West African service.
The Mission’s efforts to further consolidate and extend its enterprise amidst financial and political challenges will be examined to show how problems at home affected the Mission’s work in West Africa more broadly. As well as this, the thesis will systematically examine the strategy of creating Western educational institutions to persuade Muslim and other communities into accepting the Christian faith, the training of even more Africans for missionary duties with the Mission, the establishment of the long-awaited Diocese of the Gambia and the Rio Pongas with its own Bishopric, and the impact of the Second World War on the Mission. Finally, the founding of a Christian community village\textsuperscript{30} in Kantora District in the Gambia’s Upper River Division will be examined. In the final analysis, West Indian missionaries of African descent proved to be not only an integral part of the Rio Pongas Mission, but leading participants in missionary activities begun in 1850 and continued there until 1963. I will examine more systematically all of these issues, and many more, to build a more complete picture of a complex, fascinating, and failed mission that has been neglected for too long. In doing so, the dissertation will contribute to the limited body of scholarly studies on the Rio Pongas Mission, as well as the extensive literature on missionary enterprises in Africa.

Although the Rio Pongo is a very small place, and the Mission itself is not that significant overall, it is of historical significance because it was led by resource-starved West Indians (black descendants of slaves themselves operating in a world so completely dominated by Europeans) where the mighty CMS had failed to make any impact. That the Rio Pongas Mission survived over a century means a lot. Furthermore, the area is dominated by Islam, and for a Christian mission to survive and leave a lasting impact is highly significant – and interesting to a modern

\textsuperscript{30} The village was established in 1935 by John Charles Sydney Daly, the first Bishop of the Diocese of Gambia and the Rio Pongas as part of an effort to cater to the Episcopal needs of the local population who were non-Muslims or nominal ones.
reader, especially given the now pervasive talk of “clash of civilizations” (Islam vs. Christianity). Moreover, this was the era of the anti-slavery movement, and the British were actively suppressing the slave trade in favor of the so-called ‘legitimate’ commerce. The fact that this commerce failed to take off when the British were so active in the Pongas (a center of the illicit slave trade) can be seen as an indictment of the British anti-slavery effort. Finally, there is the French factor: their rivalry with the British, the French only language for mission education and of course, the anti-clericalism of Republican France versus the Anglican missionary efforts.

**Methodology**

The key questions that this thesis attempts to answer are as follows: (1) – What motivated the overseas organizers of the Rio Pongas Mission to establish a Christian enterprise in West Africa? (2) – Who funded it? (3) - Who were the chosen missionaries for this Mission? (4) - Did the Mission succeed in achieving its goals? Field research for this study was first conducted in Banjul, the capital city of the Republic of the Gambia between January and May 2002. Most of my investigations in the country were done at the Gambia National Archives (GNA). Initially, my plan was to proceed to Guinea and Sierra Leone from the Gambia but the political instability and the civil war taking place in these countries respectively made my trips impossible at the time.

In the case of Barbados and London, however, I was lucky because the data that was formerly housed at the S.P.G. library in both places was found together with archival material at the Rhodes House Library in Oxford. Thus, almost all the relevant sources for this study were found in Oxford and London in the United Kingdom. Nevertheless, if I had sufficient funds, I would have consulted several additional archives, such as the Spiritan Archives at at Chevilly Larue in France that holds important data regarding Catholic activities in the Pongas Country and
the relationship between their Mission and Anglican and Protestant converts in the area. The genealogical reconstruction and elaborate charts by the Holy Ghost Fathers would have been invaluable for my research as it relates to African and Eurafrican families of the Pongas Country. Also, I would have benefited significantly by focused study in the Church Missions Society archive at the University of Birmingham, which holds data relating to the issues of race that link the activities of Rio Pongo families more directly to the Freetown community. As the history of the Iles de Los and Kambia on the Scarcies figure prominently in the history of the Rio Pongas Mission, and the British Imperial perspective of that story is found at the CMS archives at the University of Birmingham and the National Archive at Kew Gardens, London, I should have gone to the former or spent more time at the latter but financial limitation prevented this from happening. In the last years of this project, ill health also limited my mobility and ability to conduct further research.

Staying at the North Oxford Overseas Centre (NOOC) between June and August 2002, I conducted the better part of the research for this study at Rhodes House Library in Oxford. There I consulted the S.P.G. annual reports and *The Mission Field* for published information on the Mission. The English Committee minutes taken during discussions by the S.P.G. governing body were also consulted. Rhodes House Library also has a rich collection of correspondence materials between the S.P.G. in London and West Africa, especially Sierra Leone, from where the African part of the Rio Pongas Mission was directed. I made extensive use of these materials.

At Rhodes House Library, I was also able to consult many original letters sent to and from London, Barbados, and Sierra Leone. Many of these letters were found under the label “Diocese of Sierra Leone.” Incoming letters were found under the label, “D” Series. These were marked Copies of Letters Received (CLR). They were original missionary reports or letters that
the S.P.G. received from the missionaries or their supporters concerning the Rio Pongas Mission. In addition to examining the CLRs, I consulted the Copies of Letters Sent (CLS). These were found in the “E” Series and were also original copies of quarterly and annual reports filed by all missionaries as required by the S.P.G.

I also collected data from volumes labeled “Barbados Letters Received” at the Rhodes House Library. Many of the contents of these volumes were letters that the West Indian missionaries of the Rio Pongas Mission sent originally to Barbados and were redirected to the S.P.G. in London. Materials from the West Indies Letters Sent (WILS) in bound volumes also added to my data collection from Rhodes House Library. These include the S.P.G. letters sent to Barbados regarding the Rio Pongas Mission, as well as letters sent to the missionaries of the Mission via Barbados.

While at Rhodes House Library, I also consulted the contents of two boxes in the “X” Series. This is a miscellaneous series. Marked X1445/1 and 2, the boxes contained daybooks and journals from some of the S.P.G. mission stations in different countries. One box contains materials dating from 1894, but the rest were from the twentieth century. They include the English Committee minutes for the Rio Pongas Mission from 1909 to 1927. Research at the Rhodes House Library was not restricted to manuscript materials. Periodical publications by the S.P.G. or the English Committee in London were also consulted. Occasional Papers detailing the annual progress of the Pongas Mission, as well as magazines, such as *The Gambia Pongas Magazine* and *The Beacon* also yielded important data for this study.

From my research base in Oxford, I commuted occasionally by coach to the Public Records Office (PRO) in London’s Kew Gardens. There, I consulted the British Government documents, such as those of the Foreign Office labeled F.O. 2 (Africa, Consular) Series and F.O.
84 (Slave Trade) Series. These documents yielded official statistics and data regarding the slave trade and the trade in legitimate commodities, as well as the economic and political activities of the British and other European and American rivals in the Pongas country. While some of these materials were jotted down in notebooks or photocopied by myself, or by the staff of the respective archives, most of them, especially those consulted at the R.H.L, were made into reels of microfilm and mailed to me in Toronto at a later date.

Secondary sources, including memoirs of missionaries, journals, books, and articles were also extensively used in this study. These were also supplemented by Ph.D. dissertations from various universities. Although some of the secondary sources were obtained from different libraries in Canada, the United States, and England, most of them, including some primary sources, such as the British Parliamentary Papers (BPP) and some Foreign Office (FO) documents were found at the University of Toronto’s downtown and Scarborough campus libraries, especially John P. Robarts Library and the affiliated college libraries. This array of sources as evident in the methodology of this study enabled me to offer a fresh and comprehensive study of a missionary enterprise that was one of very few initiatives in Africa, and one that lasted for almost a century but is yet to be studied in its entirety.

**Chapter Arrangement**

This thesis is arranged chronologically into six main chapters. Chapter 1 focuses on the historical background of the Pongas Country and the Pongo River and its major inhabitants, the arrival in Freetown, Sierra Leone, of the first West Indian missionaries of the Rio Pongas Mission and their eventual settlement in the Pongas Country. Chapter 2 discusses the hierarchical nature of Barbadian society of the nineteenth century, a situation that strongly influenced the original policy of White supervision and Black subordination of the Pongas Mission. It also shows how
the concept and eventual birth of the Rio Pongas Mission to West Africa began. Providing a detailed and chronological overview of the formative years of the Rio Pongas Mission, Chapter 3 shows how organizers demonstrated persistent colour prejudice by denying leadership positions to African-descended West Indian missionaries. It also investigates the White-controlled Mission’s initial efforts to spread the Gospel among the indigenous populations of the Pongas Country. Chapter 4 begins with the period between 1863 and 1873, when efforts were made to consolidate the Mission under the sole control and supervision of the West Indian missionaries of African descent. The chapter also deals with the beginning of the relationship between West Indian missionaries of African descent and the Eurafrican chiefs, as well as the Mission’s trials and tribulations in the Pongas Country. Furthermore, it discusses the relationships between these missionaries and the Western-educated African teachers and catechists from Sierra Leone. It also discusses the efforts of the missionaries to eradicate the transatlantic slave trade or to mitigate domestic slavery, the missionaries’ efforts to persuade Britain to engage in legitimate trade with the Pongas Country, as well as the French occupation of the area.

With more Western-educated Africans being hired and ordained as deacons to head the Mission posts between 1873 and 1900, Chapter 4 also discusses the Rio Pongas Mission under the control of African-descended West Indian missionaries and their relationship with Eurafrican chiefs and Western-educated African teachers and catechists from Sierra Leone. Again, the chapter investigates the adoption of self-supporting initiatives and the new “African agency” that was meant to replace the West Indian “native agency,” the proposal for a new Diocese of the Rio Pongo with its own bishop, and the depleting funds resulting from the declining sugar industry in the West Indies, one of the Mission’s principal sources of revenue. Chapter 5 deals with the period between 1860 and 1935, a period that witnessed an increase in the efforts to consolidate
the missionary enterprise amidst more financial problems and French influence and crippling restrictions on the Mission. These included the use of schools as educational propaganda among Muslim populations, and the training of more Africans for missionary duties with the Mission. Finally, Chapter 6 engages the period between 1935 and 1963, when the Rio Pongas Mission officially ended. Included in this investigation is the creation of the new Diocese of the Gambia and the Rio Pongas with its new bishop, the effects of the Second World War on the entire Rio Pongas Mission, and the establishment of Kristi Kunda or “The New Jerusalem” in the Kantora District of the Gambia’s Upper River Division (URD).
Chapter 1

The Pongas Country: A Small Region in the Upper Guinea Coast of Africa

This chapter discusses the historical background of the Pongas Country and the ethnographic mix of the area – a mixture that includes Eurafrican families who played the role of hosts to the West Indian Mission to West Africa and the Mande people, particularly the Susu among who the Rio Pongas Mission was established.

Historical Background of the Pongas Country

The Pongas Country is situated about 140 miles north of Sierra Leone on the West Coast of Africa. It lies along both the right and left banks of the Pongo River in what the British called the Upper Guinea Coast. Presently located north of Guinea’s capital city of Conakry, this area contained fifteen villages or towns that had a population totaling about 7,580 in the nineteenth century.¹ Some of the original inhabitants were the Baga and Nunez who subsisted on fishing and rice growing.² By the sixteenth century, however, Mande people, whose ancestry could be traced to the Empire of Ghana that flourished in West Africa in the eleventh century, joined these groups. The disintegration of Ghana’s political system, the rise and expansion of the Mali Empire in the thirteenth century, and the development of the transatlantic slave trade in the sixteenth century all contributed to the Mande migrations to the Pongas Country in the sixteenth century.³ Initially, Mande immigrants settled in the lowland areas west of the Futa Jallon highlands due to incursions of the Fula people led by Koli Tengela during their own westward

¹ The Mission Field, Vol. I, March 1856, p.57. Hereafter, The Mission Field will be referred as M.F.
expansion at the close of the fifteenth century. Thereafter, the Futa Jallon highlands became a gateway for immigrants moving from the interior to the coast. Among Mande settlers in these lowlands were the Susu-speaking people, who claimed to be descendants of the Soninke of Soso. They were the first Mande speakers to reach the windward coast of the Atlantic.


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5 Ibid., p. 24.
7 Ibid. See the map above.
In the Futa Jallon, these Susu were called Jalonke, while in Sierra Leone they were referred to as Sulima or Yalunka.\(^8\) The Susu trading families migrated from Futa Jallon to the coast to settle among the Baga in the sparsely populated grasslands on the right bank of the Rio Pongo, the Bangalong basin, and the Fattalah River.\(^9\) As merchants, these Susu migrants served as intermediaries in the flourishing trade between the coastal Baga and the interior Mande and Fula people.\(^10\) The trade involved salt and rice, produced by the Baga, and the cloth, cattle, and gold brought annually to the coast by the Fula and Jahanke caravanners from Futa Jallon and the Upper Niger respectively.\(^11\) Futa Jallon was an important cattle producing and grazing territory in the period.\(^12\) This interior caravan trade continued until the early decades of the sixteenth century.

By the mid-sixteenth century, however, an expanding transatlantic trade involving slaves had overtaken the interior caravan trade.\(^13\) Initially, the Portuguese who had been the first Europeans to land on the shores of the West African coast in the fifteenth century, settled in places like Arguin in the present Republic of Mauritania and in the Senegal and Gambia Rivers.\(^14\) Here, their original aim was to participate in the trans-Saharan gold trade.\(^15\) However,
as slaves became an important trade commodity during the late fifteenth century, Portuguese traders involved in human trafficking set up operations on islands situated off the Atlantic coast or in barracoons along the estuaries of West African rivers. These locations enabled them to quickly fill up their ships with the human cargoes. With the establishment of cotton and sugar plantations on some of the Atlantic islands and the need of a steady labour supply, many Portuguese settled permanently as private traders, and from the mid-fifteenth century, they monopolized trade along the west coast of Africa for 150 years. They initially settled on islands such as Madeira off the coast of Morocco, the Canary Islands 250 miles south of Madeira, the Cape Verde Islands off the coast of Senegal, and São Tomè, Fernando Po, and Principe in the Gulf of Guinea. In these settlements, the Portuguese focused more on trading in slaves than in any other commodity from West Africa. The settlements along the Atlantic coast enabled Portuguese private traders to conduct the business of slaves for the sugar plantations on the Atlantic islands and in the Americas.

Between the mid-fifteenth and mid-eighteenth centuries, some of the Portuguese settlers on Cape Verde Islands and Bissau expanded their trading activities onto the mainland, including some of the rivers in the Pongas Country. They became prominent in the riverine trade in items such as rice, gold, dyes, cloth, ivory, raw hides, hippopotamus teeth and slaves. These West


18 Vassady, “The Role”, p. 185.

African products were exchanged for European goods, such as firearms, tobacco, knives, beads and trinkets during this period.\textsuperscript{20}

As the transatlantic trade developed after 1500, many Portuguese private traders settled along rivers in the Pongas Country as they did elsewhere along the West African coast. These settlers were known as \textit{lançados}, a Portuguese term from the verb \textit{lançar}, which means to throw.\textsuperscript{21} According to Wright, the term \textit{lançados} was used to refer to the action of the settlers “casting” or “throwing themselves” among the African populations.\textsuperscript{22} Indeed, the \textit{lançados} did just that along the Gambia River. However, as Wright observed, in the riverine trade along the Gambia River between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries, they were under the control of their Gambian hosts because they could not rely on Portugal or any other European power for protection. Wright notes that up to the early decades of the nineteenth century, the balance of power remained in the hands of indigenous people because Europeans who traded along the Gambia River had little military power at their disposal. He further states that in the case of new Portuguese arrivals, even though some of their caravels were equipped with canon and people armed with crossbows, their military efforts were often futile because they were always outnumbered by the indigenous people armed with bows and arrows tipped with poison.\textsuperscript{23} As such, the Portuguese often relied on local rulers for the smooth running of the river trade and for their own protection against outside forces. In the Pongas Country where they also settled during this time, it was probable that they had similar relations with Susu traders. What was certain, however, was that with private armies consisting of indigenous fighters, the \textit{lançados} were  

\textsuperscript{20} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{21} Donald Wright, “Niumi, the History of a Western Mandinka State Through the Eighteenth Century” (Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana University, 1976), p.143.  
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{23} Ibid., p. 85.
readily able to make a place among indigenous societies, and to gradually integrate with them and in many instances, “only their wealth, reputation and occupation as collectors of slaves distinguished their descendants from other Africans.”

Although the lançados initially settled along the Atlantic coast, their trading activities extended far inland. As slave traders, they received most of their human cargoes from inhabitants of the interior of the Pongas Country. Their Portuguese ancestry allowed them to establish cordial economic relationships with European captains of slave ships plying the Atlantic coast. In fact, they were often better trusted by European slave ship captains than their indigenous African counterparts. As a result, the lançados often received goods on credit (advance) to be traded for slaves and other West African products.

On the other hand, in the Gambia River trade between European and indigenous Gambian traders (jula) in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, credit was also occasionally issued to the jula. However, most European traders doing their first business in the waters of the Gambia River did not issue credit to any jula without first consulting with local rulers, such as chiefs and village heads, as well as prominent and influential jula elders. These authorities were often consulted first because they knew the credit ratings of most jula merchants. Even when an individual jula’s credit rating was good, he was still likely to be refused credit because most European traders preferred direct exchange with unfamiliar traders. Such a cautious approach meant that no credit was issued until trade had occurred between the parties over a period of time, and until the two parties had come to know and trust each other. The deal was closed when

\^[24] Ibid.
\^[27] Ibid.
\^[29] Ibid.
the party with more goods to sell issued credit to his counterpart who had money less to purchase. However, despite the trust that now existed between the trading parties, credit was still strictly issued on the recommendation of the local authorities or of a jula elder with an already established credit record that was well known to European traders.

The favoritism that European ship captains afforded to the lançados provided them the opportunity of becoming the new Atlantic commerce trade intermediaries, replacing the Susu middlemen in the Pongas Country. With their ability to speak the languages and practice some of the life-styles of both Europeans and indigenous people, the lançados became more than occasional intermediaries in the Atlantic commerce. If anything, they became essential not only as traders, but as cultural brokers in the Pongas Country.

In the region, the transatlantic slave trade produced a relationship between the lançados and indigenous trade intermediaries that had a great impact on the indigenous socio-political structures. As the trade peaked between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries, the relationship between the lançados and indigenous people, especially those from the chiefly and ruling class, became more “intimate and profitable.” Considered guest traders, the lançados were accorded protection by indigenous African chiefs. However, they received more than protection from their host chiefs. The lançados also settled among and married into these indigenous chiefly and

30 Ibid.
33 Ibid. For more details on such a position in other parts of the West coast of Africa, see Wright, “Niumi”; Wright, The World; Curtin, Economic Change; Rodney, A History.
34 Vassady, “The Role”, p. 186.
trading families.\textsuperscript{36} According to Gailey, they gradually married into local communities and became increasingly isolated from their original Portuguese settlements on the Atlantic coast. He notes that as a result, the connection with those settlements was gradually lost.\textsuperscript{37} In Gailey’s view, Portugal could not afford to maintain official contact with those of its people who settled in what it considered to be unhealthy and unprofitable areas.\textsuperscript{38} Thus, except for occasional visits by Portuguese priests from Portugal, the Cape Verde or Rio Grande settlements, contact between the new hybrid \textit{lançados} and Portuguese gradually ceased.\textsuperscript{39} He argues that by the mid-seventeenth century, what remained of the link between the \textit{lançados} in other areas and Portugal had almost ceased.\textsuperscript{40} It is not certain that their relation actually ceased. What might have probably happened was a declined relationship due to the \textit{lançados} dealings with French and British traders in the area. In fact, links continued to exist between the \textit{lançados} and the Cape Verde Islands. Gradually pushed out of northern Senegambia, the Portuguese continued to trade along the Upper Guinea Coast until the 1850s. However, during this period, they focused their activities more on the Bissau-Cachew area and conducting business from their permanent base on the Cape Verde Islands.\textsuperscript{41}

Despite a declining link between the \textit{lançados} and metropolitan Portugal, marriage into indigenous Susu and other chiefly and trading families in the Pongas Country proved advantageous both for the \textit{lançados} and for their hosts. For instance, marrying into such powerful and influential families meant that any threat to the interests of the \textit{lançados} was equally a threat to their in-laws. Most importantly, the matrimonial unions between the \textit{lançados}

\textsuperscript{36} Ibid., Vassady, “The Role”, p. 286.
\textsuperscript{37} Gailey Jr., \textit{A History}, pp. 19-20.
\textsuperscript{38} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{39} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{40} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{41} Barry, \textit{Senegambia}, p. 47.
and indigenous chiefly and trading families in the Pongas Country resulted in the birth of a new powerful and distinct Afro-Portuguese (Eurafrican) class.\textsuperscript{42} Most of these descendants of early Portuguese settlers in the West coast of Africa followed the footsteps of their ancestors by becoming chiefs and traders among indigenous Africans. They became a powerful class and their power was not restricted to control over traffic in human cargoes.

Politically, Eurafricans controlled private armies and by virtue of already being chiefs, they forced their way into the chiefly political leadership in the Pongas Country, between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries.\textsuperscript{43} For instance, descendants of a “white” Portuguese trader from Bissau called Sittel Fernandez (Fernando), who settled in the Dembia River in the Pongas Country in mid-eighteenth century, followed his footsteps and became chiefs and traders of the town of Bramaya. Sittel belonged to one of the major European and later Eurafrican trading families who had settled on the left bank of the Rio Pongo in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.\textsuperscript{44} He married into the Baga chiefly family of Bramaya and rose into the position of chief of the town by the late eighteenth century.\textsuperscript{45} His descendants succeeded him as chiefs of Bramaya and went on to become some of the most powerful and influential nineteenth century Eurafrican chiefs and traders in the area.\textsuperscript{46}

Another Portuguese trader from Bissau whose descendants became powerful chiefs and traders of the region during the nineteenth century was Emmanuel Gomez. The Gomez patriarch settled in the town of Bakia in the mid-eighteenth century and married an indigenous woman.

\textsuperscript{42} Vassady, “The Role”, p. 186.
\textsuperscript{43} Mouser, “Trade”, p. 22.
\textsuperscript{45} Coifman, “The Western”, p. 279.
\textsuperscript{46} Ibid.
who bore him a son called Emmanuel Gomez Jr.\textsuperscript{47} The senior Gomez rose to the rank of chief of Bakia and was succeeded by his son upon his death.\textsuperscript{48} Elizabeth (Isabella) “Bailey” Gomez, the daughter of Emmanuel Jr., married Styles Lightburn, a white American slave trader from South Carolina who settled at the town of Farringia around 1809.\textsuperscript{49} Upon the death of Styles in 1827, Mrs. Lightburn took control of his holdings at Farringia, and became one of the most powerful chiefs and matriarchs in the Pongas Country.\textsuperscript{50} From their base in Bakia, other descendants of the Gomez family became centrally powerful and influential Eurafrican chiefs and traders in the Pongas Country during the period.

Although Eurafricans of Portuguese origin had become important chiefs and traders in the Pongas Country at this time, Portugal’s own trade in the area was in decline. With increased demand for slaves for plantation work in the Americas, European traders from other countries made their way to West Africa. The business interest they established there pushed out metropolitan Portuguese.\textsuperscript{51} The Dutch, who had already occupied the island of Goree located off Dakar, now the capital of Senegal, in 1621, were the first to challenge the Portuguese trade monopoly on the West coast of Africa in the seventeenth century.\textsuperscript{52} Even though the Dutch were ruthlessly effective in protecting their interest in this period, their challenge of Portuguese domination produced even more rivalry resulting in Portugal retaking Goree in 1629 and again in 1645 after the island once again fell into Dutch control.\textsuperscript{53} The rivalry intensified with more European powers trading along the coast. This was evident twenty-two years later when in 1667

\textsuperscript{47} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{48} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{49} Ibid., Mouser, “Trade”, p. 91.
\textsuperscript{50} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{51} Mouser, “Trade”, p. 24.
\textsuperscript{52} Barry, \textit{Senegambia}, p. 47.
\textsuperscript{53} Ibid.
the English also seized Goree from the Portuguese only to lose it to the French a decade later in 1677.\textsuperscript{54} As their settlement fell into the hands of one rival after another, the Dutch retreated from the coast of Senegal to Arguin and Portendick on the coast of Mauritania where they engaged in the flourishing gum trade until the early decades of the eighteenth century.\textsuperscript{55} Meanwhile, the British who had already erected Fort James on James Island at the mouth of the Gambia River in 1651 and had also established their commercial interests along the Gambia and Sierra Leone rivers, as well as in the Isles de Los in the Pongas Country, continued with their activities in those areas.\textsuperscript{56} The French, who had also established themselves earlier in mainland Senegal\textsuperscript{57} after first settling at Saint Louis located near the mouth of the Senegal River, in 1659, also continued to conduct business there.\textsuperscript{58} By 1750, therefore, fierce competition from these European and later American traders finally destroyed Portugal’s trade monopoly in northwest Africa. In the end, Portuguese traders were confined to their Cape Verde Islands and Guinea Bissau bases from where they now operated through their Eurafrican allies.\textsuperscript{59}

What was clearly evident during the seventeenth century was that with the approval of their metropolitan monarchs, the European powers that destroyed the Portuguese trade monopoly on the West African coast had done so by establishing chartered companies with the aim of dominating the Atlantic commerce with Africa and the Americas.\textsuperscript{60} With Portuguese trade monopoly already broken various European royal policies favored chartered companies because the monarchs saw them as the most efficient way to handle the transatlantic slave trade. In 1625,

\textsuperscript{54} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{55} Ibid., pp. 48-49.
\textsuperscript{56} Ibid., p. 47.
\textsuperscript{57} Mouser, “Trade”, p. 24; Barry, Senegambia, p. 47.
\textsuperscript{58} Barry, Senegambia, p. 47.
\textsuperscript{59} Mouser, “Trade,” p. 24; Barry, Senegambia, p. 48.
\textsuperscript{60} Ibid.
for instance, the Dutch established the Dutch West India Company (WIC) that resembled its forerunner, the VOC or Dutch East India Company founded in 1602. In 1664, the French Finance Minister S. Colbert also created the Compagnie Française des Indes Occidentales or French West Indian Company while the British formed the Royal African Company (RAC) in 1672.

As had the Portuguese during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the French, British, and American traders established strong economic and socio-political ties with indigenous chiefly and trading families in the Pongas Country. Their ties and matrimonial unions produced yet another group of powerful and influential Eurafrican traders. Descended from British and American slave traders, these new traders also penetrated the local power structure in the Pongas Country, and immediately became a force to be reckoned with. By virtue of their acquired royal background, they also became chiefs and took control over Atlantic commerce in the rivers of the Pongas Country that fell under their jurisdiction.

One of the Eurafrican chiefs and traders in the Pongas Country in the mid-nineteenth century was John Ormond Jr. He was a son of an English slave trader, John Ormond Sr., who went to the Rio Nunez in the mid-eighteenth century and settled in the town of Bangalong, where he married the daughter of a Susu chief. Ormond Sr. died in 1791 after his slaves revolted against him and while his son was studying in England. When Ormond Jr. returned to Bangalong in 1805, his mother recognized him and this allowed him to inherit his father’s

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62 Ibid., p.282.
64 Vassady, “The Role”, p. 186.
The young Ormond then rose to the Bangalong chieftaincy through the support of his mother and by bribing his rival for the position.\(^6\)

As chief of Bangalong, Ormond Jr. and his family dominated the economy and politics of the upper Rio Pongo in the early nineteenth century. However, in the 1830s, age, alcohol abuse, and a rebellion both within his household and chiefdom caught up with Ormond Jr.\(^6\)

Commenting on him, Theodore Canot, a Florentine slave trader who had once worked for him recalls that:

- Ormond was growing old, constantly under the influence of alcohol, and did not always act with judgment. His own wives, over forty in numbers, and his sub chiefs plotted within his own court and further diminished his power.\(^7\)

In 1833, Ormond Jr. committed suicide in the face of mounting external\(^7\) and internal pressure on his business and chiefdom.\(^7\) His death marked the end of an era in the Pongas Country.

Commenting on the death of Ormond Jr. Mouser states:

- The death of Ormond in 1833 marked the end of an era in the history of the upper Pongo. He had exercised great commercial and political power in the Bangalan basin for more than thirty years, and as the chief of Bangalan town, he provided the direction, which permitted the upper river to become the center of the Pongo’s commerce in slaves.\(^7\)

William Ormond inherited the Ormond chieftaincy at Bangalong and family fortune upon his brother’s death in 1833, and himself became a leading chief and influential trader in the upper

\(^6\) Coifman, “The Western”, p. 279; Mouser, “Trade”, p. 75.
\(^6\) Ibid.
\(^6\) Ibid.
\(^6\) Ibid.
\(^7\) Quoted in Mouser, “Trade”, p. 164.
\(^7\) By 1833, the export trade in slaves would have become more difficult due to the British and American bans on it (enforced in the British case). People with good political information would realize that one large area of enslaved labour – the Caribbean was about to change (and be lost as a potential market).
\(^7\) Mouser, “Trade,” p. 164.
\(^7\) Ibid., pp. 167-168.
Rio Pongo.\textsuperscript{74} However, upon his death in 1840, there were no other Ormond family members to inherit the Bangalong chieftaincy and the family fortune. Consequently, both the town and the family’s factory fell into decay in the years that followed.\textsuperscript{75}

The Eurafrican family that became the most important family as far as the nineteenth century development of the Rio Pongas Mission was concerned was that of the Wilkinsonsons. The patriarch of this family was of either English or American origin that settled in the town of Fallangia about 140 miles north of Sierra Leone and died there in 1794.\textsuperscript{76} His son, Richard Wilkinson, was born in 1795.\textsuperscript{77} In 1812, Leopold Butscher, one of the German missionaries in the service of the Church Missionary Society (CMS), first established in the Pongas Country in 1808, sent the young Richard Wilkinson to England to study.\textsuperscript{78} There he learnt to read and write English while receiving the rudiments of a Christian education under the tutelage of a clergyman called Thomas Scott.\textsuperscript{79} In 1813, Richard Wilkinson returned to the Pongas Country where he became the chief of Fallangia and returned to his traditional life-style, marrying five wives.\textsuperscript{80} However, after recovering from a serious illness in 1835, he returned to Christianity. To hasten his recovery, Richard Wilkinson supposedly prayed daily to God for a missionary to come to his homeland and spread the Gospel. Finally, after twenty years of asking, God supposedly answered his prayers.\textsuperscript{81} In 1855, the tale is told that his oldest son, Charles Wilkinson told James Hamble Leacock that he dreamt of seeing a missionary come to their house. As Caswall notes, in a region where dreams were taken very seriously, Charles Wilkinson’s reported dream “was received as

\textsuperscript{74} Ibid., p. 196.
\textsuperscript{75} Ibid., p. 199.
\textsuperscript{76} Coifman, “The Western”, p. 279.
\textsuperscript{77} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{78} Caswall, The Martyr, p. 97.
\textsuperscript{79} Ibid., Thompson, Into All Lands, p. 331.
\textsuperscript{80}Caswall, The Martyr, p. 98; Barrow, Fifty Years, pp. 52-53.
\textsuperscript{81} Ibid.
an indication from heaven that the prayers of the old chief were about to be answered.”

Considering the purpose of the enterprise, one wonders if this whole thing was missionary myth making to justify the mission. Whatever the case, while the old chief was praying for a missionary, and young Wilkinson supposedly saw him in his dream walking from the river’s landing place to their house, James Hamble Leacock and John Henry A. Duport were already in England preparing to sail to Sierra Leone and to the Pongas Country as missionaries of the Rio Pongas Mission. They finally disembarked in the Pongas Country and arrived at Chief Wilkinson’s house in Fallangia in late December 1855.

Like the Ormonds and the Wilkinsons, the Curtis family was a chiefly and trading family in the Pongas Country during the period. The patriarch of this family was Benjamin Curtis, an American born in Boston, Massachusetts in 1774. He settled near the town of Kissin on the right bank of the lower Pongo River around 1795. After establishing a factory in the area near Teah, the royal capital of the ruling Susu Katty family at the time, he named it “Boston” after his birthplace. Benjamin went into semi-retirement in 1809 and died in 1820. He was succeeded by his brother Thomas Curtis as director of “Boston” factory at Kissin. It was Thomas Curtis who went to Freetown with his nephew George Curtis and John Ormond Jr. in 1815 to declare their allegiance to the British Crown. Commenting on the trio’s action, Coifman states that they officially declared their allegiance to the British Crown…. As British citizens, Ormond and Curtis opened Freetown to Pongo trade and to smuggled American goods at a time

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82 Caswall, *The Martyr*, p. 98.
83 Ibid.
84 Mouser, “Trade”, p. 92
88 Coifman, “The Western”, p. 278.
when Americans were increasingly restricted from British ports by the Navigation Acts.\footnote{Ibid.}

Thomas Curtis was most importantly known for being politically active within the ruling Susu Katty family on the right bank of the Rio Pongo. He served as Prime Minister under King Uli (William) Katty who died in May 1816.\footnote{Vassady, “The Role”, p. 192.} Curtis gained even further prominence after his close friend and brother-in-law, Yati Yende Katty succeeded his father as king of Teah in 1816.\footnote{Ibid., p. 194, Mouser, “Trade”, p. 95.}

Thomas Curtis’ connection with the Katty royalty earned him the family’s protection, which also enabled him to control the riverine trade on the right bank of the Rio Pongo in the nineteenth century.\footnote{Mouser, “Trade”, p. 154.} He operated a factory and a coffee plantation near Bakia on the Fattalah River.\footnote{Ibid., p. 194.} The Eurafrican descendants of Benjamin Curtis and Thomas Curtis of Boston and Kissin were not only traders but maintained their close connection to the ruling Susu Katty families of Teah. They served as advisors, kin, and regents to the Katty royalty throughout the period.\footnote{Coifman, “The Western”, p. 279.}

Like the Curtis family, the Faber family had its origin in the United States. However, they were of white American descent.\footnote{Mouser, “Trade”, p. 91; Caswall, The Martyr, p. 203.} The founder of the Faber family in the Pongas Country was an American ship captain called Paul Faber. He established a factory at the town of Sangha on the Bangalong River in the Pongas Country in 1809.\footnote{Ibid.} Thereafter, he married Mary, the daughter of a Black Nova Scotian settler\footnote{The Black Nova Scotians were former slaves in the United States of America who fought on the side of the British during the American War of Independence in 1776. As British allies, they were settled in what was then the British colony of Canada but today the Canadian provinces of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. Here, they experienced the harsh Canadian climate. With the} family in Freetown.\footnote{Ibid.} Their son, William Faber inherited his
father’s property upon the senior Faber’s death in 1851, and went on to become a wealthy man and one of the most influential Eurafrian chiefs of the Pongas Country.\(^{99}\)

William Faber’s political prowess was evident in his appointment by the Almamy of Futa as tribute collector (Ali) in the Pongas Country in mid-nineteenth century.\(^{100}\) In the early nineteenth century, the Pongas Country was a tributary of the Futa Jallon that had earlier conquered the area.\(^{101}\) In fact, in 1824, Futa Jallon directly controlled the region through Alfa Siakha, its resident representative in the region.\(^{102}\) As a result, none of the kings of the Pongas Country could be crowned without the approval of the Futa Jallon monarchs.\(^{103}\) Futa Jallon’s political influence and the Faber family’s economic fortune enabled the Fabers to dominate the upper Rio Pongo politics from their base in Sangha in the first half of the nineteenth century.\(^{104}\) Mary Faber, the family’s matriarch, went on to become a powerful trader in her own right and rivaled the renowned Mrs. Lightburn an influential female slave trader in the Pongas Country, a rivalry that led to war between the two matriarchs in 1838.\(^{105}\)

The Lightburn family has already been mentioned in connection with the Portuguese-descended elite family of Emmanuel Gomez Jr. of Bakia. Styles Lightburn, the white American patriarch of this family came from South Carolina and settled in the town of Farringia around

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\(^{100}\) M.F, Vol., II, p. 124.


\(^{102}\) Barry, *Senegambia*, p. 165.


Following the tendency of members of the powerful chiefly and trading families in the region to intermarry, Styles married Elizabeth (Isabella) “Bailey” Gomez, a daughter of Emmanuel Gomez Jr., the Eurafrican chief of Bakia. Upon Styles Lightburn’s death in 1827, Mrs. Lightburn took over his holdings at Farringia. She then became a notorious slave dealer who also wielded tremendous power and influence among other local traders. The fact that two of her daughters married the Freetown-based traders, John Emerson and Benjamin Campbell respectively clearly demonstrates the matriarch’s power and influence in the nineteenth century riverine trade in the Pongas Country. In the mid-nineteenth century, her family owned over 1000 slaves and a significant real estate. The Lightburn matriarch died on April 14, 1879 at age 81 and was succeeded as chief of Farringia by her eldest son, Styles Lightburn Jr.

Because these interesting, diffuse, competitive multi-polar world – as well as complex – polities were largely products of the Atlantic slave trade, they would come to be profoundly affected by the ending of that trade. As it happens, the Pongas was not allowed to adjust, on its own, to the effects of the ending of the slave trade. At first Anglican missionaries, and then the French, both as missionaries and as colonial rulers, helped to shape its evolution.

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106 Mouser, “Trade”, p. 91; Coifman, ”The Western”, p. 277.
107 Coifman, “The Western”, p. 279; Barrow, Fifty Years, p. 73.
109 Thompson, Into All Lands, p. 331; Barrow, Fifty Years, p. 60.
110 John Emerson was a partner of Smith and Emerson Company headquartered in Freetown, Sierra Leone in the nineteenth century. He had a trading post in the Pongas country where he met and married one of Mrs. Lightburn’s daughters. See Barry, Senegambia, p. 136.
111 Barry, Senegambia p. 135, puts the figure at several thousands. Klein, Slavery, p. 143, holds it at 6,000 at Mrs. Lightburn’s death.
The Rio Pongo

As the name indicates, the Rio Pongo (mud river) is a muddy estuary. It was given the name by the Portuguese slavers in the area in the fifteenth century. It is among more than a dozen rivers found along the Atlantic coast between the Gambia and Sierra Leone Rivers.


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113 Barrow, Fifty Years, p. 15.
These rivers include the Scarcies, Dembia, Moribaya, Forekaria, Melacoreé, and the Cassamance Rio Cacheu, Rio Geba, Rio Grande and the Rio Nunez.\textsuperscript{115} In the nineteenth century, the British collectively referred to these rivers and the region as the Northern Rivers or the Upper Guinea Coast\textsuperscript{116} because they were located north of the British headquarters and colony of Sierra Leone.\textsuperscript{117} The French, whose headquarters in the nineteenth century was in Senegal located even further north of Sierra Leone, referred to this collection of bodies of water south of the Senegal River as “Les Rivières du Sud” (The Southern Rivers).\textsuperscript{118}

The Rio Pongo originates from the Futa Jallon highlands, which spread more than 15,000 square miles and reached heights of nearly 3,000 feet.\textsuperscript{119} It is an estuary of many streams converging at a short distance from the sea, and emptying their contents into the Atlantic Ocean.\textsuperscript{120} The mouth of the estuary is about 3 miles wide, and there are a few islands the largest of which is Mangrove Island.\textsuperscript{121} The river has seven navigable entrances each of them almost blocked by a sandbar.\textsuperscript{122} Lying in an area with very fertile soil, the banks of the Pongo River are inhabited by indigenous communities, both Muslim and non-Muslim. Along the river were numerous villages or towns with beehive shaped houses, populated by up to 400 – 500 inhabitants each.\textsuperscript{123} About 4 miles from the bar at its mouth, the Rio Pongo branches into streams. The northeastern stream is known as the Big Pongo on the Fattalah. This stream also

\textsuperscript{116} See Barry, \textit{Senegambia}, p. 316, footnote # 27.
\textsuperscript{117} Mouser, \textit{Guinea Journals}, pp. 1-2; Skinner, \textit{Thomas}, p. 50. See the map on the next page.
\textsuperscript{119} Mouser, “Trade”, p. 1.
\textsuperscript{120} Barrow, \textit{Fifty Years}, pp. 15-16.
\textsuperscript{121} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{122} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{123} Caswall, \textit{The Martyr}, p. 96.
branches into the proper Fattalah to the northwest and the Bangalong to the northeast. The Bangalong is a short tributary also consisting of several streams. It joins the Fattalah at Devil’s or Hell’s Island and stretches 10 miles northwards. European ship captains supposedly named the island Devil’s or Hell’s Island because of the dangerous nature of the narrow passage leading into the Bangalong and the Fattalah. The island forms the channel that European ship captains also referred to as Hell’s Gate because its dangerous whirlpool wrecked many slave ships during the Atlantic commerce. This channel is the meeting place of the two main streams of the Bangalong, running from the north, and the Fattalah stretching from the southeast confluent to form the Rio Pongo proper.

The southeastern river that branches from the main stream is known as the Little Pongo. It is a soft-mud, crocodile infested river that was navigable for about 20 miles but only in small vessels. Its sandbars made it dangerous for larger craft. On the northern bank of the Little Pongo, 9 miles from the bar at the mouth of the Fattalah, is the village of Tintima. Tintima was the residence of the renowned indigenous Susu chief, Kennyback Ali. It was the first village to host Leacoc and Duport, the first West Indian missionaries of the Rio Pongas Mission, in December 1855. Most of the village’s 300 inhabitants at the time of their arrival were Muslims. Caswall noted that they were slave dealers at the time.

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124 Ibid.
125 Mouser, “Trade”, p. 4.
126 Ibid.
127 Barrow, Fifty Years, p. 16.
128 Ibid.
130 Ibid., p.197.
132 Ibid.
According to Leacock, Tintima looked very much like large villages of West Indians of African descent found in the West Indies during the transatlantic slave trade.\textsuperscript{133} It had no streets and its houses were irregularly built to serve as camouflage and as a deterrent to an enemy’s sudden attack.\textsuperscript{134} Since one of the major means of obtaining slaves during the period of the slave trade was raiding the enemy, the irregularity of Tintima’s houses was not surprising. The houses were generally single-room beehive shaped structures.\textsuperscript{135} Their roof rafters were often covered with cobwebs and blackened by the smoke from fires lit in the center of the rooms to provide light while at the same time flushing out the insects held up in the thatches.\textsuperscript{136} What was not certain about Tintima is whether the village was walled or not in this period of slave raiding.

Twelve miles north of Tintima on the northern bank of the Little Pongo close to the Fallaniah creek was the town of Fallangia.\textsuperscript{137} “With a population of about 530 people” in 1855, Fallangia was the residence of the influential Eurafrican chief, Richard Wilkinson. It was the first centre to accept the Rio Pongas Mission in December 1855.\textsuperscript{138} The town became the base of operations for the Mission in the nineteenth century, a position that earned it the title of “The Canterbury of the Mission.”\textsuperscript{139}

Fallangia’s sister town of Domingia lay 2 miles farther up the river and was for many years, one of the main stations of the Rio Pongas Mission.\textsuperscript{140} In fact, while Fallangia was referred to as the “The Canterbury of the Mission,” Domingia was known as “The London of the

\textsuperscript{133} Barrow, \textit{Fifty Years}, p. 47.
\textsuperscript{134} Ibid., p. 45.
\textsuperscript{135} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{136} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{137} \textit{Occasional Paper} No. II (1859), p. 2; Barrow, \textit{Fifty Years}, p. 47; Caswall, \textit{The Martyr}, p. 97.
\textsuperscript{138} Barrow, \textit{Fifty Years}, p. 47; Caswall, \textit{The Martyr}, p. 97.
\textsuperscript{139} Barrow, \textit{Fifty Years}, p. 47.
\textsuperscript{140} Ibid., pp. 15-16.
Chief Charles Wilkinson, the eldest son of Chief Richard Wilkinson of Fallangia ruled Domingia at the time of the Pongas Mission. It was one of the most important centres of transatlantic slave trading activities in the region because of its easy accessibility to large slave vessels plying the Atlantic. In 1855, slaves were perhaps being exported from the area. Caswall observed that the inhabitants of the village of Tintima located in the region were slave dealers at the time of the arrival of Leacock and Duport, the first West Indian missionaries of the Rio Pongas Mission in December 1855. Christopher Fyfe notes that in the 1840s, established British interests in the Pongas Country were implicated in reduced British anti-slave trade enforcement. He states that in the 1850s and prior to the American Civil War (1861-1865), American anti-slave trade enforcement was also slack and established American business interests in the area were implicated in the trade. Fyfe further notes that even though slave-trading activity was reduced in the Pongas Country in the 1840s, when trade was revived in the 1850s, American slave vessels carried their human cargo mainly from the Congo to Cuba. In 1859, they carried more than 30,000 slaves to the island.

Other equally important towns along or near the Rio Pongo in the nineteenth century were Bramaya, Bakia, Farringia, Sangha, Bangalong, Kissin and Teah. Bramaya was the seat of economic and political power of the Fernandez chiefly and trading family. It was located in the Bramaya River south of the Rio Pongo and was ruled by King Jelloram Fernandez, an Eurafrican of Portuguese origin. It had once been an important slave depot. Situated between Fallangia and Tintima on the Little Pongo was the town of Bakia. It was the official residence of the

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141 Ibid. p.16.
143 Caswall, The Martyr, p. 148
144 Fyfe, A History, p. 331.
146 Mouser, “Trade,” p. 86.
Eurafrican chiefly and trading Gomez family in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Like other towns in the Pongas Country at the time, it was related to the town of Farringia situated about 8 miles from Devil or Hell’s Island. The two towns were connected through the matrimonial union of members of their ruling families. Farringia, a town of 1,500 inhabitants in 1855, was the headquarters of Mrs. Lightburn, the Eurafrican widow of American slave trader Styles Lightburn.

Sangha was a powerful neighbour and rival of Farringia. It was located on a creek that empties its contents into the Bangalong River. This town was the seat of economic and political power of the Faber family. The Fabers were prominent in the politics of upper Rio Pongo in the first half of the nineteenth century. Sangha’s neighbour, Bangalong, was the official residence of the Eurafrican Ormond family of English descent. The Ormonds were also a political force in the region at the time. They were owners of between 5000 and 6000 slaves in the early decades of the nineteenth century. On the lower Pongo was the town of Kissin, the headquarters of the Afro-American Curtis family. With their connection to the ruling Susu Katty family of Teah, descendants of the Curtis family rose to the ranks of important advisors to the Susu Monarchs. The Katty family at their royal capital of Teah situated on the western part of Domingia was part of the dominant Damba clan on the right bank of the Rio Pongo at the time of the arrival of the West Indian missionaries in December 1855.

With many creeks to help conceal slave vessels during the clandestine transatlantic slave trade after the British abolition of the traffic in human cargoes in 1807, the Pongo River became

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148 Barrow, *Fifty Years*, p. 56.
150 Ibid., p. 279.
a favourite conduit for slave traders. The clandestine trade flourished throughout the early decades of the nineteenth century in this river as well as in the Rio Cacheu and Rio Geba. With the participation of powerful Eurafrican families such as the Curtis, Wilkinson, Gomez and the Ormond families, and the use of fast sailing ships under the command of Euro-American captains, the clandestine slave trade in these rivers continued well into the 1860s.

However, before the 1860s, by the 1820s, commodity trade in coffee grown in the Pongas Country supplanted the clandestine slave trade and, from the 1840s, groundnut trade took over. These commodities were added to an already flourishing trade in items such as rice, gold, hides, beeswax, and ivory brought into the Pongas Country from the interior. After the United States abolished the foreign slave trade in 1808, most slaves were imported into Brazil and Cuba. Others were also brought from the Futa Jallon area to the Pongas Country from which the Spaniards exported them clandestinely with much reduced numbers to Cuba throughout the early 1860s. However, following Abraham Lincoln’s election as President of the United States of America and the commencement of the American Civil War, the country’s anti-slave trade enforcement was tightened. The American Navy impounded many slave vessels on the Atlantic and others while loading their human cargo. The U.S. authorities adopted even more strict measures, such as hanging a slave vessel captain in New York in 1862. In late 1862, the U.S. government signed a treaty with its British counterpart to jointly enforce the anti-slave trade activities just like the British had done with other European governments. As a result, “the

155 Ibid., Klein, Slavery, p. 144.
156 Ibid.
157 Ibid.
159 Fyfe, A History, p. 331.
American flag had been drawn from the slave trade.\textsuperscript{160} The Cuban government also helped in the enforcement against the slave trade in the early 1860s and by 1865, the transatlantic slave trade was virtually suppressed.\textsuperscript{161} Cuba and Brazil officially ended the institution of slavery itself in 1886 and 1888 respectively.\textsuperscript{162}

**The Susu of the Pongas Country**

In order to understand the undertakings of the Rio Pongas Mission, it is necessary to examine the Susu ethnic group among whom the Mission was established in this period. The Susu were among the inhabitants of the ancient Empire of Ghana that reached its peak in the eleventh century. They established their own empire in West Africa in the twelfth century, after a long struggle against the Almoravids who sacked Ghana and traumatized the Muslim Sarahulay\textsuperscript{163} residents of that ancient empire, which continued to exist for another one and a quarter centuries. However, in 1233, Sunjatta Keita, the ruler of the Mandinka\textsuperscript{164} state of Kangaba conquered the Susu Empire of Sumanguru Konteh. The conquest triggered a westward population movement of some Susu to the lowland areas west of the Futa Jallon highlands. From here, others moved through the Gambia and southward into the Rio Nunez and the Pongas Country.\textsuperscript{165}

In the Pongas Country, these Susu migrants settled among the Baga in the sparsely populated grasslands on the right bank of the Rio Pongo, the Bangalong basin, and the Fattalah

\textsuperscript{160} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{161} Ibid., p. 331.
\textsuperscript{162} Klein, *Slavery*, p. 134.
\textsuperscript{163} The spelling varies and the people are generally referred to as Soninke.
\textsuperscript{164} Mandinka in the Mande language as spoken in The Gambia and Senegal means a person from Manding. In the early nineteenth century, the British called Mande speakers Mandingos.
\textsuperscript{165} Rodney, *A History*, p. 10.
Although Sunjatta’s destruction of their empire was a major catalyst for Susu migration into the Futa Jallon highlands in the thirteenth century, it was the salt trade between the interior and the coast that the Baga established earlier that influenced their movement into the Pongas Country in the sixteenth century.\footnote{166} As merchants, these migrants served as intermediaries in a flourishing caravan trade in salt, rice, cloth, cattle, and gold between the interior and the coast.\footnote{168}

Other Susu groups also migrated into the Pongas Country in the eighteenth century not only to participate in the trade between the interior and the coast, but also to get involved in the expanding transatlantic slave trade.\footnote{169} In this period, the Rio Pongo became an important outlet for slaves exported as a result of the raging Muslim jihads (Holy Wars) in the Futa Jallon between 1725 and 1805.\footnote{170} Although some of the slaves sold at coastal factories by the victorious Fula jihadists were the Sulima Susu,\footnote{171} others were Limba or Kisi, disposed of by their Sulima or Yalunka captors.\footnote{172}

During the eighteenth century, some of the Susu groups conquered the Bangalong basin and subjugated the Baga residing in the lower river.\footnote{173} These Susu conquerors sent their victims into the transatlantic exile by selling them to the lançados and other slave dealers in the Rio Pongo.\footnote{174} During the eighteenth century, the Susu were not only conquerors and traders in the Pongas Country, but they also became settlers. Led by Domin Kanté of the Damba clan, they

\footnote{166}{Mouser, “Trade,” p. 18; Mouser, Guinea Journals, p. 5.}
\footnote{167}{Ibid., p. 18.}
\footnote{168}{Ibid., Vassady, “The Role,” p. 185; Rodney, A History, p. 20.}
\footnote{169}{Mouser, “Trade,” p. 20.}
\footnote{170}{Ibid., Fyfe, A History, pp. 6-9.}
\footnote{171}{Mouser, Guinea Journals, p. 8.}
\footnote{172}{Fyfe, A History, p. 9.}
\footnote{173}{Mouser, “Trade,” p. 19.}
\footnote{174}{Vassady, “The Role,” p. 186.}
established their capital at Domingia, a town they named after Domin himself. As the new overlords, the Susu collected tribute from their Baga subjects. They also divided Baga settlements, such as Monchon, Kakata, Sobanè, Bakia, Lisso and Bramaya into separate, self-rulled paramount chiefdoms. However, two of the paramount chiefdoms, Bangalong and Domingia, were ruled directly by the Susu Monarch. The heir to the Susu throne was also appointed co-chief of Monchon.

The Susu kings in the Pongas Country in the nineteenth century were descendants of two royal family branches. These branches were the Domin Kanté Damba, the founding clan based at Domingia and later Boffa, and the Uli Katty Damba of Teah who married into the former and held ministerial positions. As ministers in the Domin Kanté Damba administrations, Katty family members rose to the position of kingship. With the cooperation of Eurafrican chiefs and the Baga in the area, Katty kings became efficient rulers in the Pongas Country in the nineteenth century. The first Katty king moved the royal capital from the Bangalong to Teah. He and his descendants went on to dominate the Susu kingship on the right bank of Rio Pongo for most of the nineteenth century. It was during their reign that the Rio Pongas Mission was planted among the Susu, a Mission whose pioneers were first received in the Pongas Country by members of this Susu royalty.

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176 Ibid.
177 Ibid., pp. 18-19.
178 Ibid.
179 Ibid.
183 Ibid.
Conclusion

This chapter discussed the historical background of the Pongas Country and its ethnic composition, which includes Eurasian families who hosted the West Indian Mission to West Africa and the Mandé people, particularly the Susu among who the Rio Pongas Mission was established. Between the mid-fifteenth and mid-eighteenth centuries, some Portuguese traders and settlers on the Cape Verde Islands and Bissau ventured into the mainland, including areas surrounding the rivers in the Pongas Country where they became prominent riverine traders. As the transatlantic trade developed after 1500, many Portuguese traders settled along rivers in the Pongas Country as they did elsewhere along the West African coast. Establishing themselves among indigenous African populations, these settlers became commonly known as the lançados. In the Pongas Country, they gradually married into local communities, particularly with Susu and Baga chiefly families and by virtue of their royal blood, the lançados and their descendants forced their way into the chiefly political leadership between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The French, British and American traders followed this trend establishing their own strong economic and socio-political ties with indigenous chiefly and trading families in the Pongas Country, providing yet another powerful and influential Eurasian class.

This chapter pointed out that the Susu kings in the nineteenth century Pongas Country were themselves descendants of two royal families – the Domin Kanté Damba, which was the founding clan based at Domingia and later Boffa, and the Uli Katty Damba of Teah who married into the former, held ministerial positions and later his family members became kings themselves. Transferring his royal capital from the Bangalong to Teah, the first Katty monarch and later his descendants dominated the Susu kingship on the banks of the Rio Pongo for most of the nineteenth century. With the establishment of complex polities, including those of Eurasian and Susu families in the nineteenth century, the Pongas Country became an interesting area,
which this chapter already discussed. It has been argued above that the complex polities were largely the result of the transatlantic slave trade and the transformation of the Pongas Country was also the result of the abolition of that trade. It will be shown in the following chapters that the Pongas Country was not allowed to adjust to the effects of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade on its own and the arrival of the West Indian missionaries followed by French colonialism finally and effectively changed the Pongas Country forever.
Chapter 2

Barbados: A Hierarchical Society in the Nineteenth Century British West Indies

This chapter looks into the hierarchical nature of Barbadian society in the nineteenth century. The hierarchical Bajan society strongly influenced the initial policy of White supervision and Black subordination of the Rio Pongas Mission. Also discussed in this chapter is how the concept of the West Indian Mission to West Africa began in Barbados and how it eventually became a reality.

Barbadian Society in the Nineteenth Century

Barbados is part of the Windward Islands of the West Indies. The island was claimed on behalf of King James I of England by a crew of English sailors of the “Olive” under the command of Captain John Powell on May 14, 1625. However, it was not until 1627 that the first English settlement was established on the island. From the beginning, the settlers tried to earn a living off the soil. They eked out a living on the island by cultivating plantains, potatoes, maize, and fruit trees. The early settlers also grew tobacco but it failed to provide profitable returns.

Commenting on the early attempt by the settlers to produce tobacco, Ligon states that: “And the Tobacco that grew there, so earthy and worthlesse, as it could give them little or no return from England, or elsewhere”.

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3 Ibid.
4 Ibid.
After the initial settlement, the Barbadian economy was based on tobacco, cotton and indigo production and was dependent on free and indentured European labourers. However, around 1637, a Dutch ship from Brazil arrived on the island with some sugar cane plants. With the introduction of sugar cane production, Barbadian society and its economy were transformed. For example, sugar cane replaced tobacco and cotton as the island’s main export crops - a switch that also resulted in the transformation of the island’s workforce. Planters switched from employing free and indentured Europeans to African slaves.

As Barbados became the first British West Indies colony to engage in massive sugar cane production in the 1640s, it became more and more dependent on African slaves for the new plantation economy. The new product placed Barbados among the most important British overseas possessions. As Beckles notes: “By the early 1650’s, Barbados was described as the richest spot in the New World, and colonial officials boasted that the island’s value, in terms of trade and capital, was greater than all the English colonies put together.” This wealth was obtained at the expense of the African slaves and their descendants who found themselves at the bottom of a rigidly stratified society. From the beginning, Barbadian “colonists developed their own life-style, and once they converted from tobacco to sugar, everything was bent by their eager embrace of African slavery”. The colonists not only embraced African slavery, but they subordinated and controlled their slaves. Beckles relates that:

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8 Beckles, A History, p. 21.
9 Dunn, Sugar and Slaves, p. 46.
Planters in Barbados kept African slaves subordinated by an effective deployment of militia regiments, supported by imperial troops and navy. A complex legal machinery strengthened these forces. Legal forces were designed to regulate slaves’ social behaviour, within and outside the production process, as well as to police their movements.\textsuperscript{10}

As evident in the above quotation, the planters were able to assert their domination over African slaves because of their control of the national institutions. Handler and Sio note that: “Whites dominated and controlled the national institutions and were instrumental in perpetuating a rigid stratification system based to a considerable degree on racial origins.”\textsuperscript{11} One would think that such white domination would change after the emancipation of the slaves in 1838, but that was not meant to be. In fact, if anything, the hierarchy of Barbadian society and the inequality within the island’s institutions remained strong well into the twentieth century. In 1838, well-established educational institutions such as Codrington College and Harrisons School were still not opening their doors to students of African descent.\textsuperscript{12} West Indians of African descent were generally denied secular education and were mostly exposed to religious instruction. In fact, even after emancipation, inequality between White and African-descended Barbadians remained strong in such a hierarchical society. Trevor Marshall argues that in spite of adjusting to certain aspects of emancipation after 1838, “Barbadian society remained virtually the same as before 1834.”\textsuperscript{13}

Although the British imperial government insisted on secular education as a pre-requisite for freedom in the early decades of the nineteenth century, the Barbadian planters were reluctant to expose students of African descent to such educational commitment. If anything, they “held

\textsuperscript{10} Beckles, \textit{A History of Barbados}, p. 33. \\
\textsuperscript{11} Handler and Sio, “Barbados”, p. 214. \\
\textsuperscript{12} Beckles, \textit{A History of Barbados}, p. 105. \\
on to the traditional concept that education would create among blacks certain unrealistic expectations and therefore reduce their willingness to be productive workers”. The planters also argued that, “educational institutions would make it more difficult for blacks to accept their subordinate social status.” Nevertheless, they pretended to yield to the demands of the British imperial government by implementing changes, including allowing missionary activities among slaves on their own terms. According to Newton, “as planters expanded their private educational and missionary activities among slaves, they strengthened the public racial segregation of whites and free people of colour.” She further states:

In the late 1820s the island’s parish governments called vestries, which were responsible for overseeing parochial schools and whose members were all clergymen and landowners, increased funding for parochial schools. These schools were for whites only, and the vestries sought to improve the attendance of poor white children. They restated the racial segregation policy, making it clear that no free children of colour would be admitted.

Even when schools for free African-descended Barbadian children such as St. Philip and Christ Church received funding in such a hierarchical society by the 1830s, their students were educated separately from whites.

These discriminatory actions of the plantocracy did not diminish the quest for education among Barbadians of African descent. However, their quest for acquiring knowledge became even more difficult to fulfill as the British imperial government reduced and finally terminated its grant for educational programs for students of African descent in 1845. The situation was worsened by the diminished financial contribution of the Church of England in the 1840s and by

15 Ibid.
17 Ibid., pp. 104-105.
18 Ibid., p. 105.
the continuous indifference towards the education of blacks by the planter government of the island. In fact, the planter Assembly was not enthusiastic about secular education for students of African descent in the 1840s. Planters “remained more concerned with religious instruction for blacks as part of their renewed campaign to improve their morality and character, and to create a docile labour force.” As such, the status quo remained until the last quarter of the nineteenth century. As Beckles points out, “It took government, therefore, some forty years after emancipation to accept legislative responsibility for the education of the black working class within the framework of a comprehensive, structure of policy”.

As far as religion was concerned in the early decades of the nineteenth century, there was also inequality among parishioners of the Anglican churches in Barbados. “Anglican clergy showed no serious signs of de-segregating churches”. In fact, during much of the period of slavery in the nineteenth century, “the Anglican Church in Barbados generally took no active role in encouraging the freedman’s participation”. Racial inequality within the Anglican Church in Barbados, as well as within other aspects of life on the island was the norm. According to Newton, in the 1820s, some planters tried to “preserve Anglican worship as a key marker of whiteness.” She further notes that in their efforts to control the amelioration process in Barbados, these planters also sought to control the kind of Christian message that reached the slaves and free Afro-Barbadians by accepting missionaries from Britain they considered to be nonthreatening to the island’s social order. Ironically, African-descended Barbadians were

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20 Ibid.
21 Ibid.
22 Ibid., p. 106.
23 Ibid.
26 Ibid.
forced to comply with certain aspects of Christianity on the island. Newton writes: “The church and the colonial state also tried to eliminate Sunday markets and ban Sunday dances, an important part of the social and economic lives of slaves and free Afro-Barbadians, in order to encourage slaves to observe Sunday as the Sabbath.” Commenting on the plight of the freedman in Barbados in the early decades of the nineteenth century, vis-à-vis the Anglican Church, Handler relates that: “In fact, the discriminatory practices he experienced outside the church, were active in the church as well; his free status, when weighed against his racial ancestry, had little influence on his acceptance or treatment in the church.”

As evident in the above quotation, racial ancestry was a major determining factor in acceptance or treatment in the Anglican Church in nineteenth century Barbados. Colour prejudice on the island was not restricted to the period of slavery. It continued well into the last quarter of the nineteenth century – decades after the emancipation of the slaves in the British West Indies. Commenting on a situation involving the appointment of a Barbadian of African descent to a clergy position in one of the rectories in Barbados in 1888, Pascoe writes:

…for the first time in the history of Barbados, a Coloured curate was presented to one of the rectories. This drew forth a protest, but Bishop Bree, who presented, remaining firm, opposition soon ceased, and the parish found that it had been given an able priest. The “colour prejudice,” however, diminishes but slowly in the island, and it may be long before a parish ceases to prefer having a white clergyman and to regard it as an indignity if one is not secured.

The above quotation demonstrates the inequality among parishioners within the Anglican Church and the hierarchy in Barbadian society in the nineteenth century. It is also indicative of why service in Africa would have been an attractive option for some Barbadians of African descent, who sought on the continent, the positions denied them at home.

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27 Ibid., p. 92.
The Conception and Birth of the Pongas Mission, 1843-1855

The British abolished their transatlantic slave trade in 1807 and passed the Emancipation Act, freeing all slaves within the British Empire, in 1833. The Emancipation Act came into effect in the British West Indies on August 1, 1834, to be replaced by an “apprenticeship system”.30 This also came to an end in 1838. Thereafter, West Indians of African descent became a potential source of recruitment for missionary service in Africa.31 Newton notes that, “Africa had served as a metaphor for the hope and great expectations that many elite Afro-Barbadians had of emancipation.”32 As for the colonial government in Barbados, she states: “West Africa had been a potential source of imperial employment for a small number of educated and politically ambitious Afro-Barbadian men.”33 Within the imperial circle, sending African-descended Barbadians to Africa in the late 1840s was an idea that floated as an opportunity for them to participate actively in the imperialist goal of spreading Western civilization, Christianity, and commerce in their ancestral land.34

The intellectual framework for the mission to West Africa was provided in a letter to the Lord Bishop of London from Archdeacon J. M. Trew of Barbados in 1843. Entitled “Africa Wasted by Britain, and Restored by Native agency,”35 Archdeacon Trew suggested a British missionary enterprise in West Africa. He argued that because of its natural relationship with the

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30 “Apprenticeship” was the system designed to prepare former slaves for complete freedom in 1838. It was an integral part of the Act of 1833. For more details on the system, see W. L. Burn, Emancipation and Apprenticeship in the British West Indies (London: Jonathan Cape, 1937), Chapter IV, pp. 146-195; Michael Craton, Slavery, Abolition and Emancipation: Black Slaves and the British Empire (London and New York: Longman, 1976).
33 Ibid., pp. 273-274.
34 Ibid., p. 274.
West Indies and the debt incurred by slavery, Africa deserved the spiritual and material benefit of such an enterprise. As Noel Titus points out, Trew maintained that: “Britain owed a debt to the African race for past injustices …and that being the case, any efforts on behalf of the descendants of those Africans were not acts of generosity; they constituted a debt which should be regarded as ‘boundless.’”\(^3^6\) On the idea of compensating Africa for its part in the development of the West Indies through the trans-Atlantic slave trade, T. F. Buxton wrote in a letter to Trew in 1839 stating that: “The idea of compensation to Africa, through the means of the West Indies, is a great favourite with me; and I think we shall see the day when we shall be called to pour a flood of light and truth upon miserable Africa.”\(^3^7\)

Due to the lack of patronage of the Archbishop of Canterbury, the idea of an African mission died down for several years, but resurfaced in 1850. This time, it was due to the collective interest in it and joint efforts of Richard Rawle\(^3^8\) who had become the Principal of Codrington College three years earlier, Bishop Parry\(^3^9\) of Barbados, and Governor Sir William Colebrooke of Barbados.\(^4^0\) The Barbados Church Society eventually supported the idea. In a meeting convened by the Society and chaired by Bishop Parry on November 15, 1850 in Bridgetown, the capital of Barbados, the plan was announced publicly. In the course of passing resolutions at the meeting, it was noted that:

> … a mission to Western Africa would be a work peculiarly suitable to the Church in the West Indies, where the population consists so largely of persons deriving their origin

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\(^3^8\) Rawle was also a missionary of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. He became the first Bishop of Trinidad in 1872.

\(^3^9\) Bishop Parry retired in 1866 after 25 years of service.

\(^4^0\) Sir William Colebrooke was a man who was always interested in Africa. He became Governor of Barbados in 1848 after serving as Governor General of the Leeward Island; Pascoe, *Two Hundred Years*, p. 260.
from that country, - that the time for such an enterprise had arrived, - and that it would especially become Barbados to be forward in this great and good work.\footnote{Caswall, \textit{The Martyr}, p. 73; Pascoe, \textit{Two Hundred Years}, Vol. I., p. 260.}

In his speech during this meeting, Bishop Parry also noted that Western Africa “has furnished nine-tenths of the population of the Caribbean Islands.”\footnote{The Caribbean Islands are also known as the West Indies and those colonized by Great Britain were known as the British West Indies.}

With the backing of the Barbados Church Society for the projected mission, the cooperation of the entire West Indian Church was sought. In fact, the idea of a Western Africa mission was considered favourably by the West Indian Church, which, as evident in the above quotation, kept in mind how many West Indians of African descent had originated from that part of the continent. Arguably, West Indians of African descent, themselves members of the West Indian Church, demonstrated their willingness to spread the Gospel in the land of their ancestors. They asked: “Can nothing be done by us to carry the message of the Gospel to those of our own flesh and blood in far-off Africa?”\footnote{Barrow, \textit{Fifty Years}, p. 10.} The post-emancipation period was one of despair for many African-descended Barbadians and emigration, whether inter-island or overseas, was very attractive to them. Newton highlights this sentiment by stating:

\begin{quote}
In the harsh political and socioeconomic climate of post slavery Barbados many Afro-Barbadians despaired of the possibility of change in the island turned decisively away from the reformist struggles that had shaped their politics for decades. Large numbers came to see emigration, rather than reform, as the solution to their troubles.\footnote{Newton, \textit{The Children}, p. 273.}
\end{quote}

Realizing that West Indians of African descent would be both available and willing to be partners for the African mission, Buxton wrote in 1840:

\begin{quote}
I have a great satisfaction in finding, that among the liberated Africans in our West Indies colonies, we are likely to be furnished with a number of persons in whom are
united the desirable qualifications of fitness for the climate, competency to act as teachers, and willingness to enter upon the [missionary] work.\textsuperscript{45}

In 1851, the West Indian Church received an invitation for co-operation in the celebration of the Third Jubilee\textsuperscript{46} of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (S.P.G).\textsuperscript{47} In his response to the invitation, on April 14, 1851, Bishop Parry wrote:

The chief commemoration of the Jubilee I propose in my own Diocese, and venture to suggest also to the other West Indian Bishops is, \textit{to commence an African Mission}; if only in answer to our prayers and efforts, the Great Lord of the Harvest be pleased to send forth the labourers, disposing also the members of the West Indian Church to unite in the work, and others in England to assist it. I am fully aware how far from attractive is the missionary field which the Western Coasts of Africa present; how trying the climate; how degraded the people; and how slow probably the progress will be in anything lovely and of good report. Still it is a work which ought to be done, which has, indeed, in more than one place been already commenced, and in which, the West Indian Church should certainly take a part. If the Society’s Jubilee should find us at length engaged in it, surely it would be a suitable commemoration of the Society’s benefits, to be thus, after a century and a half given to America and Asia, thinking also of Africa.\textsuperscript{48}

During the annual meeting of the Barbados Church Society on June 16, 1851 (a date that was also the Third Jubilee Day of the S.P.G), a new organization known as the “West Indian Church Association for the Furtherance of the Gospel in Western Africa” was formed.\textsuperscript{49} Upon its formation, the responsibility for the proposed Mission that was once held by the Barbados Church Society was transferred to the new Association. Within this new Association, a new Mission Board was formed. Consisting of the Vice-Patron, President, Vice-Presidents, Associates, Secretaries, and Treasurers,\textsuperscript{50} the Board was required to hold quarterly meetings to

\textsuperscript{45} T. F. Buxton, quoted in Groves, \textit{The Planting of Christianity in Africa}, p. 23.
\textsuperscript{46} The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel was formed in 1701 in England.
\textsuperscript{47} Hereafter referred to as S.P.G.
\textsuperscript{49} Titus, “The West Indian Mission”, p. 99; Caswall, \textit{The Martyr}, p. 73.
\textsuperscript{50} At least in its first meeting held under the Presidency of Bishop Parry on June 27, 1851, the Mission Board had a total of four Vice-Presidents, twenty Associates, two Secretaries, and two Treasurers. Please see Titus, “The West Indian”, p. 99.
discuss how to proceed with the proposed missionary enterprise and how to seek the support of fellow Anglicans in the West Indies.\footnote{Ibid.} 

With the formation of the “West Indian Church Association for the Furtherance of the Gospel in Western Africa”, as well as its Mission Board,\footnote{Hereafter referred to only as the Board.} it was agreed that the African mission would be a major priority.\footnote{Caswall, \textit{The Martyr}, p. 73; Pascoe, \textit{Two Hundred Years}, Vol. I, p. 261.} At the June 16, 1851 meeting convened by the Barbados Church Society, all the participants agreed that this mission would focus on areas of Africa not already under the domain of established missions of the French, English or Americans.\footnote{Caswall, \textit{The Martyr}, p. 73.} Once the African mission had gained support and approval by the West Indian and English bishops, the S.P.G, several West Indian Governors, and the British Government, it became a reality.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 73-74.} In fact, on February 24, 1851, the British Secretary of State, Earl Grey, “promised to give it whatever countenance and protection could be legitimately afforded”.\footnote{Caswall, \textit{The Martyr}, p. 74.; Titus, “The West Indian Mission”, p. 98.} Once the proposed mission received the blessing and support of both religious and political authorities in the West Indies and England, the Board decided to establish a Mission House at Codrington College in Barbados.\footnote{Codrington College was originally established to train faithful clergy and laity for the churches of the West Indies. However, because it once depended on slave labour for its own upkeep, the college was to help in the education and training of West Indians of African descent for the African service.} The major role of this institution was to board and train West Indian students of African descent for the missionary enterprise in West Africa.\footnote{Titus, “The West Indian Mission”, p. 99; Pascoe, \textit{Two Hundred Years,,} Vol. I, p. 261. The initial idea was to establish a college in what is today the Republic of the Gambia on the West coast of Africa to train African youths for missionary duties on the continent. See Barrow, \textit{Fifty Years}, p. 13.} For this purpose, Rawle had the western part of the Principal’s lodge at Codrington College remodeled for the intake of six
students of African descent to be trained for the West African missionary enterprise.\textsuperscript{59} The remodeling job cost £375, £300 of which was donated by Rawle’s friends in England.\textsuperscript{60} When the renovation was complete, the result was a classroom, workshop, dispensary, kitchen and sixteen rooms for student accommodation.\textsuperscript{61} To support the training of students for the proposed West African mission, the S.P.G pledged a five-year annual sum of £100.\textsuperscript{62} Monetary donations were also received from friends and supporters of the Mission in England, as well as from the Codrington College staff, who followed Rawle’s example.\textsuperscript{63} These funds helped cover accommodation expenses for the students at the Mission House. The Wells Theological College in England also provided two scholarships for the Mission from a fund established in 1851 in honour of the Rev. J. H. Pinder, who had once served as Principal of Codrington College.\textsuperscript{64} Not to be outdone, in 1853, the Mission Board provided its own assistance for the project in the form of four annual scholarships worth £25 each.\textsuperscript{65}

With financial assistance available, the preparation of candidates for the West African mission was set in motion. By 1855, six students were already enrolled at the college. Although these students were receiving training for their service with the proposed mission in Africa, the selection process for this training is not clear. What is clear, however, is that, of the six students admitted into the training program when the school was opened in 1852, four were from the Bahamas and the other two were from St. Kitts.\textsuperscript{66} In preparation for their service in Africa,

\textsuperscript{60} Pascoe, \textit{Two Hundred Years}, Vol. I, p. 261.
\textsuperscript{61} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{63} Barrow, \textit{Fifty Years}, p. 13.
\textsuperscript{65} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{66} Ibid.
students were taught the Bible, Grammar, History, Geography, Arithmetic, and Music.\textsuperscript{67}

Whether these courses had much West African content is not clear. However, “the subordinate role envisaged” for these students in Africa probably “influenced the quality of the course”.\textsuperscript{68}

Although the Mission House project started smoothly because of donations received from the friends and supporters of the West African mission in the West Indies and England, financial support for the entire missionary enterprise was initially bleak. By 1852, however, donations started to trickle into the coffers of the “West Indian Church for the Furtherance of the Gospel in Western Africa”. From its Jubilee Fund, the S.P.G donated the sum of £1000 to the Association.\textsuperscript{69} Private individuals, churches and their congregations on West Indian islands, such as Barbados, the Bahamas, Antigua, Montserrat, St. Kitts, Jamaica, St. Vincent, and Grenada also donated money toward the proposed African mission.\textsuperscript{70} The Association cofferes were boosted even more when sums of £135 and £158 were received from the widow and sons of the late philanthropist, Sir T. F. Buxton and from a Committee at Cambridge University respectively.\textsuperscript{71}

As a result of the encouraging moral and financial support for the missionary enterprise, the Association was now ready to start work in Africa. Thus, to borrow Titus’ phrase, the search for volunteer missionaries “moved into top gear”. As President of the Board, Bishop Parry commenced direct communication regarding the missionary enterprise with Dr. E. O. Vidal, the first Bishop of Sierra Leone, under whose jurisdiction and supervision the Mission would be.\textsuperscript{72} In response, Dr. Vidal sent the bishop two letters of approval of the projected mission and advice as

\textsuperscript{67} Titus, “The West Indian Mission”, p. 100.
\textsuperscript{68} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{69} Ibid., p. 101; Caswall, The Martyr, p. 74; Pascoe, Two Hundred Years, Vol. I, p. 261.
\textsuperscript{70} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{71} Caswall, The Martyr, p. 74.
\textsuperscript{72} Ibid.
to the best location in Western Africa for it. At this juncture, the only impediment to the projected mission was the lack of volunteer missionaries. However, the Association did not despair. In fact, while the search for volunteer missionaries was in progress, the Rev. Hamble James Leacock, a Barbadian of English descent, was contemplating the possibility of answering the call for service in Africa. Leacock occasionally revealed the desire for missionary service in Africa to his wife. However, considering her husband’s advanced age, the fear of diseases, such as malaria made Mrs. Leacock try discouraging him from doing so.\textsuperscript{73} Despite such discouragement, however, Leacock tried hard to promote the objective of the projected mission to Africa within his sphere of influence. By organizing meetings among his parishioners in the parish of St. Peter’s, Leacock was able to collect the sum of £26 for the proposed Mission.\textsuperscript{74} Bishop Parry recommended Leacock’s example to his clergy by stating that: “Such meetings might add to the labours of the clergy, but the benefits arising from them would be largely shared by the people themselves, and the piety of the country would gain strength and maturity.”\textsuperscript{75}

During the summer of 1854, a cholera epidemic broke out in Barbados, killing 20,000 people and nearly ending the projected missionary enterprise.\textsuperscript{76} As the person in charge of the chapel of St. Leonard’s in Bridgetown, a position he received from Bishop Parry in January 1854, it was stated that Leacock had distinguished himself in taking care of the sick and the dying regardless of their sect, character, or colour.\textsuperscript{77} In August 1854, Leacock’s beloved wife

\textsuperscript{73} Until 1857, when quinine began to be used as a protection against malaria caused by mosquitoes, tropical diseases and climate took a heavy toll of Europeans in West Africa. As a result, the region was referred to as the “White Man’s Grave”.

\textsuperscript{74} Caswall, \textit{The Martyr}, p. 75.

\textsuperscript{75} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{77} Caswall, \textit{The Martyr}, p. 76.
succumbed to the cholera epidemic. The devastation of the cholera epidemic and the loss of his wife not only crushed Leacock emotionally, but it also affected his desire for missionary work in Africa. Nevertheless, after six months of grief, Leacock’s interest in missionary service in Africa was rekindled.

On March 19, 1855, at more than sixty years of age, Leacock made himself available to lead the projected mission to West Africa. His willingness to go to West Africa as head of the West Indian Mission finally ended the Association’s long search for a voluntary missionary. In a letter to Bishop Parry concerning the Mission, Leacock stated that:

The Church calls, and some one must answer. But few years’ service are now before me. I wish therefore to save my brethren in the ministry, the young who are the hope of the Church, the old who are the stay of large families. Believe me, I do not suppose that my services, unaided by Divine grace, can accomplish any thing. To god alone must we look for any strength or for any success, whatever may be the character of the instrument employed, whether young or old, learned or unlearned. If the Board concur with your lordship I will go; But ‘I will go in the strength of the Lord God; and make mention of his righteousness, and of his only.’ My lord, in placing my services at your disposal, I have done only my duty and I shall be satisfied with the issue, be it what it may.

It is obvious from this that Leacock was not only willing to head the mission to West Africa, but he also firmly believed that this willingness to volunteer might spare more colleagues from the venture. Although his own family members did not approve his decision to undertake the journey to West Africa, they did not attempt to stop his zealous quest for the glory of God.

Leacock’s offer to go to West Africa as head of the West Indian Mission was revealed on May 16, 1855 during a special meeting convened by the “West Indian Church Association for the Furtherance of the Gospel in Western Africa,” presided over by Governor Sir William

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78 Ibid.
79 Ibid.
80 Ibid., pp. 77-78.
81 Groves, The Planting of Christianity in Africa, p. 41.
Colebrooke of Barbados. As the offer was unanimously accepted, it was obvious that the participants were deeply saddened by “the loss of an individual so generally esteemed and beloved, and as a clergyman so valuable to the diocese.”

Offered the position of an industrial help and subordinate teacher for the projected Mission, John Henry A. Duport, a West Indian of African descent, agreed to accompany Leacock to West Africa. Having been educated at the Mission House affiliated with Codrington College, Duport was knowledgeable in the Holy Scriptures, History, Geography, Arithmetic, and Latin. He was also a practical mechanic. On July 15, 1855, the two men left Barbados for West Africa but not before they received an introductory letter by Archdeacon Trew to be given to Governor Lieutenant Colonel Stephen Hill of Sierra Leone who would assist in establishing the Mission in its formative years in the Pongas Country.

Conclusion

Even after emancipation, Barbadian society remained extremely racially stratified in nature. This was a situation that strongly influenced the original policy of White supervision and Black subordination of the Rio Pongas Mission. As Barbados became the first British West Indies colony to engage in massive sugar cane production in the 1640s, it also became more dependent on African slave labour for the new plantation economy. British colonists not only embraced African slavery, but they subordinated and controlled their slaves. Although slaves were emancipated in 1838, white domination of Blacks in Barbados continued well into the end of the nineteenth century. In the area of education, Barbadians of African descent were denied secular education, exposing them mostly to religious instruction on the island. This was in spite of the

82 Caswall, The Martyr, pp. 78.
83 Ibid., p. 79.
British imperial government’s insistence on secular education as a prerequisite for freedom during the early decades of the nineteenth century. In their reluctance to provide secular education, Barbadian planters held on to the archaic concept that such education would create unrealistic expectations among Blacks and therefore limit their willingness to be productive workers.84 Most importantly, it is shown in this chapter that the planters argued that educational institutions would contribute even more to Blacks refusing to accept their subordinate social status within the island’s hierarchical structure. This inequality within Barbadian society also existed in the island’s Anglican religious institutions. In the early decades of the nineteenth century, Anglican clergy in Barbados showed no serious signs of de-segregating churches on the island, a situation that was evident in the original policy of White supervision and Black subordination in the Pongas Mission.

Following the emancipation of slaves in the British West Indies, West Indians of African descent became a potential source of recruitment for missionary service in Africa. As members of the West Indian Church, they demonstrated their willingness to spread the Gospel in the land of their ancestry. Most importantly, as shown in this chapter, being pastors in West Africa provided African-descended West Indians the opportunities denied them at home. For Barbadians of African descent, the Pongas Mission also provided them the opportunity to escape devastating poverty and the hierarchy of their society, as well as the political and socio-economic disenfranchisement they faced on the island. Chapter 4 discusses issues of inequality when efforts were made to consolidate the Pongas Mission under the sole control and supervision of West Indian missionaries of African descent following the successive deaths and resignations of White supervisors between 1863 and 1873.

Chapter 3


This chapter provides a detailed overview of the formative years of the Rio Pongas Mission between 1855 and 1863. During these years, the Mission’s European organizers demonstrated persistent colour prejudice that denied West Indian missionaries of African descent the top leadership position in the Mission. The chapter also discusses the early conversion into the Church that the Mission established, showing the complexity of the process in an area where Islam was already well established. It shows that motives other than purely spiritual or ecumenical were of prime importance in the decision by many in the Pongas area to join the new Church. But the increasing flow of “converts” severely undermined the traditional belief systems nonetheless, in turn helping to get the Mission better established. This eventually resulted in confrontation between the Mission and traditional worshippers.

The Formative Years of the Rio Pongas Mission, 1855-1863

We follow the uncertain beginnings of the Mission, showing how, although the Caribbean-based organizers of the West Indian Mission prepared their missionaries for the establishment of the missionary enterprise in West Africa, they had no specific location in mind. The result was a frantic search for a suitable site for the Mission once the first West Indian missionaries got to West Africa – the initial group was based for several months in Freetown, Sierra Leone. In the event, the Rio Pongas Country was chosen, and the first missionaries arrived in Fallangia on December 25, 1855. Upon the establishment of the Mission station in Fallangia, the missionaries were quick to recruit several children as their first ‘converts’, to be followed by slaves, and only
later, free adult women and men. I will show that the initial success of the Mission was due to its focus on children whom the missionaries saw as a strong foundation for a Christian establishment in the Pongas Country. This success, however, appeared hollow at first. Recruitment of children was primarily based on the gifts and other incentives the Mission provided. More widespread support for the Mission was registered as a result of the need for new trade opportunities in agricultural products and new cultivation techniques, which became acute as a result of the abolition of the slave trade. This need became a catalyst for some support for the missionaries from Eurafrikan sources, and contributed to the rapid success of the Rio Pongas Mission. The Mission began when Hamble James Leacock, son of a wealthy slave-owner from Barbados and John Henry A. Duport, a descendant of slaves from St. Kitts, sailed from Barbados to Southampton, England on July 15, 1855. While there, they were joined by J. W. Weeks, the newly appointed second Bishop of Sierra Leone on his own journey to Freetown, Sierra Leone. Bishop Weeks was also the person appointed to direct and generally supervise the planned West Indian mission in West Africa. The early formative years of the Rio Pongas Mission witnessed a difficult interaction between the West Indian missionaries and the Susu royalty. This critical period lasted eight years.

Sailing from Plymouth, the party arrived in Freetown in November 1855. There is no record of what Duport did immediately after disembarking, but Governor Hill received Leacock. He was immediately invited for dinner at the Government House in Freetown. During this dinner, the parties engaged in preliminary discussions relating to the location for the West Indian Mission. Governor Hill suggested that Leacock visit the Cape Coast Castle, in modern day Ghana. He thought such a visit would enable the missionary to carefully study a possible site in

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1 Caswall, *The Martyr*, p. 117.
the El-Mina district, near a Dutch settlement located about seven miles north of El-Mina Fort. After further consideration, however, the Governor changed his mind about the location of the projected Mission. He advised Leacock to commence the Mission within British territory, observing that:

> There is plenty of room in our government for another mission, and we want labourers. Why then leave us for a foreign government? Under British influence you may be sure of protection; and while you are labouring for the salvation of a benighted people you may render us an essential service.²

The Governor’s suggestion for establishing the West Indian Mission in British territory had a dual purpose. He was concerned about the security of its missionaries, as well as about how to combat the recurring wars, raids, and to curb the clandestine slave trade within some parts of the British territory. He suggested establishing the Mission on Plantain Island and in Sherbro Country, contiguous territories south of Sierra Leone. Gallinas Country, also south of Sierra Leone, and about 100 miles northwest of the present Liberian capital of Monrovia³, was also suggested. Hill told Leacock that the area was about seventy miles wide and extended into the interior.⁴ The Governor argued that the area was then not exposed to any missionary activity and that the recurring wars and clandestine slave trade had devastated some of its chiefdoms. He was convinced that the presence of such a Mission would have a restraining influence on the warring chiefs and the clandestine slave traders and would eventually result in the cessation of such activities.⁵ Governor Hill’s suggestion of planting a Christian Mission in a territory that his government was trying to pacify is also a clear indication that even at this time, colonial authorities saw such missions as instruments of colonial control. Also, it is most likely that Hill

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² Ibid.
⁴ Caswall, *The Martyr*, p. 117.
⁵ Ibid.
did not want the missionaries to be at a place that was far away from Freetown because he would be asked to protect them and he was perhaps not interested in getting involved in the Pongas Country.

While Leacock was considering Hill’s suggestions, he received discouraging news about the prevailing conditions in Plantain Island. John McCormack, a British merchant based in Freetown, told Leacock that Plantain Island would not be a practicable site because slave raiders had turned it into a completely desolate place. Then on December 1, 1855, the reopening of a deserted Church Missionary Society outpost in Kapparu, about seventy miles north of Freetown, was suggested to Leacock. However, Leacock did not support the idea, considering the fact that CMS missionaries had tried unsuccessfully for several years to spread the Gospel in the area and had been forced to abandon the outpost. Two days later, the Spanish consul of the faraway island of Fernando Po visited Leacock in Freetown. The consul had read about Leacock’s mission to West Africa in the print media and came to Freetown to persuade him to establish the Mission on Fernando Po. However, despite the cordial invitation, Leacock refused to consider that possibility seriously. He was convinced that, after expelling a Baptist Mission long established there, the last thing the Spanish Government would allow was an Anglican establishment. Despite Leacock’s skepticism, the consul tried to convince him that an Anglican Church Mission in Fernando Po would be acceptable to Catholic Spain because there were already over 900 Protestants on the island, who could communicate well in English. While the consul succeeded in persuading Leacock to consider the island as a possible site for the Mission, the West Indian

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6 Ibid., p. 121.
7 Ibid.
8 Ibid.
9 Ibid., pp. 123-124.
was discouraged from doing so by Bishop Weeks. The bishop continued to insist that Leacock should examine the possibility of locating the Mission in Sherbro or in the Gallinas.

During a public meeting convened at Christ Church in Freetown on December 5, 1855, a Mr. Galbridden, a Maroon merchant in Freetown who traded in the Pongas Country, told Leacock that the area would be an ideal place to spread the Gospel. Leacock immediately informed Governor Hill and Bishop Weeks about this possible site for the Mission. Both men responded favourably to the proposal. On December 7, 1855, at the suggestion of Governor Hill’s wife, Captain E. H. Buck of Her Majesty’s steamer, Myrmidon, agreed to provide Leacock with the necessary information about the Pongas Country, an area from which he had just arrived. Buck also offered to take the missionary to the region himself on board the Myrmidon.

On Monday December 10, 1855, the two West Indian missionaries finally left Freetown for the Pongas Country on board the Myrmidon. They anchored off the mouth of the Rio Pongo a day later. The following morning, Leacock and Duport were passengers on two well-manned and armed boats to the village of Tintima, on the northern banks of the Little Pongo. The town was the residence of a Susu chief called Kennyback Ali, who was the first to receive the West Indian missionaries. The arrival of the two missionaries in the area happened almost forty years after the expulsion of CMS missionaries by slave-trading families in the area in 1816. Unlike the CMS

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10 The Maroons were former African captives laves in the Caribbean island of Jamaica. After a long struggle against British authorities for their freedom, many were deported to Nova Scotia in Canada. From there, in September 1800, about 550 Maroons were transported to Sierra Leone by the Sierra Leone Company on behalf of the British Government. Here, as Fyfe notes, they settled among other former slaves and free people of colour from Nova Scotia and England. It is interesting that Mr. Galbridden was still considered a Maroon after so many years.

11 Caswall, The Martyr, p. 139; Fyfe, A History, p. 291; Pascoe, Two Hundred Years, p. 262.

12 Ibid.

missionaries, however, those from the West Indies were under the protection of a treaty signed between N. W. Macdonald, the then British Governor of Sierra Leone, and Bala Bangu, the Susu king of the Pongas Country, on January 17, 1852. Among other things, the treaty allowed missionaries under British jurisdiction to settle and spread the Gospel in the area. The West Indian missionaries became the first English-speaking missionaries under British jurisdiction to test this provision of the treaty. They were well received by the chief in his piazza. Upon his enquiry about the purpose of the visit, Ali was assured that it was a peaceful one and that the missionaries were only there to spread the word of God. The chief accepted the explanation but he also suspected it to be associated with the efforts to abolish the clandestine transatlantic slave trade in the area. As a Muslim and owner of many slaves, Ali had every reason to be suspicious of visitors who were accompanied by uniformed English captains. The mid-nineteenth century was a period when the British authorities were active in their efforts to wipe out the traffic in human cargoes.

Chief Ali’s situation was tricky. The British Government had supposedly granted him a pension earlier in return for his own abandonment of the clandestine slave trade and for encouraging others to do so. In total, the British Government provided him and other chiefs of the Pongas Country over £700 to help suppress slave-trading activities. The chief gave the missionaries a warm welcome. On December 12, 1855, while Leacock and Duport were in

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17 Caswall The Martyr, p. 254. According to Leacock, such a hefty sum only provided the chiefs the capital required to penetrate even deeper into the interior for more slaves. During this time, the Rio Pongo, with its numerous creeks, mangrove swamps and concealed barracoons, provided a perfect situation for slave traders to elude British gunboats. The river was still an important outlet for slaves brought in from the interior.
Tintima, Mathias (Culom) Katty, the Susu king, who resided at the royal capital of Teah, visited them. Informed about the purpose of the visit of the missionaries, the king approved it and promised to provide the Mission with children to be taught the Gospel provided that the Queen of England provided those children with some clothing.\textsuperscript{18} Captain Buck assured the king that the projected Mission would not forcibly recruit converts. Buck also urged the king not to prevent any of his subjects from joining the Mission. The meeting ended amicably.

However, just when it seemed that the West Indian missionaries had made an arrangement with both Chief Ali and King Katty to plant a Christian Mission among their subjects, a group of eight Muslim Mandinka chiefs opposed it. This opposition was based not only on the chiefs’ eagerness to protect their own Islamic values against what they saw as Christian intrusion, but also on the failure of the missionaries to offer them presents, a practice that was common on the west coast of Africa at the time.\textsuperscript{19} Firmly rejecting their demands, Leacock told the dissenting chiefs that he would not give them any presents now or ever and that, if anyone deserved a present, it was he and not the chiefs. It is noted that his firm stance against the demands of the dissenting chiefs produced the desired effect because they disappeared immediately. With their departure, Leacock and Katty settled down to finalizing the business of establishing the Mission in the Pongas Country. The king then signed a hastily drawn declaration of support for the Mission before the parties went their separate ways.\textsuperscript{20} Chief Ali’ offered the Barbadian and the Kittisian the use of one of his houses until their own could be built, and King Katty offered them a house and a garden plot.

\textsuperscript{18} Caswall, \textit{The Martyr}, p. 144; \textit{M.F}, Vol. 1, March 1856, p. 52.
\textsuperscript{19} Caswall, \textit{The Martyr}, p. 144; \textit{M.F}, Vol. 1, March 1856, p. 52.
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., Caswall, \textit{The Martyr}, p. 146.
Ali kept his promise of providing accommodation for the missionaries in his own way. He gave them a dilapidated cone-shaped hut and instructed his slaves to care for the West Indians. It is not clear whether Ali deliberately sanctioned the mistreatment of Leacock and Duport, but his slaves allegedly denied them provisions for the purpose of extorting something from the West Indians in return. Consequently, the missionaries had to rely on their own limited supply of provisions, such as ginger and biscuits. However, since they had brought so little, they had to purchase local provisions, such as chickens and eggs, at what they claimed were inflated prices.

Leacock and Duport were pessimistic about their prospects in Tintima. The behaviour and attitude of their hosts were disappointing. For their part, residents of Tintima, largely Muslim and slave owning, suspected the missionaries of being British Government agents sent to interfere with their clandestine slave trading activities. Chief Ali himself did not openly advocate the expulsion of the missionaries from his village, but he was clearly actively disinterested in their presence. For instance, not only were the missionaries given sub-standard accommodation, but also they were refused the children promised them earlier, and any child who showed some kind of interest in the Mission was discouraged from doing so. All of these actions reduced the West Indian missionaries to a state of despair about their situation. Relief came, however, when on December 21, 1855, Lewis Wilkinson, one of the younger sons of Chief Richard Wilkinson of Fallangia, arrived in Tintima to deliver his father’s invitation for the missionaries to go to his town. It is noted that Leacock accepted it without hesitation.

22 Ibid., p. 152.
24 Ibid.
25 Ibid.
The Nascent Fallangia Mission

Chief Wilkinson’s invitation could not have come at a better time. As a result of the condition of the hut, Leacock suffered severe mosquito bites and had a swollen face and hands, as well as sore feet. As Caswall noted, the missionary “thankfully accepted the invitation believing that he saw in it the hand of Providence.” Leacock left Duport to guard their belongings in Tintima while he accompanied Lewis on a boat plying the Little Pongo back to Fallangia. There, Chief Wilkinson welcomed him with open arms. During their tête-à-tête, the Chief told Leacock that he was the answer to his prayers. He remarked:

I have written to Sierra Leone for a Missionary, but could get no answer; and now the LORD has sent me an answer. You are, Sir, an answer to my prayers for twenty years. You are the first Minister of the Gospel I have beheld since 1835. And now I know that God hears prayer, and that a blessing is come to my house. Here you are welcome.

Not only did Wilkinson cordially receive Leacock, he also assured the missionary that he would inform other chiefs about his presence in the Pongas. The chief also promised to provide the Mission about thirty children of the town for Christian instruction. As for accommodation, Wilkinson offered to share his own house with Leacock until one could be built for him. The chief also undertook to personally nurse Leacock back to health if he became ill. Chief Wilkinson’s enthusiastic reception of Leacock was not based exclusively on altruistic or religious grounds. He hoped that the presence of a white missionary in his territory would encourage British commerce in which he would be an influential intermediary. Having arranged everything with Wilkinson, Leacock returned to Tintima where he joined Duport on December

27 Ibid.
29 Ibid., p. 59; Caswall, The Martyr, p. 159.
30 Ibid.
24, 1855. The two missionaries finally left the village on that Christmas Eve for Fallangia, where Chief Wilkinson received them warmly.

In the meantime, Governor Hill of Sierra Leone was becoming anxious about the plight of the two West Indian missionaries. Told about the hostility of the inhabitants of Tintima towards them, the Governor ordered Lieutenant Grubbe of H. M. S. Teazer to sail to the Pongas Country and see for himself if the missionaries were in danger from serious illness or otherwise. Lt. Grubbe was also ordered to repatriate the missionaries to Freetown if he found them in a difficult situation. Although the missionaries were found secure, both were suffering from what was then referred to as the “acclimatizing fever.” According to Leacock, the acclimatizing fever attacks foreigners during their first encounter with the area, and he was glad that he caught it sooner than later. With instructions to take the missionaries back to Freetown if found sick, Lt. Grubbe brought them on board the Teazer on December 29, 1855. The party arrived in the city two days later and commenced medical treatment. After a brief recuperation in Freetown, they returned to the Pongas Country. Once again, Chief Wilkinson enthusiastically welcomed them. Leacock and Duport settled in Fallangia and started the white-supervised and controlled phase of the mission’s history, a period that also witnessed racism in the administration of the Rio Pongas Mission.

**Racism in the Rio Pongas Mission**

Advocates of the West Indian Mission emphasized that their organization, “The West Indian Church Association for the Furtherance of the Gospel in Western Africa” was not a colonization

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32 Ibid.
They also argued that their organization was not trying to relieve the West Indies of its population problems. Instead, they argued, the presence of members of their organization in West Africa was only to spread the Gospel among the people resident there. Nevertheless, the presence of West Indian missionaries in the Pongas Country had the appearance of a ‘dual purpose’ - the spread of Christianity and colonial influence.

Racism was evident from the very beginning of the West Indian Mission to West Africa. Although African-descended West Indians were an integral part of the Rio Pongas Mission, developing their leadership within the missionary project was not the aim of the organizers. As has become customary in the hierarchical society of Barbados, which was the Mission’s base in the West Indies, the expectation held by the white Anglican clergy who organized the Mission was to have permanent white supervision and black assistantship in the Pongas Country. Not only was this policy mirrored on the actions of the island’s Anglican clergy, it also reflected the cultural and social assumption of British society at the time that Blacks lacked solid character and sound judgment. The course of events in the Pongas Country showed once again that Britons from the metropole, as well as those from the colonies who claimed “Britishness” wherever they might be, were singularly likeminded, an issue that Robert Huttenback dealt with in great detail. However, cruel reality and the need for religious proselytization have a way of eroding and dictating even the most strongly held beliefs. As successive deaths and resignations of White superintendents provided an even more compelling need for leadership in the Pongas Mission, organizers came to the realization that white men in Barbados and Britain willing to go to West

33 Fyfe, A History, p. 29.
Africa famously known for its so-called “disease environment” at the time were not available to take the post of superintendent.

Racism was evident in the reluctance of the Mission organizers to appoint Duport, the veteran African-descended West Indian missionary, to the post of superintendent after the death of each White superintendent between 1856 and 1863. Instead, Duport was often reluctantly accepted as temporary caretaker until a White superintendent could be found. Most importantly, as in the West Indies and British society, Rio Pongas missionaries were paid strikingly unequal salaries. While Leacock was paid £300 per annum, Duport received only £50 a year. This extreme inequality was later addressed, as the Mission organizers, faced with the dilemma of not having a superintendent, and perhaps much to the chagrin of White Barbadians, finally appointed Duport to the post. Even then, a significant difference remained between salaries paid to White missionaries and to their Black counterparts in the Pongas Country.

Mission School at Fallangia

On January 4, 1856, Leacock and Duport opened the first West Indian Mission School in the Pongas Country. The school opened in Fallangia with twenty of the thirty children promised earlier by Chief Wilkinson, along with several adults. Earlier, on January 2, 1856, Leacock wrote to members of the English Committee informing them how much it would cost the Board to send teachers from the West Indies to the Pongas Country. He estimated the amount to be £500. Leacock also informed the Committee that only £210 would be required for him to hire six

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36 Vassady, “The Role,” p. 197
38 Caswall, The Martyr, p. 166; Barrow, Fifty Years, p. 51; M.F, Vol. 1, March 1856, p. 80.
39 Caswall, The Martyr, p. 168; Barrow, Fifty Years, p. 51.
teachers from Sierra Leone.\textsuperscript{40} He related to his superiors that he planned to train two young indigenous men as teachers at a monthly salary of £10 because they could speak Susu and some English.\textsuperscript{41} Leacock’s intention was to reduce the Mission expenses involving the use of West Indian teachers in West Africa. However, his action also demonstrated a common trend involving missionary societies in West Africa at the time. In the nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries, most missionary societies operating on the West coast of Africa sought workers, especially teachers and catechists, from the West Indies.\textsuperscript{42} These requests were often influenced by the myth or belief that West Indians could withstand the tropical climate better than their British counterparts. In reality, however, this was not necessarily the case. Most experiments with such workers failed. Prickett points out that, “The West Indian coloured or black, soon grows homesick…. [and they] can no more stand the climate of West Africa than an Englishman can.”\textsuperscript{43} Comparing the mortality rate among European and West Indian troops during the British Asante campaigns of 1895-96, Philip D. Curtin observed that, of the 348 Europeans hospitalized, 5.01 percent died of malaria, while out of the 248 West Indians hospitalized, 2.67 percent died of the same disease.\textsuperscript{44} The case of African descended West Indian Pongas missionaries like Duport reinforces these statistics because even though he died at a fairly early age of 43, Duport out-lived a series of his white counterparts. Curtin reiterates that, “For the West Indian troops, the relatively high death rate from malaria was no doubt because

\textsuperscript{40} Caswall, \textit{The Martyr}, p. 165.
\textsuperscript{41} Ibid., p. 169.
\textsuperscript{43} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{44} Curtin, \textit{Disease and Empire}, p. 108. Also see P. D. Curtin, \textit{Migration and Mortality in Africa and the Atlantic World, 1700-1900} (Aldershot, Hampshire, Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2001).
they were West Indian, lacking the immunizing consequence of an African childhood.”

However, he fails to realize that malaria is still the number one killer in Africa – even of those who have gone through a childhood immunizing experience.

As far as the Rio Pongas Mission was concerned, the pressing problem initially was not the need for teachers and catechists, but the need for more students, a problem caused, among other things, by the lack of clothing for prospective pupils. Even though the missionaries did not insist that children be clothed before they could attend school, clothing was very important in Victorian missionary culture. As Prickett relates, “… a horror of nudity, even among children, was deeply rooted in the missionary mind.” In this missionary culture, insisting on converts shedding their past was not unusual.

In the Rio Pongas Mission, parents were not formally prevented from enrolling their children in the new school for lack of clothing. However, this unavailability was a shame for many. Even though most children in the area often roamed the town almost naked, the sight of other children sitting in the class fully attired discouraged many potential students from entering the school premises. To solve this problem, Leacock pleaded with Mrs. Caswall, the wife of the Secretary of the English Committee, for donations of new or used clothes for the students of Fallangia Mission School. He stressed that in the Pongas Country at that time, only children of

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45 Curtin, Disease and Empire, p. 108.
46 Prickett, Island Base, pp. 9-10.
47 Commenting on the insistence of the missionaries of the Africa Inland Mission in East Africa at the close of the nineteenth century that their Maasai coverts shed their past, Waller writes: “This was symbolized by the adoption of Western clothes instead of the ‘skin’…. ” See Richard Waller, “They Do the Dictating & We Must Submit: The Africa Inland Mission in Maasailand” in Thomas Spear & Isaria N. Kimambo (eds.). East African Expressions of Christianity (Oxford: James Currey, 1999), p. 92. Also see Kathleen R. Smythe, “The Creation of a Catholic Fipa Society: Conversion in Nkansi District, Ufipa” in East African Expressions of Christianity, pp. 133-136.
49 Ibid.
the chiefs had access to some sort of clothing.\textsuperscript{50} Thus, the possibility of receiving clothes would be an attraction towards the Mission.\textsuperscript{51}

The missionaries occasionally distributed clothes among students. Along with other incentives, this practice was aimed at attracting new students, somewhat suggesting – at least to some people, that conversion to Christianity in the Pongas Country was more a matter of practical necessity than spiritual conviction. By the end of April 1856, the school made such an impression that several people in the villages and towns around Fallangia offered their children for schooling.\textsuperscript{52} This increased interest in schooling should not be mistaken for an outright acceptance of the new religion. The fact that children could learn how to read and write English, as well as acquire new skills in carpentry, mechanics, needlework and tailoring, in addition to receiving gifts, largely accounted for this growth.\textsuperscript{53}

As the Mission School at Fallangia continued to grow, Chief Wilkinson reassured Leacock that more children would be provided for the new educational institution. At that moment, Wilkinson was the only chief, either indigenous or mixed descent, to encourage his slaves to enroll themselves or their children in the school.\textsuperscript{54} Other chiefs were reluctant to follow Wilkinson’s example because they were convinced that Christian religious instruction would lead to the emancipation of their slaves or their rebellion against their enslavement.\textsuperscript{55} It was even

\textsuperscript{50} Ibid., p. 165.
\textsuperscript{51} In coastal regions such as the Rio Pongas, access to imported cloth, as well as African made cloth, was not difficult. Perhaps poverty limited the ability of many people to purchase it. Many people probably lacked money or goods to barter. Nudity traditionally was probably not shameful and was probably once the norm for children.
\textsuperscript{52} Caswall, \textit{The Martyr}, p. 186.
\textsuperscript{54} Caswall, \textit{The Martyr}, p. 168.
\textsuperscript{55} Ibid., p. 212; \textit{M.F}, Vol. 1, March 1856, p. 184.
more difficult for the missionaries to draw the children and slaves of Muslims to the school. In fact, considering their attitude to Christianity, it was only natural that Muslims would resist sending their children to a Christian school. As such, Muslim clerics or leaders often advised domestic slave-owners against enrolling their slaves in the Mission School. They told masters and mistresses that the aim of West Indian missionaries was to free their slaves, as had been done in the West Indies in 1838.\textsuperscript{56} Consequently, for a number of years, most domestic slaves were simply not allowed to attend the Mission School for fear that they would run away as soon as they were able to speak a little English. Even those already enrolled were often removed by force for similar reasons.\textsuperscript{57} Clearly, slave masters/mistresses worried that their slaves would see themselves as equals in light of the teachings of the new religion. In September 1878, Rev. P. H. Doughlin, who was based at Domingia station, remarked of Mrs. Lightburn that her “objections to the Gospel coming to Farringia was that it would make her slaves’ ‘eyes fit’ her – make them look on her as their equal if they sat in the same church, and said the same prayers, and were partakers of the same hope.”\textsuperscript{58}

Leacock’s approach to the issue, despite his strong anti-slavery sentiments, was non-confrontational, even sedate. He knew that his position was precarious. Unlike Sierra Leone, the ‘Pongas was not a colony of Britain or any European power. British influence was significant, but it did not translate into actual power. Leacock therefore had to be cautious about taking actions that could offend powerful local interests, especially potentially hostile Muslims. But his attitude may also have been influenced by his previous experience within the racially hierarchical society of Barbados and elsewhere in the West Indies and America, as well as by the

\textsuperscript{57} \textit{M.F}, Vol. XIII, 1868, p. 246.
\textsuperscript{58} \textit{M. F.} Dec. 2, 1878, p. 585.
fact that, as acting assistant priest of St. John’s, Barbados in the 1820s, he somehow extended the privileges of the church to all the slaves in the parish.\textsuperscript{59} Leacock’s action was highly unusual given the fact that in the 1820s Anglican clergy in places like St. Kitts and Grenada did not cater too much to Blacks for fear of undermining slavery.\textsuperscript{60} This attitude was also reminiscent of Barbados, where the planter Assembly was not enthusiastic about education for Blacks until the late 1870s.\textsuperscript{61} In fact, Leacock was extremely cautious both in approach and goal, stating that

\begin{quote}
I have decided to wait till Providence shall open the door by enlightening their minds with respect to the nature and obligations of Christianity and the object of our Mission, which is to make masters kind and gentle to their servants, ‘giving unto them that which is just and equal,’ and ‘servants obedient to their masters in singleness of heart, fearing God.’\textsuperscript{62}
\end{quote}

It is clear that Leacock’s attitude vis-à-vis the master-slave relationship reflected those of the clergy in Barbados. He was in a different context in the Pongas Country and without power there. In Barbados, the clergy accommodated the invidious strategy of planters, who continued to campaign to ‘improve the morality and character’ while in actual fact they were more interested in creating a docile labour force from the 1840s through the 1870s.\textsuperscript{63} In fact, since that attitude was part of the dual purpose of the Rio Pongas Mission’s efforts to spread Christianity and British colonial influence, Leacock was convinced that there would be limited opposition when the Mission’s view on the master-slave relationship was known. In a letter to the English Committee dated May 13, 1856, he confirmed this position by stating that: “When they

\textsuperscript{60} Cox, \textit{Free Coloreds}, p. 122.
\textsuperscript{61} Beckles, \textit{A History of Barbados}, pp. 105-106.
\textsuperscript{62} \textit{M.F}, Vol. 1, March 1856, p. 184.
\textsuperscript{63} Beckles, \textit{A History of Barbados}, p. 105.
understand our views, I think we shall meet no more opposition in the country generally than we do in Fallangia.”

Perhaps Leacock’s attitude toward the master-slave relationship in the Pongas Country was also greatly influenced by nostalgia for his homeland. First, upon his arrival in the Pongas Country in 1855, he described the village of Tintima as similar to large Black villages in the West Indies during the period of slavery. Moreover, Leacock saw in the Pongas Country what he strongly believed was a striking physical resemblance of people and in material culture between the area and Barbados. Commenting on this resemblance, he wrote:

There is a striking resemblance between the natives here and the Africans in Barbados, or what I remember of them at the time of their importation, and subsequently to the termination of slavery; and now their amusements, musical instruments, &c., are not without analogy. I have no doubt that a great number of the people imported into our island come from this place. There is a ruined, once a flourishing village, now on the Bangalong river, called Liverpool, and there is an impression on my mind that Liverpool took the lead in supplying Barbados with slaves. The musical instrument used to this day by the [Blacks] in Barbados, called the ‘pump,’ is also used here. The singing of the people here is like the singing of the poor Africans, as I remember it in my youth; the baskets are made here just as they are now made in Barbados. These circumstances, and others, make it appear to me singular that Providence should close every door on the coast against me, except this.

Perhaps this perceived resemblance in people and in material culture between the Pongas Country and Barbados further encouraged Leacock to spread the Gospel in the area. The Mission School continued to prosper despite the attitudes of domestic slave owners, Christian, Muslim or otherwise. More people, including some Muslims, eventually showed interest in the educational institution because of the opportunity it afforded them to learn to read and write English and to acquire new vocational skills. Seizing on this opportunity, Leacock mapped out a strategy to

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65 Barrow, *Fifty Years*, p. 47.
67 Ibid., p. 136.
increase the student population. He undertook first to persuade certain influential kings and chiefs, such as Jelloram Fernandez of Bramaya, Elizabeth Lightburn of Farringia, Charles Wilkinson of Domingia, and William Faber of Sangha to enroll their children or slaves in the school. Leacock was convinced that the subjects of these chiefs would eventually follow the example of their rulers. This was common thinking among missionaries in Africa in the nineteenth century. In the late 1880s, the Catholic White Fathers adopted a similar policy among the Fipa people of southwestern Tanganyika. It is reported that Leacock had already seen such an example in Chief Wilkinson who he said often told his subjects, “I will not compel any of you to send your children to school, but you are quite at liberty to do so. I send my own, and shall be glad to see yours come.”

Leacock was not only interested in teaching reading, arithmetic and religious doctrine to his students, he also thought of using the school as a vocational training centre for young and old. In the same letter to the English Committee dated January 2, 1856, he emphasized that the boys of the Pongas Country were eager to learn how to use carpentry tools. Leacock also noted that the chiefs of the area were interested in learning new cultivation techniques and his own knowledge of some methods of cotton production could be a valuable asset for the Mission School at Fallangia. As a result, he pleaded for a cotton gin, a machine that would separate seeds from the cotton, which he noted was a popular crop in the Pongas Country. The Head Missionary also wanted to use the school to teach local people how to grow maize. However, to persuade

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68 Her maiden name is Elizabeth (Isabela) “Bailey” Gomez. Although I do not see anything wrong with the title Mammy even though some of my readers might because in pidgin dialect, it could communicate a sense of matriarchal authority. In fairness to her status as a renowned chief in her own right, I will therefore use her first name rather than the common Mrs. Lightburn or Mammy Lightburn as used in my sources.


indigenous peasants to grow this crop, Leacock needed a thirty-shilling hand corn-mill such as those used in Barbados. The role of the school which at this time had a student population of twenty-four explains the rapid success of the Mission in the Pongas Country. In June 1856, Chief Faber of Sangha became the second Eurafrican chief to enroll his children in the Mission School at Fallangia. He gave two sons to Chief Wilkinson to enroll in the school during the old chief’s visit to Sangha that month.

With the first West Indian Mission station and school established successfully in Fallangia, Leacock embarked on a tour of other prospective Mission sites in the Bangalong River area to acquaint himself with other Eurafrican chiefs and their subjects. Although many of these chiefs were still reluctant to send their children to the missionaries in Fallangia, they warmly received the missionary and his chiefly escort. Perhaps this was related to their expectation of his role in facilitating more British trade in the agricultural products of the area. During this tour of duty, however, Leacock became seriously sick and had to seek medical help in Freetown.

While Leacock was in Freetown, Duport took care of the Mission station and the school at Fallangia. The White superintendent’s absence gave Duport the opportunity to implement his innovative ideas, especially regarding the Mission School and its curriculum. Amidst the racism of both the Mission’s organizers and Eurafrican chiefs and other obstacles, Duport, who unlike Leacock was black, tried hard to make the quest for knowledge something that his students enjoyed undertaking every day. He turned the art of teaching into an interactive communal affair by delegating some of the duties to students themselves. As a result, many students became

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72 Ibid., p. 165.
73 M.F, Vol. 1, March 1856, p. 133.
74 Ibid., pp. 228-229.
75 Ibid., pp. 184-185.
76 Ibid., p. 228.
after-school teachers in their community. In a Mission Progress Report that he sent to the
recuperating Leacock in Freetown in May 1856, Duport stated that, “All the boys are teachers;
each of them has a certain number of persons to teach after school.” The assistant missionary’s
skills were even more evident in the teaching style he adopted for the Mission School. In the
same Mission Progress Report, Duport presented the teaching plan for the first time as follows:

First, I enter the School, the children repeat the Morning Hymn; then prayer. After
prayer, they repeat the Psalms in the Prayer book, which they have learned, then the Ten
Commandments, and the Creed, with its questions and answers given in the Church
Catechism. Then I examine each child from my vocabulary of words, in Soosoo and
English. Secondly, reading and spelling, counting, weights and measures, numeration
and multiplication table up to five times; then arithmetic. I use mangoes and the fingers,
to give them some idea of addition […]. Third, play-hour. Fourth, reading and spelling,
writing and dictation, the map of the Holy Land, &c. Fifth, Evening Hymn and other
Psalms; then evening prayer.

Duport was able to connect well with his students in part, because of his willingness to learn and
his ability to communicate and preach in the Susu language.

Languages of Instruction and Preaching

As the Susu language was the lingua franca in the Pongas Country, it was not surprising that
West Indian missionaries had to learn it in order to reach a wider audience. The position of the
S.P.G. was that the Bishop of Sierra Leone should not ordain any missionary for service in the
Pongas Mission unless they passed an examination in the language of the people among whom
they were to work. Like many missionaries, Duport strove to acquire more and more Susu
language proficiency by studying, translating and revising translations. Consequently, with the
help of Chief Wilkinson, by 1858, Duport had already compiled a Susu vocabulary based on a

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77 Ibid.
78 Ibid., p. 229.
79 W.J. Bullock to Duport, October 10, 1865, CLS 129, West Indies Letters Sent, Rhodes House
Library. Hereafter, Rhodes House Library will be abbreviated as R. H. L.
plan that he received earlier from the Principal of Codrington College in Barbados.\textsuperscript{80} Also, with the Chief’s assistance, Duport translated the Prayer Book, the Sunday-School Primer, the Ten Commandments, and the Morning and Evening Church Services into Susu and taught his students and parishioners how to recite them.\textsuperscript{81} The translations of the Scriptures came about when Duport observed that church attendance was always low and was told that the people could not understand what was being said in English.\textsuperscript{82} To address the situation, Duport enlisted the services of Chief Wilkinson and older students as interpreters before he acquired the language himself and preached in it. Duport’s proficiency was extraordinary: his Susu translations were eventually published by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (S.P.C.K.) in England.

English was the principal language of instruction, but Susu was an integral part of this instruction. In fact, adopting Susu as a secondary language of instruction was not new in the Pongas Country. In the failed CMS Mission established among the Susu at Bassia in 1808, the missionaries taught in English but they allowed Susu language in the school system as much as possible. This policy once gave a tremendous advantage to the CMS missionaries, as Leopold Butscher notes in a letter to the CMS Committee in England in October 1807:

> The children may be instructed in English; but, at the same time, let them talk their mother tongue as much as they please; the missionary will derive advantage in hearing their chat all the day long, and may therefore, soon be enabled to preach, and, at the same time, attend to English teaching.\textsuperscript{83}

A similar sentiment prevailed among the Methodist missionaries in the Gambia. In 1871, James Fieldhouse emphasized the importance of the vernacular language by stating that:

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\textsuperscript{80} M.F, Vol. III, 1858, pp. 36-37.


\textsuperscript{82} Ibid., p. 185.

\textsuperscript{83} Walker, Missions in Western Africa, p. 247.
We must give them the Gospel in their own tongue…. We have an almost unlimited extent of country, and yet we are confining ourselves to a single circuit and that not a large one. We seem to have a boundary and be unable to oversee it.  

It is not surprising that West Indian missionaries also saw such an advantage in the language during their period in the Pongas Country because translating the Scriptures into the vernacular and preaching in it was the most important measure for spreading the Gospel in the Pongas Country as in many missionary enterprises among indigenous cultures worldwide. Adrian Hastings notes that mastering a “new language and Scripture translation were – for the few capable of it – a missionary’s central responsibility. Upon them preaching and teaching must be entirely dependent together with the whole subsequent life of the church.”

Duport’s commitment to general missionary work and teaching was unquestionable. An immediate problem, once he took over while Leacock was recuperating in Freetown, was that he was not ordained as a minister. As a result, he was ordered by Bishop Weeks to go to Freetown to be ordained deacon to enable him to temporarily take care of the Mission at Fallangia. On October 12, 1856, Duport was admitted to the Holy Orders. In his absence, Chief Wilkinson took charge of religious instruction, while the oldest student assumed the teaching responsibility. It was the first time that non-West Indians took management positions in the Mission. With the help of fellow chiefs, such as William Faber of Sangha, Charles Wilkinson of Domingia, William Gomez of Bakia and some of Chief Wilkinson’s own subjects, Chief Wilkinson started the construction of a church in his town. Having an established church

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84 Prickett, Island Base, p.122.
building at the Mission station was a necessity for the chief because, since the arrival of the West Indian missionaries in Fallangia, church services had always been held in his piazza. On December 4, 1856, almost a year after the West Indian missionaries first arrived in Fallangia, the church foundation stone was laid. Laying the foundation stone in the presence of Christian converts and non-Christians alike, Chief Faber remarked, “My beloved countrymen, We are all assembled here to-day on a most solemn and important occasion; we are about to erect a temple, in this place and on this spot, to the true and only living God.” It is interesting to know that Chief Faber, who, up to this point, was reluctant to educate his slaves, could participate fully in the construction of the church. However, he had already surrendered two of his children for English instruction and for the acquisition of new trade skills, and was seriously lobbying for trade. It should not be surprising therefore if again the chief had ulterior motives in his new enthusiasm for the Mission.

The church would have the capacity to accommodate about three hundred parishioners when completed. Its entire construction was a community effort. Commenting on the construction of this big church, David H. Cyprian, a Fourah Bay College-trained Sierra Leonean schoolmaster recruited by Duport and hired by Leacock earlier in 1856 to teach at the Fallangia Mission School, observed that people in the area “work cheerfully and heartily. Many of the

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freed people\textsuperscript{94} volunteer their services free of charge to us or to Mr. Wilkinson…\textsuperscript{95} The church building was completed by May 1857.

In the event, Leacock did not witness either the church’s completion or its opening: he died in Freetown on August 20, 1856.\textsuperscript{96} His death saddened Chief Wilkinson, who wrote Bishop Weeks of Sierra Leone on September 15, 1856 stating that:

\begin{quote}
After a lapse of time I have now taken up my pen, with a trembling hand and sorrowful heart, to inform your lordship of the great loss we have sustained in our beloved champion of the Cross, the Rev. H. J. Leacock; and may the great Disposer of all events raise up many Leacocks in the West Indies to come over and help….
\end{quote}

Upon Leacock’s death, committees were formed in many places to collect donations to help the Rio Pongas Mission in his honour. A tablet recalling his memory was also erected in the Cathedral Church in Freetown.\textsuperscript{98}

After Leacock’s burial, Duport returned to Fallangia ordained as deacon. He continued to perform his missionary duties with increased energy and efficiency. In fact, on December 7, 1856, Duport baptized 27 people.\textsuperscript{99} The occasion was a noteworthy one and Duport described it as follows:

\begin{quote}
It was indeed a sublime sight, on the day that holy baptism was administered, to see the candidates, all clad in white loose garments, in striking contrast to the other members of the congregation. About 140 people were present, and the baptized were very thankful for being thus privileged to become members of CHRIST.\textsuperscript{100}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{94} The freed people referred to here were those the missionaries redeemed from their Muslim masters/mistresses using funds donated privately to the SPG in England for that purpose. See \textit{M.F} Vol. XII, 1867, p. 15, \textit{M.F} 1878, pp. 196, 337.

\textsuperscript{95} \textit{M.F}, Vol. II, 1857, p. 65.


\textsuperscript{97} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{98} Ibid


\textsuperscript{100} Ibid., p. 64.
Duport was being understandably optimistic: some years later the Rev. P. H. Doughlin, the West Indian missionary at Fallangia, wrote to the Secretary of the English Committee (in 1868) stating that “On the whole, Christianity seems only to be regarded in a worldly point of view, only as a means of getting the children educated.”\textsuperscript{101} Perhaps this was a view that was in sharp contrast to how some Susu regarded their indigenous religious system.

**Indigenous Susu Religious System**

Ethnographical sources on the Susu are scare, so it is difficult to provide more than a sketchy account of the traditional Susu religious system. However, like many religions in Africa, that system did involve a network of spiritual beings, including a Supreme Being, and a series of lesser deities and ancestral spirits. Peter Hartwig\textsuperscript{102} of the CMS Mission in the Pongas Country in the early years of the nineteenth century remarked that the Sumbea Susu “consider the Supreme Ruler of the Skies as good, and not as having decreed to do harm to the work of his hand…”\textsuperscript{103} Although there is a deplorable paucity of data regarding this issue, one can argue that such a conception of the “Supreme Ruler of the Skies” may have also shaped the way West Indian missionaries presented their message in the Pongas Country. It is possible that the missionaries may have conflated the Susu concept of the “Supreme Ruler of the Skies” with their own concept of God and used it as a means of conversion. On the other hand, the Susu may have sensed a spiritual continuity when presented the information about the benevolent Christian God and thus embraced it. According to Robin Horton, the replacement of the belief in lesser spirits by belief

\textsuperscript{101} M. F, Vol. XIII, 1868, p. 245.
\textsuperscript{102} For more details on this German seminarian that the CMS recruited in 1803 to serve as one of its first two missionaries in Africa, see Nancy Fox Mouser, “Peter Hartwig, 1804-1808: Sociological Perspectives in Marginality and Alienation” in History in Africa 31 (2004), pp. 263-302.
\textsuperscript{103} Walker, Missions in Western Africa, p. 204.
in the Supreme Being is a logical response of indigenous religion to external forces.\textsuperscript{104} Horton links conversion to the weakening of the microcosm and the presence of the macrocosm by arguing that Islam and Christianity played the “role of catalyst – i.e. stimulators and accelerators of changes which ‘were in the air’ anyway.”\textsuperscript{105} Having played an important role in the transatlantic slave trade and continuing to do so in the Atlantic commerce involving legitimate agricultural products following the abolition of the slave trade, we can certainly see Guinea coast being involved in the microcosmic forces that Horton refers to.

Within the Susu religious system, worshiping and consulting ancestors through oracles or priests was not unheard off. Libations and other forms of sacrifice were often made to the ancestors either to appease or to exorcise the evil spirits believed to be residing in desolate regions and thickets.\textsuperscript{106} The West Indian missionaries regarded these ceremonies and sacrifices as heathenish practices and thus condemned them. Their condemnation was often the source of confrontation with the traditional religion worshippers and their priests, such as the \textit{Bansungi}, who always felt that their religious forms of worship were being threatened by the new religion. Presumably, such practices remained widespread, even among Christian converts. If so, one can see what the missionaries could not see at the time, a transference from traditional shrines to the Christian church through conversion.

\textbf{The Process of Conversion and its Requirements}

The difference between the views of the missionaries and those of some of the “converts” indicates that conversion to Christianity was not a simple process in the Pongas Country. For one

\textsuperscript{105} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{106} Walker, \textit{Missions in Western Africa}, p. 204.
thing, the “converts” often found it difficult to understand the beliefs, social practices, and language of the missionaries until the Scriptures were translated and preached in local languages.\textsuperscript{107} Even then, attitudes to the meaning of conversion varied significantly among the “converts” in the Pongas Country.

As in many missionary enterprises worldwide, schools and churches were built in the Pongas Country to facilitate conversion.\textsuperscript{108} These institutions taught the English language and provided religious instruction and vocational training to their students and parishioners. Potential converts were often put in a class of catechumens with the hope of baptizing them later. Often, at baptism, European names were given to the new converts in an effort to discard what the missionaries thought were ‘heathenish’ ones.\textsuperscript{109} T. J. Bowen, an American missionary of the Southern Baptist Convention, noted in the mid-nineteenth century that, “In Sierra Leone, native boys are christened with English names, and frequently with great ones, as Edward Bickersteth, or Jabez Bunting.”\textsuperscript{110} In 1881, Rev. R. J. Clarke of the Rio Pongas Mission baptized Seeray Moreah at the Fotoba station on the Isles de Los and renamed her Sarah.\textsuperscript{111}

The new “converts” were often required to observe Sunday as Church Day. However, this was more of an expectation of conduct by the Mission than a religious rule put into uniform practice. In Domingia, for example, male “converts” were often tempted by European traders to work for them on Sundays. According to the West Indian missionaries, these “converts” often accepted the offer, especially when liquor was the means of payment.\textsuperscript{112} While the missionaries

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{109} Ibid., Prickett, \textit{Island Base}, p. 20.
\bibitem{110} T. J. Bowen, \textit{Adventures and Missionary Labours in Several Countries in the Interior of Africa from 1849 to 1856}. 2\textsuperscript{nd} Ed. (London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1968), p. 91.
\bibitem{111} \textit{M.F}, September 1, 1882, p. 292.
\bibitem{112} \textit{M.F}, Vol. VII, June 1, 1863, p. 132; \textit{M.F}, Vol. XII, 1867, p. 15.
\end{thebibliography}
perceived this as back-sliding, it could have been that these men embraced Christianity in the first place as a means to acquire the language and other skills necessary for those jobs offered by traders and that they were not ready to miss the opportunity because of a religious obligation. It may also mean that they appreciated both their new religion and the opportunities offered to get jobs and acquire luxury goods.

Conversion in the Pongas Country also required chastity and sobriety. Most importantly, however, it required renouncing polygamy. West Indian missionaries, like other Christian missionaries of their day, were often disgusted by what they believed was the degrading custom of polygamy among indigenous people. They were of the conviction that the Christian society must be based on Christian family life and that this could only be realized in monogamy. Their intolerance of polygamous practices became an important obstacle to the spread of the Gospel among adults in the Pongas Country. For instance, knowing that his own conversion would require him to renounce polygamy, King Katty made it clear to the missionaries at the time of their first encounter that he and his adult subjects needed no Christian teaching. Katty’s refusal to renounce polygamy may have been important vis-à-vis his position as king. His wives had been taken for socio-political reasons. Divorcing all of them but one could have undermined much of the existing socio-political and economic order in his kingdom. In the Pongas

115 See D. A. Low, *Buganda in Modern History* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1977), p. 27; Norman Etherington, *Preachers, Peasants and Politics in Southeast Africa, 1835-1880: African Christian Communities in Natal, Pondoland and Zululand* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1978), p. 44. In sub-Saharan Africa, kings and chiefs needed many wives to strengthen their grip on society. The number of wives a man had corresponded with his social standing and no man, however wealthy, would be regarded as a social and political figure if he did not have many wives. Not only do the queens enhance a king’s prestige and provide him with labour, they were also diplomatic assets, as many of them were selected from a wide range of clans, which
Country, polygamists, including King Katty, were allowed to attend church service regularly and were even admitted into the baptism class. The missionaries did not respond in any way beside prohibiting polygamy and denying baptism to individual men who refused to renounce the practice.\textsuperscript{116} According to Duport, “… Christianity requires self-denial: to wear the crown we must willingly endure the cross.”\textsuperscript{117}

While polygamy remained abhorrent to the missionaries, it was nevertheless part of a social system that was intertwined with “the subject of property, of labour, and of difference in status between men and women,”\textsuperscript{118} as well as between generations. In many African cultures, polygamy contributed significantly to the husband’s socio-political and economic status, as women are important producers of food.\textsuperscript{119} According to Helena Chojnacka, more wives and children strengthened a man’s economic and social position. In her view, “The number of wives and children is regarded as a man’s greatest asset, and the main indicator of his wealth and status, hence it is a matter of pride and honour.”\textsuperscript{120}

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\textsuperscript{116} M.F. Vol. XI, 1866, p. 268.  \\
\textsuperscript{117} Ibid.  \\
\textsuperscript{120} Helena Chojnacka, \textit{Polygamy and the Rate of Population Growth} (Lagos, Nigeria: University of Lagos, November 1978), p. 4. See also Sophia Florakas Petsalis, \textit{The Silent Power: A Portrait}
In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the practice became an issue of serious debate among missionaries and notables of various Christian denominations.\textsuperscript{121} For instance, Bishop William Colenso of Natal argued against the idea of forcing polygamists to divorce all their wives but one. He stated that: “…to force an honest polygamist to divorce his wives is to attack his feelings of justice and duty with reference to his wives. The question as to which wife is to be kept was a painful one. What is to become of dismissed women and their children?”\textsuperscript{122}

Bishop Colenso’s views resonated strongly in Kenya, where the CMS and Protestant missionaries reversed their position against baptizing polygamists. Ironically, the missionaries realized that the ban on polygamy was a serious cause of women’s hostility towards them and the reason for the slow expansion of mission communities. The women were worried about what would become of them and their children in the event of divorce.\textsuperscript{123}

Nevertheless, many in the missionary culture never came to share these tolerant and realistic views on polygamy. For example, the Secretary of the LMS argued in 1905 that polygamy was a form of license that was not allowed in the Christian church, and that polygamists should divorce all their wives but one.\textsuperscript{124} Whatever side one takes on this issue, it must be borne in mind that marriage is “largely a processual form of family alliance.”\textsuperscript{125} As John Taylor puts it, “A good African marriage is never a private arrangement between two

\textsuperscript{122} Quoted in Rotberg, Christian Missionaries, p. 129.
\textsuperscript{124} Ibid.
individuals, but a carefully prescribed meeting-point between two clans… Polygamy was also a product of the economic, social and political circumstances of the indigenous society.”

In the words of Jacob Ajayi, “… polygamy was not just a plurality of wives; it was a symbol of the communal way of life in the family compounds.” According to Bowen, in Africa, “No woman, pretty or ugly, rich or poor, is obliged to go unmarried.”

The insistence on rigid conditions of marriage for becoming a ‘good’ Christian stemmed not merely from theological commitment, but often from the arrogance of the missionaries and their ignorance or contempt for indigenous African culture. In fact, missionaries of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, including those of the West Indians of African descent, often simply dismissed indigenous practices such as polygamy as ‘unholy’ and associated them with the condition of moral and cultural blindness and depravities summed up in their use of the word ‘heathen.”

First “Converts” and their Motives

Despite these strict requirements and condescending missionary attitudes toward local culture, “conversions” did take place in the Pongas Country. There were various reasons for this. Like their counterparts in other missionary enterprises worldwide, West Indian missionaries saw the need to attract the attention of the children first. Commenting on a similar situation among the Fipa in East Africa, Smythe writes: “The young were the first to convert, drawn to the

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missionaries by their adolescence, curiosity and eye for new opportunities. They lacked the social status, authority or commitment to entrenched values to be taken seriously by others at first…”

In the Pongas Country, among other things, children were initially attracted to the Mission by the opportunity to receive gifts of clothes, food, toys, and by the lavish fan-fares on Christian religious occasions, such as Easter and Christmas. As converting children enabled missionaries to build strong foundations of Christianity in Africa, providing gifts to the youngsters typified all missionary cultures on the continent. Ironically, even though the deeds had the hallmark of bribery, the missionaries, who often insisted on moral practices, saw their actions merely as suitable inducements rather than “buying converts.”

Nonetheless, whether it was a suitable inducement or not, providing gifts in exchange for accepting Christianity was simply a corrupt and an unethical practice that set a dangerous precedent, which eventually came back to haunt many missionaries in Africa. In the Gambia, for example, the cessation of the practice after two decades of doing it resulted in later missionaries being denied full access to the new areas they visited in the 1820s. In the Pongas Country, West Indian missionaries often complained that many people embraced Christianity only with the hope of material gain, and when that was not successful, “they either relapse or become indifferent.” In fact, as the missionaries argued, many people in the Pongas Country made the

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133 Rotberg, Christian Missionaries, p. 110.
134 Prickett, Island Base, p. 24.
provision of gifts a condition for becoming a Christian and for remaining one, thus supporting the ‘hypothesis’ that “conversion” was indeed instrumental.

In addition to gifts, the missionaries provided vocational and other training opportunities for both children and adults. Boys were trained as artisans and other craftsmen, while girls were often drawn to the Mission for the opportunity to learn needlework and other new skills. [The education of girls, even if it was mainly for domesticity, was a serious missionary undertaking in the Victorian era. Many missionaries often believed that African males oppressed their female folks. In the Gambia, in 1836, William Moister, a Methodist missionary remarked that, “[T]he men look upon their wives, not as companions, but as an inferior race of beings, and employ them as slaves and beasts of burden.”136 In general, missionaries often believed that their training would help free women from men’s domination. In reality, however, the education for domesticity they often provided for the women reinforced gender inequality in Africa in general, and the Pongas Country in particular. In the Gambia, Henry Lamb of the Methodist Mission arrogantly noted in 1877 that, “[T]housands of African women are mere slaves. The standard of morality in the homes is low. Vice assumes a daring effrontery that is unknown in England.”137 Lamb’s remarks typified the condescending and negative attitudes that many nineteenth-century missionaries had toward African cultural practices.

Perhaps there were other reasons for Susu children attending the Mission School in Fallangia. Commenting on Muslim children’s education among the Mandingoes of the Pongas Country at the close of the eighteenth and the early years of the nineteenth centuries, Samuel A. Walker, a CMS missionary, noted that only boys had access to Islamic education. He remarked

136 Prickett, Island Base, p. 12. This is an ironic statement given the status of women in Britain and other Western countries at the time.
137 Prickett, Island Base, p. 123.
that if girls were allowed any access to that privilege, it was only because they needed to be taught how to pray in the future.\textsuperscript{138} Walker further stated that the Susus had no schools and therefore sent their children to Muslim clerics for religious instruction. This pre-existing habit of sending children to be instructed outside the Susu household and the incentives provided by Western education explains the ability of the West Indian missionaries to recruit students for their school so quickly.

The people who became “converts” in the Pongas Country varied significantly in background, age, gender, and life-style. As discussed earlier, many masters and mistresses initially denied their domestic slaves’ access to Christian religious instruction. However, by 1865, some of the slave owners began to send their slaves to the Mission. This new development could be attributed to several factors. First, at this time, despite the clandestine transatlantic slave trade resulting from the demands of both Cuban and Brazilian plantations, the British Anti-Slave Trade Squadron was very active in the waters in and around the Pongas country. With the presence of British cruisers in these waters, income for slave traffickers became unreliable. The situation was worsened by the absence of merchant ships from Europe and America due to the American Civil War. Consequently, manufactured goods, such as clothes became scarce and expensive. As a result, some slave owners sent their domestic slaves to the Mission where they were expected to be clothed and trained in new skills.\textsuperscript{139}

Slaves also became converts when the missionaries redeemed them from their owners and brought them to the Mission. The S.P.G. provided the Mission privately donated funds for this purpose.\textsuperscript{140} In 1867, for example, Duport redeemed two slaves through those funds.\textsuperscript{141}

\textsuperscript{138}Walker, \textit{Missions}, p.204.
\textsuperscript{140} M.F, Vol. XII, 1867, p. 15.
Doughlin also reported the redemption of three slaves at Fallangia in 1878.\textsuperscript{142} One of them, William Da Silva, became a lay helper for the Mission.\textsuperscript{143} John Brown, the other slave, was freed without charge because his mistress could not “eat money which was the price of her fellow communicant.”\textsuperscript{144} Other slaves redeemed themselves by borrowing money from the missionaries and agreeing to repay the full amount upon gaining their freedom. Not only did they repay their debt by working as sailors in Domingia, or as lay helpers for the Mission, but they also became some of the first real committed converts.\textsuperscript{145} Despite their commitment to the Mission, lacking vital information on the total number of redeemed slaves make it difficult to establish the importance of such conversions in creating a Christian mission community in the Pongas Country.

The Mission’s influence also resulted in the manumission of some slaves in the area. In 1880, for example, both P. H. Doughlin and J. B. McEwen signed, as witnesses, the manumission document of John Ormond’s slave, Eliza Thomas.\textsuperscript{146} A decade later, in 1890, Rev. Samuel Cole noted in his quarterly report to the S.P.G. that a Christian woman called Diminka Wilkinson, brought her slave for the missionary to bear witness to the manumission. She remarked:

I [came] to free my slave man before you. He has served me for some time and I do not feel inclined to keep him any longer. He is a Christian and I am a Christian. I give you the paper to hand over to him that he may know that I am in earnest. I do this of my own free will.\textsuperscript{147}

\textsuperscript{141} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{142} \textit{M.F}, July 1, 1878, pp. 337-338.
\textsuperscript{143} Ibid., \textit{M.F}, June 2, 1879, p. 277.
\textsuperscript{144} \textit{M.F}, 1878, pp. 196, 337.
\textsuperscript{145} \textit{M.F}, 1882, pp. 109-110.
\textsuperscript{146} C/AFR/W2, R. H. L.
\textsuperscript{147} Report of Samuel Cole at Domingia for the quarterly ending December 31, 1890 in USPG E45B, Diocese of Sierra Leone Vol. 45B, R. H. L.
In response, Cole noted that, “I took the paper thanked the woman and spoke a few words to the man and others present, and as the woman and the witnesses signed their names I handed the same to the man. The man could only say Alla Tantu (thank God).”

In addition to redemption and manumission, the Susu social structure and cultural practices enabled West Indian missionaries to recruit some of their first “converts” among women. In some Susu villages, individuals suspected of witchcraft were often ostracized, punished severely or sold into slavery. The fact that some wives and others connected to a deceased husband could be accused of bewitching him, as well as causing his death, explains why such women would join the Mission. However, unlike other missionary enterprises where women accused of witchcraft and other ‘crimes’ sought permanent refuge in the Mission and became the first real converts, there is no evidence indicating that women accused of similar ‘crimes’ in the Pongas took permanent refuge in the Mission and became its first real converts. Perhaps this could have been due to the possible absence of a recognizable community of other converts accused of similar deeds. Nevertheless, whether they lived at the Mission or not, women accused of witchcraft were among the regular congregation members of the Mission’s churches in the area.

Another factor that made it possible for West Indian missionaries to recruit their first “converts” was the commercial interest, especially the need for new trade in agricultural products, such as cotton and groundnuts. The hope for new commercial activities in the area stimulated chiefly interest in the Mission. In 1862, for instance, Chief Faber of Sangha noted that

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148 Ibid.
his subjects were quickly becoming traders, as well as cotton and groundnut producers, in the wake of the British suppression of the transatlantic slave trade. He was convinced that the aspiring traders and commercial agricultural producers could learn new cultivation techniques from the Mission school.¹⁵² In fact, by 1866, some of the Mission School graduates were working as entry clerks for French factors in Domingia as a result of the recommendation of the missionaries who trained them.¹⁵³ These new employment opportunities may have also encouraged others to seek Western education in the Mission School. Muriel Devey argues that the education that the Catholic and Protestant missionaries provided in the littoral during the nineteenth century enabled converts to achieve social mobility, especially in the commercial sector and later in the administration sector.¹⁵⁴ This instrumentalism always worried the missionaries and was the source of certain complaints. In 1865, for example, Rev. Doughlin complained about the chiefs not attending church services, stating that, “Of all the chiefs in the country, only one, Mr. Charles Wilkinson of Domingia, comes to church.”¹⁵⁵ Even though the missionaries knew the ulterior motives of many chiefs, they continued to patronize them in the hope that chiefly influence and authority would encourage some of their subjects to embrace the new religion. In any case, the symbiotic relation between the missionaries and the chiefs often increased the latter’s socio-political and economic advantages.¹⁵⁶

Western medicine also played a key role in proselytization in Africa in the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries. In the 1890s, LMS missionaries provided healing and therapy as part of

their ministries among the BaNgwato in Botswana. Writing on the desire of the Brethren missionary Dr. Walter Fisher, to convert Northern Rhodesians in 1906, Rotberg relates, “He desired both to cure their bodies and to save their souls. He thought that he could wean Africans from superstition and the worship of ancestors and eventually bring about lasting conversion by demonstration of the power of the white man’s medicine.”

In cases where traditional medicine or healing had failed and Western medicine succeeded, patients might become “converts.” In such cases, Western medicine generally assumed spiritual power. Commenting on the role of the Berliners as vaccinators for the German colonial government during a smallpox plague in Tanganyika in 1899, Marcia Wright notes that their contact with thousands of people “identified Christianity with public welfare and medicine, frequently associated with spiritual power in the mind of Africans.” Nevertheless, not all Africans were convinced about the power of Western medicine. As Prickett relates, the health of the missionaries themselves “was not a good advertisement for what medicine they had.”

In the Pongas Country, West Indian missionaries told their students and congregations stories of the wonders of Western medicine. They also narrated Biblical stories of miraculous healings to their audiences. As a result, some people were often eager to read the Bible “from which they hear great things.” Those dying of diseases, such as dropsy, also sought medical help from the missionaries because of their abandonment by family members. However, despite receiving medical help from the missionaries, Western medicine was not a major factor in conversions in the area at that time.

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The St. James Church at Fallangia

Despite the confrontation with its opponents, the Mission continued to grow in the Pongas country. This growth partly accounted for the Board’s decision to double Duport’s salary from £50 to £100 per annum in 1856. On November 15, 1857, almost two years after his arrival with Leacock in the Pongas Country, Duport officially opened the church at Fallangia for divine worship. Dedicated to ‘the Almighty God’, the church was named St. James’ Church after the deceased Hamble James Leacock. Commenting on the festivities during the opening day in a letter to the English Committee on December 17, 1857, Duport stated:

We had three bullocks killed on the occasion; one a present to me from a friend, one from Mr. Wilkinson, and one from Charles Wilkinson. These were all distributed. Myself found bread and rice. Clothes were distributed to the children from the supply forwarded by you to me, and they all appeared in them on Sunday….

The lavish occasion was more than a celebration to mark the successful completion of the church. It was customary in the Pongas Country to have a dantaga or feast on such occasions and failure to do so often resulted in hostile reaction by indigenous people. In fact, Duport had witnessed other forms of hostile reaction from some Muslims earlier, on January 9, 1857, when a Muslim Susu chief called a meeting of his subjects in a town near Fallangia and urged the participants to destroy the church then under construction.

The underlying Muslim anger against the missionaries involved several factors. First, the Muslim chief believed that St. James’ Church would become a sanctuary for runaway slaves, who would not be allowed to return to their owners. Second, Muslim clerics were worried that a Christian religious education could threaten their livelihood in making greegrees (charms

163 Barrow, Fifty Years, pp. 64-65.
164 M.F. Vol. III, 1858, p. 38.
166 Ibid., pp. 124-125.
167 Ibid.
encased with Koranic quotations) by turning their Muslim clients into skeptics.\textsuperscript{168} These charms were sold to clients who carried them on their “person as protection from all sorts of danger, and the medium of a multiplicity of blessings, to both body and soul.”\textsuperscript{169} The West Indian missionaries were always happy to destroy these charms because they believed that they were part of superstition. These deeds themselves had contributed to the anger of Muslim clerics against the missionaries. A third factor contributing to opposition to the Mission was related to land ownership. Eurafrikan chiefs had no land of their own and had indigenous Susu notables as their landlords. The fact that Chief Wilkinson gave the Mission fifty acres of the land he held in tenancy in 1859 complicated matters even further. As landlords, some Susus claimed that the missionaries overlooked them and were paying huge amounts of money to the Wilkinson brothers instead of them. Consequently, their opposition was a way of demonstrating their right to the land on which the Mission station was built.\textsuperscript{170}

The group bent on destroying the church at Fallangia in January 1857 was prevented from doing so by Duport, Chiefs Charles Wilkinson and Richard Wilkinson, as well as by some of the parishioners.\textsuperscript{171} Thus, the lavish \textit{dantaga} during the official opening of St. James’ Church was meant not only to please local people, but also to cement the Mission’s social position to prevent future hostile Muslim actions against the establishment.\textsuperscript{172} It was also meant to strengthen Duport’s standing in the community, a status that had already been threatened by the feud within the Mission.

\textsuperscript{169} Walker, \textit{Missions}, p. 13.
\textsuperscript{170} \textit{M.F.}, Vol. II, 1857, p. 124; \textit{M.F.}, Vol. XII, 1867, 236.
\textsuperscript{172} Vassady, “The Role,” pp. 199-200.
Feud Within the Mission

The death of Leacock created enormous challenges for Duport. For example, the racism of the Mission’s organizers and the Eurafircan chiefs became even more apparent in the Rio Pongas Mission after the Head Missionary died. The organizers searched extensively for a white clergyman to fill in the vacant post of superintendent of the Mission. As a Black man, Duport was overlooked for the position. However, he remained in charge of the Mission until a white superintendent was found. At this time, Duport was experiencing a serious financial crisis because his bills could not be certified in the absence of Leacock. Consequently, he was owed a twelve-month cumulative salary of £80: 18: 0, and could only manage with very little.\footnote{Duport to the Treasurer of the S.P.G., May 6, 1857, D8/1850-1859, R. H. L.}

To make matters worse, both Chief Wilkinson and David H. Cyprian, the schoolmaster, accused him of appropriating Mission funds and two rings belonging to the late Leacock, as well as engaging in commercial activities for personal gain.\footnote{Vassady, “The Role,” p. 201.} Duport was also accused of adultery and drunkenness on the job.\footnote{Ibid.} These charges were filed with Bishop J. Bowen, the new Bishop of Sierra Leone, who replaced Bishop J. W. Weeks upon the latter’s death on March 25, 1857. Upon receiving these charges, Bishop Bowen suspended Duport’s license and ordered him to go to Freetown and to concentrate on his translating of the Susu Primer while the charges were investigated.

Despite these charges, the Mission organizers remained confident in Duport’s innocence. They even believed that Duport was a victim of two jealous rivals in the aftermath of the death of Leacock.\footnote{Ibid.} Nevertheless, as their racism remained strong, they denied his return to the Pongas Country until a white superintendent was appointed for the Mission. During his Episcopal Tour
of the Pongas Country in February 1858, Bishop Bowen exonerated Duport and reinstated his license.

The feud between Duport and Chief Wilkinson also indicated a colour prejudice of Eurafri
can chiefs against Black West Indian missionaries in the Pongas Country. It also demonstrates Chief Wilkinson’s own ulterior motives in hosting the Mission. Principally, the feud was based on the fact that the Chief expected the continuous residence of Englishmen in his town to facilitate commerce between the Pongas Country and the outside world, while at the same time promoting his position as intermediary between them.\textsuperscript{177} However, with Leacock’s death and Duport’s active control of the Mission as temporary caretaker, Chief Wilkinson’s dream of seeing the continuous presence of Englishmen in his town appeared to have died as well. As a result, he collaborated with the schoolmaster to have Duport removed from the Rio Pongas Mission.\textsuperscript{178}

As for Cyprian, his quarrel with Duport was mainly the result of two Western-educated men vying for power and control of the Mission. Vassady argues that service in the Pongas Country provided an opportunity for West Indians of African descent to fulfill their dreams of status and authority denied them at home.\textsuperscript{179} Thus, in the absence of Leacock, Duport saw himself in the enviable position of caretaker of the Mission, and was not going to allow anyone, including Cyprian, to threaten his newly achieved status. Not only was this the principal cause of the feud between Duport and Cyprian, but it was also at the centre of the latter’s dismissal from his job by Neville after Duport also accused him of drunkenness on the job.\textsuperscript{180}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{177} Ibid., p. 203.  
\textsuperscript{178} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{179} Ibid., p. 205.  
\textsuperscript{180} Ibid., p. 206.\end{flushleft}
Arrival of New Missionaries and More Threats from Worshippers of Traditional Religion

The Rio Pongas Mission received a new missionary in mid-1857. He was Samuel Higgs of Nassau, the Bahamas. White and a West Indian by birth, Higgs was highly recommended to the Board for service in the Pongas Country by Archdeacon J. M. Trew of the Bahamas. Chief Wilkinson welcomed Higgs warmly as he had done for Leacock, an indication of his preference for white missionaries. However, his enthusiasm for the arrival of another white missionary was short-lived because Higgs was attacked by fever and died in Fallangia on June 21, 1857, just two months after his arrival in West Africa. His death was the second for white West Indian missionaries in the Pongas Country.

The deaths of both Leacock and Higgs in such short order led to concerns in Barbados and in England about the unsuitability of the West African “disease environment” for whites. However, during his first Episcopal Tour of the Pongas Country on February 17, 1858, Bishop Bowen lessened that concern. In fact, while Bowen was impressed by the Mission’s progress, he once again stressed the need to have a white superintendent. Commenting on the need for such a clergyman and on the actual cause of Higgs’ death, he recalled:

A suitable European clergyman is wanted (i.e. English or West Indian). I believe the climate is by no means so deadly as supposed, with ordinary care, to men of fair constitution. Mr. Higgs fell a victim to the season in which he went down. What should we think of a person who went from Falmouth to Portsmouth in an open boat in winter. And the house of the chief in which he was, I do not consider well ventilated. I do not think I could occupy the room in which Higgs died, for a fortnight without feeling its effects.

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184 Ibid.
Bowen’s remarks were meant to allay the fear about the West African “disease environment”, and to persuade labourers for the Mission. They were also an indication of the racism attendant in the early management.

During his Episcopal Tour of the area, Bishop Bowen heard appeals from Chief Faber of Sangha for a white clergyman, indicating the chief’s own colour prejudice. Faber’s appeal echoed the views of the Bishop of Barbados who had earlier requested a white superintendent for the Mission. Heeding these repeated appeals, Caswall, the English Committee Secretary, advertised for a missionary in a London newspaper. Three white clergymen and a schoolmaster responded to the advertisement and immediately offered their services. One of the respondents was the Rev. William Latimer Neville, a 55 year-old Englishman. The English Committee accepted Neville’s offer and recommended him to the Bishop of Barbados. Thereafter, he departed and arrived in Freetown in September 1858. He joined Duport on the journey to Fallangia where Chief Wilkinson welcomed them warmly.

By the beginning of 1859, Neville had already firmly settled in Fallangia as the new Head Missionary and his treatment on arrival further confirmed the racism of the organizers. Since the Mission’s mud house was fully occupied, it was recommended that he have his own house built for him. Bishop Bowen recommended an iron sheet house at the estimated cost of £160, an amount to be donated by the friends of the Mission in England. Realizing the limitations of the kind of accommodation once allotted to Leacock and Higgs, Bishop Bowen believed that such a house could save Neville’s life.

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186 Ibid.  
189 Ibid.
As Leacock had done, Neville embarked on a tour of the Pongas Country to acquaint himself with other chiefs and their subjects. He sailed up the Fattalah, visiting villages along the river. While Neville was on tour, the Mission station at Fallangia was threatened with destruction by a band of worshipers of the traditional religion led by a priest whose face was covered with the *Bansungi* (mask) whom the missionaries disparagingly referred to as the representative of the devil because of their contempt for local religion.\(^{190}\) When he returned to Fallangia, Neville was told that the group bent on destroying the Mission station was angry with three Mission boys who allegedly saw the face behind the *Bansung*. According to indigenous belief, the boys could not live after such a sight without ritual purification and the Mission was pressured to surrender them for this rite.\(^{191}\) The Mission was reluctant to do so, and this infuriated the priest behind the *Bansungi* and his followers. This anger precipitated the threat to the Mission.

The threat to the Mission had more to do with the intention of the traditional religion worshipers to drive the missionaries out of the Pongas Country than with the Mission’s failure to surrender the three boys. At this time, after three years of only intermittent work, the Mission had about 101 students registered in the day school, 106 attending Sunday school, and 173 people baptized.\(^{192}\) These numbers indicate the steady progress of the Mission but they also indicated the attractiveness of the material benefits available from the institution. In fact, at this time, several trainees had already made their own furniture, and others were employed by European factors.\(^{193}\) As might be expected, such progress increasingly threatened the survival of the traditional belief system, and the Mission had now become a serious rival to the followers of traditional religious practices. As happened in many other African societies, the Mission had

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\(^{190}\) Barrow, *Fifty Years*, p. 74.  
\(^{191}\) Ibid.  
\(^{192}\) Ibid., pp. 70-71.  
begun to undermine the leadership and authority of priests like the one behind the *Bansungi*, who eventually became a Christian “convert” himself.\(^{194}\)

The rapid success of the Mission set a new pattern in motion in the region. For instance, after the *Bansungi* incident, a large army of Simo Society (secret society) members of Yenungia, also threatened to destroy the Mission.\(^{195}\) This second threat seems to be attributable to Simo Society members’ suspicion that the missionaries, strangers who came to the Pongas to recruit converts, would by doing so eventually destroy the support base of indigenous belief system, as well the authority of the local socio-political leadership.\(^{196}\)

Once these potentially violent confrontations had been successfully averted as a result of Chief Styles Lightburn Jr.\(^{197}\) threatening military force, and the Mission’s payment of a cask of rum and goods worth forty dollars to the Simo Society leadership, Mission activity continued apace.\(^{198}\) Duport continued to work even harder, interrupting his efforts in April 1859 for a trip of several weeks’ duration to marry a sister\(^{199}\) of an African chaplain of the Bishop of Sierra Leone.\(^{200}\) He returned to Fallangia with his bride and continued with his missionary duties. In a letter to Caswall on November 28, 1859, Neville wrote about Duport’s industry noting that, “Duport works hard in the school. He is a valuable brother helper.”\(^{201}\) The Head Missionary’s letter is an indication of a good working relation with Duport. Insubordination was an occasional

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\(^{195}\) Barrow, *Fifty Years*, p. 73; Vassady, “The Role,” p. 205.

\(^{196}\) *M.F*, Vol. XII, 1867, p. 236.

\(^{197}\) At this time, Chief Styles Lightburn Jr. of Makatah and Baralande was the elected Head Chief of Eurafriean chiefs in the Pongas country. He was also the appointed adviser of the newly crowned king at Teah. See *M.F*, Vol. XI, 1866, p. 187.

\(^{198}\) *M.F*, Vol. XII, 1867, p. 236.

\(^{199}\) Vassady “The Role,” p. 206 refers to Miss Campbell as the daughter of the Rev. Campbell.


\(^{201}\) *M.F*, Vol. V, February 1, 1860, p. 42. It is ironic that Neville referred to Duport as helper when the latter was the driving force behind the success of the Mission.
problem within missionary cultures in Africa in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In the Gambia, for example, insubordination among Methodist missionaries based on the power struggle in the 1830s and 1840s eventually resulted in some of them conspiring with opponents of the Mission to undermine the authority of senior missionaries.  

In the Pongas Mission, as we have seen, this problem surfaced only between Black West Indian missionaries on one hand, and their Western-educated African assistants and Eurafrican chiefs on the other. Despite this divisive problem, Duport continued to prove how useful he was to the Mission. By December 1859, the numbers of students had increased to 108, daily church attendance averaged 80, the number of baptized people rose to 205, and 22 more were being instructed for baptism. Since the dismissal of Cyprian, the schoolmaster, in June 1858, Duport taught the children with the help of his wife and the monitors. He taught the monitors the Bible, grammar, arithmetic, general history, Susu, and geography an hour a day, including Sundays. Mrs. Duport instructed the girls in needlework and washing, and she was also very active in Sunday school. Her participation in the Mission School demonstrates that the Rio Pongas Mission was not an all-male affair, but also shows that the Mission endorsed (as might be expected) a distinct male/female division of labour.  

At the end of 1859, the Mission’s progress was once again threatened. This time, the threat came from King Jelloram Fernandez of Bramaya who suspected the West Indian missionaries of being agents of the British Government sent to spy on clandestine slave trading

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202 Prickett, Island Base, p. 97.
203 Barrow, Fifty Years, p. 77; Vassady, “The Role,” p. 206; Progress of the Pongas Mission, Vol. VI, October 1 1859, p. 228.
204 Progress of the Pongas Mission, Vol. VI, October 1 1859, p. 228.
205 Her first name is not mentioned in any source consulted for this study.
activities in the Pongas Country. Learning about the king’s threat, authorities at different levels took serious precautions to avert it. Chief Wilkinson strengthened his town’s fortification and Governor Hill of Sierra Leone provided Neville with fifteen barrels of gunpowder and some arms to defend the Mission station. The Governor’s action illustrates the cooperation between colonial officials and missionary agents in both the propagation and defense of European influence in Africa. Neville himself was not satisfied with defensive measures alone. Instead of waiting for a violent confrontation to occur, he decided to engage the king in a peaceful dialogue. However, Fernandez could not be persuaded to abandon his hostile attitude against the Mission. It is possible that the king may have been frustrated by the fact that Britain’s focus on suppressing the transatlantic slave trade did not extend to efforts to replace it with a viable alternative, something that contributed to the decision of others not to send their slaves to the Mission.

At the conclusion of the long and disappointing meeting with Fernandez, Neville returned to Fallangia. By his arrival, however, he had been overcome by illness. This illness once again left Duport to shoulder all the Mission’s responsibilities. This time, however, it was not for long. While Duport was worrying about the likelihood of Neville’s death, two white replacements were already preparing for admission to Holy Orders in London. They were the Rev. Abel J. Phillips, a Codrington College student and a deacon of the Diocese of Barbados and Joseph Dean, a young English scholar. Under commission from the Bishop of London, the Bishop of

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207 Ibid., Barrow, Fifty Years, p. 77; M.F, Vol. IV, June 1 1859, p. 136; Progress of the Pongas Mission, 1860, p. 4.
208 See Gray, Black Christians and White Missionaries, pp. 59-80.
210 Barrow, Fifty Years, p. 79; Progress of the Pongas Mission, 1860, p. 5.
Barbados ordained Phillips as priest and Dean as deacon in the Chapel Royal, Whitehall on January 22, 1860.\textsuperscript{211} With the S.P.G’s financial support for Phillips and the English Committee’s for Dean, these young clergymen were dispatched to Sierra Leone on January 24, 1860.\textsuperscript{212} They arrived in Freetown on February 12. Five days later, they landed at Fallangia.\textsuperscript{213} The pair’s arrival was a big relief for Duport who had been simultaneously nursing the incapacitated superintendent and carrying on full missionary duties. However, there was an irony in the new missionaries’ discovery that Neville was sick. As Vassady points out, it had been Neville’s continued good health as well as his repeated calls for more European missionaries that convinced the Board to send both Phillips and Dean to the Pongas Country.\textsuperscript{214} Neville was sent to Freetown to seek medical care and from there he proceeded to Santa Cruz, Teneriffe to recuperate for several months in what was considered a more favourable environment.

\textbf{More New Missionary Arrivals and Increasing Concerns About French Influence in the Pongas Country}

While Neville was recuperating in Teneriffe, Phillips became acting superintendent. Despite his experience, Duport was once again overlooked for the position. Nevertheless, he continued to serve the Mission well, receiving high praise from the same white missionaries who had received leadership positions in the Rio Pongas Mission at his expense. Writing to the English Committee on his arrival at Fallangia on February 17, 1860, Dean stated that, “I hope I may be permitted to express the very high opinion which I have of Mr. Duport. Whatever Mr. N – has said of him is not too much. If the Mission should lose his services, it would be a very, very long time before

\textsuperscript{211} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{212} Vassady, “The Role,” p. 208.
\textsuperscript{213} Barrow, \textit{Fifty Years}, p. 79; \textit{Progress of the Pongas Mission}, 1860, p. 6.
\textsuperscript{214} Vassady, “The Role,” p. 208.
he could be replaced." Phillips echoed Dean’s view when he also wrote to the English Committee stating that: “It gives me great pleasure to report most favourably of Mr. Duport. Mr. Neville speaks of him in the highest terms.” While recovering from his illness in Freetown, Neville also praised the veteran Black missionary stating that, “Duport was most attentive and kind to me. He is a most valuable servant of the Mission and I would not part with him for anything.” Once again, these testimonies demonstrate the continued good personal relations among the West Indian missionaries in the Pongas Mission. However, their relationship remained good because Black assistant missionaries did not challenge the racial hierarchy.

Duport was indeed a valuable servant of the Mission. Not only did he work with his white colleagues, he also continued to work with the Mission’s main local allies, Chief Richard Wilkinson and Lewis Wilkinson, despite their own colour prejudice against him. In fact, by this time, Lewis Wilkinson had replaced his ailing father as the unsalaried interpreter for the Mission, a role the young Wilkinson kept for four years. Lewis’ voluntary service for the Mission may have been connected to Phillips’ hope of establishing an indigenous Ministry and of sending the young Wilkinson to England to train as a missionary to his people. Commenting on this possibility, Phillips remarked: “The Mission can never flourish [as it should] until Sôsôs are trained up as clergymen and schoolmasters for their own countrymen. Until this is done, the Christian religion must be an exotic here.” To this effect, the S.P.G. commenced fundraising in England.

216 Ibid., p. 106.
217 Ibid., p. 107.
218 Progress of the Pongas Mission, 1860, p. 6.
219 Vassady, “The Role,” pp. 210-211.
220 Progress of the Pongas Mission, 1860, p. 11.
As evident in Phillips’ observation, the Mission was always eager to train local clergy or to use local catechists in the Pongas Country right from the time when it was conceived. While in the Pongas Country, Duport continually thought of sending a couple of his students for training at the Missionary Department of Codrington College in Barbados.\footnote{M.F., Vol. XII, 1867, p. 14.} The Mission’s eagerness to train local clergy can be attributed to several factors. First, it wanted a “Native Ministry” in the Pongas Country that could support its own teachers and catechist to reduce the expenses of the S.P.G.\footnote{W.J. Bullock to Bishop of Sierra Leone, October 15, 1878 in CLS 13, West Indies Letters Sent, Rhodes House Library (R.H.L); Bullock to Turpin, August 1, 1874 in CLS 13, R.H.L.} Secondly, with increasing Muslim opposition to the missionaries’ agonizing conversion activities that affected many people in the Pongas Country, training students to support themselves through their own labour meant to serve as an example that could attract others to the new religion.\footnote{Bullock to Turpin, May 21, 1875, CLS 130, R.H.L.}

Spreading the Gospel through local catechists was a financial necessity for the Missions in Africa during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Not only were local catechists able to spread the Gospel in areas that foreign missionaries could not reach for health reasons but they were also less expensive to maintain. Commenting on the use of indigenous catechists in Zimbabwe, Bhebe writes: “The black agents were also cheap to maintain; their basic needs were simple: they lived in daga huts, ate the same food as the people, needed no furloughs, and above all lived with people without being inconvenienced by their way of life.”\footnote{Ngwabi Bhebe, Christianity and Traditional Religion in Western Zimbabwe, 1859-1923 (London: Longman, 1979), p. 130.}

In West Africa, overseas missionaries found it even more necessary to form local clergy. To spread the Gospel, they had to venture into the region themselves. However, the harsh tropical climate and deadly diseases such as malaria and yellow fever often claimed their lives...
and made the area notorious as the “White Man’s Grave.” In the Pongas Country in particular, forming local clergy also had a lot to do with the missionaries’ abhorrent attitude toward local customs. For this reason, they often banked on those with “good character” to be trained as missionaries for their people. This, the missionaries believed would “save” many “valuable” lives.225

While Phillips and his fellow missionaries tried hard regarding the issue of local clergy, they also tried new ways to recruit converts for the Mission. The zealous young missionary believed in spreading the Gospel by going from one village or town to the other. Around the end of February 1860, Duport and Lewis Wilkinson accompanied Phillips on such a tour. During the itinerary, Phillips became ill and had to remain in Makatah, a village ruled by Chief Styles Lightburn Jr., while Duport and Lewis sailed upriver to Bassia, a town that had hosted the CMS station 50 years earlier. Even though the town’s residents were overwhelmingly Muslim, Chief Halifah and many of the town’s residents he assembled for the purpose warmly received Duport and Lewis.226 The chief’s gesture can be attributed to the changing times and interests. The Mission had now produced tangible results, as several trainees took employment with French factors in Domingia. The Muslim chief could have been aware of these successes. However, Chief Halifah’s hospitality should not be mistaken for Muslim acceptance of Christianity. Earlier, Leacock saw such Muslim gestures as ephemeral.227 Moreover, not all the Muslim chiefs were as accommodating to the missionaries. For instance, even though Lagbe was a short distance from Fallangia, Lamina Bah, the town’s Muslim chief, was steadfast against any Gospel

225 M.F, Vol. VI, March 1, 1861, p. 68.
226 Progress of the Pongas Mission, 1860, p. 7.
activities in his territory.\textsuperscript{228} There, a Muslim once remarked to Phillips that, “If Mahommed is in hell, I shall be quite satisfied to bear him company.”\textsuperscript{229}

Despite this emphatic statement, Phillips insisted that the spread of the Gospel must continue. In fact, he was not very worried about Muslim opposition to the Mission. He believed that Islam paved the way for the Gospel in West Africa. In a letter to Caswall, he explained this view as follows:

In other countries, Missionaries have great difficulty in impressing on the heathen mind the unity, infinity, wisdom, and power of the Deity, the immortality of the soul, and other fundamental truths of natural religion; but here it is not so. The people are prepared (chiefly, I think through their intercourse with the followers of Mahomed) for the reception of these verities, and even the resurrection of the dead is a doctrine not so difficult to be impressed on their minds as one would suppose.\textsuperscript{230}

Indeed, there is some truth in Phillips’ argument. Low argues “… that Islam had set many minds agog; it had brought change, and this helped to give Christianity its entree…”\textsuperscript{231} This also echoes Robin Horton’s model of conversion in which he identifies a ‘basic’ African cosmology consisting of a two-tier structure. The first of these tiers is that of the lesser spirits involving events and processes occurring within the microcosm of the local community and its environment. Horton argues that in situations where subsistence agriculture rather than a developed commerce dominate people’s lifestyle, their social relations would most likely be confined within the boundaries of their microcosm. As such, they would still be aware of what is occurring globally but not in a manner that they believe concerns them.\textsuperscript{232} He writes:

\begin{quote}
Given the assumptions of the ‘basic’ cosmology about the respective spheres of concern of lesser spirits and supreme being, it follows that this sort of situation is likely to favour a religious life in which a great deal of attention is paid to the lesser spirits
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\textsuperscript{228} \textit{Progress of the Pongas Report}, p. 8.
\textsuperscript{229} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{231} Low, \textit{Religion and Society in Buganda}, pp. 1-2.
\end{flushright}
(underpinners of the microcosm), whilst very little attention is paid to the supreme being (underpinner of the macrocosm).  

This situation is in contrast to the second tier in the structure of African cosmology, which involves the Supreme Being – underpinning events and processes in the macrocosm within the wider world. Horton argues that in situations where factors responsible for wider communication, such as long-distance trade exist, people’s social lives are no longer confined within the boundaries of their microcosm. Instead, their relationships become intertwined. He writes: “In this situation, given the same ‘basic’ cosmology, religious life is likely to take a somewhat different form. Less attention will be paid to the spirits, and more to the Supreme Being.” Following Horton’s model of conversion, the second tier is relevant not only to the history of the Pongas Mission, but also to the success of both universal religions of Islam and Christianity in this period. The time of the establishment of this Mission in the mid-nineteenth century was also a period involving long-distance trade in slaves and African products. It was also a period when wider communication routes were established between sub-Saharan Africa and the wider world – providing greater opportunities for the spread of such universal religions among populations that would have been otherwise confined within the microcosm of their local communities and environments. In the Pongas Country, the role of Islam in “setting many minds agog” may have been facilitated by the fact that the area is close to two major Islamic centres, Moriah Country and Futa Jallon. In fact, at this time, the Pongas Country paid an annual tribute to the Almamy of Futa Jallon.  

In the face of Muslim opposition of the Mission, Phillips found solace in Chief Charles Wilkinson’s invitation to establish a Mission station in his town. Charles even offered two sites

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234 Ibid.
for the church and the Mission-House. Phillips accepted the chief’s invitation and went on to plan for the ordination of Duport and Dean as priests to control some of the Mission outposts. He also planned to personally take charge of the station at Domingia, which was then the commercial centre in the Pongas Country. Meanwhile, the Mission-House, whose foundation stone had been laid at Fallangia on December 13, 1859, remained incomplete as a result of limited financial resources. The missionaries claimed that the house became a huge attraction in the area. Phillips stated that: “the building [was] regarded as something wonderful, and [was] talked of in Western Africa as the Crystal Palace of 1851 was in the civilized world.” His remarks are a clear demonstration of the cultural arrogance of the Victorian era, one that involved the display of technological prowess to make a lasting impression on the minds of indigenous peoples around the world.

Although the Mission-House remained unfinished, other Mission establishments were doing well. Despite the heavy rain that often occurred between May and October, the weekday church service at Fallangia was well attended. In March 1860, Phillips put weekday attendance record at 57 males and 26 females, while about 300 to 400 attended Sunday services. Many people were also showing interest in the Mission outpost as a result of some of its successful graduates.

While the West Indian missionaries were enjoying their initial success in the Pongas Country, a new development began to cause concern for their missionary enterprise. The French were signaling their interest in the area. Phillips was alarmed by this French involvement,

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237 Ibid.
238 Ibid.
239 Progress of the Pongas Mission, 1860, p. 11.
especially by the anchorage of a French gunboat at Domingia with the Governor and
commandant of both Senegal and Goree respectively on board. Relaying to the English
Committee his fear of the French intention of building a fort on the Rio Pongo, Phillips
remarked:

You cannot think how injurious the establishment of French influence in this river
would prove to our infant Mission. I sincerely trust the French will fail in their attempts
to get possession of the river. The people are much more favourably disposed to the
English than to the French.

The acting Head Missionary was arguably worried about French control of the Pongas country
because, being a Catholic country, France might not allow Anglican missionary activities in its
sphere of influence. Perhaps Phillips was aware of Catholic Spain’s expulsion of Baptist
missionaries from Fernando Po before the establishment of the Pongas Mission. Phillips had
every reason to be alarmed about French intentions. From the start, the Mission found itself in
the middle of a changing environment in the Pongas Country. In fact, the West Indian
missionaries had arrived in the area at a time when the economy was shifting from slave trade to
trade in groundnuts, which became the major regional export in the Atlantic commerce. Their
arrival also coincided with a declining British engagement in the Pongas Country and a
corresponding increase in French interest. The French were major importers of groundnuts and at
this time, French traders from the Moriah country and the Rio Nunez plied the Rio Pongo in
search of groundnuts. The French had been interested in the Southern Rivers for some time.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{241} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{242} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{243} Mouser, “Trade,” p. 275.
\item \textsuperscript{244} Moriah country includes Fouricaria, Beri, Eri, Kokeh, Fangay, Tannah, Forodugu, Yengissa,
Malagivea, and Melacorie. The area is inhabited by a Muslim Susu ethnic group called Moriah.
For more details, see Skinner, \textit{Thomas George}; P. 87; Fyfe, \textit{A History}, p. 340.
\item \textsuperscript{245} Mouser, “Trade,” pp. 275-276.
\item \textsuperscript{246} Fyfe, \textit{A History}, p. 340.
\end{itemize}
Under Napoleon III, France sought imperial expansion, and the Rio Nunez became a springboard for expansion into other Southern Rivers. Colonel Louis Faidherbe, the Governor of Senegal, spearheaded French expansionism in West Africa from the late 1850s. It is not certain when he became a Colonel because he was only a Major when first appointed and he became a General during the Franco-Prussian War. As Governor of Senegal, Faidherbe created a permanent French presence at Fort Boke in the Rio Nunez in 1865 and Benty in 1866, and competed with the British from these strongholds. The French also had a military post at Boffa at this time. Faidherbe left in 1865. His successor, Pinet-Laprade, was very committed to expansion in the Rivières du Sud.

In the Pongas Country, Faidherbe signed a treaty of friendship with King Katty in 1859. The treaty permitted French traders to conduct business freely along the Rio Pongo. However, Katty continued to maintain his independence despite increasing French involvement in the area. This independence is evident in the king’s refusal to meet with the Governor in Boffa in 1860, an action that prompted Faidherbe to send a letter reminding Katty of his obligation under the treaty of 1859. In the same year, Katty wrote to Governor Hill of Sierra Leone about French intentions in the Pongas Country, but the Governor only urged the king to “resist as best as he could.” In this period, the British had little interest in any expansion. Only later did French and German interest stir them to expand. In fact, the British Government’s concern in the area at the time was

248 Ibid.
not territorial or even broadly commercial, but still aimed at stopping the internal slave trade and the clandestine export of slaves by the Spaniards to Cuba and Brazil. Newbury notes that, “The need for territorial expansion was a late development in British West African policy.”

Thus, while the West Indian missionaries carried on their duties at Fallangia and Domingia, the French continued to stake out the area for their commerce.

However, by September 1860, those missionary duties were again imperiled. The health of some of the missionaries had become questionable. Dean was sick and went to Sierra Leone to seek medical help. While he was recuperating in Freetown, Phillips left to take charge of the newly opened Mission station at Domingia on October 29, 1860. Both Chief Charles Wilkinson and King Katty received him. Shortly after, however, Phillips also became ill and had to return to Fallangia, where Duport and his wife nursed him back to health.

In the meantime, Dean who had returned to Fallangia on November 18, 1860 after a five-week recuperation in Freetown replaced Phillips at Domingia. At the same time, Neville had already returned from Teneriffe and was in Freetown getting ready to sail to the Pongas Country. Neville was impressed with the Mission’s progress in his absence. On Christmas day, he baptized 15 more adults. That increased the total baptisms to 296 in the five years since the Mission began.

Neville’s arrival in Fallangia on December 19, 1860, coincided with Dean’s second fever attack in the Pongas country. This time, however, Dean did not recover from his illness. He died in Fallangia on January 4, 1861.

Dean’s death brought new concerns for the West Indian missionaries, and Neville was particularly worried that it would affect the recruitment of other

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254 Ibid., p. 13.
missionaries for the Mission. As a result, the Head Missionary called for experienced single men for service in the Pongas Country. In a letter he sent to the English Committee from Fallangia on February 1861, he wrote, “I hope and pray that our losses will not discourage men from offering themselves for the glorious work of setting up CHRIST’s kingdom here. They should be men of experience and unmarried, for wives and children are out of place here.”

Although Neville was genuinely worried about the impact of these deaths, his suggestion to exclude women from even a subsidiary role in missionary activities demonstrates common Victorian male views about the proper role and capacity of women. In fact, it was a common trend in the nineteenth century for British missionaries and colonial officials to travel without their female companions. The Victorian ideals designated men as travelers, adventurers, and breadwinners and relegated women to the domestic sphere or assigned them subordinate quasi-domestic tasks. Thus, despite the fact that some women made it into the missionary field in Africa, men always outnumbered them.

In response to Neville’s call for more missionaries, the Bishop of Barbados recommended Joseph A. Maurice, a Black Barbadian student of Codrington College for the service. At this time, the Mission existed on a very tight budget. By January 1861, it had an operating budget of about £520. Some of this money was raised in the Caribbean, but most had to come from the English Committee and the S.P.G.

To expand its activities, the Mission earmarked several villages for Mission outposts and Bishop E. H. Beckles, who had replaced the late Bishop Bowen as the new Bishop of Sierra Leone, ordained Duport priest on February 24, 1861 in anticipation of the expansion. The

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256 M.F., Vol. VI, April 1, 1861, p. 79.
257 M.F., Vol. VI, June 1, 1861, p. 132.
258 Progress of the Pongas Mission, 1861, p. 3; M.F., Vol. VI, May 1, 1861, p. 116.
newly ordained priest also got a pay increase in consideration of his dedication to missionary service. As of April 1861, Duport would draw £50 more for a total of £200 per annum.\textsuperscript{259}

In the meantime, Neville was looking for ways to make learning even more interesting for the children and encourage attendance. He wrote to the English Committee requesting several children’s sports items such as bats and balls for boys and dolls for girls.\textsuperscript{260} Neville asked for them despite reservations about some of the play items, such as dolls with fine dresses. Writing about this reservation, he stated that, “I dread the fine dresses of these little images; moreover they might be regarded not merely as dolls, but as idols.”\textsuperscript{261}

A Period of More Trials and Tribulations for the Mission

The year 1861 brought new sadness to the Mission. At the time, Lewis Wilkinson was being prepared for missionary training at St. Augustine’s College in England. A rural deanery in Wiltshire had already agreed to pay £35 annually for his studies,\textsuperscript{262} while another £30 was being sought elsewhere.\textsuperscript{263} However, the projected studies did not materialize. Lewis’ father, Chief Wilkinson died on May 27, 1861.\textsuperscript{264} Since Charles Wilkinson, the deceased chief’s eldest son, decided to remain Chief of Domingia, Lewis was chosen acting chief of Fallangia.\textsuperscript{265} The death of Chief Wilkinson, a man the English Committee referred to as the most known and feared in the Pongas Country,\textsuperscript{266} created a power vacuum that could not be easily filled. Not only were the late chief’s efforts the main catalyst for the establishment of the Mission, his unwavering support

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{260} M.F., Vol. VI, May 1, 1861, p. 117.
\bibitem{261} Ibid.
\bibitem{262} M.F., Vol. V, July 1, 1860, p. 164.
\bibitem{263} M.F., Vol. VI, April 1, 1861, p. 79.
\bibitem{264} Barrow, \textit{Fifty Years}, p. 81; \textit{Progress of the Pongas Mission}, 1861, p.5.
\bibitem{265} M.F., Vol. VI, July 1, 1861, p. 164.
\bibitem{266} M.F., Vol. VI, January 1, 1861, p. 14.
\end{thebibliography}
and determination guaranteed its longevity in the region. Therefore, his death deprived the Mission of its most influential ally and supporter even though his motives were mostly instrumental in providing that support.

Chief Wilkinson’s death was followed almost five weeks later by that of the Head Missionary. While Fallangians were grieving over the sudden departure of their chief, Neville’s health deteriorated rapidly. The Mission-House that was supposed to provide him better accommodation and increase the chance of a prolonged life could not be completed in time. On July 7, 1861, Duport read him Bishop Andrews’ Litany for the Dying, and on the same day, he died.  

His was the fourth death of a white missionary in the first five and a half years of the Mission’s existence. The statistics were discouraging to the members of the Board in Barbados, which was beginning to suspect the “disease environment” of West Africa as a major factor in the deaths. The notion that West Africa was the “White Man’s Grave” was once again hinted at. This suspicion triggered a debate in which Bishop Beckles of Sierra Leone argued that with better accommodation, deaths attributed to the “disease environment” could be prevented.

Neither the Board members nor the bishop’s views could convince the acting chief Lewis Wilkinson of Fallangia that the “disease environment” was a major factor in the deaths. Indeed, it was not. At this time, West Africa was also the “Grave Yard” of West Indians because, as Pricket argues, they “…can no more stand the climate of West Africa than an Englishman

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268 Vassady, “The Role,” pp.210-211.
269 For more information on this notion, see Curtin, Migration and Mortality, pp. 63-88, 94-110.
can.”271 In a letter to the Board, Lewis Wilkinson attributed the deaths to old age and lack of prudence, stating that:

No one could attribute Mr. Neville’s illness and death to our climate. It was the effect of age; for the only complaint he had after the fever was weakness and loss of appetite. Mr. Dean’s death was from want of prudence, and I am almost sure he contracted the sunstroke from traveling to Yengisa at the improper time.272

Although Lewis’ letter was meant to vindicate the “disease environment” of West Africa in the deaths of the White missionaries, it was also meant to persuade the members of the Board to continue sending White missionaries to the Pongas Country. The acting chief was interested in having them because of the commerce they could encourage in the area, a concern that clearly demonstrates the role played by instrumentalism in his own embrace of the Mission.273 However, despite his passionate plea, members of the Board were still concerned about the mortality rate for White missionaries in the region. In fact, the deaths forced the Board to reflect on the fact that the only missionary who was pretty much unaffected was Duport.274 Necessity prevailed over racism in their minds and, in September 1861, the Bishop of Barbados called for a Black superintendent for the Mission. Although one was not appointed immediately, on September 13, 1861, Joseph A. Maurice, who had been appointed catechist to the Mission in July 1861, sailed to England for a short training at Battersea College and proceeded to Freetown where he arrived on December 13, 1861.275 Two days later, he embarked on a boat for Fallangia where he was immediately appointed schoolmaster.276

271 Prickett, Island Base, p. 156.
272 M.F, Vol. VI, September 1, 1861, p. 194; Progress of the Pongas Mission, 1861, p. 8; Vassady, “The Role,” pp. 210-211.
274 Ibid., p. 211.
275 Ibid., Progress of the Pongas Mission, 1861, p. 9; M.F, Vol. VI, November 1, 1861, pp. 258-259.
276 Barrow, Fifty Years, p. 84.
In the meantime, Phillips was preparing for his furlough in England. His departure once again temporarily left the Mission entirely in the hands of West Indian missionaries of African descent and marked the beginning of the end of the phase of the Mission during which racism determined the appointment of the supervisor. While in England, Phillips preached and addressed gatherings about the Rio Pongas Mission. However, while he was there, Phillips was advised by the medical authorities not to return to West Africa soon. He was instead urged to proceed to his homeland of Barbados to convalesce and to work to increase awareness of the Mission. On October 3, 1861, Phillips boarded a steamer from Southampton and sailed to Barbados.

From Barbados, Phillips visited other Caribbean islands to raise awareness of the needs and the progress of the Rio Pongas Mission. His efforts resulted in the formation of several branch Mission Associations in Jamaica, Antigua, Nevis, St. Kitts, and St. Thomas. The Dioceses of Antigua and Jamaica even contributed £186 and £100 to the Mission respectively. Phillips’ stay in Barbados also allowed him to meet with the Morgan family. They were Barbadians of African descent and staunch supporters of the Church of England. The family consisted of ten members: Thomas Morgan, the patriarch; his wife, two adult daughters, a grown-up nephew, and five younger children. Morgan was a professional carpenter and his wife was a qualified baker, cook and seamstress. They agreed to settle permanently in the Pongas Country as “industrial missionaries” who would provide their own subsistence. Their

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277 Progress of the Pongas Mission, 1861, p. 8.
278 Ibid., p. 9; Barrow, Fifty Years, p. 88.
279 Barrow, Fifty Years, p. 88.
282 Ibid.
presence in the region was intended to contribute to the artisanal and agricultural development of
West Africa,\textsuperscript{283} and “…to set an example to the native inhabitants of Christian life and industry,
and at the same time contribute to the greater comfort and health of the Missionaries.”\textsuperscript{284} The
ideal behind the “industrial missionary” project stemmed from the Mission’s goal to introduce
what were commonly known in the nineteenth century as the three C’s – Commerce (“legitimate
trade”), Christianity and Civilization. In the view of the missionaries, “commerce and
Christianity would provide a dual antidote to slave trading and barbarism.”\textsuperscript{285} In 1833,
missionary theorist John Philip stated that:

\begin{quote}
The civilization of the people among whom we labour in Africa is not our highest
object; but that object never can be secured and rendered permanent among them
without their civilization. Civilization is to the Christian religion what the body is to the
soul… The blessings of Civilization are a few of the blessings which the Christian
religion scatters in her progress to immortality; but they are to be cherished
for their
own sake as well as for ours…\textsuperscript{286}
\end{quote}

These views were common in the nineteenth century missionary enterprises.\textsuperscript{287}

While Phillips was on his furlough, Duport was left at the helm of the Mission without
official portfolio of acting Head Missionary. Nevertheless, he once again served to the best of his
ability. On September 24, 1861, Duport’s efforts were threatened and his commitment tested
when a fire consumed both the church and the Mission edifice at Fallangia. Most of his personal
effects, as well as those of Phillips and the Mission, were destroyed in the blaze.\textsuperscript{288} Fortunately,

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\textsuperscript{283} Progress of the Pongas Mission, 1860, p. 14.
\textsuperscript{284} Vassady, “The Role,” p. 213.
\textsuperscript{261}.
\textsuperscript{286} Quoted in Hastings, The Church in Africa, p. 285.
\textsuperscript{288} Progress of the Pongas Mission, 1861, p. 10; M.F, Vol. VI, December 1, 1861, p. 267.
\end{flushright}
donations for fire relief and for the reconstruction of the church poured in from England, Barbados, and Sierra Leone.\(^{289}\)

Thus, 1861 proved to be a year of many trials and tribulations for the Mission. Despite these difficulties, the Mission’s sponsors in Barbados and England encouraged its continuance. In response to the Bishop of Sierra Leone’s letters of January 19 and February 20, 1861, and commenting on the trials of the year, Ernest Hawkins, Secretary of the S.P.G wrote:

> It is doubtless most sad and discouraging to hear the trials to which the Pongas Mission has been subject, in the death of one missionary and the temporary retirement of another, through failure of health. Nevertheless we must not suffer to fail, for many signal sources have been awarded to the labours of those who survive, and nowhere have these seen a greater promise of a native church.\(^{290}\)

Hawkins’ plea was accepted and the Mission continued to prosper. On January 11, 1862, King Katty laid the foundation stone of the first church in Domingia.\(^{291}\) Maurice was now firmly settled in his job as the schoolmaster of the Mission School at Fallangia. Duport began a tour of duty up the Fattalah and, when he returned to Fallangia in February 1862, he cautiously received the traditional religion priest whose face was behind the *Bansungi*, (the mask) and who had threatened to destroy the Mission earlier during church service. Once a formidable opponent of Christian worship, who was referred to as representative of Satan, this priest was now a member of the congregation.

Duport claimed that the priest’s ancestors told him in a dream to renounce his form of religious worship and join the Mission. This may have been a convenient excuse. It can be argued that, in light of the rapid growth of the Mission, the priest whose face was behind the *Bansungi* may have realized that his support base was crumbling under him. The fact that Chief

\(^{289}\) Ibid.
\(^{290}\) E. Hawkins to Bishop of Sierra Leone, April 2, 1861, CLS 129 in West Indies Letters Sent, Vol I, (1834-1868).
\(^{291}\) Barrow, *Fifty Years*, p. 85.
Tom of Yengisa, the priest’s strongest supporter and other sympathizers had already joined the Mission, even though for instrumental reasons, meant that he was isolated. The traditional religion priest could not maintain an overt resistance against the Mission by himself. He even tried escaping missionary influence by moving into the interior of the Pongas Country, but no place seemed to be beyond the reach of the Christian proselytizers. In a circumstance under which factors for wider communication already existed, the priest of the traditional religion was caught between two rising forces, Islam and Christianity and could not escape one of them or both.

The hope of receiving rum from the missionaries may have also influenced the traditional religion priest’s decision to join the Mission. Believing that rum came from the White man’s country, the priest believed that it would be available in the Mission. In the Pongas Country, rum was an important trade commodity and the missionaries themselves used to blame the drink for causing what they called “the vice of drunkenness” in the region. For the priest of the traditional religion, there could been a ceremonial purpose to his quest for rum because liquor played a key role in libations to the dead, and he may have believed that joining the Mission would facilitate his access to it. In fact, Phillips doubted the sincerity of the “conversion” of the man whose face was once behind the Bansungi when he stated in a letter to the English Committee that he was not converted to such an extent as Chief Tom, who often walked a long distance to hear the Gospel. Ironically, however, Chief Tom’s embrace of Christianity may have been more for worldly gain than that of the man whose face was once behind the Bansungi.

293 Ibid., p. 11. This also happened among the Ibo of Nigeria in their encounter with the missionaries in the nineteenth century. See Chinua Achebe, Things Fall Apart (Fawcett Crest, New York: Ballantine Books, 1959).
295 Ibid., p. 179.
In late 1864, Duport noted that the chief reverted to drinking and traditional religious practices when he was not offered presents.\textsuperscript{296} Such action was what the missionaries called backsliding. However, it was in fact a clear indication that “conversion” was mainly instrumental.

At this time, church classes were increased from two to three: distinct classes for Baptism, for Communicants, and for Confirmation. This progress pleased Phillips, who returned from his furlough on March 20, 1862. Back at the Domingia station, Phillips realized that there were even more causes to celebrate. As noted earlier, the Bansungi, whom he had once offended when he preached in Yengisa in 1860, was now a member of the congregation, together with his assistant and his most powerful supporter, Chief Tom.\textsuperscript{297} However, despite these signal successes, there were new challenges for the Mission. As Phillips wrote to members of the English Committee informing them of the progress in the Pongas Country:

> We have also much to depress our spirits. Our people, as a rule, are far from valuing, as they ought, the many privileges, which are afforded them. It is to be feared that the sins of unchastity and drunkenness are far too common even among professed Christians.\textsuperscript{298}

Phillips’ remarks further indicate that social and ulterior motives figured strongly in the decisions of many in the area to join the church.

Despite what he might have genuinely believed was the ‘depressing behaviour’ of the “converts,” Phillips was optimistic about the future and was convinced that the Mission was doing good work in the area. In fact, he cautioned that the process of conversion required patience, stating: “There is, however, a really good work going on among the people, and we must not forget that the process of conversion is in ordinary cases a slow one- ‘first the blade,

\textsuperscript{297} M.F, Vol. VII, June 1, 1862, p. 132.
\textsuperscript{298} Ibid., Progress of the Pongas Mission, 1862, p. 9.
then the ear, and after that the full corn in the ear.”” These ethnocentric attitudes were common within missionary cultures in Africa in the nineteenth century. Henry Lamb, of the Methodist Mission in the Gambia, echoed similar sentiments in 1877 when he stated that, “People who have the background of oppression and idolatry of these people will not rise to full knowledge all at once. We must have great patience.”

Phillips continued to spread the Gospel among the people in the Pongas Country. In March 1862, he met Chief Faber, who learnt from him that “industrial missionaries” were on their way to the Pongas Country. Faber told the Head Missionary that such missionaries could become invaluable assets because “the people of the country were fast becoming traders and planting groundnuts, on account of the oil extracted from them, instead of rice.” The chief was convinced that the Mission would accomplish a great deal if the Morgans taught local peasants new cultivation techniques in addition to teaching children various mechanical arts.

In fact, it was part of the Mission’s objective to employ Thomas Morgan and his family to teach new cultivation techniques, especially for popular crops like cotton, which could be a valuable commodity for the Atlantic commerce. At this time, Lewis Wilkinson, the acting chief of Fallangia, had already begun cultivating cotton and coffee, presumably with the help of some kind of slave labour, landless farmers, loyal retainers, or newcomers to the Pongas Country. His goal was to replace slaves with these two cash crops as the principal commodities in the Atlantic commerce - a move he hoped would also bring British trade to the region. Perhaps one of the major problems the acting chief might have encountered in achieving this goal was the source of

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299 Progress of the Pongas Mission, 1862, p. 9.
300 Prickett, Island Base, p. 123.
302 Ibid.
labour for cultivating these cash crops, which would replace the slaves as the dominant source of income.

Sailing directly from Barbados to West Africa in March 1862, the Morgans arrived in the Pongas Country on May 1, 1862. \(^{304}\) Since one of the conditions for their permanent settlement in the region was to provide their own subsistence, the family immediately prepared a plot from the land that the late Chief Wilkinson had given to the Mission. \(^{305}\) The missionaries claimed that the elder Morgan’s industry and cultivation methods \(^{306}\) impressed the mixed-descent and indigenous Susu chiefs so much so that many tried to emulate him. \(^{307}\)

May 1862 also saw Phillips’ confirmation as Head Missionary. Hawkins, the S.P.G. Secretary, confirmed this appointment and provided him an annual salary of £300. \(^{308}\) These developments were not surprising because the racism of the Mission’s organizers was still in effect. However, to give him his due, Phillips was also a dedicated labourer of the Mission. By the time of his confirmation as Head Missionary, he was already manning Domingia station and was in the process of opening new outposts in several villages.

For Phillips, the establishment of Mission outposts in places like Yengisa was an urgent matter precipitated by fierce competition from Muslim teachers in the area. He was of the conviction that once the people were exposed to the Gospel, the Mission should do everything possible to follow through or risk losing out to its rivals. Phillips explained this approach to the English Committee as follows:


\(^{305}\) Barrow, *Fifty Years*, p. 87; Vassady, “The Role,” p. 213.

\(^{306}\) There is no indication in the sources consulted for this study as to what these cultivation methods were.


The Mahommedans are trying their utmost to convert the young people of Yengisa, and, I am sorry to say, not without some success. It seems to me, that unless we can follow up the first attack on heathenism, we had almost better not attempt to convert them at all. As soon as the heathen begin to have any misgivings, if we are not at hand to cherish those misgivings, and to direct them to their blessed Saviour, a Mahommedan teacher is always at hand to take advantage of their feeling after God, and to induce them to adopt his own perversion of the truth.\textsuperscript{309}

Islam was indeed a force to be reckoned with in West Africa in the 19\textsuperscript{th} century. Commenting on its progress among certain communities in the Upper Guinea Coast during that period, Ramon Sarro states, it “…was mounting strong pressure in Katongoro as well as in surrounding non-Baga villages.”\textsuperscript{310} In fact, the tendency of West African prospects to embrace Islam instead of Christianity should not have been surprising to the West Indian missionaries. Christian missionary aloofness and assumption of superiority, in addition to their firm stance against polygamy, were often factors in favour of Islam. For example, in the 1870s, Benjamin Tregaskis, Chairman of the Joint District of the Gambia stated as follows:

I belong to a superior race. I condescend to come among you but should never think of living with you or even eating with you. The Arabic teacher will squat round some calabash and dip his hand in the same dish… We must make ourselves neighbourly, minister to their bodily needs etc.\textsuperscript{311}

Phillips’ worries about competition from Muslim teachers were overshadowed at this time by concern about the famine of 1862 caused by crop failure. It affected the Mission in several ways. Duport reported to the English Committee that, “The school is not well attended this month, the children suffering from hunger. The classes are filled with hungry-looking objects, and the same may be said of the church.”\textsuperscript{312} Out of the sixty students registered at the

\textsuperscript{309} M.F, Vol. VII, August 1, 1862, p. 179.
\textsuperscript{311} Quoted in Prickett, Island Base, p. 165.
\textsuperscript{312} M.F, Vol. VII; September 1, 1862, p. 263; Phillips to Hawkins, September 15, 1862 in D24/A, R.H.L.
end of September 1862, only forty-eight attended class regularly. The poor attendance resulted in the Mission adopting a harsh policy against those absent. Duport noted that, “Every child who does not attend regularly – who (for instance) is absent for a quarter – is struck off the books.”

Poor attendance also seriously affected the church. In the same period, the Mission had a total of 101 people on the class list for Confirmation, fifty-seven males and forty-four females, and there had been a total of thirty-eight Communicants, seventeen males and twenty-one females, making it a grand total of 139 people. These people were supposed to attend weekly instruction. However, due to the famine and the resulting illness, attendance dropped considerably. The average attendance for Confirmation dropped to forty people, twenty-five males and fifteen females, while that of the Communicants dropped to a total of twenty-three people, ten males and thirteen females. In Domingia, construction of the new church was suspended because the workers could not be fed satisfactorily as a result of food shortages in the area.

While famine was a great contributor to poor attendance for both school and church, there were also other causes of absenteeism. By September, the rice crop was already attractive to the birds. As a result, many peasants had to stay in their farms to scare them off. Since many of the farms were a good distance away from the Mission, classes were often over by the time the people arrived at the Mission station to attend. Phillips took note of this and planned to open a new school in Yengisa. For this reason, he rehired David H. Cyprian, who had been dismissed as schoolmaster in Fallangia in June 1858. Mr. Cyprian would be paid a monthly

315 Ibid.
316 Ibid., p. 19.
317 Ibid.
318 Ibid.
salary of £3 subject to the Board’s approval.\(^{319}\) Although Chief Tom accepted this plan, it was not implemented due to the refusal of some influential residents to accept the teacher or any missionary in their town.\(^{320}\) Yengisa residents were tolerant of the new religion as long as it was “confined to the out-of-the-way river (the Little Pongas) on which Fallangia is built.”\(^{321}\) Perhaps they were worried that allowing missionary activity in any shape or form together with other factors would have destroyed what remained of their traditions and customs.

**The End of an Era**

By 1863, Duport had already spent seven years in the white supervised and controlled phase of the Rio Pongas Mission. Despite being overlooked for appointment as Head Missionary in the wake of the death of white superintendents, the veteran missionary continued to serve patiently and obediently. For his many years of excellent service, Duport was allowed a six-month furlough in the West Indies.\(^{322}\) That of Phillips followed his departure almost immediately. Learning that the Head Missionary was sick again, the Bishop of Barbados recalled him to the island where he hoped the climate of his native land would accelerate his recovery.\(^ {323}\) In March 1863, Phillips resigned his post and returned to Barbados, joining Duport there.\(^{324}\)

On May 6, 1863, the two missionaries were warmly received at the committee meeting of the Board in Barbados.\(^ {325}\) During the meeting, Phillips’ long-time wish to establish a Sanitarium at the Isles de Los was addressed and the Board agreed to apply to the Colonial Government in

\(^{319}\) *M.F*, Vol. VIII, March 1, 1863, p. 64.

\(^{320}\) Ibid., pp. 114-116; Maurice to the English Committee, February 15, 1863 in *D28a*, R.H.L


\(^{322}\) *M.F*, Vol. VIII, April 1, 1863, p. 94.

\(^{323}\) Barrow, *Fifty Years*, p. 88; Vassady, “The Role,” p. 216.


Sierra Leone for a grant of land at Fotoba, one of the islands.\textsuperscript{326} Maurice forwarded an application for this grant to the Colonial Government in Sierra Leone. As the temporal caretaker of the Mission, Maurice’s salary was increased by the S.P.G. from £100 to £150 per annum.\textsuperscript{327}

During his furlough, Duport visited a number of West Indian islands trying to raise new awareness and support for the Rio Pongas Mission. While in Barbados, he also co-produced a Susu language dictionary and grammar with Rawle, the Principal of Codrington College, to serve the needs of future recruits for the African service.\textsuperscript{328} After vigorously promoting the interest of the Mission in the West Indies for about three months, Duport finally became Phillips’ replacement as Head Missionary, a position that had been denied him since the establishment of the Mission. At the same time, his annual salary was increased to £250. His appointment to the new job was due to the Mission organizers’ inability to find a white clergyman.

Although this salary was more than what Duport had been receiving, it was still less than what his predecessors had received. The £50 difference indicates a persistence of racism, which nevertheless could no longer deny the need to put the Mission under Black leadership. In September 1863, the new superintendent departed Barbados for England accompanied by John Morgan, a son of Thomas Morgan, who had remained behind to study at Codrington College after his family’s departure for the Pongas Country in 1862. He had been appointed catechist to the Mission at an annual salary of £100.\textsuperscript{329} The two missionaries stayed briefly in England, where Duport preached and gave speeches about the Mission in Notting Hill churches and in several parishes in the Diocese of Salisbury.\textsuperscript{330} The new Head Missionary also raised awareness

\textsuperscript{326} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{327} Vassady, “The Role,” p. 219.
\textsuperscript{328} Ibid., p. 218.
\textsuperscript{329} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{330} Barrow, \textit{Fifty Years}, p. 89.
about the Mission in London area churches such as Wells Cathedral and Sherborne Abbey.\footnote{Ibid.} As a result, he collected about £400 in donations.\footnote{Ibid.}

After their successful stay in England, Duport and the young Morgan sailed to Sierra Leone on December 24, 1863 and finally arrived in Falangia on February 6, 1864. Upon his arrival there, Duport commenced his duties as the new Head Missionary by occupying the new Mission-House built purposely for white superintendents, who would no longer be a factor in the Rio Pongas Mission. He sent Maurice to look after the Domingia station, assisted by Mr. Coker, an African schoolmaster from Freetown, while John Morgan remained to assist him in Fallangia. As the new superintendent, Duport began the efforts to consolidate the Mission under the sole control of West Indian missionaries of African descent – a situation that is to be discussed in chapter four.

**Conclusion**

Providing a detailed and chronological overview of the formative years of the Rio Pongas Mission between 1855 and 1863, this chapter also examined how and why the Mission organizers demonstrated persistent colour prejudice by denying leadership positions to West Indian missionaries of African descent. First, it argued that James Hamble Leacock and John Henry A Duport were pessimistic about their prospects in Tintima, the first village they arrived at following their departure from Freetown in 1855. Tintima was the residence of Kennyback Ali, a Susu chief who was the first to receive the West Indian missionaries in the Pongas Country. Ali’s behavior and attitude were disappointing to the missionaries. Being a Muslim and slave-owing chief, he suspected the missionaries of being British Government agents sent to
interfere with the clandestine slave trading activities in the area. Although Ali himself did not advocate the expulsion of the missionaries from his village, he showed no interest in their presence. The chief demonstrated his lack of interest in the missionaries by providing them sub-standard accommodation and denying them access to the children he promised them earlier. Fortunately, Euraficn Chief Richard Wilkinson of Fallangia was more than happy to receive the missionaries, and he enthusiastically did so a few days after they accepted his invitation to settle in his village. Settling in Fallangia, Leacock and Duport started the White-supervised and controlled phase of the Mission’s history, a period that also witnessed racial prejudice in the administration of the Rio Pongas Mission. The thesis has argued that the expectation held by White Anglican clergy, who organized the Mission was to have White superintendents permanently supervise it while Blacks would only be their assistants as it was the case in the hierarchical Barbadian society of the nineteenth century. This hierarchy also affected the cultural and social assumptions of British society at the time. Racial prejudice in the Pongas Country was evident in the reluctance of the Mission organizers to appoint Duport, the veteran African-descended West Indian missionary, to the post of superintendent after the death of each White superintendent between 1856 and 1863. Instead, he was often accepted as temporary caretaker until a White superintendent could be found. This inequality was also manifested in the huge pay disparity between White and Black missionaries in the Pongas Mission.

It is also shown in this chapter that conversion was a complex process and that ulterior motive was a driving force behind it. The thesis has argued that diverse interests of the “converts” attracted them to the Pongas Mission and the increase flow of “converts” threatened the traditional belief systems and the social order of the Pongas Country. This eventually resulted in confrontation between the Mission and worshippers of the traditional religion. Among the
Susu forms of religious worship, consulting ancestors through oracles or priests was common. Libation and other forms of sacrifice were often made to the ancestors either to appease or to exorcise the evil spirits believed to be residing in desolate regions and thickets. The West Indian pastors regarded these ceremonies and sacrifices as heathenish practices and thus condemned them. It is argued that their condemnation was often the cause of confrontation with the worshippers of the traditional religion and their priest whose face was behind the Bansungi, who always felt that Christianity threatened their religious, social, and political systems.

Although West Indian missionaries of African descent were denied leadership positions in the Mission, successive deaths and resignations of White superintendents eventually opened the door for their pastoral control of the Pongas Mission. Chapter 4 discusses the period during which the Mission was under the sole control and supervision of African-descended West Indian pastors.
Chapter 4

A Cruel Reality: The Demands of Religious Proselytization, 1863-1935

This chapter deals with the period during which the Pongas Mission was under the control of African-descended West Indian pastors. It shows that relations between West Indian missionaries and some of their Euraficen host chiefs and Western-educated Sierra Leonean assistants were seriously fraught, undermining the Mission’s activities and ultimately bringing it into disrepute. But the more profound and corrosive problem was the failure of the Mission to bring more trade to the Pongas Country, resulting in increased production for the international market. This sparked off carefully choreographed allegations from the local authorities of illicit sexual relations and illegal liquor peddling on the part of the Head Missionary, the energetic West Indian John Henry A. Duport. As a result of this, Duport was demoted from his position as Head Missionary in 1869, and the Mission itself was thrown into an existential crisis. Duport died later in Liverpool, United Kingdom, in 1873.

I will also show in this chapter that the period after Duport’s downfall and death witnessed some of the darkest days of the Mission. First, Fallangia, once hailed as “the Canterbury” of the Pongas Country, lost its influence. The Mission Headquarters was removed from there to Domingia, and its school had fewer students than it used to. To be sure, this was partly due to the fact that, after acquiring some reading and writing skills, many students remained in their villages as teachers to their people, while others attended their village schools or those nearby. This period also witnessed increasing French assertion of authority in the area. The Pongas Mission was targeted because its origin was English, a rival and encroaching colonial power in West Africa. All of these events, including the unsuccessful adoption of self-
support and African agency contributed to the failure of the West Indian Mission in the Pongas Country.

**The Rio Pongas Mission Under the Control of African-Descended West Indian Missionaries, 1863-1935**

During the post-Duport era, the Pongas Mission opened its first and only station in British territory as a result of increased French restrictions. French colonial authorities closed all of the Mission’s schools for not teaching in French. This action virtually crippled the Pongas Mission. During this period also, the devastating hurricanes in the West Indies and the depressed sugar industry in those islands deprived the Mission of some of its funding. This situation was worsened by the decision of the S.P.G. to reduce spending on the West Indian Mission in West Africa in a bid to stimulate more local support.

It is argued in this chapter that the idea of self-support and African agency, however derided (and downgraded) by prejudiced European overseers, was present in the Pongas Mission right from the beginning. A self-supporting church was always needed to help alleviate the financial burden on the Mission organizers. As for African agency, it was very important for the Pongas Mission partly because West Africa was notorious for being the “White Man’s Grave”, but also because of the influence of the liberal Henry Venn (undoubtedly one of the most remarkable leaders of the CMS), who favoured a devolved Church with African leadership.\(^1\)

Despite the general consensus on the need for a self-supporting, self-generating, and self-propagating Church run by African missionaries, however, local financial support was lacking, undermining the fine ideal. This was due to the widespread poverty in the Mission area, caused partly by the absence of British trade in the Pongas, partly by drought and crop failures, and

partly by the indifference of slave owners to the West Indian Mission. Nevertheless, a limited success was achieved in the area of African agency. A handful of local men were successfully trained and employed as catechists. One of them, Moses Yarneh McAuley, became the first Susu priest and supervisor of all the stations in the Pongas from 1929 to 1936, when he died. His death finally ended the hope of West Indian missionaries to establish an African Church in the Pongas Country, a largely Islamic enclave.

**John Henry A. Duport: The Rise and Fall of a Pioneering Missionary, 1863-1873**

We surely trust that you will neglect no precautions to guard your health, for on you depends, and must for sometime depend, almost the very existence of the mission.²

So wrote Ernest Hawkins to Rev. J. A. Duport on November 22, 1864, underlining the crucial role of John Henry A. Duport, an African-descended pastor from St. Kitts, in guiding and nurturing the Rio Pongas Mission during a period of enormous trials and tribulations. A Codrington College graduate, Duport, and Rev. Hamble James Leacock, had established the Pongas Mission in 1855. This was hardly an optimistic venture. Rio Pongas had been the earliest place of CMS missionary activity, preceding even Sierra Leone. The German Lutherans Melchoir Renner and Peter Hartwig, the first two CMS missionaries to arrive in West Africa in April 1804,³ began work in Rio Pongas in 1808.⁴ More missionaries followed in subsequent years, helping to build schools and churches. However, prior to the commencement of their work in the Pongas Country, Governor Thomas Ludlam of the Sierra Leone Settlement at Freetown

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² Ernest Hawkins to Rev. J.A. Duport, November 22, 1864 in *CLS 129, West Indies Letters Sent* Vol. 1, 1834-68, RHL.


⁴ Ibid., p. 12.
(1799-1800, 1803-1805, 1806-1808)\textsuperscript{5} sent three of these CMS missionaries (Melchoir Renner, Leopold Butscher, and Johann Prasse) to the area to gain experience in the use of Susu language and to have them introduced to African customs and climate.\textsuperscript{6} As these missionaries were to find themselves in an environment different from that of Freetown, the governor restricted their behavior. Mouser writes:

\begin{quote}
Ludlam also gave the missionaries unique instructions regarding their expected behavior while within Mandingo Country: they were not to mention the fact that they were missionaries, were not to itinerate, were not to proselytize, and were ordered to identify themselves only as traders, but they could engage in small trade.\textsuperscript{7}
\end{quote}

Mortality among the European missionaries in West Africa in the 19th century was intolerably high. In the Pongas Country, that factor, together with the effects of an expanding Islam, the continuous slave trading activities of locally based traders who also believed that missionaries reported their clandestine trading activities to authorities at Freetown, frequent fires that seriously damaged CMS buildings whose repairs would have involved more financial resources and personnel, as well as other reasons, forced the Society to abandon the Rio Pongas and to instead focus its attention on Freetown.\textsuperscript{8}

Like its CMS counterpart, the new Pongas Mission effort, spearheaded by West Indians who can trace their roots to West Africa, had high inspiration and morale regarding proselytization in the Pongas Country. In particular, its chief architect, Duport, who became its main pillar, was an exemplar of patience and hard work. Unfortunately, this was a period of widespread prejudice in the missions, and Duport was often overlooked for appointment as Head

\textsuperscript{5} Ibid., p. 6
\textsuperscript{6} Ibid., p. 9.
\textsuperscript{7} Ibid., p. 7.
\textsuperscript{8} Ibid., pp. 1-2. Mouser provides more details on the reasons why the CMS abandoned the Pongas Country in Ibid.
Missionary after the death of white superintendents.\textsuperscript{9} In fact, as this chapter will show, Duport’s career illuminates many of the themes that dominated nineteenth century West Africa: Christian missionary activity, colour prejudice, colonialism and the collision of cultures.

Duport toiled for many years in the Rio Pongas Mission before he was even allowed a furlough in the Caribbean in 1863. His departure for his homeland coincided with that of Rev. Abel J. Phillips, the Head Missionary at the time. Phillips became sick again in the Pongas and had to return to Barbados to recuperate.\textsuperscript{10} He resigned his post in March 1863 before joining Duport there.\textsuperscript{11} Phillips’ resignation prompted a failed search for another white superintendent. This impulse was largely counter-intuitive, for the period witnessed the increasing rise of Africans in the CMS and other Christian missions in the region, in particular in Sierra Leone, the centre of the Mission’s activities.

The CMS had created a Native Pastorate with nine pastors in Sierra Leone in 1861 and, beginning with Samuel Adjai Crowther (who was appointed Bishop of the Niger Territories in 1864) Africans rapidly replaced the then largely European clergy in the region. Henry Venn, the honorary Secretary of the CMS in London from 1841 to 1873 – and a friend and mentor of many African priests and intellectuals – was largely responsible for this great advancement in African agency.\textsuperscript{12}

The Pongas Mission could not conceivably ignore such a trend. For a long time, the Barbados Board assumed that it needed a white person to head the Mission and it changed its

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\textsuperscript{9} This was a common practice by all the missions on the West African coast at the time, even in the most important Mission station in Sierra Leone. See Leo Spitzer, \textit{Lives in Between: Assimilation and Marginality in Austria, Brazil, West Africa 1780-1945}. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 70.

\textsuperscript{10} Barrow, \textit{Fifty Years}, p. 88; Vassady, “The Role”, p. 216.

\textsuperscript{11} \textit{M.F.} Vol. VIII, July 1, 1863, p. 161; Vassady, “The Role”, p. 216.

\textsuperscript{12} For an insightful analysis of Venn’s impact on the CMS in West Africa, see Jehn Hanciles. \textit{Euthanasia of a Mission}, pp. 23-30.
mind when it became clear that whites died too quickly and Duport – through his actions – demonstrated that a person of African descent could obtain satisfactory results. In fact, it also became clear that the Board Board would finally have to appoint a Black man to head the Mission after Philips’ retirement, and as expected, none was more qualified for the job than Duport. In July 1863, the Bishop of Barbados wrote a letter to Hawkins, the S.P.G secretary, stating, among others stating: “We must look more and more to black or at least coloured, Missionaries. We have a very superior one (all things considered) in Mr. Duport and not less so, I think, in Mr. Maurice…”\(^{13}\) The British organizers of the Mission supported the idea.

As noted above, Duport was then visiting the West Indian islands on a furlough. Ever energetic, he there embarked on trying to raise new awareness and support for the Mission. His commitment to the Pongas Mission was plain; and on completion of his time in the Caribbean, Duport was finally chosen to replace Phillips as Head Missionary, a position he had been denied since the founding of the Mission.\(^{14}\) After the Board unanimously appointed him to his new job, Duport departed Barbados for the Pongas via England in September 1863. In England, the new Head Missionary preached and gave speeches about the Mission.\(^{15}\) As he had done in the West Indies, Duport raised new awareness about the Pongas Mission in London area churches, and was able to raise about £400 in donations.\(^{16}\)

After his successful stay in England, Duport left for Sierra Leone in December and finally arrived in Fallangia on February 6, 1864. As the new Head Missionary, he occupied the newly built Mission House in Fallangia, which had been intended purely for white superintendents. Occupying that building was a double satisfaction of sorts for Duport, many

\(^{13}\) Quoted in Vasady, “The Role”, p. 217.  
\(^{14}\) Ibid., p. 215.  
\(^{15}\) Barrow, Fifty Years, p. 89.  
\(^{16}\) Ibid.
times passed over for promotion by white overseers. Duport promptly went to work to consolidate the Mission under the sole control of African-descended West Indian pastors. He sent Rev. Joseph. A. Maurice, another Codrington graduate hired three years earlier and temporarily in charge of the Mission, to look after the Domingia station. The station had been kept under John Morgan, who accompanied him from Barbados as his own assistant at Fallangia. Morgan was the eldest son of Thomas Morgan. He had remained in Barbados to study at Codrington College when his entire family left for the Pongas as “industrial missionaries” in 1862. The Board in Barbados sent him to the Pongas as a catechist at an annual salary of £100.  

During this period, however, Maurice, who had already lived in the Pongas for a few years, was suffering from illness and was on his way for a furlough in England. Realizing the excessive work Maurice’s departure would cause for him, Duport recommended the hiring of a young West Indian, P. H. Paulus, as schoolmaster. Paulus had earlier given up a teaching job in Liberia and came to Freetown with the hope of working for the Pongas Mission. He was hired in February 1865 as a catechist-schoolmaster at Fallangia for a period of six months at an annual salary of £100 paid by the S.P.G. By the end of that year, Maurice had completed his furlough in England and was on his way back to the Pongas where he resigned his job two years later and settled with his Sierra Leonean wife in Freetown. Duport had to find Maurice’s replacement very quickly, especially considering the fact that Paulus was sick and also needed a furlough.  

As if those worries were not bad enough for Duport, Paulus’ furlough depended on the Head Missionary’s consent. Bullock had advised Paulus that Duport had to approve his furlough,

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and that he would continue to draw his usual salary of £100.22 The Society’s offer for Paulus was in sharp contrast to what it had offered Maurice earlier. He had to recruit in England at half his annual salary of £150.23 This difference could be attributable to the fact that Maurice had a longer furlough, received a larger salary, and all his travel expenses to and from England had been paid by the Society.24

While recuperating in Freetown, Paulus tendered his resignation in April citing continuous ill health.25 As he had done earlier when Maurice resigned his post, Duport recommended William Samuel Macaulay to his superiors. Macaulay was a Fourah Bay College trained Sierra Leonean catechist and had been in the service of the CMS at the time.26 He had been involved in missionary work in Sierra Leone for twelve years prior to joining the Pongas Mission. Equally important, he spoke Susu. The Society approved his hiring for Domingia station while accepting Paulus’ resignation.27 However, Macaulay’s hiring would reinforce the inequality and hierarchy that continued to prevail within the Mission. As Head Missionary, Duport received a yearly salary of £250, or £50 less than his white predecessors had received. Macaulay was hired as a S.P.G. catechist at an annual salary of £60, also £40 less than the salary of Paulus.28

25 M.F. Vol. XII, 1867, p. 238.
European Church leaders glibly explained the difference in the salaries between black and white missionaries on account of the differences of “tastes” and lifestyles, unaware perhaps that they were drawing upon prejudiced assumptions. In 1881, Bishop H. Cheetham of Sierra Leone, for example, stated that:

… where as the African clergyman would be sufficiently well paid from £80 to £100 the West Indian with his quasi European taste and habits finds it difficult to get on from £140 -- and should have his traveling expense paid when on leave.  

Bishop Cheetham’s statement should not have been a surprise to anyone. The issue of lower salaries for African clergy in comparison to their European or African-descended West Indian counterparts can be traced to the period between 1841 and 1872, when Henry Venn was Honorary Secretary of the CMS. Venn set lower salaries for local clergy than for Europeans because he did not want to create a great financial gap between the local clergy and their people.  

Curtin notes that Venn instructed the Yoruba mission in 1844 to pay the African clergy less than European missionaries. This decision, Curtin notes, was reached in part due to Venn’s determination to keep the African clergy close to the material level of their fellow citizens, and in part because of his fear of promoting “self-indulgence.”

In the Pongas Mission, the issue of lower salaries was not the only problem that the African clergy faced, or that Duport had to deal with as Head Missionary. Racial prejudice also manifested itself in the Mission’s assumptions about the relative honesty of non-Europeans. The Mission organizers never accepted bills from African catechists unless the Head Missionary

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countersigned them.\textsuperscript{32} Furthermore, the African clergy had to ‘prove their value’ as Mission employees before they could be even considered for Holy Orders. Macaulay was repeatedly denied consideration for ordination because he had yet to prove his value for the Mission. Even Duport’s plea as Head Missionary could not persuade the Society to consider the African assistant’s candidacy for Holy Orders.\textsuperscript{33} The refusal was a clear manifestation of the Society’s double standards and its unequal treatment of employees of the Pongas Mission. For instance, West Indian missionaries were not judged by their ability to perform as valuable workers, but only by their ability to read, write, speak, and preach well in Susu.\textsuperscript{34} In January 1860, Abel J. Phillips and Joseph Dean, both white clergymen, were ordained Priest and Deacon in England respectively before their arrival in the Pongas. Neither of them had ‘proved his value’ in the Pongas Mission field before being ordained.\textsuperscript{35} During this period, the Board had already arranged for Trinidadians Joseph William Thomas Turpin and Philip Henry Doughlin to replace J. Morgan and J. A. Maurice, both of whom resigned in 1866.\textsuperscript{36} Turpin and Doughlin were also African-descended West Indians trained at Codrington College. The former was already ordained Deacon in Barbados in 1867 and had been a catechist among the Caribs in St. Vincent under the supervision of Rev. G. M. D. Frederick, later Archdeacon of Barbados.\textsuperscript{37} Apart from being a Codrington College graduate, it was not known what the latter had done before joining the

\textsuperscript{33} Bullock to Duport, London, July 12, 1867 in \textit{CLS 129, West Indies Letters Sent}, Vol. I, 1834-68, R.H.L.
\textsuperscript{35} Barrow, \textit{Fifty Years}, p. 79; \textit{Progress of the Pongas Mission}, 1860, p. 5.
\textsuperscript{36} \textit{M.F.}, Vol. XII, 1867, p. 15.
\textsuperscript{37} Barrow, \textit{Fifty Years}, p. 96.
Pongas Mission. Nevertheless, the pair arrived in Fallangia in June 1867 and were engaged quickly as catechists at an annual salary of £100 each paid by the Board in Barbados.\textsuperscript{38}

Despite the new arrivals, Duport continued to make his case for Macaulay. The Society finally capitulated in mid-July and accepted Macaulay as one of its catechists.\textsuperscript{39} September 19, 1867 also brought Duport good news. Chief Lewis Wilkinson wed Hannah Lightburn, a granddaughter of Chief Mary Lightburn. The marriage happened at Domingia to the delight of the missionaries. A powerful chief marrying according to the rites of the Church of England was very important for the Mission. In the view of the missionaries, the Chief had led by example and had already set the wheels of monogamy in motion in the Pongas Country. Wilkinson confirmed this view himself in a letter to F. Bennett, the Secretary of the English Committee: “I trust that this example now set forth will lead many brother Chiefs and others of my countrymen to come forward and join in the same manner according to the holy ordinances of our Church with our united respects.”\textsuperscript{40} Such an outcome had been the hope of West Indian missionaries in the Pongas. In fact, as the couple was from two of the most powerful Eurafrican families in the area, Duport was even more hopeful that the marriage was the beginning of better days to come for the Mission.\textsuperscript{41}

Those days would not arrive during Duport’s tenure as Head Missionary, however. In a bid to make Domingia the principal station of a self-supporting church, and in compliance with the Board’s request to do so, Duport moved the Mission Headquarters from Fallangia to
Domingia. The decision followed Chief Lewis Wilkinson’s demand for payment for his services as an interpreter for the Mission. The Chief terminated his long voluntary service because of what he thought was the Mission’s failure to bring trade to the Pongas. The removal of the Mission Headquarters from Fallangia and the lack of English trade did not sit well with him. As expected, the two issues sparked the feud that occurred between him and Duport. By 1869, Wilkinson was no longer the principal ally of the Mission. Duport wrote to his superiors stating that, “Mr. Styles Lightburn, a man of a superior character and education, and a valuable friend to the Mission, is the only Chief in whom we can place unqualified reliance.” Duport’s statement was reminiscent of the one he made earlier in 1864. In that statement, he explained his frustration with Chief Wilkinson’s actions to Hawkins in these words: “I am now most fully convinced we must not depend entirely on the native Chiefs here for protection. They are so treacherous and changeable, and yet unless one has his wits about him he will soon be duped by them.”

It was certainly not a question of the chiefs duping the missionaries. Rather, it was a matter of the chiefs guarding their own interests. Establishing a viable commercial link between England and the Pongas country was a major goal and principal reason for the support of the Mission by the Wilkinson Chiefs (Richard, Charles and Lewis). Needless to say, the failure to do so was a big disappointment to them, serving to undermine the value of the Mission itself. In early 1863, Chief Lewis Wilkinson complained that his brother, Chief Charles Wilkinson of Domingia, had been trying to solicit trade between England and the Pongas Country to replace

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44 Ibid.
the slave trade but to no avail. He wrote about British efforts to stop the clandestine human trafficking without replacing it with anything in these passionate words:

> But if you tell a person not to drink out of a tumbler, you must give him something in the room of a tumbler to drink out of. The Susu natives are willing to do away with the foreign slave dealing; but they must have an English trade in its place. Besides, a nation cannot rise without commerce.  

Rev. Maurice similarly echoed this sentiment by lamenting: “It is not enough for us to attend only to the spiritual wants of the people, but we must also use our endeavours to better their temporal condition. They will then believe that the Mission is no delusion.”  

Maurice further emphasized that some people in the Pongas actually saw the Mission as an impediment rather than advancement to their economic prosperity because it discouraged the slave trade but replaced it with nothing.

The Mission was aware of the frustration that the absence of trade or more of it caused among the people. In fact, realizing this frustration, Duport appealed to the British to help Chief Wilkinson and his people even if that help meant lending them money to be repaid later. The Head Missionary followed his plea with the following statement: “We have prevented the people from supporting themselves, as they once did, by the slave trade, and if they see no legitimate trade opened to them they will return to their former occupation.” Some might have done just that even at the time Duport warned his superiors. Duport reported in 1864 that Bangalong was “… the town in which the slave trade was carried on in all its branches…” At the time, it was also reported that a French merchant had been engaged in clandestine slave trading at Domingia

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48 Ibid.
in 1867. Rev. Doughlin also reported more slave trading activities in Domingia in 1882. Rev. Doughlin attributed this to wars in the area. During this period, legitimate trade would have been taking place in the Conakry area. In the late 1880s, the British were known to have levied heavy duties on traders in their territory, forcing some of them to move to Conakry. This might have contributed to the failure of British trade about which Chief Wilkinson had been complaining.

The Chief could not understand the lack of British trade in the Pongas. In his view, the country had many products, such as cotton, groundnuts, beniseed, coffee, palm oil, palm-kernels, bees-wax, hides, gold, and various kinds of nuts from which oil could be extracted. He was convinced that trade would help advance civilization, as well as facilitate the promotion of the Kingdom of Christ in the region. This is an interesting variation on a more familiar pattern in nineteenth century West Africa, the identification of Christianity with European imperial ambitions and the loss of African independence. As Lamin Sanneh has noted, since the nineteenth century was an era of “competing political claims among the European powers,” the adoption of Christianity by an African Chief and its spread in his polity posed an immediate political danger – the turning of the Chief “into a minor client” of the Europeans. Tiny Rio Pongas, however, was essentially a trading outpost, its survival depending almost entirely on external trade. Rio Pongas chiefs, therefore, viewed the building of a Christian mission station as a prelude to increased European legitimate commercial activity. The failure of this prospect to materialize understandably caused angst and frustration. Chief Wilkinson complained gloomily

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51 M. F, Vol. XII, 1867, p. 16.  
55 Ibid.  
that there was hardly a sale of any of the agricultural products, except occasionally when a few French and American vessels visited the Pongo River.\(^{57}\)

Vassady attributes this scarce trade to the navigation difficulties of the Rio Pongo.\(^{58}\) Although this might have also been the case, heavy duties also played a key role in diverting trade from the British territory, especially the Isles de Los, to that of the French. In 1874, the financial problems of Sierra Leone led the Colonial Government there to reinforce tariffs on the Isles de Los.\(^{59}\) Consequently, in 1877, Charles Heddle, a wealthy Eurafrican merchant from Freetown who had made his money out of the lucrative groundnut trade, sold his factories in the Northern Rivers to C. A. Vermink of Marseilles.\(^{60}\) Almost three years later, Gaillard, a French businessman naturalized in Sierra Leone who controlled Factory Island on the Isles de Los, also sold some of his businesses there to the same enterprising Marseillais and “transferred much of the dutiable business to mainland sites.”\(^{61}\) In 1878, what remained of his business on the islands generated only £1,834 in revenue compared to his estimated annual trade in the area of £63,000 prior to the imposition of tariffs.\(^{62}\) No wonder Archdeacon Holme reported in 1887 that a factory that used to be on the Isles de Los, had moved to Conakry “… in order to escape the obnoxious duties imposed by the English Government, by which they have succeeded in extinguishing all

\(^{57}\) With the election of Abraham Lincoln as President of the United States of America and the American Civil War (1861-65), the anti-slave trade enforcement was tightened. The U.S. Navy impounded many slave ships on the Atlantic and others while fitting out for the sea. See Fyfe, \textit{A History}, p. 331.

\(^{58}\) Vassady, “The Role”, p. 121.


\(^{60}\) Ibid., p. 216. In 1882, C. A. Vermink was trading under the auspice of the \textit{Companie du Senegal et de la Côte Occidentale d’Afrique}, and in 1887, as the \textit{Companie Française de l’Afrique Occidentale} also known as the “French Company” in Sierra Leone. See Skinner, \textit{Thomas George Lawson}, p. 189; Fyfe, \textit{A History}, p. 444.

\(^{61}\) Ibid., p. 230.

\(^{62}\) Ibid.
trade on their colony. As the French had transformed Conakry into a flourishing port, customs receipts from the British-controlled Isles de Los opposite that port dropped from £2,474 in 1878 to only £13 in 1885. The drop of customs receipts from the British areas of influence was due to the French policy of forcing trade through Conakry.

As they became firmly established in the area, squeezing out the British, the French dominated trade in the Pongas area. By 1878 their trade in the area was estimated at 8,600,000 francs with a total annual customs receipts averaging 85,000 – 90,000 francs. King John Katty of Teah often complained about this profit because after he accepted French suzerainty in 1876, he received only 5,000 francs from France annually. By contrast, he received 300 gold coins in merchandise annually from the British Government in Sierra Leone as stipulated in the British treaty with his predecessor, Bala Bangu in 1852. Under that treaty, British vessels paid that amount to the Pongas monarch when they anchored in his waterways. Perhaps because the Pongas was under French suzerainty in the late 1870s and 1880s, and with the French imposing lower duties on exports, more French trade was encouraged than British. In the 1880s, France charged only 5% duties on exports and nothing on imports in a deliberate effort to encourage trade in her West African colonies. Whatever it was, the lack of trade between Great Britain and the Pongas country spelt the beginning of the end of Duport’s missionary career.

As early as 1857, a frustrated Chief Richard Wilkinson and a schoolteacher, David H. Cyprian, accused Duport of immoral behaviour and illegal commercial activities. In January

64 Skinner, Thomas George Lawson, p. 189; Fyfe, A History, p. 444.
65 Hargreaves, Prelude to the Partition, pp. 216-218.
66 Barry, Senegambia, p. 257; Goerg, Commerce et Colonisation, p. 73.
67 Goerg, Commerce et Colonisation, p. 73; Barry, Senegambia, p. 257.
68 Goerg, Commerce et Colonisation, pp. 60-61; Arcin, Histoire, pp. 335, 315; Barry, Senegambia, p. 257.
69 Skinner, Thomas George Lawson, p. 189.
1869, the tension took a decisive turn when Wilkinson brought formal charges against the Head Missionary. He accused Duport of illegal sexual liaisons in the Pongas. The Chief’s bitter complaint against Duport was related to S.P.G Secretary W. T. Bullock in these earnest words: “… we do not wish him [Duport] in the Pongas again for he has done too much evil in the place together with the Morgan family. It was a bad day when that family was ever sent to the Pongas.”

Obviously this reaction was overblown. Duport’s first wife had died in May 1867, after which he married Miss C. E. Morgan, one of the Morgan daughters, as his second wife, in May 1868. The problem was that the couple’s baby was born just five months after their wedding. In other words, there had been a sexual relationship before the marriage. On the face of it, therefore, the evidence against Duport for illegal sexual relations was plain. The trouble is that Duport was not accused of more extensive sexual activity in the Pongas; he had evidently had sexual relations with a woman he subsequently married. To make an issue out of the matter clearly had to be seen as churlish; and doubtless Chief Wilkinson’s concern about the entire matter was more about the missionary’s inability to persuade the English to increase their commercial activities in the area than religion.

Chief Wilkinson’s complaints prompted Bishop E. H. Beckles of Sierra Leone to revoke Duport’s license pending an investigation into the matter. Duport lost more than his license. He also lost his service to the S.P.G. Most importantly, he lost his salary from the Society and the

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71 Report of J. H. A. Duport for the Quarter Ending June 30, 1868 in D37/1868-1874, R.H.L.
72 Vassady, “The Role”, p. 236.
73 Ibid.
privilege to certify his own bills. Consequently, the most well paid missionary in the Pongas Mission was now reduced to the rank of the low paid. No longer Head Missionary, and removed from the S.P.G. payroll, Duport’s annual salary of £250 was reduced to £100 pending Bishop Beckles’ investigation into the allegations.

In addition to allegations of illicit sexual relations, Duport was also accused of illegal commercial activities. After Turpin accused Macaulay of illegally trading liquor and had Macaulay fired, Macaulay brought his own charges of illegal trading against Duport. The charges bordered on nepotism because it concerned agents from the West Indies against those from West Africa. Macaulay, an African, accused Duport of wanting to fire all Western-educated Sierra Leonean assistants because he already had a new staff of African-descended West Indian missionaries and no longer required the services of those they referred to as “strangers.”

Furthermore, Macaulay also argued that it was Duport himself who engaged in the illegal liquor trade and conspired with his fellow West Indian missionaries to fire him.

Like Chief Wilkinson, Macaulay blamed the Morgans for the misunderstanding between West Indian missionaries and their African assistants. In January 1870, he wrote to his superiors stating that: “I must confess that before Mr. Duport’s connection with this family (the Morgans) he was a kind and indulgent father to all under his care. But now alas! Poor man! He is made a

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74 Bullock to Duport London, February 20, 1869 in CLS 130, West Indies Letters Sent, Vol. II, R.H.L.
75 Vassady, “The Role”, p. 239.
76 Turpin to Bennett, Domingia, January 7, 1869 in D37/1868-1874, R.H.L.
77 Ibid., Nematu Amelia Blyden has provided an illuminating account of the rivalries between West Indians and Africans in West Africa. She notes that part of it could be accounted for by a deliberate policy of divide and rule by Europeans. See Nematu Amelia Blyden. West Indians in West Africa: 1808-1880: The African Diaspora in Reverse. (Rochester, New York: University of Rochester Press), 2000, pp. 29-41.
78 Ibid.
“monster” to many …” Once again, as this statement illustrated, the Morgans were at the centre of the disputes between West Indian and African employees of the Mission. The family’s involvement could not be disputed because all of the three most influential West Indian missionaries, Duport, Turpin, and Doughlin, married Morgan daughters between 1868 and 1869.

In an effort to solve the problems in the Mission in January 1869, Bishop Beckles appointed Rev. Daniel G. Williams, a prominent Sierra Leonean minister trained in England and tutor at Fourah Bay College. Williams was to supervise the Mission temporarily and to investigate allegations against Duport and Macaulay. His investigation later cleared Duport of all charges except the one relating to his marriage to C. E. Morgan. Consequently, Duport’s license was reinstated in early 1870 and he was re-appointed missionary at Geme St. Jean in the Rio Nunez, about a hundred miles north of the Pongas where he had been serving as a teacher for the Mission immediately after his downfall in the Pongas Country.

He had opened that station for the Pongas Mission after losing his missionary credentials in 1869 at the invitation of Gura Tasol, the area’s Muslim Nalu king. The Board continued to pay him £100 per year, but the S.P.G. held back its portion of £150 despite his repeated pleas for its reinstatement. The Society argued that reinstating Duport on its payroll “… would involve the increase of the society’s expenditure in Pongas: and no promise can now be made which would have the effect of binding the society to an expenditure in excess of its income.”

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79 Macaulay to Barbados Board and SPG, January 13, 7870 in D37/1868-1874, R.H.L.
80 Vassady, “The Role”, p. 238.
81 Ibid., p. 240; Progress of the Pongas Mission, 1870, p. 5.
82 Ibid.
83 Bullock to Duport, March 12, 1873 in CLS 130, West Indies Letters Sent, Vol. II, 1868-88, R.H.L.
secretary, responded positively to Duport’s plea for reinstatement on the Society’s payroll by noting that, “The whole question is quite open to reconsideration when you come to England: and I can assure you that if you will call on me as soon as you come, I will be very glad to see you and converse with you upon it.” This attitude demonstrates that Duport’s strong relationship with the S.P.G. was already a thing of the past and that the existence of the Mission no longer depended on him.

In the meantime, while Duport was in the Nunez, Rev. Williams, whose investigation exonerated him, concluded that Chief Wilkinson brought charges because he believed that Duport willfully destroyed his chance for trade with the outside world. Quite how Duport could have done this is not clear. In fact, trade in the area was diminishing owing to the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71. Rev. Williams confirmed this in a letter to the Mission organizers in which he wrote: “In consequence of the war between France and Prussia, trade is at present very dull in the country, as a great part of the produce goes to the French market.” This statement finally vindicated Duport, who was also cleared of all additional charges that Macaulay brought against him. Macaulay himself was cleared of Turpin’s allegations of illegal liquor trading in Domingia.

Although the parties were cleared of most of the charges brought against them, the disputes created long-lasting animosities among them. Turpin and Doughlin continued to resent the presence of Macaulay in the Pongas Country; Doughlin even threatened to resign his post unless Macaulay was dismissed. His attitude caused the chiefs, including Lewis Wilkinson, to sign a petition urging the Mission organizers to disregard the West Indian missionaries’

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84 Ibid.
allegations against Macaulay. However, even though Macaulay had the backing of the chiefs and the support and confidence of the bishop of Sierra Leone, he resigned in 1871. The situation of Macaulay, as Vassady points out, confirmed the view that African-descended West Indian missionaries were reluctant to allow Western-educated Sierra Leoneans “into positions which might threaten their own influence among the people.”

Ironically, Macaulay’s departure did not end the supposed “threat” to Turpin and Doughlin’s influence among the local people. Arguably, neither of these men was qualified to replace Duport as Head Missionary because both were not only inexperienced, but they were also new in the Pongas Country. Consequently, the position of Head Missionary went to Rev. Williams, who was already performing the duties of acting superintendent. As expected, the appointment of an African did not amuse Turpin and Doughlin. To express their disapproval of the appointment, they wrote letters to the Board in Barbados. Turpin even tendered his resignation over the matter but the Board refused to accept it. Instead, it promised to ordain Turpin as a priest and Doughlin as a deacon with increased salaries. This was done in 1871. As Williams resigned his post in the Pongas Country and returned to Freetown where he accepted a pastorate, Turpin finally got the job of superintendent of the Pongas Mission that he always wanted.

The situation in the Pongas Country was a big contrast to what was happening in Sierra Leone and Liberia during the same period. In Sierra Leone, different groups such as the Recaptives and the early settlers, Nova Scotian blacks (the so-called Black Loyalists) and

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88 Ibid.
90 Ibid., p. 243.
91 These were Africans from different parts of the continent who were liberated from slave ships by the British Navy and resettled in Sierra Leone under the protection of the British Government
Maroons were merging into what became the Creoles, while in Liberia Afro-Americans and Afro-West Indians were just arriving as settlers. Unlike those in the Pongas Country, these groups developed a “congenial relationship” with missionaries (white and black) from Great Britain and the United States and their level of westernization cemented that relationship more than anything else. As Williams points out, the “intellect and refinement of westernized Africans surprised and impressed black Americans who had expected [to meet] savages” in the area. On the other hand, African-descended West Indian missionaries like their Creole and Amerco-Liberian counterparts in Sierra Leone and Liberia respectively, thought that they were better and more “civilized” than ordinary, non-Westernized Africans. As such, they had attitudes that reflected those of their European patrons. There was a more subtle difficulty, the fraught relationship between educated Africans and West Indians in the Pongas Country. Each group probably thought it was better equipped than the other to engage with indigenous Africans, a curiosity given their shared contempt for the latter. This problem, compounded by the African-descended West Indians’ quest for absolute authority in the Pongas Mission, overshadowed almost everything else, a situation that Duport knew all too well.

Other problems intervened. In April 1872, Duport’s health was in rapid decline, forcing him to go to Freetown to recuperate. Throughout this study, the contrast between Duport’s

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92 For a concise study of this interesting transformation, see Arthur Porter, Creoledom: A Study of the Development of Freetown Society (London: Oxford University Press, 1963). See also Fyfe, A History, for a more elaborately detailed study of the trajectory of the early settlers and the recaptives, which forms the core of the Sierra Leone story.


94 Ibid., p. 154.

95 Ibid., p. 144.

96 Progress of the Pongas Mission, p. 1871, p. 18.
longevity and those of his white colleagues seems to suggest that African-descended West
Indians had some resistance to African diseases. Considering the fact that Duport spent
seventeen years in a highly malarial area and some of his successors spent twice that number
suggests that he did have some resistance to African diseases. Nevertheless, like the Africans
themselves, West Indian missionaries of African descent did fall victim to some of the diseases
in the Pongas Country. In fact, as early as 1864, when the Mission was already under the control
of African-descended West Indian missionaries, many of them suffered from fever. Duport
himself suffered from various ailments that led him to request even more missionaries to relieve
him. On August 30, 1865, he wrote:

The present state of things cannot last. Something must be done for the preservation of
the lives of the missionaries, and that is more help. At present I am thoroughly done up.
One thing I am conscious of, that whatever befalls me, I have spent my strength in the
work of the Mission, and I trust it will not prove in vain.  

Clearly Duport had hoped that greater efforts should have been made to help preserve the lives of
the missionaries in the Pongas Country. Unfortunately, nothing was done soon enough for his
own life to be preserved. Several years after his plea, Duport fell ill and had to leave the Nunez
for Freetown. Bed-ridden there in 1872, Duport wrote about his debility:

I am thoroughly done up; climate trouble, and sorrow, anxieties, and hard work have
made their impression, and unless there be some relaxation, nature must succumb. This
is now my seventeenth year in Africa. But how to obtain a change I know not. If I return
to the Nunez in my present state, the worst must be expected. I am, however, quite
resigned. God knows what is best for me, and though He slay me, yet will I put my trust
in Him. The doctor thinks my case is serious, although he speaks cheerfully.

In fact, at this time, Duport’s health condition worsened and he reluctantly sailed to Liverpool,
U.K. a month later. There, he was admitted into the Royal Infirmary. However, his health
continued to deteriorate rapidly. On September 20, 1873, the veteran missionary died at the

98 Progress of the Pongas Mission, 1871, p. 18.
Duport’s death marked the end of an era in the Pongas Mission and the beginning of another. His wife and four children survived him. His widow continued to work for the Mission and John, his eldest son, later returned to Barbados to study for his own missionary service.

**The Rio Pongas Mission After John Henry A. Duport’s Downfall and Death**

By the time he died, in 1873, John Henry A. Duport was already out of favour with the organizers of the Pongas Mission in England. Cleared of all charges against him except one, Duport’s license was reinstated and he was reappointed missionary in the Rio Nunez with a reduced salary. His departure from the Pongas Country did not end the animosity that caused his downfall in the first place. This continued until the Mission’s leadership reverted to West Indian missionaries. Nonetheless, the Mission had made some progress by 1870 without his supervision. Several outposts, such as Cassa, were added to the Pongas Mission’s four major stations of Fallangia, Domingia, Fotoba, and Geme St. Jean. All the stations were under the supervision of Rev. Williams except Geme St. Jean, which remained under Duport’s control even though it was an extension of the Pongas Mission. The establishment of new stations and outposts, including Fotoba in the Isles de Los and Gene St. Jean in Rio Nunez also meant the Mission now covered an even larger area, which was not ethnically homogeneous.

By the end of 1870, however, the expansion began to slow down. Rev. Williams blamed it on the Mission’s organizers. In his view, they did not “... manifest the same lively interest in the Mission which once they did.” This might have been the case. At the time, the sugar industry in the West Indies, a major source of revenue for the Mission, was not doing well owing

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99 *M. F.* November 1, 1873, p. 341; Vassady, “The Role”, p. 244.
100 *Progress of the Pongas Mission*, 1870, pp. 4-5.
101 Ibid., 14.
to hurricanes and falling prices. The decline in interest could have also been due to the stalled self-support initiative in the Pongas. Furthermore, it could have been due to the disturbing allegations and counter allegations of illicit sexual relations and illegal liquor peddling of the Mission staff reaching the Mission organizers. Most importantly, however, it could have involved the time things began to take root. For example, the 1860s witnessed the beginning of scientific racism that became more rigorous and more absurd as the century moved on. It was absurd in that in places like Sierra Leone, CMS organizers generally ignored the exceptional accomplishments of Creoles. In the case of the Pongas Mission, the organizers entrusted the enterprise to West Indian missionaries of African descent because they had a lower death rate, while at the same time, they became more skeptical of the abilities of Black people. This was in spite of Duport’s undeniable success.

Amidst these difficulties, however, the Mission had good news to celebrate. John Baptiste McEwen, an African-descended West Indian from Grenada, joined the Mission in December 1871 at an annual salary of £100 paid by the S.P.G. The new catechist was, like Duport, a graduate of Codrington College and a holder of a Durham University Bachelor of Arts degree. Ordained deacon in Barbados in 1869, he was stationed at St. Vincent in that year and later in Trinidad as a licensed Reader. His appointment meant all the stations now had ordained missionaries. The enthusiasm was later dampened by a major disappointment for the missionaries. Chief Wilkinson, whose high-profile wedding in 1867 was hailed as a good sign for better days to come, was no longer monogamous. The Chief was reported to have “… recently become a polygamist, and had done much to discourage Christianity in his people and

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102 For more information on this issue, see Henry Venn’s works.
103 Progress of the Pongas Mission, 1870 p. 13.
104 M. F. Vol. XLVI, 1901; Report for the Year 1886, p. 10.
dependents.” It is important to recognize the underlying cause of Wilkinson’s decision to become a polygamist. His actions were directly or indirectly related to the fact that, like many people in the Pongas, he embraced the Mission for instrumental gain, and when that had not materialized, he openly abandoned its precepts. Most importantly, there was a deeper issue regarding his action. Wilkinson lived in a society where polygamy was the norm, where offspring were highly valued and where having a number of wives was a symbol of wealth and power. Maybe it is just an assumption about human sexuality, but presumably, even monogamous chiefs had servants, or other relations that disturbed the missionaries more than their own community. Arguably, this is not just an African problem because issues relating to sexual behaviour are common in all religious communities.

It was not clear whether Chief Wilkinson’s actions contributed to the decline of the Pongas Mission in the mid-1870s. By 1873, Fallangia had already registered 571 Baptisms and fourteen marriages, while Domingia had 236 Baptisms and registered only seven marriages. Their combined baptisms and marriages since 1855 were 807 and 21 respectively. Out of the twenty-one marriages, fifteen were between Sierra Leonean immigrant couples, while the remaining six were among local Susu “converts.” Although these numbers appear small, in the view of the West Indian missionaries, they were successful numbers and it was a significant achievement on the part of the mission. They remarked that “… the No. is not small as one might

105 *Progress of the Pongas Mission*, p. 18.
106 *M. F.* Vol. VIII, March 1, 1863, p. 63. There is no better proof than this that Duport was a scapegoat of the Chief’s frustrated ambitions for increased trade.
108 Ibid., p. 3.
be induced to think at first sight, if [one] consider the great objective the natives have of being bound together for life; for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health.”

In addition to the low marriage rate, there was a decline in the progress of Fallangia School. Once boasting of having as many as eighty-five students, the school now had only seventeen. The declining numbers were attributable to several factors. Firstly, many Muslims were still reluctant to send their own children or those of their slaves to the Mission. There was clearly a struggle between an expanding Islam on one hand, and a nascent Christianity and missionaries on the other. This was particularly true in villages that were open to preaching and catechism classes only to be gradually closed off as Muslim religious teachers became more successful and as missionaries picked a fight. Secondly, children from the surrounding towns and villages no longer attended Fallangia School. Having acquired some reading and writing skills, they stayed in their villages to teach others. Thirdly, the expansion of the Mission meant students who would have otherwise attended Fallangia School were now attending those in their own villages or even the ones nearer to them. In other words, the successes of these students backfired on the missionaries. As the missionaries remarked, “… now that the Mission has stretched out her branches unto the sea, and her boughs unto the river, there is no necessity for this.” In fact, it was reported at this time that the Rio Nunez had twenty students in its school and nineteen of them were boarders. Based on this progress, one can conclude that the Mission’s successes also created failures.

109 Ibid.
110 Ibid.
111 Ibid.
112 Ibid.
113 Ibid.
These events happened under the supervision of Rev. Turpin, who had been ordained priest in Freetown on October 12, 1871. As supervisor, Turpin’s annual salary was increased from £120 to £150.\footnote{Bullock to Turpin, April 1, 1874 in \textit{CLS 130} Vol. II, 1868-88, R.H.L.} This amount was very small for a supervisor compared to the £250 Duport had received for the same job. It was even smaller than the £150 Maurice received as a catechist in the 1860s. Vassady attributes this difference to the Barbados Board’s decision not to give any missionary more authority over the others in order to avoid a repeat of the abuse of power of which Duport was accused.\footnote{Vassady, “The Role”, p. 320.} This was also due to the fact that having acquired European lifestyles, and going on furloughs like their European counterparts, African-descended West Indian missionaries became expensive.\footnote{Ibid.} Turpin had furloughs from 1872 to 1874, and 1877-1878. Doughlin did so in 1875-1877 and 1886-1887, while McEwen had his own in 1880-1882 and from June 28, 1900 to October 27, 1900.\footnote{Ibid., p. 309.} The low salary and the diminished status of the Head Missionary, who was now referred to as Senior Missionary or Acting Chief Missionary, were no longer attractive to African-descended West Indian missionaries. As a result, Turpin could not remain on the job any more. He resigned on September 27, 1877 even though Bullock of the S.P.G. urged him to stay on.\footnote{Bullock to Turpin, September 1877 in \textit{CLS 130} Vol. II, 1868-88, R.H.L.}

Upon Turpin’s resignation, Rev. Doughlin, who was hired at the same time with him and had been ordained Deacon on the same day with him in 1871, was put in charge. The S.P.G. removed Doughlin from the payroll of the Barbados Board and put him on theirs. The Society also increased his annual salary from £140 to £150, as it did for all the catechists whose annual
salary jumped from £40 to £50. Rev. Doughlin then successfully began his tenure with what his predecessors had tried so hard to achieve and failed. He baptized Chief Mary Lightburn, who had successfully rejected the establishment of a Pongas Mission station in Farringia for over twenty years. David Brown, a Sierra Leonean and Fourah Bay College graduate, was hired in 1878 to replace Turpin and to take charge of the newly opened station in that town.

Things were relatively going well for the Mission until mid-1879 when it was confronted with new and difficult challenges. As in England at the time, one of the social problems began to torment the pastors in the Pongas Country. Alleged alcoholism among local inhabitants, fueled by the large-scale importation of cheap gin from Europe became a source of great concern for the Senior Missionary. Relating this to his superiors from Domingia, Doughlin wrote: “I grieve to say that a great wave of drunkenness and immorality is sweeping over this town. Perhaps this is incidental to all rising commercial towns but it is very painful to contemplate it.” Although the locals might have been excessive in their drinking, the blame should not have been put squarely on them. European traders brought the alcohol into the region to add to what was already produced there locally and should have been blamed for it. In many West African societies at the time, alcohol was an integral part of religious rites. Thus, it should not have been a big surprise if the European liquor was used as a substitute for locally produced wine or as supplement to it. In fact, it is noteworthy that as long as the drinks were imported into the area, there would be buyers, local or otherwise. Doughlin quoted a Domingia resident who stated that, “… so long as the white people do not stop bringing it they will not stop drinking it.” As it happened, the

119 Bullock to Bishop of Sierra Leone, October 15, 1878 in CLS 130 Vol. II, 1868-88, R.H.L.
120 Ibid., Vassady, “The Role”, p. 325; M. F. December 1878, p. 583; M. F. June 1, 1879, p. 273.
121 M. F. June 1, 1879, p. 274.
122 Ibid.
white people did not stop bringing it. In fact, they brought even more into the area. In an 1880 report, Rev. S. Cole wrote:

> A steamer came from England this day – a large vessel, filled completely with rum and gin. There was not a single yard of cloth in her. When some one on board was asked if only spirits have been brought, he said: ‘yes; and there is such a quantity of spirits on board that will make the whole Susu country drunk for weeks together.’

This statement is indicative of the strong liquor market in the Pongas. Cole even stated that there were “… so many private persons selling rum in the town… that it is very hard for the people to keep sober.” The vessel that Cole referred to had 9000 casks of rum, 2,600 demijohns of rum, 4000 cases of gin, and several thousand assorted liquor cases on board.

Widespread alcoholism was not the only thing occupying the minds of West Indian missionaries in the Pongas Country. They also had declining attendance in schools to worry about. Among the factors mentioned earlier, they attributed this problem to the lack of boarding schools. Doughlin remarked that “Boarding-Schools are as needed as hospitals, and for the same reason.” The Mission also needed more helpers at this time. As Senior Missionary, Doughlin had to travel from one station to another because there were few employees to relieve him. He stated this problem in a Susu proverb: “I try to pick up chips where I can, and began to cook the elephant. The fear that harasses my mind is, that the whole of the elephant will not be cooked, and a considerable portion of it will be spoiled.”

More missionaries were hired but more issues continued to confront the Mission. Samuel Hughes and Samuel Cole were hired as catechists in 1880. Both men were from Sierra Leone. Hughes was a highly recommended Creole pastor who was also a licentiate in theology at

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123 Barrow, *Fifty Years*, p. 122.
124 Ibid.
125 See Ibid. notes.
126 *M. F.* December 1880, p. 420.
127 Ibid., p. 555.
Durham University.\textsuperscript{128} In 1878, he plied the Northern Rivers organizing Anglican congregations and arranging for suitable traders to officiate.\textsuperscript{129} Hughes was ordained deacon in May 1880 and later became the only Creole ordained priest in the Pongas in 1888.\textsuperscript{130} Upon his engagement by the Mission, Hughes was sent to replace Rev. Robert J. Clarke at the Isles de Los. Clarke was an African-descended West Indian from Jamaica and a graduate of Codrington College. Already ordained Deacon in Barbados, he was hired in 1874 but had to resign in 1880 for health reasons.\textsuperscript{131} Samuel Cole, an African pastor, remained at Domingia at the time. His starting salary is not known. However, being on the S.P.G payroll means he probably began with £50 per annum. It was only three years earlier that the Society increased the salaries of all the catechists to that level. Moreover, between 1894 and 1901, Cole reported a total annual salary of £125, £50 from the S.P.G and £70 from the English Committee.\textsuperscript{132} At this time, Rev. David Brown the Sierra Leonean Fourah Bay College graduate hired to replace Rev. William Thomas Turpin in 1878 was dead. He had drowned on July 8, 1880 while returning from his wedding in Freetown.\textsuperscript{133}

By now, the Mission had already lost another missionary and a prominent supporter. Chief Mary Lightburn, who had just embraced the Mission, had passed away on April 14, 1879.\textsuperscript{134} These deaths and the alleged actions of Sierra Leonean immigrants in Domingia caused grief for the missionaries. Doughlin noted that the behaviour of the immigrants “made Domingia

\textsuperscript{128} Barrow, Fifty Years, p. 120.
\textsuperscript{129} Fyfe, \textit{A History}, pp. 418-419.
\textsuperscript{130} Vassady, “The Role”, p. 319.
\textsuperscript{131} Ibid., pp. 309, 316.
\textsuperscript{133} Barrow, \textit{Fifty Years}, p. 121.
\textsuperscript{134} Ibid., p. 120.
to be almost a synonym for Freetown.”

During the period under study, immigrants from Sierra Leone worked as clerks, mechanics, and labourers in European commercial establishments at Domingia and other locations. Rev. Douglin’s complaint was that the immigrants were very rowdy at work, disregarded the Christian faith, and had become bad examples for others. He remarked that, “Instead of being harbour lights, guiding the wondering heathen into the port of safety, they are false lights decoying them to destruction.”

Rev. Cole also complained about the alleged misbehaviour of Sierra Leoneans in 1881. It is not known how many Sierra Leone immigrants lived in the area at this time. However, it is known that until the establishment of All Saints Church in Conakry in 1899, they worshipped in a little church that they erected themselves and even well into the 1950s most of them were Anglicans or else attached themselves to the Anglican Church.

Rev. Doughlin reported in 1882 that the wars for capturing slaves had become common in the area and that caused him even more grief. Suffering grief over such events was not surprising. Most West Indian missionaries went to the Pongas as descendants of former slaves in the West Indies, and with the hope of helping to extinguish the slave trade and to spread the Gospel. Thus, witnessing any form of the revival of the horrible trade in humans would not only be devastating to their morale, but would also be an impediment to their efforts to propagate the Gospel in the region. These events and the stressful nature of the job took a heavy toll on the Senior Missionary, who had to recuperate in Freetown in May. While Doughlin was in Freetown in 1881, William C. Morgan, a catechist from Sierra Leone, was hired to replace him.

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135 M. F. September 1, 1880, p. 419.
136 Ibid.
137 Ibid.
138 S. Cole, Full Yearly Journal for Domingia, June 30, 1881 in E36, R.H.L.
139 M. F. April 1, 1882, p. 109.
140 Ibid.
temporarily. The new recruit was a licentiate in theology at Durham University and was under the service of the CMS in Sierra Leone at the time.\textsuperscript{141} In 1882, another Morgan, Robert B., the younger son of the Morgans from Barbados, also joined the Mission staff. Bishop S. Crowther of Niger ordained the two Morgans Deacons together in Freetown in November 1882. They were engaged as catechists at Domingia and Farringia respectively and the S.P.G. was partly responsible for their salaries. In Farringia, R. B. Morgan opened that town’s first church on January 2, 1882 but he died seven years later.\textsuperscript{142}

As Rev. Doughlin was still in Freetown in 1882 where he witnessed and participated in the admission of the two Morgan catechists into Holy Orders, his superiors in England were fuming about his overstay in that city. They asked him to return immediately to the Pongas or else his post would be filled.\textsuperscript{143} The Senior Missionary complied but he eventually resigned in July 1886 and retired from missionary service after nineteen years in West Africa. Upon his retirement, Doughlin stayed briefly in England. Bishop Richard Rawle of Trinidad, a former Principal of Codrington College and founding member of the Pongas Mission, later appointed him minister of St. Clement’s in South Naparima, Trinidad.\textsuperscript{144} Rev. J. B. McEwen replaced Doughlin as Senior Missionary. During this time, the Pongas Mission’s financial difficulties continued to mount. All the parties, including Black missionaries, were of the conviction that the Mission being entirely controlled by Black missionaries was the problem.\textsuperscript{145} As such, they suggested hiring a White superintendent.\textsuperscript{146} In their view, and perhaps rightly so, a European

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{141} Vassady, “The Role”, p. 322; Barrow, Fifty Years, p. 123.
\item \textsuperscript{142} Ibid., p. 325; Pascoe, Two Hundred Years, pp. 891, 930j; Barrow, Fifty Years, p. 124.
\item \textsuperscript{143} Harry M. Tucker to P. H. Doughlin, July 6, 1883 in CLS 130 Vol. II. 1868-88, R.H.L.
\item \textsuperscript{144} Barrow, Fifty Years, p. 128; Report for the Year 1886, p. 10.
\item \textsuperscript{145} Vassady, “The Role”, p. 327; Report for the Year 1886, p. 10.
\item \textsuperscript{146} M. F. Vol. XXXII, April 1, 1887, p. 108; A Report on the Pongas Mission by Holme, 1887, p. 9.
\end{itemize}
supervisor would be more successful than his Black counterpart in raising funds in Sierra Leone, Barbados, and England.\textsuperscript{147} It was even suggested that the Pongas should have its own bishop, separate from that of Sierra Leone, and he would be based on the Isles de Los that were salubrious enough for whites.\textsuperscript{148}

All these efforts failed. As a result, the Barbados Board declared bankruptcy in 1887, allowing the English Committee in England to assume full responsibility for the Mission.\textsuperscript{149} However, relinquishing control did not end the Board’s support for the Pongas Mission. In 1902, the Bishop of Jamaica stated that West Indians were still interested in the Mission.\textsuperscript{150} In fact, the West Indies continued to send African-descended missionaries to the Pongas Country. One such missionary was C. W. Farquhar, an Antiguan graduate of Codrington College. He had fifteen-years teaching experience at Mico Model School in St. John’s, Antigua.\textsuperscript{151} Farquhar was already ordained Deacon in Antigua and had arrived in the Pongas Country in October 1890 with a family that included two daughters, O. Farquhar and Jenny Farquhar, and a son, Max E. Farquhar. The family arrived just in time for the veteran teacher to be appointed Headmaster of the new Boarding School at Cassa, Isles de Los.\textsuperscript{152} He received an annual salary of £120 from the S.P.G. but another £30 from the General Fund of the Rio Pongas Mission in England was later added to that yearly, giving him a total annual salary of £150.\textsuperscript{153}

\textsuperscript{147} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{148} Ibid. See Archdeacon Holme’s recommendations for the Mission’s revival in his report cited here.  
\textsuperscript{149} Vassady, “The Role”, p. 327.  
\textsuperscript{150} Bishop of Jamaica to Rev. Dr. H. H. Montgomery, February 27, 1902 in USPG, D142C, Diocese of Sierra Leone, Vol. 142C, 1902, R.H.L.  
\textsuperscript{151} Barrow, Fifty Years, pp. 133-134.  
\textsuperscript{152} Vassady, “The Role”, p. 315; Barrow, Fifty Years, pp. 133-134.  
\textsuperscript{153} Annual Return Form from C. W. Farquhar, January 15, 1905 in ‘E’ Series, Diocese of Sierra Leone, Vol. 61B, 1906, R.H.L.
Four years after Farquhar’s arrival, French colonial authorities officially ordered all Mission schools in the Pongas closed. France had already established the French Colony of Guinea in 1890 and was not keen to encourage extensive English influence in their territory that also covered the domain of the Pongas Mission. This prompted an S.P.G. conference in London in October 1894 to discuss the fate of the Mission. The participants included the Primate of the West Indian Church, and the Bishops of Jamaica and Sierra Leone. They unanimously agreed to open a new Mission station at Kambia, then in British territory.\footnote{Barrow, \textit{Fifty Years}, p. 139.} Rev. S. Cole was assigned the new job. With the Kambia King’s approval and provision of his own son Mollai Davies Bangura, the African catechist established the station in 1895.\footnote{Report of S. Cole for the Year Ending December 31, 1895, Kambia, the Great Scarcies River in ‘E’ Series, Missionary Reports, Diocese of Sierra Leone, Vol. 58B, 1895, R.H.L; Barrow, \textit{Fifty Years}, pp. 141-142; Report of S. Cole for the Year Ending December 31, 1903, Kambia, in ‘E’ Series, Missionary Reports, Diocese of Sierra Leone, Vol. 58B, 1903, R.H.L.} Rev. Cole also received £28 from Sierra Leonean traders in the area to build a church.\footnote{Report of S. Cole for the Quarter Ending March 31, 1900 in E55b, CLS 131, R.H.L.} There was already a community of these traders in Kambia since the early decades of the nineteenth century.\footnote{Christopher H. Fyfe, “European and Creole Influence in the Hinterland of Sierra Leone Before 1896” in \textit{Sierra Leone Studies}, New Series, No. 5-8, December 1955-57), p.119.} In 1900, Rev. Cole also built a Day School. It had seventy-nine students, forty-one boys and thirty-eight girls. Sixty of the students were from the Temne, Susu, Fullah, Limba, Mandingo, and Sarahulay ethnic groups, while the remaining nineteen were Sierra Leoneans.\footnote{Report of S. Cole for the Quarter Ending March 31, 1900 in E55b, CLS 131, R.H.L.}

The new station at Kambia was important to the Mission. In the face of French restrictions in the Pongas, Kambia station represented hope for West Indian missionaries. Most importantly, it was the first and only station in British territory. Added to this happiness was the arrival of even more African-descended missionaries from Jamaica in 1896. William Alfred
Burris and A. F. O. March were also Codrington College graduates sent to the Pongas by the Church in Jamaica. Their arrival also confirmed the Bishop of Jamaica’s statement in 1902 that West Indians were still interested in the Pongas Mission. Most importantly, however, it showed that even whereas West Indians were suffering themselves as a result of the continuous depression of the sugar industry, they still had the will to help the Mission. Pascoe relates this suffering in 1896 as follows: “One clergyman in 1896 more than once found himself, pending the arrival of the Society’s aid, ‘without a penny for a week’s subsistence beyond the Sunday offertory of an average of less than four shillings.’” Rev. Burris was ordained Deacon in Freetown on February 19, 1899 and served the Pongas Mission for thirty-one years before retiring and resettling with his wife in Pratville, Jamaica in 1927 on a pension of £75:4s:8d, almost half of his annual salary of £160. It is not known what finally became of Rev. March, but by the late 1890s, he was still in the service of the Mission.

The depression of the sugar industry that partly contributed to such suffering was the subject of a West Indian commission report that painted a gloomy picture of the industry in 1897. In that year also, a strong hurricane added to the misery of the people. It devastated many Windward Islands especially St. Vincent and Barbados. The commander of HMS Intrepid reported the destruction of St. Vincent in the following words:

> It is impossible to overstate the damage done to every town and village in this island, and to crops and works. The whole island has the appearance of having been fired

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159 Barrow, *Fifty Years*, p. 147.
160 Bishop of Jamaica to Rev. Dr. H. H. Montgomery, February 27, 1902 in *USPG, D142C, Diocese of Sierra Leone*, Vol. 142C, 1902, R.H.L.
161 Pascoe, *Two Hundred Year*, p. 205.
162 *Report for the Year* 1927, pp. 9-10.
163 Barrow, *Fifty Years*, p. 149.
164 These comprised of Barbados, St. Vincent, St. Lucia, the Grenadines, and Grenada. Until 1889, when it was united with Trinidad, Tobago was also part of this group of islands. See Pascoe, *Two Hundred Years*, p. 196.
through; utter desolation prevails everywhere. Hardly a given spot is to be seen where before all was verdant and beautiful to look upon; the towns and villages, as viewed from the sea, have the appearance of having been bombarded; churches, houses, and public buildings are mostly leveled to the ground, and those that are still standing will have to come down and be rebuilt…

Pascoe also stated that,

…the Colony of St. Vincent was reduced to a state of indescribable pauperism – 30,000 of the population were left sick and destitute like helpless chicken, some being driven to living in cellars, caves, and empty barrels, and the loss to Church of England property amounted to £20,000.

The hurricane also seriously affected Barbados and would have caused the closing down of Codrington College if the S.P.G. had not intervened financially. Had that happened, the Pongas Mission probably would also have collapsed because the college supplied most of its missionary staff. The Leeward Islands also suffered serious effects from the 1899 hurricanes. Pascoe noted that these hurricanes caused

… a great loss of life, including one of the Montserrat clergy, and a loss of over £7000 on church, school, and rectory buildings alone, and depriving the people of the ability to contribute to clerical salaries. The Society again came to the rescue, with special aid amounting to £800, £300 being towards the relief of the clergy, some of whom were on the verge of starvation.

While the West Indies islands were experiencing the devastating effects of the hurricanes, their Mission in West Africa was going through some transformation. Rev. McEwen had opened the All Saints Church in the French colonial capital of Conakry on January 4, 1900 as part of the Pongas Mission, and Rev. Burris was ordained Deacon in Freetown a month later. These events were a cause for celebration. However, the celebration was short-lived. Rev. McEwen

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165 Barrow, Fifty Years, pp. 149-150.
166 Pascoe, Two Hundred Years, p.205.
167 Barrow, Fifty Years, p. 150.
168 This group of islands comprised of Antigua, Montserrat, St. Kitts, Nevis, Dominica, Barbuda, Anguilla, and some of the Virgin Islands. See Pascoe, Two Hundred Years, p. 210.
169 Ibid., p. 215c.
170 Barrow, Fifty Years, p. 151; Report of J. B. McEwen for December 31, 1900.
died on June 7, 1901 after serving the Mission for a little more than thirty years.\textsuperscript{171} Writing on McEwen’s death, a commentator wrote that the death “… not only closes the life of a most faithful and zealous Missionary, it leaves a gap which will remain open.”\textsuperscript{172} In fact, as Bishop J. Taylor Smith of Sierra Leone remarked, Rev. McEwen “… was the very heart of the Mission, and on him had practically devolved its management for many years.”\textsuperscript{173}

Upon the Rev. McEwen’s death, Rev. C. W. Farquhar was appointed Senior Missionary to replace him. Like his successor, Farquhar faced numerous challenges. French restrictions on the Pongas Mission would make his tenure and those of his successors even more difficult. Initially, however, the new Senior Missionary received a few more African-descended missionaries from the West Indies. They included the Jamaican Joseph W. Baker, who joined his countryman, Joseph Walrond, then Principal of the Boys Boarding Schools at Cassa and later Kambia. Educated in England, Rev. Baker was later admitted into Holy Orders in Freetown as deacon and priest in 1911 and 1912 respectively. As Headmaster, he was in charge of Kambia Boarding School, having replaced the late Rev. Walrond. By 1928, Rev. Baker was drawing an annual salary of £132 from the S.P.G.\textsuperscript{174} He died suddenly in March 1933 and was buried in Kambia near his wife who had died two months earlier.\textsuperscript{175} Bermudan Cecil Barger Conton who married Rev. Farquhar’s eldest daughter, Miss O. Farquhar also joined the Mission staff. Privately educated at Oxford, Conton was ordained deacon and priest in Freetown in 1918 and 1921 respectively. During his years with the Mission, Rev. Conton was stationed at various locations, such as Conakry, Boke, and Rio Nunez, all extensions of the Pongas Mission. He was

\textsuperscript{171} Pascoe, Two Hundred Years, pp.801, 930j.
\textsuperscript{172} West Indian African Mission, September 16, 1901.
\textsuperscript{173} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{174} Expenditure for 1928 in D320, CLS 131, 1928, R.H.L.
\textsuperscript{175} Report for the Year 1933, p. 17.
later transferred to Bathurst, Gambia as Chaplain. In Bathurst, his strictness with the so-called moral delinquents was deeply resented.\(^{176}\) Thus, after three years, he returned to Conakry with the hope of proceeding to Bermuda on a furlough. That trip never materialized. Conton died of double pneumonia in 1927 and was buried in Conakry.\(^{177}\) Other West Indian missionaries of African descent included Rev. Conton’s widow, Mrs. O. Conton and her sister, Miss Jenny Farquhar, as well as De Jean Sigismund McEwen. He was born in Fotoba, Isles de Los, to West Indian parents from Grenada. His father was the late Rev. J. B. McEwen. The younger McEwen graduated from Oxford and joined the Pongas Mission in 1904 three years after his father’s death. He was an ordained member of the Mission staff with an annual salary of £165 by 1928. In 1943, Bishop John Daly of the Gambia and Rio Pongas made him the second Archdeacon of the Pongas.\(^{178}\) Ernest de Coteau of Trinidad later joined this veteran missionary in the French Colony of Guinea.

The Pongas Mission also had the services of a handful of locally trained African catechists. They included George Fernandez, Martin Luther Fernandez, S. Hector Fernandez, Scipio Gomez, and most importantly, Mosses Yarneh McAuley, who became the first Susu priest and was put in charge of all Pongas stations after the death of Rev Farquhar on February 22, 1929 and McEwen’s removal to Conakry. The employment of these local catechists demonstrates the Mission’s limited success in training local clergymen. However, the same could not be said about the Mission’s quest for a self-supporting church in the Pongas in the 1920s and 1930s. During these decades, the S.P.G. reduced most of its financial commitments to the Mission. In 1928, for example, the Society withdrew its support for Mission boys in Farringia

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\(^{176}\) *Report for the Year* 1927, p. 11.

\(^{177}\) Ibid., pp. 11-12.

\(^{178}\) Bishop Daly to Friends, Bathurst, Gambia, May 1943 in *‘E’ Series, Africa – A-J (Gambia)*, Vol. E94/1-9, 1939-1951, R.H.L.
and Conakry. A year later, it contemplated cutting the Mission staff salaries by seven percent. In fact, in reality, the Society had already cut £200 from its total contribution of £1,014:19s:3d leaving the Mission with a balance of £814:19s:3d in 1929.

From 1930, the S.P.G promised to pay only the salaries, pensions, and the educational allowance of Mission children, leaving the rest of the money to be raised locally. This meant that the Society would provide Canon McEwen, then Senior Missionary, £1,208:6s:8d divided into quarterly remittances of £283:5s:6d. In light of the new financial policy, R. Bryson, the Honorary Secretary of the S.P.G. emphasized to W. G. Squibb, the Society’s Accountant that, “The Committee have fixed this as a definite amount, and anything over and above that must be found locally.” It is clear from the above statement that, after seventy-five years of support, the S.P.G. was no longer willing to shoulder the financial responsibility without the Africans contributing more. This rigid position might have made it even more necessary for West Indian missionaries to strive for a self-supporting church in the Pongas and to train their own local clergy.


In the foregoing I have tried to show that although the idea of self-support, African agency and mission work combined fine liberalism with practical, on-the-ground necessity, their realization

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179 Hon. Treasurer to W. G. Squibb, February 15, 1929 in D328, CLS 131, 1929, R.H.L; Hon. Treasurer to W. G. Squibb, March 15, 1929 in Ibid.
180 Hon. Treasurer to W. F. France, July 24, 1929 in Ibid. W. F. France was the SPG Overseas Secretary at the time.
181 Hon. Treasurer to W. G. Squibb, March 13, 1929; West Indian African Mission Report for the Year 1929, 28 in Ibid.
182 Hon. Treasurer to W. G. Squibb, December 10, 1930 in D340, CLS 131, R.H.L.
183 Bryson to W. G. Squibb, April 2, 1931 in Ibid.
184 Ibid.
was immensely fraught. The idea had been floating around CMS circles since the 1820s. Fourah Bay College in Sierra Leone was founded in 1827 for the purpose of training local teachers and clergy for an African Church.\(^{185}\) Between 1840 and 1870, the idea of a self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating church, often referred to, as the “three selves,” became an integral part of missionary strategy in West Africa.\(^{186}\) It was the brainchild of Reverends Rufus Anderson, Secretary of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, 1832-1866, and Henry Venn, Honorary Secretary of the CMS, 1841-1872.\(^{187}\) Both men were committed to creating indigenous ministries that would work through their own cultural heritage. As the career of Duport showed, however, these ideas were in conflict with certain fundamental realities, in particular the prevailing racial assumptions, and also the basic issue of resource endowment. This was an era of European imperial ascendancy in West Africa, and the Church was an important, if sometimes reluctant, player in the imperial game. This issue became even more pertinent when the French finally took over the Pongas and began to assert their authority, as I will show in the next chapter.

Although the CMS adopted the idea of a self-supporting church and African agency, it was motivated mostly by necessity. In 1841, it encountered a serious financial crisis that made self-support even more necessary.\(^{188}\) Self-support was urgent in West Africa, where the European mortality rate was very high at the time.\(^{189}\) Between 1825 and 1834, out of the 26

\(^{185}\) Curtin, *The Image*, p. 423.
\(^{186}\) Williams, *The Ideal*, p. 1.
\(^{187}\) Ibid.
\(^{188}\) Ibid., p. 3.
missionaries that the CMS sent to West Africa, 18 died.\textsuperscript{190} These deaths increased the calls for African agency in the propagation of the Gospel on the continent. There were more calls for African pastors in light of the high European mortality rate during the Niger Expedition of 1841. In just over two months of that expedition, 49 of the 145 European participants died as a result of diseases they caught on the river.\textsuperscript{191} As a result of the tragedy, the CMS adopted the following resolution:

\begin{quote}
That, adverting to the afflictive results of the Niger Expedition and the position of the Society in Sierra Leone, the Committee are of the opinion that further measures should be adopted, in order to train Natives in Sierra Leone with a view to their being employed as Teachers of their countrymen, and in order also to fix the most considerable native dialects, and make translations into those dialects for Missionary purposes.\textsuperscript{192}
\end{quote}

A new page in CMS policy had been turned and Venn was at the centre of it all. He was convinced that an African Church could succeed as a self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating one. In the 1850s and 1860s, Venn articulated his views on self-support and African agency as follows:

\begin{quote}
…it should be borne in mind that the progress of a Mission depends upon the training up and the location of Native Pastors; and that, as it has been happily expressed the \textit{euthanasia} of a mission” takes place when a missionary, surrounded by well-trained Native congregations under Native pastors, is able to resign all pastoral work into their hands, and gradually relax his superintendence over the pastors themselves, till it insensibly ceases, and so the Mission passes into a settled Christian community. Then the Missionary and all Missionary agencies should be transferred to the “regions beyond.”\textsuperscript{193}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{190} Williams, \textit{The Ideal}, p. 4.
\textsuperscript{192} Schon, \textit{Journal}, p. xi.
\textsuperscript{193} Quoted in Warren, \textit{To Apply the Gospel}, p. 28.
Venn, perhaps influenced by the famous Pan Africanist intellectual Dr. Edward Wilmot Blyden (with whom he maintained correspondence), feared that it would be a tragedy if the African Church functioned along European patterns. In his view, the European missionary should surrender his control of the church to the local African pastor after its successful establishment. Venn argued that the pastor should be one of the people and maintained by them. Venn was against missionaries acting as pastors and doing everything in line with European patterns, as was the case among Creoles in Sierra Leone at the time. He also rejected the argument that “because the pastor must not be cut off from its flock, he must be stuck to their social standards and preserved ‘unspoilt.’” Instead, Venn supported the idea that the indigenous teacher “… must always be a little ahead of the civilization of the people around him and by his example and influence head that civilization forward.”

Venn’s ideas might have been easier said than done after the 1850s. As Williams argues, after the 1860s, “… racism began to displace the ideal of equality in the English thought, and paternalism or antagonism became the norm.” Such a situation would not facilitate the evolution of an African Church. Hastings relates that, “The establishment of a native Church required the adoption of African ways, not the imposition of European ones.” Ironically, in West Africa, despite efforts by people like Venn to establish an African Church, the opposite occurred. After 1850, the Age of Humanitarianism in which Venn grew up in England was no

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196 Ibid.
197 Williams, *Black Americans*, p. 142.
more.\textsuperscript{199} As Shenk argues, the next twenty-five years following 1850, “were a time of transition, which finally erupted into the Age of Imperialism for which the Berlin Congress of 1885 provides a convenient starting point and symbol.”\textsuperscript{200} According to Shenk, unlike “… the earlier ‘conversionist’\textsuperscript{201} ideal of the humanitarians, imperialists advocated ‘trusteeship’ – which translated into colonialism.”\textsuperscript{202} They also harboured negative and paternalistic attitudes towards local cultures, which, in collaboration with the missionaries, they tried hard to eradicate.\textsuperscript{203} According to Ayandele, European missionaries in West Africa “saw nothing worth preserving in African customs and institutions outside the languages.”\textsuperscript{204} In fact, not only did some European missionaries seek to destroy the African cultural heritage, they also infantilized an entire race. Again, Ayandele lamented that European missionaries in West Africa “… regarded the converts and their subordinate African staff as ‘infants’ reclaimed only recently from superstition and barbarism.”\textsuperscript{205} He further states that, “Their attitude was mainly paternalistic; they looked upon themselves as ‘Tutors and Governors’ and behaved as ‘little local popes.’”\textsuperscript{206}

\textsuperscript{199} Venn was a child of the Clapham Sect, a group of distinguished laymen, including William Wilberforce, Henry Thornton, Charles Grant, James Stephen, and others. His father, John Venn was the Rector of Clapham, as well as the spiritual guide and friend of the Sect. Henry Venn was brought up to love Africans from the very beginning.


\textsuperscript{202} Shenk, \textit{Henry Venn}, p. 107.

\textsuperscript{203} During colonialism, colonial officials and missionaries worked hand-in-hand on many issues relating to indigenous culture. They were on different sides of the same coin.

\textsuperscript{204} Ayandele, \textit{The Missionary Impact}, p. 183.

\textsuperscript{205} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{206} Ibid.
As expected, Africans resented such condescending attitudes. In May 1881, Archdeacon Henry Johnson, the spokesman of Western-educated Africans in Lagos made his views and those of his people known to the British Consul, T. J. Hutchinson:

You in England cannot fancy how those who come here inflated with the idea that they are the ‘dominant race’, do treat with something like contempt the natives of the country. The truth is that they regard us this day in pretty much the same light as our forefathers were, who were rescued from the iron pangs of slavery by the philanthropists of a former generation. We are not over sensitive, but at the same time we are not unduly pachydermatous… But does anyone think we have no feelings at all, or no rights, which are to be respected…? Having educated us, you will not allow us to think and speak and act like men.\(^{207}\)

Western-educated Africans in West Africa resented the superior attitudes of European missionaries. However, they were inclined to embrace Venn’s idea of an independent African church.\(^{208}\) In Nigeria, as in other places, this was for political rather than religious reasons.\(^{209}\) Commenting on the issue Ayandele writes, “It contained the principle of national independence that could be logically employed for indigenization of political independence.”\(^{210}\) Ayandele further states that the administrative experience that they gained in the church prepared Nigerians for such independence.\(^{211}\) Religiously, however, African missionaries saw the establishment of an indigenous church as an opportunity to “graduate from schoolmaster to catechist, then to priest and archdeacon if they had sufficient ability; even the episcopate was not beyond their reach.”\(^{212}\)

In fact, controlling the episcopate was always in the cards for some of the Africans. James Johnson, the spokesman for the Native Pastorate of Sierra Leone, supported the absolute

\(^{207}\) Quoted in Ibid.
\(^{208}\) Shenk, *Henry Venn*, p. 106.
\(^{209}\) Ibid.
\(^{211}\) Ibid., p. 191.
\(^{212}\) Ibid.
control of the African Church at all levels by Africans. For Johnson, such control was necessary. In his view, “European missionaries could not identify themselves with African racial ambitions and idiosyncrasies.”

Like Venn, therefore, Johnson was of the conviction that continuous European missionary dominance “would stunt the full development of Africans, eroding such qualities as ‘the superior physique, the manly independence, the courage and bravery, the daring and self-reliance and the readiness to face difficulties’ which Africans who had not come in contact with Europeans were supposed to possess.” Johnson, therefore, wanted to see Africans or people in the “New World” who were of African descent to hold positions in the Missions and Colonial Governments in West Africa.

Rev. James Frederick Schon did not share Johnson’s enthusiasm for employing people of African descent in West Africa. Although Schon praised West Indians for being more exposed to European lifestyles compared to their Liberated African counterparts in Sierra Leone, he argued against using them for missionary service in West Africa. This, he argued, “would prove a drawback, rather than a help.” Schon’s views stemmed from his belief that West Indians had proud notions of themselves. Perhaps there was some merit to those views given the fact that their Eurafrian host chiefs and Sierra Leonean assistants have accused many of the Pongas missionaries of ethnocentrism. Nevertheless, whether they were ethnocentric or not, African-descended West Indian missionaries played a pivotal role in the quest for self-support and African agency in the Pongas Country.

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213 Ibid., p. 187.
214 Ibid.
215 Ibid., p. 186.
217 Ibid.
The Pongas Mission organizers across the Atlantic and their missionaries in the field had toyed with the idea of self-support and African agency since the Mission’s inception. Whether this was a direct result of Venn’s policy or not, it is not clear. What is clear, however, is that the ideal of a self-supporting church as articulated by Venn was already in practice in Sierra Leone and was an example for the Pongas Mission. In fact, in 1867, the Secretary of the English Committee wrote to Chief Styles Lightburn Jr., then head of Eurafrican chiefs in the Pongas, telling him and his people to use the local church in Freetown as an example for them.\textsuperscript{218} Even without such a reminder, the Mission and the people of the Pongas were already gearing for a self-supporting church and for local Susu clergy. At the time, young Lewis Wilkinson was being groomed for missionary training in England. As Head Missionary, Rev. Phillips had hoped to establish an African Ministry and to have the young Wilkinson as missionary to his people.\textsuperscript{219} Commenting on this possibility, Phillips remarked: “The Mission can never flourish [as it should] until Sõsõs are trained up as clergymen and schoolmasters for their own countrymen. Until this is done, the Christian religion must be an exotic here.”\textsuperscript{220} To this effect, the S.P.G. commenced fundraising in England.

The Mission seemed to have been committed to forming local clergy or to using local Susu catechists in the Pongas Country right from its establishment. However, ordaining only three Susu priests in a hundred years, and the first one after more than sixty-six years of existence, leaves one to wonder about its efforts. Since his arrival in the Pongas, Duport continually thought of sending a couple of his students for training at the Missionary Department

\textsuperscript{218} M. F. Vol. XII, 1967, p. 364.  
\textsuperscript{219} Vassady, “The Role”, pp. 210-211.  
\textsuperscript{220} Progress of the Pongas Mission, 1860, p. 11.
of Codrington College in Barbados.\textsuperscript{221} That plan never materialized until about a hundred years later, when, in the late 1950s, two Gambians, Maximillan Davies Jones and Jacob Williams were admitted into that college.\textsuperscript{222} Both students successfully completed their Divinity course and exams at Codrington College under the Community of the Resurrection in 1959 and had returned to the Gambia, where they served the Pongas Mission in various capacities as ordained pastors.\textsuperscript{223} Nevertheless, by 1866, Duport had already employed young Edward Bickersteth from Sierra Leone in Domingia at a monthly salary of £4 and had also begun teaching him the Susu language in an effort to prepare for future missionary duties.\textsuperscript{224}

The Mission’s attempt to form a local clergy can be attributed to several factors. Firstly, it wanted an African Ministry in the Pongas Country that could support its own teachers and catechists to reduce or supplement S.P.G. expenditure.\textsuperscript{225} This was in line with Venn’s idea of a self-supporting church in West Africa. Secondly, with increasing Muslim opposition to the Mission, training students to support themselves through their own labour would serve as an example and could attract others to the new religion.\textsuperscript{226} The Mission organizers prayed for this to happen sooner rather than later.\textsuperscript{227} Spreading the Gospel through local catechists was a financial necessity for Christian Missions in Africa during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Not only were local catechists able to propagate the Gospel in areas that foreign missionaries could not

\textsuperscript{222} The Gambia-Pongas Magazine, Autumn 1958, p. 16; The Gambia-Pongas Magazine, Autumn 1959, pp. 3-4.
\textsuperscript{223} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{224} M. F. Vol. XL, 1866, p. 158.
\textsuperscript{225} Bullock to Turpin, August 1, 1874 in CLS 13, West Indies Letters Sent, R.H.L; W. T. Bullock to the Bishop of Sierra Leone, October 15, 1878 in Ibid.
\textsuperscript{226} Bullock to Turpin, May 21, 1875 in CLS 130, West Indies Letters Sent, Vol. II, 1868-88, R.H.L.
\textsuperscript{227} Bullock to Turpin, August 1, 1874 in Ibid.
reach for health reasons but they were also cheaper to maintain. Furthermore, as Williams pointed out, “Not only were African missionaries more credible than outsiders in preaching to their own society, but their Western education made them more effective than traditional African leaders in dealing with whites.”

In West Africa, overseas missionaries, including those descended from Africans, but particularly Europeans, found it even more necessary to form local clergy. To spread the Gospel, they had to venture into the region themselves. However, diseases such as malaria and yellow fever often claimed their lives. Although Black missionaries from the West Indies and the United States tended to outlive their white counterparts in West Africa, they also suffered a considerably high rate of illness and death caused by the tropical climate and diseases. Those in the Pongas Country knew this reality too well. As Schon remarked, “… it must never be thought that a black skin is a sufficient safeguard against diseases incident to the climate of Africa.” Earlier in the Pongas Country, the problem of malaria and yellow fever contributed to the missionaries’ request to train local Susu clergy for missionary duties in the area. In 1866, Duport wrote: “We must endeavour to train up our own men, who are more able to bear the climate and endure the hardships of their native place than strangers.” Similar problems befall Afro-American missionaries of the Baptist and Methodist denominations in Sierra Leone and Liberia. Like their West Indian counterparts in the Pongas Country, they also considered training local agents for

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228 Ngwabi Bhebe, *Christianity and Traditional Religion in Western Zimbabwe, 1859-1923* (London: Longman, 1979), p. 130. Bhebe argues that local African pastors were cheaper to maintain because they lived a simple lifestyle similar to that of their flock.
232 *M. F.* Vol. XI, 1866, p. 158.
the propagation of the Gospel in their homelands in the 1890s for the same reasons.\textsuperscript{233} In the Pongas Mission, other factors also contributed to the quest to train local Susu clergy. Assistants arriving in the area from the Caribbean often took quite some time to learn the local language. At the time, the expanding Mission needed assistants who were fluent in the vernacular and these were not found immediately in the new pastors from the Mission’s home base.

However, despite this aim, huge obstacles made the implementation of the schemes in the Pongas difficult. Neither the chiefs, indigenous or Eurafrican, nor their subjects had the financial means for such undertaking. At the time, trade with Europeans and Americans was very low due to the American Civil War (1861-65) and the Franco-Prussian War seven years later (1870-71).\textsuperscript{234} The absence of trade resulted in severe shortages of cash to support the schemes. Rev. Doughlin collected only £2:17s:3d during the first half of 1871, and £4:14s:7d for the whole year in Fallangia.\textsuperscript{235} In Domingia, for the last six months of 1869, he collected £4:10s:41/2d in offertory.\textsuperscript{236} The small offertory collections were due to the fact that most of the congregation members of the Mission were slaves or just poor. Many of them could not even support themselves, let alone an institution that the relatively well-off people did not support fully. Duport commented on this lack of interest as follows: “The masters will never do it, and would prefer our being miles away, except for the temporal advantages our presence affords.”\textsuperscript{237} This attitude resulted from the fact that many slave owners were of the conviction that the new religion had denied them the right to discipline their human possessions, as they were accustomed to.

\textsuperscript{233} Williams, \textit{Black Americans}, p. 148.
\textsuperscript{234} \textit{Progress of the Pongas Report}, 1870, p. 13; Fyfe, \textit{A History}, p. 331.
\textsuperscript{235} Ibid., p. 7.
\textsuperscript{236} \textit{Notes of the Pongas Mission}, 1871; \textit{Progress of the Pongas Mission}, 1870, p. 8.
\textsuperscript{237} \textit{M. F.} Vol. XIV, February 1, 1869, p. 48.
During this period, however, the most important obstacle to achieving the goal of training local clergy in the Pongas was the lack of boarding schools. In their direct appeal to supporters in Barbados and England in 1873, Reverends P. H. Doughlin, J. H. A. Duport, and J. B. McEwen asked for funds to open such schools for each station in the area. As in earlier years, the missionaries complained that their refusal to accept students already offered them stemmed from their inability to board them. They argued that boarding schools were needed to train future schoolmasters, catechists, and even ministers for the future African Church, something that Venn would have applauded.

The need for such institutions, however, had other important reasons. First, the missionaries had hoped to train local Susu children in Christian doctrines to enable them to propagate the Gospel among their own people, while at the same time, denying the rival Muslim clerics the converts. Second, the schools were also to be used as weapons in the missionaries’ battle against Islam and polygamy. The latter was seen as the backbone of the former. During his tour of the Pongas in 1887, Archdeacon Holme of St. Kitts remarked that boarding and training girls in Mission schools would help eradicate polygamy and allow monogamy to prevail after the current “generation of polygamists die out.” This dream was not realized. A couple of boarding schools were built in the late 1880s and in the early 1930s, but French authorities closed them after Britain ceded the territories to France. Most of the girls eventually married Muslim men instead of Christian men because they had no choice.

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239 M. F. July 1875, p. 193.
240 M. F. April 1, Vol. XXXII, 1887, p. 104.
In their struggle against Muslim competition, West Indian missionaries also emulated the strategy of their Muslim rivals. This involved accepting children and personally boarding and training them until they became young adults.\textsuperscript{243} The strategy was similar in procuring the children, but was fundamentally different in its implementation. For instance, unlike Muslim clerics who accepted children without asking for parental support, the missionaries often asked for food, clothing, and financial support.\textsuperscript{244} While some parents did provide such support, even though temporary, others could not or refused to do so. They were not accustomed to supporting children who were under the tutelage of others and could work. As Rev. Turpin pointed out, “It has never been the custom, and they cannot see the necessity of it.”\textsuperscript{245} Responding to Turpin’s repeated requests to provide support for his children at the Geme St. Jean Mission House in Rio Nunez, a parent stated that, “… he neither sold cloth, nor knew how to make it, when he was a boy he used to go naked, and as for food, he almost died of starvation: his children must do as he did.”\textsuperscript{246} Turpin also noted that, a mother once approached him and told him to allow her son to wear the shirt she provided him on Sundays and let him “go naked during the week.”\textsuperscript{247} These attitudes do not reflect or even indicate an indifference of Africans to self-support and African agency. They simply demonstrate the people’s poverty and helplessness in the absence of international trade and the ongoing poor crop harvests. At this time, rice was very scarce in the Pongas country, the Rio Nunez, and in the interior due to drought and crop failure.\textsuperscript{248}

\begin{itemize}
    \item \textsuperscript{243} M. F. July 1875, p. 197.
    \item \textsuperscript{244} Ibid.
    \item \textsuperscript{245} Ibid.
    \item \textsuperscript{246} Ibid.
    \item \textsuperscript{247} Ibid., pp. 197-198.
    \item \textsuperscript{248} Ibid., p. 198.
\end{itemize}
drought from 1865 to 1867 also resulted in the failure of the groundnut crop and people’s inability to even buy their own clothing. 249

As expected, the lack of parental support drained the missionaries financially and emotionally. In 1882, Rev. Turpin was personally responsible for six boys, while Mrs. Duport had two more under her care in that year, and in 1888, when she still cared for William Morgan and Joe Ormond. 250 The two missionaries had to support these children with annual salaries of £120 and £30 respectively. 251 During that period, it cost £6 annually to board and to train each child. 252 Turpin had asked the S.P.G for an annual grant of £25 or £50 to help support eight to ten children, who he had hoped would in time “form the foundation of a Christian community in a Mohammedan country.” 253 His calls fell on deaf ears in England.

By the mid-1880s, the absence of boarding schools had become not only an obstacle to the future African Church in the Pongas, but it was an immediate financial nightmare for some of the missionaries. Some of them even perceived their own voluntary boarding and training of children as a charity forced on them. Consequently, they were no longer enthusiastic about the whole thing. As Rev. Doughlin noted, “The absence of a boarding school is ruining me. I have five boys and two girls wholly dependent on me for their support. I wished to be saved from this forced charity. I no longer do it cheerfully, because I have to think of my own children.” 254

249 M. F. Vol. XI, 1865, p. 96; M. F. Vol. XII, 1867, p. 332.
250 Report for the Year 1888, p. 19 in PER 134, F. 14, West Indian African Mission, 1859-88, R.H.L.
251 M. F. July 1875, p. 198. Mrs. Duport continued to serve the Mission after the death of her husband in 1873.
252 Ibid.
253 Ibid.
254 Ibid. Also, Extracts from a Report by the Rev, P. H. Doughlin at Domingia, April 12, 1882 in E37, R.H.L.
Despite such feelings, however, the missionaries continued to support the idea of self-support and African agency. The Pongas people themselves remained motivated by the scheme. Between 1874 and 1875, both Fallangia and Domingia residents prepared Self-Aid Subscription Books to register any cash subscribed towards the self-support and local clergy training schemes. They held fundraising events with the sole aim of supporting the schemes. In Fallangia, where a Susu trainee was already employed as a schoolmaster, £4:5s:0d was collected during a fundraising event. The sum of £8 was also collected there a few days later. Both collections were registered in the Self-Aid Subscription Book. In 1900, Richard Wilkinson, the son of Chief Charles Wilkinson raised £21 in Domingia for the salary of the local teacher there. All of these sums, while generously contributed, were far less than the Mission’s total regular expenditure, which, by 1865, topped £836:4s:0d. In 1872, the staff salaries alone totaled £540.

Nevertheless, even with such enthusiasm, the self-support scheme did not take off as expected for the reasons already discussed. Amid the disappointments, however, the missionaries and their flock had a cause to celebrate. In 1889, the Mission finally opened its own boarding school at Cassa in the Isles de Los through the Boarding School Fund established in England for that purpose. In 1888, that Fund had a total sum of £459:4s:11d. Rev. Farquhar was appointed its first Headmaster in 1890.

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256 Ibid.
258 Progress of the Pongas Mission, 1882, p. 21.
Moses Yarneh McAuley: The Making of the First Susu Priest in the Pongas, 1890-1935

Among the Cassa Boarding School’s first boarders, was an eight-year old Susu boy from Fotoba in the Isles de Los. He was Moses Yarneh McAuley. McAuley joined Rev Farquhar in Conakry in 1905 when Britain ceded the islands to France and the French authorities went on to close all Mission schools in the area. Supported at the boarding school by the Children’s Guild of St. Mary Magdalene, McAuley went on to study at Fourah Bay College in Freetown. His study there was partly funded by an Austrian lady. In 1913, he returned to work as a catechist under Rev. Farquhar in Conakry. Five years later, Bishop J. Walmsley of Sierra Leone ordained McAuley deacon at the All Saints Church in Conakry. On January 30, 1921, he ordained him priest.

McAuley’s admission to Holy Orders, first as deacon, and later as priest, had enormous significance for the Mission and for his own people. It was not only the first time ever a Susu had been admitted to Holy Orders, but it was also the first time a solid foundation for the African Church in the area had been laid. The symbolism was also important because the missionaries always wanted to train Susu agents, who would “form the foundation of a Christian community in a Mohammedan country” and now they had one in Rev. McAuley. Although this was not achieved, McAuley went on to become a very dedicated priest within the Pongas Mission.

Upon Archdeacon Farquhar’s death in 1929, Canon McEwen took charge of the Conakry station and Rev. McAuley was sent to Domingia to be in charge of all the Pongas stations. There, he commenced the repairs of the Mission’s infrastructure. Finally, after more than six decades, and after all the denials of Black superintendence by the Mission organizers, the infighting between African-descended West Indian missionaries and their Eurafrican host chiefs

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262 Ibid.
263 Rev. Turpin entertained this thought in 1875. See M. F. July 1875, p. 198.
264 Report for the Year 1931, p. 7.
and Sierra Leonean assistants for control, and the struggle to establish a self-supporting church headed by local Susu clergy, a son of the land had prevailed. The cradle of the West Indian Mission in West Africa was now under the supervision of a Susu pastor. Thus, despite the long time it took to do so, the Pongas Mission had at last succeeded in producing a local priest to join that exclusive club of priesthood.

As for the Mission’s goal of a self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating church in the Pongas as articulated by Venn, it remained largely a dream. In 1948, Bishop Daly of the Gambia and Rio Pongas acknowledged that such a goal might not even be achieved in his lifetime. Actually, that goal died together with Rev. McAuley in Fotoba on June 23, 1936. After eighteen years of service with the Pongas Mission, Moses Yarneh McAuley was dead at age forty-six, almost seven years after his wife had died on October 6, 1929. The Mission nurtured his three orphan boys. One of them, William (Willy) Yarneh McAuley later became a prominent missionary himself. In fact, he became one of the Pongas Mission’s four Susu priests and the second Archdeacon of the Pongas. McAuley was eventually stationed at Fotoba, French Guinea, and later in Conakry, Republic of Guinea, while Jean-Baptiste McAuley became an Agricultural Instructor at the Pongas Mission’s Christian Village in the Gambia in the 1940s.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has examined the period during which the Pongas Mission was under the sole control of African-descended West Indian missionaries. Between 1863 and 1935, the West Indian Mission to West Africa was confronted with various challenges that contributed to its

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eventual failure. Its failure to encourage more English trade, particularly in local agricultural products and allegations of illicit sexual relations and illegal trading put West Indian missionaries of African descent on a collision course with Eurafrikan chiefs and Western-educated teachers and catechists from Sierra Leone, resulting in the downfall of John Henry A. Duport, the first Black Head Missionary in the Pongas Country. Financially, it has been argued that devastating hurricanes in the West Indies and the depressed sugar industry there, together with reduced S.P.G. spending, made it even more difficult for the Pongas Mission.

It is also shown in this chapter that self-support and African agency were necessary in the Pongas. The organizers and the missionaries hoped that a self-supporting church could reduce the financial burden of the S.P.G and other supporting organizations abroad. Furthermore, considering the harsh environment of West Africa, and the fact that African-descended pastors like their European counterparts, were not immune to that environment, African agency became a necessity. Although the Mission had a limited success in training a few local clergy in such a long time, its efforts to establish a self-supporting, self-generating, and self-propagating church did not materialize. Chapter 5 discusses the deleterious pre-colonial and colonial effects of the French on the Mission. It examines how French colonial policies affected the Mission in the Pongas Country, and how the missionary enterprise tried to cope with them.
Chapter 5

French Interests and Influence in the Rivières du Sud, 1860-1935

This chapter discusses into the very difficult relationship between the French colonial authorities and the West Indian Mission in the Pongas Country between 1860 and 1935. It shows the crippling effects of French restrictions on the Rio Pongas Mission throughout the period covered here. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, France had lost its territories in continental North America, and was left only with plantation colonies of the Antilles and small trading posts on the West African and Indian coastlines.¹ Like their British counterparts, however, the French did not have an active policy regarding territorial expansion in Africa before 1830 when they acquired Algeria.² That acquisition marked the beginning of a new era of French colonialism in Africa.

The Rio Pongas Mission and the French Factor, 1860-1935

In West Africa, France very quickly became a serious rival of Britain, and this rivalry, which became one of the major causes of the failure of the Pongas Mission centered mainly around control of what the French called the Rivières du Sud (Southern Rivers) and what the British referred to as the Northern Rivers from the 1860s. With British recognition of French control of the Mellacourie under the June 28, 1882 Anglo-French Convention – the area had already been under effective French control since the late 1860s – France was able to form the French Colony of Guinea in 1890, and then to establish its control over Futa Jallon in 1896. Consequently, in an

effort to protect the colony against renewed British incursions, French colonial authorities imposed crippling conditions on the British affiliated Anglican Mission of the Rio Pongas. However, it is not certain that they were actually afraid of British incursions, but rather of British and Sierra Leonean influence in the area. The French might have feared British spies, but I think that they were more concerned about political and economical links than anything else. That is why these conditions were, in the main, the closure of Mission schools for their failure to teach exclusively in French, and the substitution of French and Susu for English in church services.

English, widely spoken in the Pongas Country as a result of the significant Freetown Creole presence in the area, was a particularly sensitive issue for the French. The Pongas area was only 140 miles away from Freetown.

It is also shown in this chapter that in their determination to find solutions to French restrictions, the Pongas missionaries in the field and their superiors in Sierra Leone and across the Atlantic employed measures such as training their own teachers in Senegal and France. However, even these measures did not go far enough for the French colonial authorities, determined, as they were to keep direct British influence out of their territory. The authorities had deemed the certificates that the Mission trainees had received in Paris as insufficient for teaching in the Pongas. Thus, although English was allowed in church services along with French and Susu in the early decades of the twentieth century, teaching in French remained an important requirement for the Mission. It was this requirement that successfully halted the proselytization process and virtually crippled the progress of the Rio Pongas Mission in French territory.

The establishment of the West Indian Mission in the Pongas Country in 1855 coincided with a declining British engagement in the area and a corresponding increase in French interests.
British missionaries had all but given up interest in the area following the traumatic collapse of the CMS mission there in 1816. British traders from Sierra Leone, however, continued to dominate trade in the rivers, although the produce, in particular groundnuts, mostly ended up in France. This was an important factor in France’s interest in the Southern Rivers; French officials had by the 1850s already made treaties of friendship with chiefs in the area. Under Napoleon III, France sought imperial expansion and the Rio Nunez became the springboard from which expansion into the Southern Rivers began. By the 1850s, French traders from the Moriah country and the Rio Nunez navigated the Rio Pongo in search of groundnuts, of which France was the biggest consumer.

Spearheading French expansion in West Africa in the late 1850s was Louis Faidherbe, the Governor of Senegal from 1854-1861 and 1863-1865. Originally a Major when first appointed to the post of Governor, Faidherbe signed a treaty of friendship with King Mathias Katty of Teah on April 21, 1859. The treaty allowed French traders to operate freely along the Pongo River and it followed that which the British and Bala Bangu signed on January 17, 1852. At this time, even though British traders, and in particular the influential merchant community in Freetown, were active in the area’s lucrative trade, and lobbied tirelessly for British imperial expansion, the British Government had very little interest in territorial expansion in the area. It was only interested in stopping the clandestine but booming slave trade. According to Newbury,

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4 Mouser, “Trade”, p. 274.
“…the need for territorial expansion was a late development in British West African Policy.”

Even then, he argues, this was as a result of French and German interest and competition. In the early decades of the nineteenth century, as Hargreaves puts it, the ‘separatist’ thought had a tremendous influence on the Colonial Office and that contributed to the British Government’s lack of interest in territorial expansion in Africa. In fact, Hargreaves argues that the Colonial Office of the mid-Victorian era was even less “… inclined than the Foreign Office to support territorial expansion in Africa.” In the view of James Stephen, a prominent Colonial Office official, territory acquired in Africa “… would be but a worthless possession.”

Many British politicians of the 1860s harboured this view. Sir Frederic Rogers, Permanent Under-Secretary 1860-71, even thought that African colonies were “expensive and troublesome.” In the early decades of the nineteenth century, the British Treasury spent about £3,000,000 on Imperial troops in the colonies alone. A significant amount of this was spent on naval and military stations such as Gibraltar and Malta. Comparatively little was spent on West Africa. Perhaps this was due to the fact that Gibraltar and Malta had greater value. During this period, the Colonial Office was driven more by anti-slavery zeal than territorial expansion on the continent. Edward Cardwell, Secretary of State in 1864 stated in the House of Commons in that year that,

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7 Newbury, British Policy, p. 157.
8 In the mid-nineteenth century this belief involved the settlers’ idea of secession of all British colonies from the mother country, a thought that was deeply influenced by the legacies of the French Revolution of 1789. For more details on this thought, see C. A. Bodensen, Studies in Mid-Victorian Imperialism (New York: Howard Fertig, 1968), especially Chapter I, pp. 11-75.
9 Hargreaves, Prelude to the Partition, p. 38.
10 Quoted in Ibid.
11 Ibid., p. 39.
12 Bodensen, Studies in Mid-Victorian Imperialism, p. 37.
13 Ibid.
Our policy is solely and entirely a disinterested one – namely at great inconvenience and no inconsiderable sacrifices to ourselves, to abolish a trade disgraceful to human nature, and extend the advantage of religion, civilization and commerce to the miserable inhabitants of Africa.\textsuperscript{14}

This British disinterest provided a perfect opportunity for the French to increase their activities throughout West Africa, particularly, along the upper Guinea coast. But the French, like their British counterparts, also lacked an active policy regarding territorial expansion in Africa at that time. In fact, French Government initiatives in West Africa in the mid-1860s, also like the British, were often driven by “pressure from men on the spot.” According to Hargreaves, French authorities had “creative ideas for colonial policy” but “had no central authority capable of translating these into [a] coherent policy.” This was due to the fact that, the \textit{Direction des Colonies} office was not only small, but was subordinated to the Navy Ministry which was less enthusiastic about African settlements.\textsuperscript{15} However, with the formation of a Ministry of Algeria and the Colonies signaled a change in this attitude even though the Ministry lasted only two years between 1858 and 1860.

In the mean time, from their headquarters at Goreé, French traders such as those of the Bordeaux firm of Gaspard Devés successfully competed with their British counterparts, such as Charles Heddle, Nathaniel Isaacs, and Messrs. Broadhurst and Frame\textsuperscript{16} in the groundnut producing areas between Senegal and Sierra Leone. Gradually, these traders extended their business interests into the three most important rivers north of Sierra Leone, the Rio Nunez, Rio Pongo, and Mellacourie. At the end of 1861, between forty and fifty French vessels anchored and loaded their cargo in the Mellacourie annually. By 1864, sixty out of the seventy ocean-going vessels anchored in that river annually were French. During the better part of 1865, about 13,629

\textsuperscript{14} Quoted in Hargreaves, \textit{Prelude to the Partition}, p. 38.
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., p. 91.
\textsuperscript{16} Broadhurst and Frame later merged to form the Manchester based firm of Fisher and Randall.
tons of groundnuts were exported directly to France from the Mellacourie. Also, half of the 5,220 tons of the groundnuts exported to that country from Sierra Leone in the period originated from the Mellacourie. The Mellacourie region exported to Europe £150,000-£200,000 worth of products annually and groundnuts accounted for two-thirds of this amount, while “agricultural or forest produce” and “the commodities of the caravan trade” made up the remaining amount. The French used groundnuts to manufacture candles and soap. They also used the oil extracted from them for cooking and to lubricate railway trains and industrial machinery.

During the 1860s, British trade in the Rio Pongo and Rio Nunez was very minimal. In fact, although the Rio Pongo was an important area of Anglican missionary work, by the 1860s, it “was never a major place of trade” for Britain. British trade was more important in the Rio Nunez, but that trade declined after 1850 following wars caused by succession disputes. Thus, it was not surprising that the British authorities did not complain about French activities in that region. Only a few Sierra Leonean traders and West Indian missionaries complained about the French presence. The British authorities were more concerned about the Mellacourie than other rivers in the region. They had tried very hard to preserve peace and to encourage trade in the area since the 1820s. Heddle’s business venture in the area starting from 1845 increased British influence through the treaties they signed with local authorities. By the mid-1860s, the Mellacourie was an important commercial area. Caravans bringing hides, gold, and ivory from

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18 Ibid., p. 4.
19 Hargreaves, Prelude to the Partition, p. 94.
20 Fyfe, A History, p. 258.
21 Hargreaves, “French Occupation”, p. 3.
22 Ibid.
23 Hargreaves, Prelude to the Partition, pp. 129-130; Hargreaves, “French Occupation”, p. 3.
Futa Jallon and the Great Scarcies River, as well as competition among foreign traders, increased the river’s commercial status.\textsuperscript{25}

French traders also increased their commercial activities in the area for the first time. Around 1864, the house of Gaspard Devés established several factories under the supervision of Jean-Baptiste Dalmas. Dalmas was an African-descended agent of the firm of Devés who came from Guadeloupe and was based in Freetown at the time. As Devés was affiliated with the firm of Chaumel and Durin of Bordeaux, the Bordeaux Chamber of Commerce urged the French Government to protect their trade interest between the Gambia and Sherbro against British interference. The area, as Hargreaves points out, was “exploited almost exclusively by French commerce.”\textsuperscript{26} Governor Faidherbe rejected the idea for fear of offending the British authorities in Freetown.\textsuperscript{27}

In May 1865, however, a devastating war caused by succession disputes broke out in the Mellacourie and changed the whole situation. The war disrupted trade and agricultural production. Some warriors looted trade goods from stores and ships anchored in the Mellacourie.\textsuperscript{28} Acting Governor William John Chamberlayne of Sierra Leone failed to suppress the violence. He argued that intervention would “… cost the traders more in taxation than it would immediately bring them improved security.”\textsuperscript{29} Chamberlayne’s inaction provided French authorities in Paris and Dakar with the opportunity to intervene. Heeding the plea of the traders of the firm of Devés in the Mellacourie, the French dispatched their warship, the \textit{Castor}, to settle the dispute on July 28, 1865. Commander Requin proceeded to sign treaties with the chiefs in

\textsuperscript{25} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{26} Hargreaves, \textit{Prelude to the Partition}, p. 131; Hargreaves, “French Occupation”, p. 7.
\textsuperscript{27} Fyfe, \textit{A History}, p. 340.
\textsuperscript{28} Hargreaves, \textit{Prelude to the Partition}, p. 132.
\textsuperscript{29} Ibid., p. 133.
whose favour he had settled the succession dispute that caused the violence in the first place.\(^{30}\) In February 1867, France established a military post at Benty on the south bank of the Mellacourie. This action not only asserted the authority of France in the area, but it also strongly established the basis of French takeover of the Mellacourie from the British.\(^{31}\) The French followed their action in the Mellacourie by taking official control of the Rio Pongo three months later, and by establishing another fort at Boffa in June of that year.\(^{32}\)

These events came on the heels of the French establishment of a fort at Boke in the Rio Nunez in January 1866 and they proved rewarding for France. Not only did the events succeed in gradually cutting off the British Colony of Sierra Leone from the sphere of influence it claimed in the Northern Rivers, but also then, under the Anglo-French Convention of June 28, 1882, Britain recognized French claims to the Mellacourie and Rio Pongo.\(^{33}\) The recognition enabled France to form the French Colony of Guinea in 1890 and to control the entire Futa Jallon region six years later. The establishment of that colony allowed the French to divert caravans from Futa Jallon away from Freetown to Conakry as well as from the Rio Nunez, the Rio Pongo and the Mellacourie. Despite that action, Sierra Leonean traders still remained in what was now French territory.\(^{34}\) Thus, protecting the region against extensive British activities on the coast north of

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\(^{32}\) *M. F.* Vol. XIII, September 1868, p. 24; Goerg, *Commerce et Colonisation*, p. 69.


\(^{34}\) Fyfe, “European and Creole Influence”, p. 121.
Sierra Leone provided the context in which French colonial authorities in Guinea would impose stifling conditions on the Pongas Mission – an Anglican missionary enterprise in the Rio Pongo.

As a largely Catholic country with strong Republican sentiments – and a key rival of Britain – France immediately looked askance at Anglican missionary activities in its sphere of influence. French hostility was evident to the Mission’s representatives very early. Already, in 1860, warning his superiors about French territorial ambition in the Pongas, Rev. Phillips, then Acting Head Missionary of the Pongas Mission, said that French control of the area would be detrimental to the Mission.\(^{35}\) In January 1866, Duport echoed similar sentiments. He lamented that the French were interested in placing a Consul in the Pongas River, but King William Katty refused because he favoured the English.\(^{36}\) This refusal prompted the French to threaten force in their quest to occupy the river. Finally, Colonel Jean Marie Emile Pinet-Laprade, Governor of Senegal (1865-9) signed a treaty with Yangi Will (William Katty) on February 15, 1866.\(^{37}\) The treaty ceded Katty’s land to France and allowed the French to build a residence for their representative on any site they wished.\(^{38}\) In effect, this treaty marked the beginning of French control of the Pongas country. In May 1866, this control was made official when France declared the Pongas Country their protectorate.\(^{39}\) The declaration followed frequent looting and destruction of French-owned or affiliated businesses in the area by local residents in 1862, 1863, 1864, and later, in 1867 because they disapproved French control.\(^{40}\)

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\(^{35}\) *M. F.* Vol. V, July 1, 1860, p. 164.

\(^{36}\) *M. F.* Vol. XI, 1866, p. 82.


\(^{38}\) For more details, see Arcin, *Histoire*, p. 337.


\(^{40}\) Goerg, *Commerce et Colonisation*, p. 66.
Although French control of the Pongas Country did not have an immediate effect on the Mission, it signaled the beginning of a new and difficult era for the West Indian missionaries. For instance, the British Colonial Government in Freetown, which often provided grants to support the Mission schools in Fallangia, began to question the wisdom of continuing to do so. A commentator wrote in 1867 that:

As the French have occupied the Rio Pongas for trade and civilization, the Colonial Government think, not unreasonably, they should no longer be called upon to aid the education of the natives, but that the French Government should relieve them of this expense.\(^4\)

Although the French Government did not relieve the British Government of expenses at this time, the principal French merchants in Domingia did. In late 1867, they provided Duport with £50 to fit the town’s school.\(^4\) The Head Missionary had even hoped that those merchants would support the training of two or more local missionary agents at a later date.\(^4\)

As the Pongas missionaries banked on additional financial support from French merchants in Domingia in 1877, they also began to feel that the Roman Catholics of the Holy Ghost Fathers from the French Colony of Senegal who established their own Mission near Domingia were threatening the very existence of the entire Anglican enterprise. Rev. McEwen wrote to the Pongas Mission organizers informing them of the impending competition. He told his superiors that the Roman Catholic Mission was only waiting for its supply of priests and the Sisters of Mercy from Senegal.\(^4\) As a result, he urged them to strengthen the Mission in anticipation of the rivalry. In fact, it did not take long for McEwen’s fears to be realized. By trying to recruit members of the Pongas Mission’s flock, the Roman Catholics lived up to the

\(^4\) M. F. Vol. XII, 1867, p. 235.
\(^4\) Ibid.
\(^4\) M. F. October 1, 1877, p. 473.
expectation. Rev. Doughlin confirmed this when he remarked in 1881 that, “The Romish Priest is very busy trying to draw away my people. He has not made much success but the effect will be an undermining of the people’s steadfastness, I fear.” 45 A year later, Doughlin stated that despite making a “bold and energetic” attempt to poach members of the Pongas Mission, the Superior of the Roman Catholic Mission was not successful. 46

Clearly from the point of view of the Pongas missionaries, Roman Catholic competition was a cause of great concern. The anxiety was rooted in an inescapable reality: in the event of a showdown, the Pongas Mission simply did not stand a chance against Roman Catholic competition. As a Catholic country and one in control of the Pongas Country, France would most likely favour a Catholic missionary enterprise rather than a Protestant one that was firmly rooted in the Anglo-Saxon tradition. This was no exaggeration. In the 1860s, the goal of Napoleon III was to satisfy Catholic Missions and organized merchant interests. 47 However, this was less so later, particularly under the Third Republic, which had anti-clerical tendencies. Thus, it was probably more important that the Pongas Mission was British rather than an Anglican enterprise.

Another underlying cause for concern on the part of West Indian missionaries was the lack of adequate funding, especially for boarding and maintenance of children. This put the Pongas Mission at a disadvantage to the Roman Catholic Mission, which received help and support, at least initially, from the French Government. 48 By 1884, the Roman Catholics had already built a church, house and school at Sangha on a site previously given to Bishop J. Bowen

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45 P. H. Doughlin to the Board and S.P.G, Quarterly Financial Report, October 12, 1881, Domingia in D57, R.H.L.
46 M. F. April 1, 1882, p. 109.
47 Hargreaves, Prelude to the Partition, p. 92.
of Sierra Leone for the use of the Pongas Mission in 1858.\textsuperscript{49} They also launched a smear campaign against West Indian missionaries during that period.\textsuperscript{50} Evidently, by the early 1880s, competition between the West Indian missionaries and their Roman Catholic counterparts had become very serious and potentially corrosive for the West Indians. This trajectory changed drastically with the emergence of an anti-clerical French administration by the end of the decade.

The French had now consolidated their position in the Pongas, and their much-vaunted Republican spirit came full circle within their colonies, occasioned in the Rio Pongas by the halting not only of the expansion of the Pongas Mission, but also the alleged privileged position of the Roman Catholic Church. The Third French Republic\textsuperscript{51} had begun a new era of colonial policy with the appointment of Jules Ferry as Minister for Public Instruction.\textsuperscript{52} As Prime Minister from 1881-3 and 1883-5, Ferry was associated with the reform of the French educational system in an effort to curb the influence of the Catholic Church. The Prime Minister and his fellow Republicans took an intensely anti-clerical stance.\textsuperscript{53} His government passed laws forbidding monks and nuns from providing religious teaching in schools except during off-hours. The government’s focus was science rather than religious education.\textsuperscript{54} These anti-clerical actions followed Pope Pius IX’s issue of the Papal Syllabus in 1864, something that the Republicans saw as an “attack on modern thought and science and on the very idea of democracy itself.”\textsuperscript{55} As

\textsuperscript{49} M. F. June 1, 1884, p. 17 L 8.  
\textsuperscript{50} See Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{51} The Third Republic began in 1875 and ended in 1940 when France surrendered to Germany during World War II.  
\textsuperscript{52} Hargreaves, \textit{Prelude to the Partition}, p. 99.  
\textsuperscript{53} Peacock, \textit{Europe and Beyond}, p. 138.  
\textsuperscript{54} Ibid., p. 39.  
\textsuperscript{55} Ibid., p. 38.
Peacock points out, the Syllabus stated that, “… the pontiff neither can nor ought to be reconciled with progress, liberalism and modern civilization.”

Reaction to such blatant anti-clericalism undoubtedly played a key role in French action against the West Indian Mission in the Pongas when France formally established the Colony of Guinée Française in 1890. The seat of the new colony that covered all of the Pongas Country was Conakry, then a telegraph station and the official residence of the French Commandant who had by then became the Lt. Governor.

**Guinée Française in the Rivières du Sud and the Pongas Mission, 1890-1935**

The establishment of the Colony of French Guinea in 1890 and the subsequent French restriction of English as a language of instruction in Mission schools resulted in a direct decline of the influence of the West Indian Mission’s principal stations at Fallangia, Domingia, and Farringia in the Pongas Country. Unable to teach in English in French territory, the missionaries focused on Fotoba station on the Isles de Los, which were part of the British colony of Sierra Leone since 1818 when Governor Sir Charles McCarthy (1814-24) annexed them. However, the Mission staff still continued to open a few more outposts in what was now French territory. For example, in 1891, one of these was established in Teah. Ironically, Teah was the seat of the Katty monarchy that did nothing when the pioneers of the Pongas Mission landed on Tintima village in 1855 and were rejected by Chief Kennybek Ali. However, triumph was short-lived. New developments were also lurking in the horizon. By the middle of 1891, the fate of the Mission schools and churches in the Pongas began to cause greater anxiety for the missionaries. The

58 *M. F.* Vol. XXXII, April 1, p. 108.
church buildings were crumbling and required immediate repair. Moreover, the French insisted that West Indian missionaries, all English-speaking, teach the French language in Mission schools or risk having them closed immediately. A chagrined Rev. Cole remarked:

Our schools of late the French Government has been very hard upon us, insisting that we teach French in schools in consequence of which I have been obliged to vacate both Domingia and Farringia schools, otherwise the Government will close them up.

In June, both schools at Domingia and Farringia were closed for lack of French teachers. Even the newly opened school at Teah was not spared. These new developments forced the English Committee to accept the idea of hiring French teachers to teach at the Mission schools in the Pongas. The decision elated Rev. Cole, who was by now very optimistic that all the Mission schools would be reopened sometime in January 1892. Little did he know that recruiting French teachers would prove as difficult as training them.

In the mean time, the missionaries continued to run a night school at Teah. However, they were obliged to teach only “the rudiments of the Christian Religion” to adults and children for whom a regular day school was not yet available. Such teaching, even though conducted in English, appeared not to have worried French authorities initially. Perhaps this was due to the fact that, like their English counterparts, the French were interested in “civilizing” their African subjects.

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62 Ibid.
In early 1892, Cole’s optimism was confirmed. The school at Domingia was reopened after the Mission hired William Aboly, who spoke French, to teach there. However, the experiment was short-lived. On June 30, French Government authorities once again ordered the school closed. This time, they did not allow English to be taught in any form in the Pongas. Cole remarked that French Government officials always told him to teach French “exclusively or close up your school”. 64

This dramatic French action could be accounted for by two factors. First, the 1884-85 Berlin Conference of European powers concerning Africa stipulated that European claims of territory along the African coastline would only be recognized as valid when accompanied by effective control. This meant having representatives on the spot to validate the claim. 65 Second, in 1890, another International Conference in Brussels extended the effective occupation requirement to the interior of Africa. This meant that the long time span of influence that British merchants and missionaries had enjoyed on the West African coastline could not survive any legal challenge in international law unless British representatives were physically present there. 66

Although the British already had such representatives in the Gold Coast and Lagos, they had none in the Pongas Country at the time because they had recognized French sovereignty in the area since 1882. Thus, the French, who had established their Colony of French Guinea in the year of the Brussels Conference, were in no mood to accommodate renewed British interest in what they saw as their backyard. However, according to Rev. Cole, despite the fact that many people in the Pongas Country preferred English as the language of instruction in schools, they

66 Ibid.
did not mind French being the second.\textsuperscript{67} That was probably what French authorities were eager to accomplish in the first place. With the British established in Sierra Leone, and many of their Sierra Leonean subjects migrating to the Pongas and Conakry, French authorities were taking no chances to loosen the restrictions they imposed on the use of English in their territory. They were always suspicious of British intentions in Africa. In fact, it was only a decade earlier that British invasion of Egypt destroyed the Anglo-French Dual Control of that country. That action led France to suspect Britain of aiming to build an empire in Africa and to look for ways to pressure the British to reconsider their actions.\textsuperscript{68} West Africa, particularly the Rivières du Sud, provided that opportunity for France. Betts relates that, “Much of French African policy at the end of the nineteenth century was conditioned, even provoked, by concern – fear and anger – over the policy pursued by Britain.”\textsuperscript{69}

The French had every reason to be fearful of British intentions. In 1890, A. W. L. Hemming, a prominent figure in Britain, argued that territorial expansion in Africa was necessary for Britain. He wrote as follows:

\begin{quote}
The fact is, it is very difficult to stand still. If we don’t go forward we practically recede for the natives regard a refusal to take them under protection as a lack of power to protect, & are therefore always disposed to turn their eyes in search of more potent friends & allies.\textsuperscript{70}
\end{quote}

It was clear that the British were no longer eager to ignore matters regarding territorial expansion in Africa. However, their quest for empire on the continent happened at a time when patriotic zeal was also strong in French colonial thought. France had demonstrated that zeal by

\textsuperscript{69} Betts, \textit{Tricouleur}, p. 31.
\textsuperscript{70} Newbury, \textit{British Policy}, p. 206.
establishing the sprawling French Colony of Guinea, several times bigger than the older British colony of Sierra Leone, in 1890. In the same year, some Frenchmen formed the Comité de l’Afrique to promote intervention and trade in West, Central, and North Africa.\textsuperscript{71} In 1899, Joseph Chailley-Bert argued that,

Colonial policy is no longer the conception of a group of self-interested merchants, or of a clear-sighted governmental aristocracy. It has become a national thought... and it will succeed because it is legitimate, necessary, wise, and sound – and because in guaranteeing the future greatness of France, it also contributes to stability and peace in the world.\textsuperscript{72}

With such imperialistic thought, it was not surprising that French colonial authorities banned the teaching of English in any form in the Pongas Mission schools in favour of their own language.

Whatever the motives of the French authorities, their actions adversely affected the Pongas Mission in several ways. First, the closure of schools was a serious setback to the Mission’s work in the area. According to Rev. Cole, the strength of their work lay in those schools. In 1905, a member of Les Missions Evangéliques de Paris wrote about the need of Anglican French schools in the French Colony of Guinea as follows:

But a Mission without a school is a Mission without an elite, and it has no future. A school is universally recognized as missionary work in itself; and it is worth maintaining a school. These are the facts about a problem that has waited for a solution for forty years.\textsuperscript{73}

Second, the schools were ordered closed at a time when the Mission’s rivals were intensifying the competition for converts and students. Cole lamented that the Roman Catholic School at Boffa was waiting for the opportunity to admit Pongas Mission students into its school. He also stated that after learning about the closure of the Mission schools, Muslim clerics also began to

\textsuperscript{71} Hargreaves, \textit{France and West Africa}, pp. 192-193.
\textsuperscript{72} Quoted in Betts, \textit{Tricouleur}, p. 37.
\textsuperscript{73} Quoted in Rev. Ernest De Coteau’s letter to R. M. Ware, Hon. Secretary of the English Home Association, Diocese of the Gambia and Rio Pongas, 1945, p. 3 in ‘E’ Series, \textit{Africa A-J (Gambia)} Vol. E94/1-9, 1939-51, R.H.L.
intensify their convert recruiting activities in the area by opening four schools in Domingia
“wherein their boys & girls are being taught the Moslem Creed.”

In spite of all these difficulties the West Indian missionaries had some positive news to
report to their superiors abroad in 1892. The two church buildings at Domingia and Farringia, for
long in a state of disrepair, were completely rebuilt with donations received abroad, and the
missionaries opened two new Susu language schools in these towns in December 1893 and in
January 1894 respectively. The missionaries had hoped that opening such schools would have
satisfied French authorities. This was not the case. Instead, it hastened the decision of the
authorities to officially and permanently order the closure of all Mission schools in the Pongas
Country until instructions were completely conducted in French. In a letter conveying that
decision, the French Commandant in the area wrote: “Sir, in carrying out the instructions I
received from the Governor of French Guinea I have the honour to inform you to immediately
close Domingia School and the branches of Falinghia and that of Farringhia.” Handing Cole
the official letter, the Commandant remarked: “Whenever you happen to get French Teachers,
and you desire to open your schools, you have to apply to the Government at Conakry through
me.” The Commandant’s statement made clear the determination of the French to protect their
dominance of the region. In fact, it was only a year earlier that France completed the process of
establishing its rights on the coast between Sierra Leone and Portuguese Guinea by creating the

74 Report of S. Cole, p. 6. The translation from French to English is mine. Check the reference
for the French version.
75 Report of S. Cole at Domingia for the Half Year Ending June 30, 1894, in ‘E’ Serves,
Missionary Reports – Africa Vol. 49, 1894, Diocese of Sierra Leone, R.H.L.
76 C/AFR/W2 in Deeds, Official Letters, etc. Relating to Sierra Leone, Gambia and Rio Pongas
(French Guinea), 1886-1907, R.H.L. This is my own translation. For the original text in French,
see the document as referenced here.
77 Ibid.
constitutions of the new colonies of French Guinea and the Ivory Coast. By denying British merchants or missionaries and others active involvement, or at least by allowing them to operate in the region only on French terms compared to French nationals and subjects, France had hoped to influence British foreign policy in Africa.

French authorities did not demand the closure of Sunday Schools that the Mission had been running in the Pongas. Most of the schools were successfully operating and filled with students during the early 1890s. Perhaps the French authorities allowed these schools to function because the missionaries taught only the rudiments of the Christian religion and were also helping to strengthen the French idea of *mission civilisatrice* in Africa. For their part, Africans were probably interested in the education system, even if that was offered only in the form of religious instruction.

Up to 1894, the West Indian missionaries had failed to recruit French teachers from the Protestant Mission in Senegal or from anywhere else. Consequently, their Mission schools remained closed and their students scattered all over the place. This time, however, unlike the early 1890s, when parents in the Pongas Country waited patiently for the Mission schools to reopen, and did not send their children to the rival Roman Catholic Mission schools, the late 1890s witnessed a different response in the region. Many parents now sent their sons to the Roman Catholic school in Boffa and their daughters to the Roman Catholic convent in Conakry. Most of them did so because all Mission schools remained closed for lack of French teachers. It is important to recognize the underlying reasons behind the decisions of these parents.

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79 Ibid., p. 152.
81 Ibid.
to send their children to the Roman Catholics at this time. In the first instance, one must remember that many people embraced the schools, and Christianity for that matter, for their value in teaching a European language, and in training students in new skills. In an era of international commerce, and of European colonialism, it was useful to acquire a European language and the skills necessary to improve one’s chances for employment within the colonial political economy. Thus, when such prospects seemed bleak in the Pongas, as a result of the Mission school closures, many parents were left with very limited options but to send their children to schools already operating, even if they were French ones. After all, as Rev. Doughlin acknowledged more than a decade earlier, the Roman Catholic school at Sangha was a good one with an efficient teaching staff.\textsuperscript{82}

In fact, not only were Roman Catholic educational institutions able to attract students from their rival as a result of their efficiency, they were also able to do so successfully because of their ability to place their graduates in Government and merchant services.\textsuperscript{83} The rapport between the Roman Catholics and the French colonial establishment at the time could have been due to the fact that the anti-clerical metropolitan government of Prime Minister Ferry was already voted out of power in 1885. As France was then running the show in the Pongas, it should not have been a surprise to Cole or to anyone else that the French Government and merchants were possibly the biggest employers in the area. In 1888, Rev. J. B. McEwen noted that French merchants in different parts of the river employed between twenty and thirty men

\textsuperscript{82} P. H. Doughlin to the Board and SPG, Quarterly Financial Report, Domingia, October 12, 1881 in \textbf{D57}, R.H.L; \textit{M. F.}, June 1, 1884, p. 178.

\textsuperscript{83} Half Yearly Report of S. Cole at Domingia for the Year Ending June 30, 1894 in ‘\textit{E’ Series, Missionary Reports – Africa} Vol. 49, 1894, Diocese of Sierra Leone, R.H.L.
and youths from Isles de Los.\textsuperscript{84} The Senior Missionary attributed the flow of workers into the French area of influence to heavy duties that British colonial authorities in Sierra Leone imposed on traders on the islands. He argued that heavy duties drove merchants to the mainland and that job seekers followed them there because the Mission could not offer them jobs in Isles de Los.\textsuperscript{85} In a situation like that, acquiring French language, whether from the Roman Catholics or from French Colonial Government institutions, could have strongly improved the chance of landing a job in the Pongas for the local people. Cole himself acknowledged this problem when he stated that, “Our boys can’t be employed, because they do not know French.”\textsuperscript{86}

By the end of 1894, it was clear that the French language issue was a bigger problem for the West Indian Mission than was first thought. Realizing that it was difficult to recruit French teachers from the Protestant Mission in Senegal, Cole proposed a drastic measure to the Mission organizers. He suggested sending at least two Mission boys to the Protestants in Senegal to be trained in French instead. These boys, he argued, could “become Teachers both in the Boarding School and in the Mission Field.”\textsuperscript{87} Should this initiative also fail, Cole suggested an even more radical measure. He wrote, “If this cannot be done, then we must turn our attention, so far as school is concerned, to somewhere else.”\textsuperscript{88} Perhaps Cole made these suggestions under duress.

At this time, the French Colonial Government had him under constant surveillance for his alleged activities relating to teaching in English. He reported that, “My movements, for some time past have been greatly watched. I was, as it were under an espionage. My works have been

\textsuperscript{84} Report for the Year 1888, p. 14 in \textit{PER 134, F. 14, West Indian African Mission}, 1859-88, R.H.L.
\textsuperscript{85} Ibid., p. 13.
\textsuperscript{86} \textit{Half Yearly Report of S. Cole at Domingia for the Year Ending June 30, 1894} in Ibid.
\textsuperscript{87} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{88} ibid.
enquired after secretly as to whether I keep a private school or teach in any form in English.”

Ironically, even though Cole was under surveillance, and all the Mission schools remained closed, the French Governor in Conakry promised “absolute security” of the same schools he ordered closed earlier. However, he still remained adamant on the question of teaching in French. In 1905, he sent a letter to Bishop E. H. Elwin of Sierra Leone stating that:

> I confirm the decision that I gave to you with regard to the absolute security of your schools, with the sole reservation that they will come under French law. The teaching of French will be undertaken, and my intention is to have it properly controlled, but you will only see in this measure the exercise of the usual rights of the civil power and no disconcerting supervision.

Although French authorities remained adamant on the issue of teaching in French, they were less rigid on the operation of the Mission churches in the Pongas at this time. Church services continued to be reasonably well attended. For instance, in 1894, the average Church attendance at Domingia and Farringia was 77 and 61 respectively. Again, French authorities were less concerned about the spread of the Gospel in areas under their control. They were not concerned about the religious activities taking place within the confines of church walls because at this time, most services were conducted in the vernacular. In fact, it was evident that the missionaries were doing a good job of that. The French Governor confirmed this in the following statement to Bishop Elwin of Sierra Leone: “The work of your missionaries seems to me to be most interesting, and it is for their special advantage that my government will guarantee them the

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89 Ibid.
90 Le Gouverneur des Colonies Frezoul, Inspecteur de 1ere class des Colonies, Lieutenant-Gouverneur de la Guinee Francaise, a Monsieur L’Eveque Sierra Leone, Conakry le 6 Juin 1905 in C/AFR/W2, Deeds, Official Letters, etc. Relating to Sierra Leone, Gambia and Rio Pongas (French Guinea), 1886-1907 R.H.L. This is my own translation. For the original text in French, see the document referred to here.
92 Ibid.
greatest facilities of action and will follow all their efforts with attention.”

French authorities did follow all the efforts of the West Indian missionaries in the Pongas for several years, and their action contributed to the declining numbers in communicants. In 1894, for example, the two Mission stations at Domingia and Farringia had a combined Communicant population of 75, 46 of these were at the former and the remaining 29 were at the latter. The small numbers illustrate the effects French restrictions already had on the Mission.

In 1899, the West Indian missionaries made a carefully calculated move regarding the survival of their Mission. More than two years earlier, Rev. J. B. McEwen, then Senior Missionary, with over 27 years of service in the area, suggested the opening of a Mission station in Conakry. Situated opposite the Isles de Los, Conakry could replace Fotoba as the new Mission Headquarters, an honour that Fotoba already had from 1900 to 1905 as a result of the initial French restrictions. McEwen’s move was strategic. He was obviously not steering the Mission into what seemed to be the lion’s den. At this time, Conakry was not only the seat of the French Colonial Government, but it was also becoming increasingly an important commercial and education centre, and a favorite destination for British trade vessels. Goerg argues that French colonial authorities forced all trade through Conakry in order to make the capital the major commercial centre. The town became an important centre for immigrants from Sierra Leone and former students of the Pongas Mission. Since the establishment of the French Colony of Guinea in 1890, a few more educational institutions were founded in the capital attracting even more people from the Pongas and Sierra Leone. Consequently, the Mission decided to follow the

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94 Ibid.
95 M. F. Vol. XLIV, 1899, p. 332.
96 Ibid.
97 See Goerg, Commerce et Colonisation.
tide by establishing a station there. After all, it was English teaching and British territorial expansion and not the actual religious activities of the missionaries that French authorities were vehemently opposed to.

The idea of establishing a new station in Conakry was well received in Barbados and in England, as well as in Sierra Leone. However, not even Bishop E. Graham Ingham of Sierra Leone could successfully solicit the required funds from the English Committee for this purpose. There was a marked disinterest in the Mission across the Atlantic at the time. This was perhaps due to financial difficulties, as well as anxieties about French control of the Pongas and their subsequent restrictions of Mission activities. Despite the lack of financial support, however, McEwen’s enthusiasm concerning the project was not dampened. In fact, the shortage of funds encouraged the Senior Missionary to rely on local funding. Settling in Conakry himself on January 26, 1899, McEwen was able to raise £300 locally to enable him to build a solid stone house there. The Senior Missionary collected most of the subscriptions from European and Sierra Leonean traders, as well as from the immigrants from Sierra Leone employed as clerks, mechanics and labourers by European commercial houses in the French colonial capital. His collection was supplemented by a £60 subscription from the West Indies. McEwen was very enthusiastic and committed to the Conakry project, which he thought would not only stand out as a good example of a successful self support project, but also one that “could one day assist other struggling stations” in the Pongas. With such a hefty local contribution, who could question the pastor’s vision? The only problem, however, was that the traders might not be there at some

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98 M. F. Vol. XLIV, 1899, p. 332; J. B. McEwen to A. H. Barrow, Hon. Secretary of S.P.G, Conakry May 27, 1899 in E 549 in CLS 13, West Indies Letters Sent, R.H.L.
99 Ibid.
point to sustain that scheme. On April 4, McEwen laid the foundation stone of the church in Conakry and opened it on January 4, 1900 as All Saints Church.\textsuperscript{100}

While McEwen was busy establishing the new station at Conakry another development was about to happen in the area that would badly affect the Mission. The British and the French were preparing to sign a treaty that would cede the Isles des Los to France. If signed, the treaty would result in the closure of the Mission schools, and perhaps even the churches on the islands. It was, therefore, not surprising that the impending treaty generated opposition among the supporters of the Pongas Mission. In 1904, for example, Boston M. Smith, a chaplain in Freetown, sent a letter to Bishop H. H. Montgomery, the Honorary Secretary of the S.P.G. at the time, arguing that ceding the Isles de Los to France could only result in even more serious consequences for the Mission. Smith reminded Montgomery by stating:

\begin{quote}
When the mainland was occupied by France our work was destroyed there. The schools connected with the Mission are in the islands, and these the French will not allow to continue for they compel all the children from the mainland to leave as soon as the French flag controlled Konakry & they will insist on these being closed.\textsuperscript{101}
\end{quote}

Worried about the potential school closures, Smith urged the British Government to put strong pressure on France to include provisions in the treaty that protected the schools and churches on the islands. Otherwise, he argued that they would be closed as others on the mainland were.\textsuperscript{102}

Evidently, Smith’s plea fell on deaf ears in England, as British authorities did not heed his warning. In 1905, the Isles de Los were ceded to France, and as expected, French authorities quickly ordered the closure of all schools there. As a result, the Mission was temporary moved to Kambia on the Great Scarcies River just north of Sierra Leone. At the time, the town was in

\textsuperscript{100} Report of J. B. McEwen, Isles de Los, December 31, 1899 in \textit{E54a CLS} 131, R.H.L.
\textsuperscript{101} Boston M. Smith to Bishop Montgomery, Freetown 1904 in \textit{USPG D156C, Diocese of Sierra Leone, Vol. 1 D156C}, 1904, .R.H.L.
\textsuperscript{102} Ibid.
Despite these events, French authorities allowed the Pongas Mission personnel to maintain limited contact with their congregants and to continue operating their churches in the Pongas stations.\textsuperscript{104}

However, two decades later, the French authorities came up with new and even more demands and orders, further restricting the progress of the Pongas Mission. For example, they stated in 1926 that no teacher without a complete French diploma might teach at any of the Mission schools if and when they reopened. The new decree was very difficult for a Mission that originated from a British territory, and one whose staff were mainly English language speakers. As Bishop G. W. Wright of Sierra Leone complained, such French demands “…rule out every one of the present West Indian and African members of the staff” of the Mission.\textsuperscript{105} As in 1894, when Rev. Cole suggested sending some Mission boys to the Protestants in Senegal to be trained in French, Bishop Wright came up with a similar suggestion in 1926. However, unlike Cole’s, Wright’s suggestion was to send two female missionaries to France itself to study the French language and to acquire diplomas required for teaching in the Pongas.\textsuperscript{106} For this training, Wright suggested English women because in his view, they could be recruited as volunteers supporting the S.P.G.\textsuperscript{107} Most importantly, however, he believed that the women “would be more economical and more efficient, as well as possibly more mobile than the present staff.”\textsuperscript{108}

Female missionaries were grossly underpaid compared to their male counterparts. In 1865, for example, while J. H. A. Duport received £250 annually as Head Missionary, and P. H.

\textsuperscript{103}Vassady “The Role”, p. 348.
\textsuperscript{104}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{105}Bishop G. W. Wright to the Board, Freetown December 22, 1926 in USPG D305, Diocese of Sierra Leone, Vol. D305, p. 2, 1926, R.H.L.
\textsuperscript{106}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{107}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{108}Ibid.
Paulus and J. E. Morgan were paid an annual salary of £100 each as schoolmasters in the Pongas Mission, their female counterparts, Miss C. E. Morgan and her sister, Miss S. L. Morgan received an annual stipend of £16:16s:0d each as schoolmistresses.\footnote{109} Seventeen years later nothing had changed. J. W. T. Turpin received £120, while C. E. Morgan, then Mrs. Duport, was paid £30 annually.\footnote{110} Also, in the early 1940s, female Rio Pongas missionaries received less furlough allowance than their male counterparts. In December 1948, the Standing Committee of the S.P.G approved the recommendation of the Finance and Selection and Reference Sub-Committee that the resolution of Special Grants Sub-Committee regarding Hawkes Mission should be adopted. As a result, furlough allowance for male missionaries was raised from £278 to £288 per annum and their marriage allowance was also increased from £131 to £144 per annum.\footnote{111} Even though the furlough allowance of female missionaries was also increased from £206 to £240 per annum, they still received less than their male counterparts.\footnote{112} The huge difference in these amounts clearly demonstrates the unequal treatment of male and female missionaries of the Pongas Mission by their employers.

Despite this inequality, some Mission patrons viewed women as the only people who could save the Pongas Mission from extinction. Bishop Wright was even of the conviction that female missionaries “might revive the life of the mission” because they were cheap and “often splendid linguists” compared to married men.\footnote{113} Presumably, the bishop expected such women to remain unmarried in order to facilitate their movement between Mission stations in the Pongas.

\footnote{109}{\textit{Progress of the Pongas Mission}, 1865, p.22.}
\footnote{110}{\textit{M. F.} April 1, 1882, p. 11.}
\footnote{112}{Ibid.}
\footnote{113}{Bishop G. W. Wright to the Board, Freetown, December 22, 1926, in \textit{USPG D305, Diocese of Sierra Leone} Vol. D305, 1926, p. 2, R.H.L.}
As of 1926, there was still no service in French in the Pongas Mission churches even though it was already a requirement. Most of the services were then conducted either in English or in Susu. As might be expected, French authorities were not impressed with the slow integration of French language into church services. They were very anxious that their African subjects speak French.\(^{114}\) Such attitudes could have stemmed from the fact that the French had a policy that was “based on the idea of assimilation, of gradual – very gradual – absorption of educated Africans when they [were] fit, into the realm of French culture and even French society.”\(^{115}\)

While French authorities were anxious to see their African subjects speak the imperial language, Pongas missionaries and their superiors continued with their earlier search for French teachers. As in earlier years, the endeavour continued to be fruitless.\(^{116}\) As a result, Bishop Wright suggested that the Mission wait for the graduation of its students sent earlier to Conakry and Dakar but even that hope was dashed. In 1933, Joseph Gomez, one of the students of the Pongas Mission successfully completed his brevet elementaire diploma at Ecôle William Ponty Training College in Dakar but refused to work for the Mission. Instead, Gomez accepted employment as a French Colonial Government School teacher in Dakar.\(^{117}\) Perhaps the French authorities in Senegal enticed him with a more attractive salary and a more attractive location than he would have had from the Mission. Five years earlier, the Mission paid local schoolteachers only £50 annually.\(^{118}\)

\(^{114}\) Ibid.
\(^{116}\) *West Indian African Mission, Report for the Year 1926*, p. 18.
\(^{118}\) See Expenditure for 1928 in *D320 CLS 131*, R.H.L.
The Mission had paid the French Colonial Government in Dakar an annual fee of £10 to train him.\textsuperscript{119} Mr. Gomez’s refusal to work for the Mission did not affect the good relations between the Mission and French authorities in both colonies of Senegal and Guinea. Despite the fact that French authorities in Guinea closely monitored the activities of some of the Pongas Mission personnel in the mid-1890s, and were still insisting on teaching French in Mission schools, relations reportedly remained cordial and amicable up to this point. The Rev. De Jean S. McEwen confirmed this in the following words: “I am glad to record that my relations with succeeding commandants have been happy, and those with the Roman Catholic Fathers at Boffa (belonging to the Community of the Holy Spirit).”\textsuperscript{120} He echoed these sentiments three years later in the following statement: “Our relations with the French Administration are excellent, and in the present Governor M. Poiret, who has had a long term of office in the colony, we have an understanding friend.”\textsuperscript{121} Once again, these good relations could be attributed to the fact that all parties involved had a shared goal of “civilizing” the Africans they came in contact with through the spread of Christianity and European lifestyles.

Still unable to find a qualified French teacher, West Indian missionaries and their superiors continued to think of creative ways to solve the problem. Bishop Wright rekindled his earlier idea of sending two female missionaries to France to study the language and to acquire French diplomas that would enable them to teach in the Pongas. He asked the late Rev. C. B. Conton’s widow, Mrs. O. Conton and her sister, Miss. Jenny Farquhar, to volunteer for the trip. Perhaps the bishop settled on the two West Indian women because he could not find white English women as he had hoped to for the task. Whatever Wright’s motive, the two West Indian

\textsuperscript{119} D334 in CLS 131, R.H.L.
\textsuperscript{120} Report of the Year 1933, p. 1. One wonders whether these were the same Roman Catholics who engaged in personal attacks against Rev. Doughlin in 1881.
\textsuperscript{121} M. F. Vol. LXXIV, September 1, 1929, p. 206.
women accepted the proposal to the delight of their fellow employees and employers alike. In 1927, G. J. Barclay, one of the Mission organizers in England remarked that: “The result will be new life to the Mission now crippled through loss of the children who are obliged to attend Muslim schools.”

Whether the two women’s studies actually brought “new life to the Mission” or not, the decision to send them to France was in itself remarkable. It was the first time female missionaries were featured prominently in the Pongas Mission. Until that time, women in the service of the Mission were identified only as wives or daughters of male missionaries. For example, C. E. Morgan and O. Farquhar were referred to as Mrs. Duport and Mrs. Conton respectively, while S. L. Morgan and J. Farquhar were simply known as the Morgan and Farquhar daughters before their marriage. Also, all the women were identified as schoolmistresses rather than as missionaries. That remained the case even when the two female graduates returned to the Pongas with their diplomas from France. The idea of training women for missionary duties in the Pongas only began in the early twentieth century. Even then, it was as a result of the French colonial government’s restrictions and the Mission organizers’ perception of women’s role as teachers rather than as missionaries.

As evident in the decision to send the two West Indian women to France, the Mission was by now crippled and Rev. De Jean. S. McEwen correctly attributed it to French restrictions and the consequent loss of Mission students and “converts” to the rival Roman Catholics in the area. In fact, at this point, even descendants of Chief Richard Wilkinson, who had invited the missionaries to Fallangia in 1855, had joined the Roman Catholic faith. As expected, the

123 M. F. Vol. LXXIV, September 1, 1929, p. 205.
Mission organizers were not amused by French actions that caused this crossover in the first place. They complained bitterly, referring to the big difference between missionary work in British and French territories. In the former, they lamented, “freedom is given to all missionary societies of good character to do their work freely.”\(^{125}\) In the latter, however, “Restrictions are severe and progress is difficult. All work must be done in French, Latin, or the local language.”\(^{126}\)

This was exactly what had been taking place in the Pongas since the early 1890s. French restrictions severely disrupted the forty years of freedom that West Indian missionaries had to conduct their proselytization in the Pongas. The closure of schools and restrictions on the expansion of churches appeared to have sounded the death knell of the work of the missionaries. During his tour of the Pongas Country in 1935, John Daly, the first bishop of the newly established Gambia-Pongas Bishopric\(^ {127}\) commented as follows: “Boffa and Domingia had looked deserted and clearly a shadow of their former selves, but Farringia looked desolate.”\(^ {128}\) Rev. Ernest De Coteau observed an even worse situation a decade later. He wrote about some old French settlers in Guinea speaking of the Pongas Country as terre morte (dead land).\(^ {129}\)

In fact, at that time, the Pongas Country was a terre morte and the French Colonial Government in Conakry had a lot to do with it. After the death of Archdeacon Farquhar on February 22, 929, for example, the Colonial Government in Conakry quickly implemented another new policy that further restricted the activities of the Mission in the Pongas. This time,

\(^{125}\) *M. F.* Vol. LXXII, December 1, 1927, p. 282.

\(^{126}\) Ibid.

\(^{127}\) The new Gambia-Pongas Bishopric was established in 1935 after eighty years of lobbying London for it. Its headquarters was in Bathurst, now called Banjul, the capital of The Gambia.

\(^{128}\) *The Gambia-Pongas Magazine*, April 1936, p. 10.

\(^{129}\) *Gambia-One in ‘E’ Series, Africa A-J (Gambia)* Vol. E94/1-9, 1939-51, R.H.L.
French and Susu were substituted for English in church services and instructions. The substitution had long been expected but the Mission was given a reprieve to gradually adjust to the policy. This policy was a part of the Colonial Government’s ongoing campaign to force Africans to speak the official language. Although aimed mostly at colonial subjects attending Mission church services, the policy affected the missionaries and their congregation members from Sierra Leone already accustomed to speaking English as British nationals or subjects. In 1906, All Saints Church in Conakry boasted a congregation of 717 people. Of these members, only 10 were Europeans. There were 3 Mendes, 104 Susus, and 600 Sierra Leoneans. Often, about 280 parishioners attended English services, while about 34 did so during the vernacular ones. These figures demonstrate the importance of the English language as language of commerce and how restricting its use might have really affected the Mission, especially the Sierra Leone Christian community in Conakry. In 1931, Rev. De Jean S. McEwen, then Senior Missionary of the Pongas Mission, noted that domiciled Sierra Leonean Christians formed the bulk of his congregation in the French colonial capital.

Nevertheless, for the West Indian missionaries, most of them were able to cope with the new situation because of their ability to speak and preach in Susu, one of the languages then required for church services and instructions. To their advantage also, the missionaries’ ability to speak and preach in the language of the people they worked with had been a long-standing requirement for their service. As for the Sierra Leonean immigrants in Conakry, they managed to

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130 Report of the Year 1929, p. 9.
131 Ibid.
be “masters of the situation.” After six years, however, neither the missionaries, nor their congregation members needed to worry about the language rules in their churches. In 1935, an arrangement between the French Colonial Government and Bishop Daly reversed the policy. Church services and instructions once again included English. Perhaps French authorities realized the ineffectiveness of their policy after almost six years of its enforcement. After 1930, the Mission had some staff members who were proficient enough in French to conduct service in that language although they were still seen as unqualified to teach in a school.

Earlier, in July 1928, at the urging of Bishop Wright, Mrs. O. Conton and Miss. Jenny Farquhar left for a two-year diploma course in France. Mr. De Coteau later joined them in Paris, where he spent only eight months. Conton and Farquhar first studied at Saintes Charente-Inferieure and later at the Alliance Française in Paris, where De Coteau joined them. All three students received Diplome Superieur of the Alliance Française. The diploma was still not enough for its bearer to teach in a school. However, as De Coteau argued, it was “a hall-mark of proficiency in French.”

Just about five months after their return on July 19, 1930, and with their new academic qualifications, the three graduates comfortably worked for the Mission. De Coteau was engaged as a catechist and assistant to the Senior Missionary at Conakry. The two women took charge of the Girls’ Hostel newly opened in the colonial capital on December 1, 1930 in a rented house that cost £36 annually. It boarded about fifteen girls with ages ranging from six to eighteen.

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136 Report for the Year 1929, p. 8.
137 Report for the Year 1930, p. 13.
138 Ibid.
139 Ibid., p. 14.
140 Ibid.
A great number of the girls also attended the Government Girls’ School at Conakry at the same time. Most parents of the hostel boarders helped defray some of the cost of supporting their children. They paid a small monthly amount to the Mission for this purpose. Whatever their contribution was, it was certainly not enough to cover the cost of maintaining the entire institution. Nevertheless, the gesture in itself was a starting point for the self-support scheme, especially at a time when the S.P.G reduced its subscription.

The Girls’ Hostel was not only aimed at training girls in new skills, it was also meant to produce “ideal wives.” In essence, the institution’s aim was gendered cultural engineering, framed in the language of improving the girls’ “character” and discipline. In 1930, Rev. De Coteau acknowledged this early intention when he wrote as follows: “By teaching organized industry we hope to use a tremendous force in bringing discipline to bear on the formation of character; with this as our objective we are hoping to start a hostel for our native girls in October.” Perhaps this objective was achieved in the few years that followed the opening of the hostel. In 1933, when the institution was about three years in existence, more girls were admitted for domestic training. At this time, however, most of them were not older than eight years. The lower age of boarders was an advantage to the Mission. According to the missionaries, younger children were easier to mold. Mrs. Conton remarked that: “The little ones are so much more easily molded and it is delightful to see how soon they begin to adapt themselves to their new life.”

141 Ibid., p. 7.
143 Ibid.
144 Report for the Year 1930, p. 11.
145 Report for the Year 1933, p. 8. This was the first time a female missionary of the Pongas Mission reported directly to the organizers in Barbados and England. Until that moment, the
In the view of some of the missionaries, training the girls into “ideal wives” would help sustain the Pongas Mission. The girls were therefore earmarked for marriage to members of the Mission church congregations. Perhaps this was also a way of enticing male employees to remain with the Mission. Earmarking the girls for marriage to members of the Mission church parishioners was also a clear attempt to stop them from marrying non-Christians, who, in the view of the West Indian missionaries, would have oppressed them. Rev. De Coteau emphasized this view as follows:

We must train Christian wives for our young men. We have seen as did Nehemiah, the evils of heathen intermarriage. These young Christian women must be able to hold their own. They must be ideal wives.\(^{146}\)

The goal of the Mission was not only to “free” African women from their so-called oppressive men, but also to “elevate the continent” through them. In 1890, Rev. Cole stated that, “The higher training of our girls should be thought of. The future generation should be equal in point of intellect. The boys trained will desire suitable partners, and it is by this means we can elevate the country.”\(^{147}\)

This late nineteenth and early twentieth-century view regarding African women echoed those of some of the missionaries in the Victorian era. During that period, many missionaries were of the conviction that African women were terribly dominated by their men folk and therefore needed missionary intervention to help “free” them.\(^{148}\) Missionary intervention in the lives of these male-dominated African women was done through education for domesticity. Nakanyike Musisi relates that until 1918, education in colonial Uganda was totally under the

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\(^{146}\) Ibid.

\(^{147}\) Quarterly Report of S. Cole in USPG E45B, Diocese of Sierra Leone, Vol. 45B, 1890, R.H.L.

\(^{148}\) Prickett, Island Base, pp. 12, 123.
control of missionaries whose main goal was to use it “to establish a Christian nation at the source of the Nile.”\textsuperscript{149} The missionaries’ agenda to “liberate” African women through education for domesticity was evident in Uganda at the turn of the century. In 1909, the headmistress of Gayaza Girls’ Boarding School near Buganda’s capital of Kampala wrote: “Our aim is not so much to fill the girls’ head with knowledge, as to develop their character and make them good sensible women who are not afraid to work.”\textsuperscript{150} As Musisi argues, the methods and philosophy of female education were in line with the ideologies of education for domesticity, which was common in both Uganda and Britain at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century.\textsuperscript{151} What the advocates of education for domesticity failed to realize is that if you educate a boy, he goes and get a job and if you educate a girl, she goes and educate the family. Thus, not only were males and females standing on different footing on this issue, but males were also given a big edge in the sexual economy of the time. In the Pongas Country, some missionaries, despite supporting education for domesticity, urged caution. In 1931, Mrs. Conton noted: “… we have to be careful that while helping to fit these girls for future spheres in life we do not rob them of that simplicity which is just what makes the charm of the native girl.”\textsuperscript{152} In her view, female West Indian missionaries also manifested ethnocentrism in the Pongas Country – a situation that was clearly illustrated in the marriages of the Reverends Duport, Turpin, and Doughlin to the Morgan daughters between 1868 and 1869, and Mrs. Conton’s own marriage to Rev. Conton in the 1920s, and that of her sister to De Coteau in 1931.

\textsuperscript{150} Quoted in Ibid.
\textsuperscript{151} Ibid., p. 173.
\textsuperscript{152} \textit{Report of the Year 1931}, pp. 15-16.
As expected, some of the older boarders of the Girls’ Hostel married members of the Mission church congregations. In 1933, for example, Deborah O’Connor and Matilda Saunders became the first girls to do so to the delight of Mrs. Conton and J. Farquhar, the latter herself now married to Rev. De Coteau. The female missionaries personally dressed the brides during the wedding ceremonies in Fotoba, Isle de Los. Mission arranged weddings were not uncommon in the Pongas. In 1900, Emma Louis Wilkinson, a granddaughter of Chief Richard Wilkinson, married Timothy William Richards. Both were products of the Mission. It is not clear whether the focus on the so-called “moral value” training nature of the Girls’ Hostel and the successful wedding of two of its boarders in 1933, played a major role in attracting girls from other communities in Conakry. It is however clear that some members of the Islamic community in the city sent some of their daughters to the hostel. For example, Fagouda Niang whose father was a Muslim and mother a Christian joined this girls’ institution in 1933. About sixty-six years earlier, this would not have happened. Fathers of such children often refused to send their children to the Mission for fear of them being converted to Christianity.

Perhaps the success of the Girls’ Hostel was also the cause of its demise: in June 1934 French colonial authorities ordered it closed. The authorities might have done so to crush competition with their own Girls’ School in Conakry. Whatever their motives may have been, the closure had a negative impact on the Mission. It silenced the voice of the female missionaries of the Mission. In fact, not only did the Mission lose the boarders to its rivals, it also lost the service of two of its valuable employees. While Mrs. De Coteau remained with her husband in

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154 Report of S. Cole at Kambia for the Quarter Ending March 31, 1900 in E55b, CLS 131, R.H.L.
155 This is a Senegambian Wolof name.
156 Notes on the Pongas Mission, January 1933, p. 6.
Conakry, presumably as an unemployed housewife, Mrs. Conton sought new employment in Sierra Leone. Upon the recommendation of Bishop Wright, she was hired to teach at the Annie Walsh School, a CMS Grammar School in Freetown.\textsuperscript{158} Her departure ended the second period of most active participation by female missionaries in the Pongas Mission.

The Mission’s loss in human resources came on the heels of the financial woes caused in part by the expensive training of the three missionaries in France. As much as £563:7s:2d was spent on the passage to France, boarding, training, and allowance of the trainees between 1928 and 1930.\textsuperscript{159} Also, the sum of 1,811 francs was spent on the two female graduates’ return passage to the Pongas, while 8,212:05 francs, including the deposit to be refunded was spent on their male counterpart.\textsuperscript{160} These expenses worsened an already bad situation. In fact, it resulted in the Mission borrowing money to balance its books. Gladys Walton, Honorary Secretary of the English Committee, confirmed this in her 1931 Report in which she wrote:

> On two or three occasions lately it has only been possible to send out the amount due for salaries by borrowing money. The balance in hand has been decreasing each year for the last four or five years, this being mainly due to the sums expended on training in France Mrs. Conton, Miss Farquhar, and Mr. De Coteau….\textsuperscript{161}

Doubtless the French Colonial Government’s insistence on teaching French in Mission schools contributed greatly to the demise of the West Indian missionary enterprise in the Pongas Country. In fact, not only were these restrictions partly responsible for the Mission’s financial woes, they were also a major catalyst in the drain of the Anglican Christian population from the Pongas. Since the official establishment of the French Colony of Guinea in 1890 and the direction of all trade through Conakry, as well as the closure of Mission schools shortly after,

\textsuperscript{159} Report for the Year 1929, p. 18; R. Bryson to W. G. Squibb, July 3, 1930 in D334, CLS 131, R.H.L.
\textsuperscript{160} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{161} Report of the Year, 1931, p. 21.
there had been a steady movement of Pongas “Christians” to Conakry and other centres of education and commerce, a situation that also prompted the establishment of the Pongas Mission station in Conakry in 1899. In 1900, for example, the congregation of the All Saints Church in Conakry included twenty former students of the Mission schools in the Pongas and other areas. They included one called Carimo Pedro from the Rio Nunez and others from Domingia, Fallangia, Fotoba, and Cassa.\(^{162}\) To make matters worse for the Pongas stations, once these immigrants firmly established themselves in those centres, they rarely returned to their places of origin. Many sought employment with the Colonial Government or commercial houses there. Rev. J. B. McEwen reported in 1900 that, David Fernandez and Henry Nightingale, two of the former Mission students from the Boys Boarding School at Cassa, who were able to speak a little French, worked in French Government offices in Conakry.\(^{163}\) McEwen also noted that the rest of the boys held various jobs as mechanics and clerks, while others learnt carpentry and masonry.\(^{164}\) This was a successful coup for French colonial authorities because it lessened the possibility of British influence in the region.

While the rural-urban drain might have had a positive impact on the lives of some of the people involved, it generally produced a negative residual effect on the growth of the Mission in the Pongas and other places in the area. For example, the migration resulted in a scarcity of Christian marriages and baptisms in those areas because the people who remained there were often the elderly and girls, whose parents could not afford to send them to Conakry for training. In 1865, a total of ten Christian marriages in Fallangia were reported for the period starting from

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\(^{162}\) Report of J. B. McEwen for December 31, 1900.
\(^{164}\) Ibid.
1855. The number increased to twenty-one between that year and 1873. Fourteen of these marriages took place in Fallangia, while the remaining seven walked down the aisle in Domingia. Of the twenty-one marriages registered in the Mission books, fifteen were between indigenous “converts”, while the rest were either between Europeans or Sierra Leonean immigrants. In 1890, Rev. Cole reported a total of thirty marriages. By contrast, Rev. Farquhar reported only four Anglican or Protestant weddings for 1903. He reported one marriage each for the years 1906 and 1907 and none for 1909. The statistics attest to the fact that French restriction contributed to the decline in Christian marriages in the Pongas. French authorities might not have wanted increased Protestant Christian marriages in the Pongas for fear of cementing the ties of those couples and their potential offspring with Britain rather than France.

In 1873, a total of 807 Baptisms from 1855 to January 1873 was recorded. Again, 571 of these were recorded in Fallangia, while 236 came from the Domingia register. In 1891, when French restrictions began to take shape, Fallangia recorded eight Baptisms, while Domingia and Farrangia had twenty-eight and thirty-three on their registers respectively. The statistics demonstrate Domingia and Farrangia’s increasing influence at the expense of Fallangia. They are

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165 Progress of the Pongas Mission, 1865, p. 23.
167 Ibid., p. 3.
168 Report of S. Cole December 31, 1900 in USPG E45B, Diocese of Sierra Leone, Vol. 45B, R.H.L.
170 See Rev. Farquhar’s Reports for 1906, 1907, 1907 in ‘E’ Series, Missionary Reports, Vols. 61B; 62B; 64B; R.H.L respectively.
171 Ibid. Figures for other Mission stations are not available. Perhaps they were included the statistics already provided.
also indicative of the crippling effects French restrictions had on the Mission. According to the West Indian missionaries, French restrictions contributed considerably to the decisions of many girls to marry Muslim men in the Pongas Country. However, in reality, the rapid growth of Islam in the area was the major factor in such marriages. The declining membership in the Pongas Church and the rapid growth of Islam meant that an increasingly large percentage of potential marriage partners were Muslims.

During the period of French control of the Pongas, mixed marriages could not be avoided due to the fact that many “Christian men” migrated to the centres of education and commerce, leaving those potential brides behind. It was reported that Conakry had a total population of 8,500 in 1905. Out of this total, there were 250 Europeans, 200 Syrians, 500 Jollofs, 1000 Fullahs, 150 Mende, 600 Sierra Leoneans, and 5,800 Susu. Rev. Farquhar reported that there were 200 French functionaries and traders in Conakry in 1910. The above numbers clearly show a high percentage of Susu residents of the French colonial capital. Commenting on the desolate nature of the Pongas country in 1935, Bishop Daly of the Gambia-Pongas stated that, “… the successful Susus have made their way to the towns for work, and the young have been drafted away for education: some have joined the Church of Rome because of the educational advantages that it can offer…” Obviously, such a situation would not have helped the survival of the Mission in the Pongas. In fact, it was a key factor in causing the demise of the Pongas Mission.

176 Daly, Gambia and the Rio Pongas, p. 4.
Vassady attributed the rapid decline of the Pongas Mission to three main factors.\textsuperscript{177} (1), he blamed the disappointments of Africans with the lack of material reward from the Mission. This is a valid argument considering the fact that, in the first place, most “converts” in the Pongas embraced the new religion for practical rather than strictly spiritual, gain. (2), there was the unhappiness of its organizers, especially in connection to the negative reports that emanated from the Mission field. Again, considering the accusations and counter accusations of illicit sexual relations and illegal liquor peddling in the late 1860s, which resulted in firings and resignations of Mission personnel, Vassady’s argument is valid. (3), Vassady argues that the Mission declined because the bishop of Sierra Leone was disappointed over the West Indian missionaries’ treatment of their Sierra Leonean assistants. Indeed, bad relations between West Indian missionaries and their African assistants, as well as their Eurafrican host chiefs in the late 1850s and 1860s, were major causes of conflict, which also resulted in the firing and resignation of Mission personnel.\textsuperscript{178}

Although all of the above contributed heavily to the decline of the Pongas Mission during the earlier period, it can also be argued that the lack of funding resulting from various circumstances played a key role. By 1899, resources from the Mission organizers “were at the lowest possible ebb” due in part to the recurring hurricanes in the West Indies and the islands’ declining sugar industry, from which the Board in Barbados was able to finance the Mission.\textsuperscript{179} The Mission organizers occasionally reduced spending, causing the Mission to scale back its activities and to employ self-support schemes where applicable. Most importantly, however, as we have seen and will see in the next chapter, French colonial authorities’ imposition of strict

\textsuperscript{177} Vassady, “The Role”, (1972).
\textsuperscript{178} Ibid., p. 307.
\textsuperscript{179} M. F. Vol. XLIV, 1899, p. 332.
language rules in an effort to assimilate people by promoting the use of French language in the region finally sealed the fate of the Mission.\textsuperscript{180} By the late 1930s, French colonial authorities in Guinea intensified their stranglehold on the Mission.

**Conclusion**

The period between 1860 and 1935 witnessed an increase in the efforts to consolidate the Pongas Mission amidst more financial problems and French influence and crippling restrictions on the Mission. The thesis has argued that French interests in the Rio Pongo and the final establishment of the French Colony of Guinea had crippling effects on the Mission. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, the French had lost their continental empire in North America, leaving them only with plantation colonies of the Antilles and small trading stations on the West African and Indian coastlines. France did not have an active policy regarding territorial expansion in Africa before 1830 when it acquired Algeria, an acquisition that marked the beginning of French colonization in Africa. It has been argued in this chapter that between 1866 and 1894, the relationship between the French and the Pongas Mission was cordial but very difficult. The consolidation of the French position in the Pongas Country from 1890 and the demand that Mission schools teach in French stifled the expansion of the Mission. The thesis also argued that the Pongas Mission’s inability to recruit French teachers to meet the requirement of French colonial authorities in Guinea halted its progress. Due to French restrictions, most of the Mission’s students were left with no choice but to join the rival Roman Catholic and local Islamic institutions in the Pongas Country.

\textsuperscript{180} Bishop G. W. Wright to the Board, Freetown, December 22, 1926 in *USPG D305, Diocese of Sierra Leone*, Vol. D305, 1926, p. 2, R.H.L.
It is also shown in this chapter that in their desperate moments, the Pongas missionaries and their superiors tried to solve the problem of language instruction in Mission schools and church services by training their own teachers in Senegal and France. However, as French colonial authorities remained committed to denying the British any vital influence in their colonial territory, these efforts did not solve the problem. Despite the fact that the Mission successfully trained three teachers in France itself in the 1930s, authorities in Guinea never accepted their certificates as sufficient for teaching in the territory under their control. This rejection meant a continuous crippling of the Pongas Mission. As we shall see in Chapter 6, by 1935 when the Gambia-Pongas Bishopric was established in the hope of rescuing the Mission, and during the decade’s end when the Second World War erupted in Europe and two West Indian missionaries were jailed in Senegal, the Pongas Mission was already on a downhill spiral in the Pongas Country. French actions in the late 1930s and other developments in the Pongas Country, especially events relating to the Second World War – the Mission’s last decades of existence there, are the subjects of the next chapter.
Chapter 6
The Demise of a Century Old Missionary Enterprise in West Africa,
1935-1963

Discussing the last years of the Rio Pongas Mission in West Africa in this chapter, it is argued that the final straw came in the 1935-1963 period through the effects of French policy during and immediately following WWII and self-inflicted mission mistakes. The chapter shows that the Diocese of Sierra Leone that extended well into the Straits of Gibraltar was too vast and impossible for a single bishop to provide the Episcopal supervision needed for the Pongas Mission. For eighty-five years, the Bishop of Sierra Leone supervised the Mission. During those years, however, it was longing for the day when it would be directly cared for by a bishop of its own. There were only three Episcopal visits in 1858, 1865, and 1874 even though the Pongas missionaries requested more frequently.

As Christians in the Pongas Country, including those from Sierra Leone who settled there as traders and as British colonial government civil servants, received inadequate Episcopal supervision, it became even more urgent for the Mission to have its own bishop to cater to their needs. It will be shown in this chapter that to address this problem and to consolidate the Church of England’s work in this part of West Africa, the West Indian Church authorities approached the Archbishop of Canterbury and asked him to create a new diocese in the region that would include the Rio Pongas Mission. In 1935, the new Diocese of the Gambia and the Rio Pongas was created.

I noted earlier in this study that from the 1860s, the French seriously challenged the British influence in West Africa and competed with them for control of what they called the Riviere du Sud (Southern Rivers) and what the British referred to as the Northern Rivers. After
France formed the French Colony of Guinea in 1890, it increased its efforts to protect it against renewed British interest in the area, leading to the imposition of crippling conditions on the British affiliated Anglican Mission of the Rio Pongas. It is argued in this chapter that similar crippling measures were taken against the Mission during World War II. With the fall of France and the Franco-Germany Armistice of June 22, 1940, the political landscape in French West Africa was thrown into great confusion. As the Vichy regime of Marshal Philippe Pétain became increasingly authoritarian and resolutely pro-Germany, British subjects in the region came under heavy scrutiny. Those whose contacts, activities, and institutional ties linked them most closely with British colonies in Africa were particularly suspected of sympathizing with Britain. Not that the French authorities in metropolitan France and in West Africa were particularly interested in religious matters, but because of their Anglicanism, Pongas missionaries and staff were naturally seen as possible sympathizers with the interests of Great Britain as a colonial power in Africa. For this reason, especially at a time when French Guinea sided with the Vichy Government in France, the Pongas Mission workers became major suspects and were treated as British spies. Some of them were consequently jailed in Dakar, Senegal, halting the Mission’s new work plans in Guinea.

Finally, it will be shown in this chapter that the establishment of Kristi Kunda (K.K.) or Christ Town in the Kantora District of the Gambia’s Upper River Division by John Charles Sydney Daly, the first Bishop of the Diocese of the Gambia and the Rio Pongas, in 1940, was meant to make the tiny settlement a model Christian village where people lived in community, worshiping the Lord and serving their neighbours. However, it will be argued that the establishment of K.K. was not only part of a wider scheme of Bishop Daly’s to tap into what he believed was a large pagan or nominal Muslim population in the area. It also reflected the
comprehensive concept of missionary penetration that was the common goal of the Missionary Societies in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.


In 1855, the West Indian Church mainly composed of emancipated slaves and their descendants but led by metropolitan and Creole whites, decided to establish a Mission in West Africa under the auspices of the S.P.G. This missionary enterprise became commonly known as the Rio Pongas Mission. For eighty-five years, the Bishop of Sierra Leone whose diocese extended well into the Straits of Gibraltar supervised it.¹ During those long years, however, the Mission was longing for the day when the S.P.G. authorities realized that a bishop in close proximity to the Rio Pongas Mission was needed for the missionary venture to be carried out successfully. To this end, petitions were repeatedly sent to the West Indies and to England asking for a bishop to be appointed. However, for various reasons, no bishop was appointed for over eight decades. In 1934, however, wishing to reduce the size of his diocese, the Bishop of Sierra Leone contacted the Bishop of the West Indies who was also wishing to secure Episcopal supervision for the Pongas Mission in French Guinea. Together, they approached the Archbishop of Canterbury and asked him to form the new Diocese of the Gambia and the Rio Pongas.²

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¹ When it was created in 1852, the Diocese of Sierra Leone consisted of the colonies of Sierra Leone and the Gambia, to which was added the oversight of Anglican congregations in Guinea, the Azores, Grand Canary, Teneriffe, Madeira, and parts of Morocco, as well as Lagos and the Gold Coast. E. G. Walmsley, *John Walmsley, Ninth Bishop of Sierra Leone: A Memoir for His Friends*. London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1923, Chapter IV. “The Call to Africa”, p. 1.

The Archbishop approached both the S.P.G and the S.P.C.K. and asked them respectively to serve the new diocese and to sponsor a Bishopric Endowment Fund whenever it was formed. Despite the argument that the Mission needed its own bishop, it was obvious that the creation of the new Diocese of the Gambia and the Rio Pongas was more of a rescue effort for the ailing Mission than anything else.

When the Diocese of the Gambia and the Rio Pongas was finally created in 1935, John Charles Sidney Daly, a product of King’s College, Cambridge, and Vicar of Airedale-with-Fryston, in the Diocese of Wakefield in the United Kingdom became its first bishop. Young and presumably energetic, Daly was the kind of bishop that the Mission sponsors in Barbados and England wanted for assignment in West Africa. He was believed to be the right man for the job because of his capacity for endurance during difficult circumstance, which would find ample scope in a diocese that involved traveling on foot for many miles. It was also believed that the bishop designate could make his presence and influence among his parishioners felt very quickly; for his visits to the remote parts of the diocese could be but brief and few. Most importantly, however, in regard to churchmanship, it was believed that the new diocese required a bishop who regarded with sympathy the Evangelical traditions established through its connection with the Church of England. Even though important Anglican operations did not exist in the Gambia, the presence of minor Anglican communities in the colony, as well as in Senegal, called for a bishopric.

During the English Committee meeting held on March 12, 1935 prior to Daly’s consecration, the Chairman told the bishop designate that his appointment to the new job would put new life into the whole Pongas Mission.\(^3\) Noting that it was nice to have a man with

\(^3\) *The Gambia-Pongas Magazine*, May 1935, p. 9.
knowledge and authority to direct the Mission, the Chairman assured Daly that he could count on the loyal support of the English Committee whose members were ready to help him by every means possible in his difficult undertaking. Promises of help and support for the new diocese in anticipation of strengthening the Pongas Mission also came from elsewhere. As L.M. Allen, Hon. Secretary of the S.P.C.K. put it, “…we all felt that at last the romantic, but rather tragic, West Indian Mission to West Africa was going to have a chance to expand and develop, in a way which would more than justify its existence and its survival in spite of all its difficulties and loses.”

Allen’s statement echoed the deep sentiments felt by many proponents of the creation of the new diocese and supporters of the bishop designate. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it was a deep conviction among organizers of missionary enterprises that the African Church required a leader of marked humility, and possessing deep powers of sympathy, who would also be able to adapt to customs and traditions of a people different from his own. It was also believed that rural missions often required a person with the fervent zeal of an evangelist. Furthermore, it was a common conviction among Mission sponsors in the West that settlers, traders, and officials from their countries often needed a spiritual shepherd who had the faculty for knowing them individually, and who could move easily and happily amongst his friends while always calling them to higher things.

Perhaps as Bishop of the Diocese of the Gambia and the Rio Pongas, Daly could better handle matters affecting the constitution of the Church because he would have the advantage of a full working knowledge of the Anglican system in England. Moreover, the large circle of friends, whom he had already gathered round him in his parishes and elsewhere, would form the nucleus of a keenly interested group of supporters for his work in West Africa. In light of Daly’s appointment and Allen’s comments about strengthening the Pongas Mission, it is

4 Ibid., p.10.
5 Walmsley, John Walmsley, p. 2.
therefore clear that the creation of the new diocese was meant to put new life into the ailing Pongas Mission. In fact, upon its creation in May 1935, the centre of the Pongas Mission work was transferred from Conakry, French Guinea to Bathurst in British Gambia - an action that changed the enterprise from the Rio Pongas Mission to the Gambia-Pongas Mission.

As bishop, Daly headed a diocese that extended about 700 miles up the Atlantic coast northward from Sierra Leone, including the whole of Senegal, the Gambia, and both Portuguese and French Guinea. All of these areas were part of the Diocese of Sierra Leone whose bishops supervised the work of the Pongas Mission from its earliest days until 1935. Because of the vastness of the diocese, only an occasional visit to the Pongas Mission stations by its bishops was possible. This also meant certain Mission undertakings were delayed or not done at all, prompting the belief that with the establishment of the new diocese, the Mission’s work would be carried out more efficiently. After all, the Gambia, the See of the Bishop of the Gambia and the Rio Pongas, was an excellent location, as it was possible to reach the Pongas Mission stations and other areas by the newly constructed roads and by the British colony’s river systems. In fact, unlike the Rio Pongo and its numerous branches, the River Gambia itself was, as it is today, a safe and easy body of water to navigate.

The creation of the new diocese was very important for the Pongas Mission. Although there were other denominational Christian Missions, such as the Roman Catholic and Methodist Missions in Bathurst, Gambia, the L’Eglise Protestante de Paris in Dakar, Senegal, as well as non-denominational American Missions in that vast area, their work was confined to more specific areas leaving huge areas supposedly uninfluenced by Christianity. Believing that certain areas of the Gambia were untouched by other denominational or non-denominational Christian

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7 Ibid.
Missions, Bishop Daly had specific plans for the place. His plan for the Gambia included seeking a supposedly unworked area in the Protectorate at which to establish a central station staffed by numerous workers. This station would also have boarding schools both for boys and girls, a dispensary and hospital, a model farm, a church and a training college for catechists and “bush school” teachers. The bishop also hoped to have a European priest as head of that central station with another European as his assistant. Trained African evangelists, teachers, agriculturalists, dispensers, and other professionals would assist these European priests.

Such a plan directly contravened the missionary theory of Henry Venn who argued that, “the most important function of the C.M.S. missionary was to train members of the indigenous population as pastors so that they could take over the missionaries’ role.” According to Venn, “the missionary who did not educate an indigenous ministry to replace himself was building on an insecure foundation.” Furthermore, contrary to Bishop Daly’s plan, Venn was of the conviction that the missionary should “avoid putting himself before the people as a leader.” Venn argued that, “prompting the self-action is more important than inducing men to follow a leader.” By looking at Bishop Daly’s plan for the Gambia, it is clearly evident that the concepts that Venn developed in response to the problems C.M.S. missionaries encountered in East Africa in the nineteenth century were not being applied in the Gambia in the twentieth century. Nevertheless, Daly’s missionary zealotry in the Gambia remained very strong. The bishop and his staff’s so-called tasks in the country were,

8 Ibid., pp. 6-7.
9 Ibid., p. 8.
11 Ibid.
12 Ibid.
to strengthen and make real the Faith of the Christians in their care; to maintain a stand against the zealous and effective missionary spirit of the Mohammedans; and to win to the Faith those pagans who have as yet withstood the call of Islam.\textsuperscript{14}

In his enthronement address at St. Mary’s Pro-Cathedral in Bathurst on June 6, 1935, Daly outlined and emphasized that major undertakings of his Bishopric were to “provide a spiritual home for those who have left England to live awhile in Africa”, to “unite into one [his] Church-people in [the new] diocese” and to “extend Christ’s Kingdom throughout the diocese.”\textsuperscript{15} In doing so, his ultimate goal was “to build up a new diocese in which the living Church shall function in all her fullness, [as the] ultimate aim of that Church must be to see that Jesus Christ is known and loved and served in every corner of the diocese.”\textsuperscript{16} The Bishop reiterated that the Pongas Mission’s “task is to build up a Church in full communion and fellowship with the Church in England, the Anglican branch of the Holy Catholic Church.”\textsuperscript{17} To achieve that goal, however, the Mission needed the support of both overseas and local sponsors.

The creation of the Diocese of the Gambia and the Rio Pongas in 1935 would not have succeeded without financial support from overseas and local sponsors. In 1934 when the Archbishop of Canterbury approached both the S.P.G. and the S.P.C.K. and asked them respectively to serve the new diocese and to sponsor a Bishopric Endowment Fund whenever it was formed, the S.P.C.K. responded by promising to provide £1000 for five years.\textsuperscript{18} Members of St. Mary’s Church congregation in Bathurst, Gambia also contributed to this Fund with the amount of £40.\textsuperscript{19} The Diocese of the Gambia itself provided £55.5s while the Pongas donated

\textsuperscript{14} The Gambia-Pongas Magazine, April 1938, p. 1.
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., p.10.
\textsuperscript{17} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{18} The Gambia-Pongas Magazine, May 1935, p.15.
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid.
£12.\textsuperscript{20} The S.P.G. received other donations in the sum of £355 to put towards the endowment of the See.\textsuperscript{21} In 1935, the Endowment Fund was set up, but it initially raised only £250 per year with the bulk of the Bishop’s stipend of £700 per annum paid by the S.P.G. for five years.\textsuperscript{22} The S.P.G. provided a small grant of £185 for diocesan funds annually. However, the society was not committing itself to paying the balance of the stipend beyond 1940.\textsuperscript{23} Instead, it asked Bishop Daly to raise £10,000 for the Endowment Fund.\textsuperscript{24} By 1940, between £5,000 and £6,000 was raised. Consequently, the S.P.G. extended its guarantee on a yearly basis for half of the Bishop’s £700 annual stipend and arranged for him to be paid about £200 out of the Endowment Fund interest. As the years progressed, the Endowment Fund increased, and in 1944, the Bishop was paid £580 in total. A year later, however, the S.P.G. cancelled the Fund after adding another £6,200 to it and reducing the Fund’s annual grant of £185 to £150. With no travel, leave, and sickness allowances from the S.P.G., it seemed the stipend of the Bishop of the Diocese of the Gambia and the Rio Pongas was fixed at £580 per year.\textsuperscript{25} This reduced income seemed to be unsatisfactory for Bishop Daly who was worried about the effects it would have for himself and his successors. As such, he stated:

For myself I am content to cut my suit according to my cloth. Traveling has cost little during the war thanks to the great help the Royal Navy and R.A.F. have given. Traveling over so vast an area after the war may be difficult on my reduced income.\textsuperscript{26}

\textsuperscript{20} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{21} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{23} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{24} Answers From the Bishop of Gambia: The Survey in D490/6, 1946-47, p. 1.  
\textsuperscript{25} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{26} Ibid.
As it turned out, traveling over so vast an area and living on a reduced income were the least of the worries facing Bishop Daly and the Pongas Mission, especially in French Guinea, site of the pioneer stations for the West Indian Mission to West Africa. What would eventually worry them the most was exclusive French politics during World War II.

**Exclusive French Politics: The Impact of the Second World War on the Rio Pongas Mission, 1939-1945**

As we have seen in this study, French restrictions severely disrupted the freedom that the West Indian missionaries and the Pongas Mission had in conducting their proselytization in French Guinea for many decades. The Mission school closures and restrictions on the expansion of churches contributed greatly to the demise of the work of the missionaries. By 1935 when the Diocese of the Gambia and the Rio Pongas was created and the centre of the Pongas Mission was transferred from Conakry to Bathurst (now Banjul), the Mission’s pioneer stations at Fallangia, Domingia, and Farringia had already lost their supposedly former glory.27 Echoing a similar view, Rev. Ernest de Coteau, a resident West Indian missionary in Conakry wrote about some old French settlers in the colony speaking of the Pongas Country as terre morte (dead land).28

Between 1935 and 1940, the Pongas Mission tried hard to put new life into its activities in French Guinea. However, the insistence of French authorities in the colony to have all English-speaking schools closed continued to frustrate the efforts of the missionaries, especially in their quest to train their own teachers and workers. Most importantly, however, the Mission’s efforts to rekindle its work in the French colony was further hampered by the fall of France to Nazi Germany and the Franco-German Armistice of June 22, 1940 during the Second World War. The subsequent anti-British activities of the Vichy Government in France further derailed

the Mission’s plans to train its own teachers and staff and to rebuild its ailing school system in
French Guinea. This created a deep sense of loss and frustration among the Pongas missionaries
and their sponsors and supervisors. According to Bishop Daly, “The vicious circle of being able
to have no schools until you have a trained staff and no ability to train your staff until you have a
school is one of our most worrying problems.”

During the previous years, a boarding school of the Mission in the Rio Pongas was
situated at Domingia in a block of buildings that an Anglo-Greek trading company in French
Guinea loaned to the Mission for the duration of the war. As the location was considered
unhealthy, the decision was made to relocate the school to Cassa, Isle de Los. This was based on
a more important factor than just the unhealthy location of Domingia. Being a predominantly
Muslim town, it proved difficult for the Mission to convert Domingia’s children to Christianity.
Thus, according to Rev. John R. Laughton, the Irish-born Pongas missionary, the solution lay in
the relocation of the boarding school to Cassa. Laughton wrote:

It would seem that the only solution is to be found in bringing up a new generation who
are filled with missionary zeal, a generation that is removed for a while from
Mohammedan influence so that, later, they can come to it with fresh minds and with an
enthusiasm that is not dulled by constant stagnating influence of Islam.

To this end, a proposal to establish the James Leacock Boarding School in Cassa in memory of
the first missionary of the Pongas Mission had been put forward in 1937 but the application for
funding in the amount of £500 for the school was turned down by the S.P.G. on the grounds that
there would be no such money for colleges and schools except in very urgent cases for the next
two to three years. The refusal to fund the James Leacock Boarding School was based on the

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30 *The Gambia-Pongas Magazine*, April, 1938, p. 17.
31 Assistant Overseas Secretary to Rev. J.R. Laughton on establishing the Ecole James Leacock
in Isles de Los-Cassa, April 29, 1937 in CLS 219, 1936-1939, R.H.L.
fact that the S.P.G. had already given a grant of £2,000 to the Madras Christian College with the hope that it would be re-paid within three years from the special funds it controls.  

As it turned out, the S.P.G.’s refusal to provide the required funds to establish the James Leacock Boarding School was not the only problem the Mission faced regarding the matter. The French Colonial Government in Guinea was also steadfast in its refusal to permit the Mission to carry out its plan in Cassa. At the time, it was believed that the refusal of French authorities to allow the proposed project to proceed was an economic decision based on their plan to mine bauxite on the island, which at the time was producing the granite stone for harbour construction at Conakry. As the quarry at Cassa was located at a site near the old boarding school of the Mission, there was little chance that another school could share the economically viable space. It was later realized, however, that the French decision was not entirely an economic one. Rather, it was mostly a military one. Writing his report as the person in charge of All Saints’ Church at Conakry in 1939, Rev. de Coteau notes that, “Cassa has proved impossible because a naval base is to be established there.” Considering the fact that World War II was about to start in September and France was always suspicious of Britain’s intentions as a rival colonial power, it was not surprising that colonial authorities in French Guinea withheld permission from all the people seeking concessions on the island.

The French Government’s refusal to allow the Mission to build the James Leacock Boarding School at Cassa came as a severe blow to the Mission’s plans. For two years following the negative French decision, negotiations continued and everything pointed to permission being granted. However, this was never to be. Bishop Daly appealed against the adverse French

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32 Ibid.
34 Ibid., p. 11.
decision to no avail. Eventually, the decision had a serious impact on the Pongas Mission’s work in French Guinea. Rev. Laughton, who was the chief proponent of the Boarding School, resigned from the Mission and became Rector of Dambleton with Mornington near Evesham in Ireland where he resided with his wife.35 Most importantly, however, the failure to build the school in Cassa left the Pongas missionaries with the feeling that they had lost the little sympathy and co-operation of French colonial authorities in Guinea. In the long run however, that feeling was dispelled. While explaining the importance of Cassa as a future naval base for France, the Mayor of Conakry also made it clear to the Pongas missionaries that the French authorities were willing to help their British allies. As in the 1890’s when similar instances occurred in French Guinea, the willingness of the French colonial authorities to co-operate with the Pongas missionaries in other areas was demonstrated in Conakry where the Mission staff was provided with free light and water supply, and Bishop Daly’s traveling and accommodation were facilitated.36 In addition to these provisions, the French Colonial Government often sent official representatives to the Mission’s special services and it provided advice and help to the missionaries in other matters when necessary. One can therefore argue that, despite certain restrictions against the Mission put in place by French authorities in Guinea, the relationship between the two parties seemed to be a symbiotic one. Commenting on this symbiosis, Bishop Daly wrote: “Our work is to teach the Gospel and to build an indigenous Church but in so doing we are also helping a great Colonial Empire of people rightly grateful and loyal to the French Republic.”37 As evident in the above statement, French authorities both in metropolitan France and in French Guinea no longer shared Bishop Daly’s view during the war years. After the fall of France and the Franco-German

35 Ibid., p.17.
36 Ibid.
37 Ibid.
Armistice of June 22, 1940, the political landscape in French West Africa was thrown into great confusion. The war between Britain and Germany after France’s capitulation brought deep misunderstanding between old friends and former allies in West Africa. According to Bishop Daly, because of their Anglicanism, Pongas Mission workers became suspects when French Guinea sided with the Vichy Government in France and some of them were jailed for being considered British spies. As disheartening as imprisonment was, such action was normal during wars.

The action of Vichy authorities in French Guinea against the Pongas missionaries was more than just seeing them as British spies. Overseas territories were tremendously important to the Vichy regime in France during the war years. This importance is reflected in the maiden speech of Marshal Pétain, the French wartime leader, in which specific reference to the empire was made. On June 25, 1940 after signing the Franco-German Armistice, he declared the following statement to the French: “I was no less concerned about our colonies than the metropole. The armistice safeguards the link that unites us with them. France has the right to count on their loyalty.”

Ginio has suggested that:

In a situation in which two-thirds of France’s territory was under German occupation, the empire endowed the new regime with an opportunity to restore to the French people at least some of the dignity snatched by the German occupier. But the empire was also vital for the Free French forces that had no territory at all.

As Ginio points out, “Soon, the French colonies of Africa became a battlefield of these two forces [the Vichyite and Free French forces].” Ginio further notes that, “Africans found

38 The Gambia-Pongas Magazine, April 1944, p. 10.
41 Ibid., p. 206.
42 Ibid.
themselves faced with two Frances appealing for loyalty – an unusual position for any colonized people.”

Like the Africans, the Pongas missionaries found themselves in this unusual position, as they were British subjects who also had to demonstrate their loyalty to France – the host of their missionary enterprise in French Guinea. Arguably, the missionaries witnessed Vichyism in French West Africa, especially in Guinea, undergoing its most difficult hour during the war. This is reflected in the suspension of their activities in the colony and the arrest and imprisonment of some of them in Dakar, Senegal. Under the circumstances created by the war, the Vichyites would not tolerate anything that would threaten their interest in Africa. As Ginio points out, when Pierre Boisson was appointed High Commissioner in French Africa and transferred to Dakar in 1940 to represent the Vichy regime, he emphasized that his goal was not only to protect the region from the Anglo-Gaullists takeover, but also to keep it away from Nazi German and Fascist Italian control. Boisson’s main concern was making sure that the colonized as well as the Anglican missionaries remained loyal to the Vichy regime in France. Ginio notes that, the French High Commissioner knew how unstable French Africa was during the war and realized that the situation was extremely dangerous. The greatest weakness of the French was exposed to the Africans, as well as to the Pongas missionaries, when France was partly occupied by Nazi Germany. Elsewhere, Ginio notes: “World War II in general and Vichy rule specifically shattered many myths for Africans, as well as for colonial subjects in other parts of the empire.”

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43 Ibid.
44 Ibid., p. 208.
45 Ibid.
challenge French colonialism and the subsequent decolonization in Africa and Asia.\(^{47}\) Under such circumstances the events of 1940, which left France holding on to only about one-third of its territory, transformed its empire into a real lifesaver. The empire provided France the opportunity to restore its lost honour, proving to the world that it still controlled an empire blessed with resources, territory, and huge manpower in its service.\(^{48}\) According to Eric Jennings, “Just as the vanquished France of 1871 has turned to colonial expansion, so too was the humiliated France of 1940 expected to pursue an imperial resurgence.”\(^{49}\) Thus, this reasoning and French colonial zeal emanated after France lost Alsace and Lorraine in 1870 to Prussia. Finding greater salvation in the empire followed an even more truncated France in 1940.\(^{50}\) As an illustration, Jennings quotes Marius Leblanc – a Réunionais of Greek origin:

> The defeat is not only a trial but also a lesson in a school – one of reflection, of determination, of wisdom and of flourishing. Our wonderful colonial empire of today sprang up from our defeat in 1871. The latter left the French shocked, crushed, limited in Europe: out of a profound and ancestral instinct, they turned to colonial expansion…. The colonies became a school of breathing, aspiration and freedom, as well as laboratories of hope.\(^{51}\)

Perhaps, the colonies were all of the above to the French and France’s destiny was unknown without them. During the Second World War, the supporters described what France’s destiny would have been without the empire by stating:

> Thanks to this empire, France, though defeated and reduced in Europe, is not a people without space, not a nation without men, not a state without resources… The French should only consider how their country would have been wiped out if it was limited in 1940 to its metropolitan territory and its scant 39 million inhabitants! Deprived of all communication with the outside world, erased from the rank of the sovereign nations for

\(^{47}\) Ibid., p. xiii.

\(^{48}\) Ibid., p. 127.


\(^{50}\) Ibid.

\(^{51}\) Quoted in Ibid., p. 13.
an undetermined period, condemned to wait in the future for only the pity and generosity of others, France would have been, for years, just another Poland or slightly larger than Belgium.\textsuperscript{52}

As evident from the above statement and from this study, the Vichyites saw the empire not only as the supplier of territory, manpower, and resources lost in France’s defeat by Nazi Germany, but it was also seen as an avenue through which the country might regain at least some of its lost honour. In Ginio’s words, “The empire, in short, is pictured as a ship battling stormy seas, seriously damaged but eventually rescued by the wisdom of an experienced leader and thus able to aid comfort, support, and feed France.”\textsuperscript{53}

\section*{Prisoners in French West Africa Under the Vichy Government, 1941-1943}

According to Bishop John S. C. Daly of the Diocese of the Gambia and the Rio Pongas, the Second World War came with its messages to the Pongas Mission: “Go slow”, “Economise”, “Undertake no new work”, “Prepare for a decrease in support from home.”\textsuperscript{54} What was missing from the messages as indicated above was the statement, “Beware of hardship and jail time.” In 1939, Rev. de Coteau was in Paris trying to establish contact with the French Evangelical Board of Missions. His efforts had raised hope with the Pongas Mission about receiving a grant from that Board for an Anglican priest to work in Dakar among the Mission’s converts, as well as the French African Protestants there. The Mission also hoped that Rev. de Coteau’s efforts would result in attracting the interest of a young Frenchman from the French Theological College that he visited to head its educational work in French Guinea. Furthermore, it was the Mission’s hope that Rev. de Coteau’s trip would have also generated the interest of the Secretaries of the

\textsuperscript{52} Quoted in Ginio. \textit{French Colonialism Unmasked}, p. 12.
\textsuperscript{53} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{54} Bishop Daly in “Letter From The Bishop”, Bathurst, February 2, 1940 in \textit{The Gambia-Pongas Magazine}, April 1940, p. 1.
Y.M.C.A. in Geneva who had invited him there to support the Mission’s children in Conakry.\footnote{Ibid.} However, the outbreak of the Second World War halted all the negotiations and dashed the Mission’s dreams, as de Coteau had to rush back to his post in Conakry. In the mean time, there was a general mobilization for the war in French Guinea. In 1940, the French commandant went to Domingia to personally inform Bishop Daly about it. The bishop decided to leave Domingia where he was visiting to head for Conakry en route to Bathurst, his See City, from where he would review the situation.

In Bathurst, Daly continued to monitor and review the situation in his diocese, especially in French Guinea. According to Rev. de Coteau, “foreseeing what was likely to happen as a result of pro-German feeling which was spreading like malignant tumors” among French subjects there, Bishop Daly suggested that, as British subjects, the Pongas missionaries should leave French Guinea.\footnote{The Gambia-Pongas Magazine, April 1944, p. 10.} However, as Rev. de Coteau himself points out, even though “the storm clouds were already gathering, and would sooner or later burst”, and the missionaries were no longer communicating with either Bishop Daly or the S.P.G., they decided to weather the storm clouds in the French colony. For such a decision, the Pongas missionaries suffered serious consequences. For example, for many months, the Mission funds were cut by Government decree and the missionaries were left with no money to run their errands. In 1940, it was Bishop Daly who had to go to England to arrange for the Mission to receive funding through a firm in Conakry that was headquartered in Manchester.\footnote{Ibid.} Almost two weeks after Daly’s departure for England, Rev. de Coteau was summoned to the office of the Mayor of Conakry to be told that the Colonial Government in French Guinea was now engaged in a “politique exclusivement
Française.” By this, the Mayor meant the cancellation of the monthly service for the English-speaking people from Sierra Leone and the cessation of instructions held on Fridays for the Mission’s children.

Upon receiving the devastating news, Rev. de Coteau tried to draw the Mayor’s attention to the fact that the Mission Church was “de cour et sentiment Français” in French Guinea, especially in Conakry. However, little did he know that the worst was yet to come. On June 1, 1940, the head of the Intelligence Service in French Guinea summoned de Coteau to the agency headquarters. As Chief-of-Staff, the officer informed de Coteau that he and the Governor of the colony would want him to co-operate with them if he really wanted to save the Mission. Rev. de Coteau was also informed that his co-operation would prove the Pongas Mission’s loyalty to France. By co-operating with the authorities, de Coteau was required to help secure funds from England to pay spies for propaganda purposes against England, and to recruit about 10 young men from his congregation who would then be sent to Freetown where they would spy on England for France. At such a high price, however, de Coteau refused to “save the Mission.” Consequently, during the “Colonial Week” inauguration ceremony on July 1, he was escorted out of the gates of the Governor’s palace in disgrace. Later, the police explained de Coteau’s disgraceful expulsion from the ceremony by telling him: “Your people (the English) have taken away Syria from us. As from now we do not want to see you at any public function, nor do we want you to have anything to do with our people.” From that moment, de Coteau’s life and the fate of the Pongas Mission in French Guinea were in grave danger. The missionary was spied on and colonial authorities in Conakry monitored all his actions and activities closely and carefully.

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58 Ibid., p.11.
59 Ibid.
60 Ibid.
In the mean time, colonial authorities in Conakry sent a telegram to Pierre Boisson, the Governor-General in Dakar, accusing the “Mission Anglicaine” (Anglican Mission) as being a “nid d’espionage” in French Guinea, and providing them with the power to arrest the missionaries. Authorities in French Guinea wasted no time. On August 1, 1941, all the Pongas Mission stations were searched and all but two missionaries were arrested. Commenting on the arrests made in the Pongas and Isles de Los stations, Bishop Daly wrote:

On one day (evidently under the impression that the Anglican Church was the English Secret Service in disguise!) every member of the staff was arrested and imprisoned save one who was confined to his island and another who was asleep and so overlooked. Rev. de Coteau himself was detained in solitary confinement in a prison cell in Conakry for 45 days without charges before being transferred to Dakar where he remained together with Rev. Martin Luther Benjamin until his return to French Guinea in 1943. Their colleague, Rev. De Jean S. McEwen, the Senior Missionary at the time, was confined already to his island station while de Coteau’s wife was put under constant surveillance in Conakry. It was only on September 8, 1941 following their arrest a month earlier that both de Coteau and Benjamin were taken to face a military tribunal in Dakar on the trumped charges of spying for Britain. Almost a year later, on May 26, 1942, both men were finally brought to trial on three charges of espionage. They served a total of 18 months of jail time in Dakar until their release in 1943 when Governor-General Boisson finally rallied to the Free French on the grounds that it was necessary in order to preserve French control in West Africa.

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61 Ibid.  
62 Ibid.  
64 Ibid., The Gambia-Pongas Magazine, April 1944, p. 11.  
65 The Gambia Pongas Magazine, p. 11.  
66 Ibid.  
67 Ibid.
It is important to further understand why colonial authorities in French Guinea were hostile to the Pongas Mission and staff during the Vichy regime. World War II pitted great empires and nations against each other. France was one of the Western European countries that lost the war, suffered national humiliation during the carnage, only to be “liberated primarily through the efforts of others.”

As we have already seen, the French Government had surrendered to Germany and then collaborated with the Nazis. “For the French and those in French colonies, the war years were a time of division and a source of “ecrimination”, especially as the German conquerors sought revenge for the African empire that they lost earlier. During the war that began in September 1939 when Germany invaded Poland, French forces, 10% of who were Africans, were mobilized to fight the Nazis. However, German forces overwhelmed them and France was forced to surrender on June 17, 1940. As the French National Assembly voted to surrender to Germany and to dissolve itself, Marshal Philippe Pétain ruled the southeastern part of France from his base in the city of Vichy. According to Manning, at that moment, “only a few French officers and soldiers, under the leadership of General Charles de Gaulle, escaped and vowed to continue the fight.”

The key thing, however, was that Vichy was an ally of Nazi Germany.

In a radio broadcast from London on June 18, General de Gaulle pleaded for the French to join him in fighting German aggression. This plea produced the Free French movement that established a government in exile in London. While in metropolitan France a resistance movement began, in the French colonies the governors had to decide whether to continue taking

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69 Ibid.
70 Ibid.
orders from the defeated government of Marshal Pétain or to support de Gaulle. According to Manning, most of them hoped to support de Gaulle, but they hesitated to break with the Vichy administration. This is an assumption that Eric Jennings has proven wrong when he argued that most colonial administrators at all levels were sympathetic to Vichy, which articulated their long held values. Nevertheless, as expected, their hesitation to break with the Vichy regime did not play well with the British who could not wait any longer. Thus, not surprisingly, the British forces attacked and destroyed the French fleet in the harbor of Mers-el-Kebir in Algeria in early July, killing 1,300 French personnel. This military action further humiliated French colonial governors in Africa and it made their potential decision to break with the Vichy regime in support of de Gaulle and Britain even harder.

During the war, Pierre Boisson, the Governor-General of French Equatorial Africa, was appointed High Commissioner for French Africa. At the time, only Felix Eboué, the French Guiana born black governor of Chad, declared his support for the Free French. In fact, from the very beginning of the war, Eboué had maintained contact with both de Gaulle and the British authorities, and had encouraged other governors to continue the fight against Nazi Germany. Had the governors accepted Eboué’s advice immediately, the war in France would have taken a different direction. According to Barbara Cooper, “Any efforts to retake France from North Africa would be heavily reliant on the overseas territories for soldiers, materiel, food supplies,
and moral support.”

In fact, this was a possibility. For instance, after the announcement of the Franco-German Armistice on June 22, some elements of the French military in African colonies rejected capitulation and thought of joining the Allied forces in African colonies. As Cooper points out, by August 1940, Eboue had decided to lend support to de Gaulle’s Free French movement and if all the French West African colonies had followed his example, “the block of African colonies would have become the backbone of the French resistance forces.” This is probably true considering the fact that with African support, de Gaulle’s aide, Colonel (later General) Leclerc over threw the pro-Vichy government of Cameroon on August 26, 1940 and took control of it. Similarly, the French colonies of Congo and Ubangi-Shari, and later, Gabon fell to the pro-de Gaulle forces in the same year. Also, with the support of the British navy, a small Free French fleet bombarded the harbours of Casablanca and Dakar in an attempt to force the governments of Morocco and French West Africa to abandon their support for the Vichy regime. This military action only drove the respective colonial administrations further into the arms of Vichy authorities. Thus, after several hours of fighting in Dakar, the attackers withdrew and “French West Africa was left alone for two years but not until Boisson arrested European and African supporters of the Free French movement.

In light of such animosity, it was not surprising that the colonial authorities in French Guinea who were generally sympathetic to the Vichy regime demonstrated their hostility against the Anglican affiliated Pongas Mission in their colony. In fact, during the war, Boisson saw the

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78 Ibid.
79 Ibid.
81 Ibid., p. 138.
82 Ibid.
rallying of French Equatorial Africa in support of de Gaulle as a betrayal of France. In his view, as Cooper observed, the most important duty of overseas administrators of metropolitan France was “to maintain the cohesion of the French empire and prevent any further erosion of France’s position.” Cooper notes that the Vichy regime could not imagine “any kind of autonomous decision-making capacity within France’s African territories.” She relates that Pétain himself was of the opinion that the African colonies which he “referred to explicitly as the French “empire,” would be the guarantor of France’s ultimate sovereignty and independence from Germany.” According to Cooper, Pétain was convinced that as long as French overseas territories were protected from German intrusion, they could become areas from which American goods could be exported into metropolitan France. Thus, it was not surprising that the Vichy policy toward French West Africa was to keep German interests away while “attempting to sustain and cultivate economic links to the United States, which was at that point neutral.” Consequently, as Cooper points out, “Anything that might cut off metropolitan France from the prestige and resources of the empire then, was seen as a threat to the very survival of France as a sovereign nation.”

It was such fear that the British-affiliated Ponga Mission and its missionaries were considered spies for Great Britain, which was then a strong ally of the Free French. In fact, considering the military action of the Allies against Mers-el-Kebir and Dakar on July 4th and 8th respectively in a hasty attempt to stop Germany and Italy from taking Africa, the French had every reason to be suspicious of any British affiliated organization or subject. As Cooper points

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83 Cooper, Evangelical Christians, p. 225.
84 Ibid.
85 Ibid.
86 Ibid.
87 Ibid.
88 Ibid.
out, even though French West Africa as a whole remained loyal to the Vichy regime, “in the confused political currents of the time, it was the “britaniques” who appeared to be the most immediate threat to France’s overseas empire.” As we have seen, this was evident in the maltreatment of the Pongas missionaries in French Guinea and their eventual imprisonment in Dakar during the course of the war.

Ironically, despite their harsh measures against the Pongas missionaries during the war years, French colonial authorities in Guinea always reassured Bishop Daly of their readiness to allow and even to help the Mission to continue its work in the colony. A French colonial official later explained the administration’s actions to the bishop by stating that:

You must realize that we were bound by the terms of the Armistice but after Nov. 10th 1942 when the Germans themselves violated the terms [sic.] we became freemen again. When we were slaves we had to obey but now we are free and three quarters of Frenchmen in the Colonies rejoice to be in the fight again on the side of their Allies.

The above explanation cannot be totally disputed knowing that French colonial authorities had always maintained relatively good relations with the Mission despite their language policy in Guinea.

In fact, the actions of French colonial authorities against the Pongas Mission during the war years cannot be understood entirely in terms of politics. As Cooper points out, politics aside, “the Vichy government (both in France and abroad) advanced a pro-Catholic policy as part of a crusade to renew and purify France in the wake of what looked like the failure of the Front Populaire.” This pro-Catholic tendency crystallized the contradictions already present in French claims to republicanism in the context of empire. As the Pongas missionaries were

89 Ibid., p. 226.
91 Cooper, Evangelical Christians, p. 226.
mostly British subjects, the Mission itself was not surprisingly seen as “britanique” in orientation and its employees were regarded as potential spies with ties to neighbouring Sierra Leone, the base of British colonialism in the region. Evidently, Pongas missionaries did maintain close ties with the Diocese of Sierra Leone whose bishops supervised the Mission from its establishment in 1855 to 1935 when a separate bishopric was created. However, as we have seen in Rev. de Coteau’s reply to the Mayor of Conakry’s accusation of the missionaries being British spies, the Pongas Mission remained neutral on political issues in French Guinea. It was the Vichy regime’s increasing pro-German position that branded any British subject a potential spy for Britain.

During the war years, people whose contacts, activities, and institutional ties linked them most with British colonies in Africa were particularly suspect. As Cooper observed, it was not that French authorities were particularly interested in religious matters, but “because missionaries seemed to be natural conduits of information in likely sympathy with the expansionist interests of Great Britain as a colonial power.”92 In French Guinea, therefore, this mistrust of the “britaniques,” compounded by the pro-Catholic policies of the Vichy regime, created a climate that was particularly inauspicious for an Anglican enterprise such as the Rio Pongas Mission.

**Transferring the Centre of the Pongas Mission Work from Conakry, French Guinea to Bathurst, the Gambia, 1935-1963**

Following the creation of the Diocese of the Gambia and the Rio Pongas, and the consecration of Bishop John Charles Sidney Daly in 1935, the centre of the Pongas Mission work was transferred from Conakry to Bathurst – making the enterprise the Gambia-Pongas Mission. It was very difficult for the Mission to progress in French Guinea in the face of the colonial French regime’s language laws, French only for instructions, its rivalry with Great Britain, and later, the

92 Ibid.
anti-British actions of the Vichy regime witnessed during World War II years. The events of the war virtually destroyed what was left of the Mission in the colony. Upon their release from prison in Dakar, the first priority of Reverends Ernest de Coteau and Martin Luther Benjamin was to re-establish the boarding school at Domingia. In two years, the school had 40 boarders but it proved too expensive to maintain.\(^9^3\) Even though the Mission had saved some money during the war when new ventures could not be undertaken, the amount available was still not enough to maintain the school. Because of the war, financial support from abroad was not forthcoming. In addition, the cost of living in the colony quadrupled, as the pound sterling had declined in value compared with the French Franc, with the exchange rate of £1=10\(^9^4\) compared to the earlier years in which the rate was £1=200.\(^9^5\) These difficulties made it virtually impossible for the Mission to maintain adequate food supplies for its existing staff and boarders. Consequently, Rev. de Coteau and his wife, Jenny de Coteau, as well as other staff members had to go on leave – closing the school. While vacationing in the Caribbean, Rev. de Coteau tried to raise £10,000 to support the Mission, but the devastation of the war had made his efforts on the islands virtually impossible.\(^9^6\)

The financial problem was not the only thing that affected the Pongas Mission in French Guinea in the 1940s. The language restriction continued to impede its progress in the colony. In fact, at the time, the Colonial Government did not recognize the boarding school at Domingia and the school’s existence was a direct contravention of the law. The authorities were ready to recognize only two kinds of schools: a “Catechism School” that would provide religious instruction in the local language together with a curriculum that included reading, writing, arithmetic, and rudimentary French language, and a “Rural School” that would provide

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\(^9^3\) *The Gambia-Pongas Magazine*, April 1947, p. 4.
\(^9^4\) Ibid.
\(^9^5\) *The Gambia-Pongas Magazine*, November 1944, p. 3.
\(^9^6\) *The Gambia-Pongas Magazine*, April 1944, p. 5.
instructions entirely in French – a scheme “intended to produce good literate peasant farmers, with a pride in the French Empire.” ⁹⁷ The latter school was also supposed to provide religious instruction, have a farm and offer other forms of manual instruction for its students.

It was not easy for the Mission to provide this kind of education system in French Guinea. As Bishop Daly pointed out, this was mainly due “to the lack of opportunity to accept and to train children during the last 40-50 years that [the Mission’s] work in the Pongas has been so barren.” ⁹⁸ Daly further noted that there would be snags in establishing a school system that would be satisfactorily recognized by the authorities in French Guinea. First, he cites the problem of feeding and clothing the students. In the mid-1940s, excluding tuition, it cost £12 annually to feed and clothe a single student. Second, Daly points out that it would cost £50-100 yearly to acquire the services of a schoolteacher for each school in the colony. ⁹⁹ Although these financial problems could have been easily alleviated by self-support schemes, as we have seen in this study, the poverty of the local people and other circumstances made it virtually impossible for that to happen in French Guinea. Therefore, together with other factors as indicated in this study, these conditions further necessitated the transfer of the centre of the Pongas Mission work from French Guinea to the Gambia in 1935. In the Gambia, the Mission established a Christian community village in 1940 to continue with the work already begun in the Pongas Country eighty-five years earlier.

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⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 8.
⁹⁸ Ibid.
⁹⁹ Ibid., pp. 8-9.
Kristi Kunda (Christ Town): “The New Jerusalem”, 1940-1963

Thy houses are of ivory,
Thy windows crystal clear,
Thy tiles are made of beaten gold —.  

So wrote William Haythornwaite (Kotto\textsuperscript{101} Bill), a Pongas missionary in November 1944, underlying the brilliance of Kristi Kunda\textsuperscript{102} that dazzled him when he approached the settlement for the first time. On that occasion, Haythornwaite exclaimed: “Ah, the New Jerusalem!!”\textsuperscript{103} The one time headmaster of the elementary school at K. K. was deeply impressed by the new roofs of aluminum corrugate that adorned the church, dispensary, and three of the houses of the settlement.

Bishop Daly established K. K. near Fatoto in the Kantora District of the Upper River Division (URD) of the Gambia, about 300 miles from Bathurst, in 1940. A little party of six young men, including a hospital dresser and dispenser, an agriculturalist, a teacher, a cook, and a carpenter, together with the village chief of Jao Kunda and his subjects, assisted the Bishop in building twelve mud houses, including a dispensary or First Aid Post at a total cost of £30.\textsuperscript{104} The establishment of K. K. was part of Bishop Daly’s plan for the Gambia – a plan that included finding supposedly “unworked area in the Protectorate\textsuperscript{105}, …to establish a central station with as

\textsuperscript{100} The Gambia-Pongas Magazine, Autumn 1953, p. 7.
\textsuperscript{101} “Kotto” means older brother or sister in Mandinka.
\textsuperscript{102} From hereon, Kristi Kunda will be referred to as K. K.
\textsuperscript{103} The Gambia-Pongas Magazine, Autumn 1953, p. 7.
\textsuperscript{105} The Gambia consisted of a British Crown Colony and a Protectorate. The Crown Colony consisted mainly of the islands of St. Mary and McCarthy, and the division of Kombo St. Mary. Bathurst, the capital (now Banjul) is situated on the island of St. Mary with a population of 21,000 in 1951. It was Britain’s second oldest colony in West Africa. The Protectorate was a narrow strip of territory of about 10 miles on each bank of the River Gambia. It extended for
big a staff as possible.\textsuperscript{106} In his view, this area was the Fula village of Jao Kunda. From the very beginning, K.K. considered itself a mission to the Fulas, and Jao Kunda being a Fula village, became the prime candidate for Christian influence among that ethnic group. The objective was to establish a Christian settlement that would include a hospital and an industrial farm school to provide vocational training for its residents who would also live a communal life and engage in agricultural production. However, upon its establishment, K.K. tended to develop rapidly and to deviate from the original ideal as visioned by Bishop Daly. According to Haythornwaite, “This was inevitable, as in the first place, it was soon discovered that the education given [there] was the best in the Protectorate, and many people wanted to send their sons [there]; thus for a time the schools were absorbing practically all the interest and work.”\textsuperscript{107}

Even though it was believed that many people wanted to send their children to K. K. schools, it was obvious that the Mission was facing many difficulties. Bishop Daly notes that one of the difficulties was that Christianity was always regarded as “the white man’s religion” in the Gambia.\textsuperscript{108} In K. K., the bishop tried to correct this view by trying to transform the settlement into “a normal African village.” As such, the staff tried practicing what they believed were the accepted local customs of hospitality by becoming naturally friendly with their neighbours, and by secularizing the education system. However, as many Gambians regarded schooling as the gateway to “the white man’s way of living – trousers and an office job,”\textsuperscript{109} the Mission was careful in its school curriculum. It produced a Primer in the local language together with some about 300 miles from Bathurst to Koina, Upper River Division (URD). Koina is the easternmost village in the Protectorate. Most of the inhabitants of the Protectorate were Muslim. For more details, see \textit{The Gambia-Pongas Magazine}, April 1951, p. 5.\textsuperscript{106} Right Rev. J. C. S. Daly, \textit{Gambia and the Rio Pongas}, p. 7.\textsuperscript{107} \textit{The Gambia-Pongas Magazine}, Autumn 1953, p. 7.\textsuperscript{108} \textit{The Gambia-Pongas Magazine}, January 1942, p. 6.\textsuperscript{109} Ibid.
Bible and African folk stories, as well as prayers. Nevertheless, the fact that there was no lingua franca and a written local language made the Mission’s efforts more complicated. Whether the Mission wanted to make K. K. “a normal African village” or not, the truth of the matter was that its main goal was to spread the Gospel among the Fulas of Jao Kunda and the surrounding villages who the missionaries considered to be non-Muslim or pagan. In 1948, Bishop Daly wrote about this goal and the difficulties that the Mission faced at K. K. stating as follows:

Our task is to make known the Love of God as revealed in Jesus Christ, and to establish His Kingdom by building His Church. One of the greatest obstacles to a European Missionary’s work is the immediate assumption that he is preaching “The White man’s religion.” Another is that everyone assumes that he is backed with limitless wealth. If we are to fulfill our task in the face of these two difficulties, our obvious duty is to train West Africans, who have been filled with the Love of God to proclaim the Gospel, and to insist on the Church becoming self-supporting.\footnote{The Gambia Magazine, March 1948, p. 3.}

This dual goal as evident above resulted in the bishop’s wish for the English school curriculum in the Gambia to adopt the four H’s (Health, Head, Heart, and Hands) policy.\footnote{The Gambia-Pongas, November 1935, p. 6.} This policy was implemented in K. K. after Daly had seen its success in Dakar in 1935. The bishop was convinced, as the French colonial authorities were, that the prevailing education system at the time was only “producing far too many boys and girls whose only ambition [was] to work in the towns as clerks”\footnote{Ibid.} – a situation that often left hundreds of them without jobs while making them feel above doing farm work. In French West Africa, colonial authorities included practical agriculture in their school curriculum and they often insisted on most of the students returning to their villages to do farm work. Bishop Daly wanted this policy emulated in the Gambia, especially in K. K. where a small school farm was provided. In February 1940, he defined the three-fold objective of his proposed agricultural work at K. K. as follows:
(i) To produce food for the settlement.

(ii) To make a link of sympathy and understanding with the people,

(iii) To demonstrate better farming on a village scale and under normal working conditions.

To achieve this goal at K. K., the bishop was encouraged by the Colonial Government, whose Department of Agriculture provided him with two trained Gambians, a plough and improved seeds. The Department also advised the Mission in matters regarding the purchase and training of the ploughing cattle.113

The reason for putting more emphasis on the four H’s and agricultural production at K. K. was to produce Christian farmers and not semi-educated clerks. According to Bishop Daly, “The Church’s work is certainly not primarily “to get John a good job”, but it is “to help John to become a good man.” The work is not to make the children of farmers into successful townsmen but into fine Christian farmers.”114 This sentiment echoes that of G. W. Erle Drax, another missionary, who supervised a small groundnut farm at Basse School in the Gambia in 1938. According to Drax, it was necessary “… to try and teach rather better methods of agriculture; by training the young to try gradually to influence the people as a whole.”115 In essence, school farms were not only meant to produce self-supporting Christian farmers, but they were also used as tools of conversion into Christianity. As we have seen in this study, although many Gambians, like other West Africans, might have wished to become Christians because they found a lot in Christianity to be attractive, as the religion was synonymous with Western form of education and ability to read and write and speak English well, the yoke imposed on them as Christians or as

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113 Extract from Dispatch No. 42 of the 30th May, 1942 from the Governor of the Gambia, p. 1.
114 The Gambia-Pongas Magazine, April 1939, p. 18.
would-be Christians, such as becoming monogamous, had discouraged them and even led many of them to embrace Islam instead. Oshitelu notes that, like Christianity, Islam is a universal religion with a book – the Quaran, and with teachers and doctrines that are attractive to non-literate people (as in Christianity).\footnote{G. A. Oshitelu, *Expansion of Christianity in West Africa up to 1914* (Ibadan, Bamadi, Patani, Ughelli, Warri: Nigeria, Oputoru Books), 2002, p. 11.} With that knowledge in the Gambia, the battle for Muslim converts became a very difficult one for the Pongas Mission. According to Bishop Daly, the boys and girls who joined K. K. had originally come from Muslim and non-Muslim families. As a result, the Mission could not “contemplate their becoming Christians until they are old enough and strong enough to stand on their own.”\footnote{The Gambia-Pongas Magazine, April 1945, p. 3.} Despite this situation, the bishop found other ways and means to win over the Muslims and non-Muslims in the country. Earlier in 1935, he wrote:

> It seems to me clearer than ever that we must find a way into the hearts of the Mohammedans other than through schools alone; we must win them by living the life among them. I have a vision of our stations being centres of vigorous cultivation and of medical aid … slowly pagan children are coming from the pagan villages, which the catechist visits, and these represent our most immediate hope of conversion.\footnote{The Gambia-Pongas Magazine, November 1935, p. 4.}

Even with such plans as evident in the above quotation, converting Muslim children into Christianity in the Gambia proved very difficult for the Mission. For example, Muslim parents often withdrew their children from mission schools after Muslim clerics or authorities expressed their concern that the children might adopt the Christian religion.\footnote{Ibid.} In 1950, Bishop Daly wrote, “The Mohammedans have closed their eyes to the Light and the pagans seek the reflection of that Light in Mohammedonism – the Anglicans in the diocese are loyal and very responsive, but they are very few.”\footnote{The Gambia-Pongas Magazine, October 1950, p. 3.}
The Mission was fully aware that converting Muslim children to Christianity in a country whose population was 90% Muslim\textsuperscript{121} was going to be an uphill battle. In K. K. for example, except a handful of Fula children, most of St. John’s, the settlement’s vernacular school’s 30 boarders were Mandinka and Muslim.\textsuperscript{122} The opportunity to acquire Western education rather than adopting Christianity was what took most of them there. In the House of Transfiguration, K. K.’s English-speaking school, the boarders were mainly Christian children from Bathurst sent there “to get them away from the Bathurst environment which [was] not too helpful for youngsters.”\textsuperscript{123} Even there, most of the 90 boarders joined the Mission with the main goal of receiving training in new skills and acquiring Western education.\textsuperscript{124} Together with the problems of funding, these issues threatened the success and survival of K. K. in the late 1940s.

As it was in French Guinea, the issue of funding became a serious problem for K. K. from the late 1940s onwards. In 1948, for example, the Mission received only £5000 from overseas sponsors for the settlement’s programs compared to £6000 in 1947.\textsuperscript{125} Ironically, this budgetary shortfall happened at a time when some of the students had reached an advanced stage in their training and were supposedly ready to be sent out to their various communities to help spread the Gospel. The only positive outcome of the budgetary shortfall was that it forced the Mission to build its new projects more on the basis of self-support. In late 1948, £400 was raised among the Mission staff. About £52 of that amount was collected from the African employees of K. K. – most of who earned between £36 and £80 annually.\textsuperscript{126} Consequently, by late 1949, K. K. schools were operating fairly smoothly under the direction of Rev. St. John Pike – allowing

\begin{itemize}
\item [121] *The Gambia-Pongas Magazine*, November 1935, p. 5.
\item [122] *The Gambia Magazine*, October 1949, p. 10.
\item [123] Ibid.
\item [124] *The Gambia-Pongas Magazine*, March 1948, p. 3.
\item [125] Ibid., p. 4.
\item [126] Ibid., p. 5.
\end{itemize}
Bishop Daly to focus on transforming K. K. into a model village that he believed was as important as the schools themselves. The bishop insisted that, “K. K. must become a model Christian village where men and their families live in community, worshiping the Lord and serving their neighbours.” To this end, he toured the Sandu District to spread the Gospel, using K. K. as an example of the Mission’s successful achievement in the Gambia.

Bishop Daly’s tour of Sandu District should not only be seen in terms of showcasing K. K. Rather, it should be seen as part of the comprehensive concept of missionary penetration of the lands they considered to be “unworked” and thus aimed at evangelizing and civilizing – an idea that Thomas Fowell Buxton always supported and a common goal of missionary societies in nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In the nineteenth century (1841-1842), Buxton incorporated this concept into his Niger Expedition. As an observer wrote, “Buxton proposed that ‘pure’ humanitarians should also be put to work. There should be actual missionaries to preach the Gospel; the Bible should go with the plough and the traders’ goods.” According to this observer, in Buxton’s view, “it was through the work of missionaries that the old society built on slavery and the slave trade would ultimately be dismantled and another based on Christianity and civilization reaved in its place.” As evident in the above statements, Buxton’s concept and Bishop Daly’s showcasing of K. K. should not be a surprise to any one. According to Russell, “Christianity, Commerce and Civilization had been the remedy prescribed for the ills of Africa by Whitehall and Exeter Hall for almost half a century. This had led to the establishing of Sierra

\[129\] Ibid.
Leone, Liberia, and Libreville as well as the Niger Expedition…“ in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. A similar remedy was prescribed for K. K. in the twentieth century. However, despite some success as evident in Bishop Daly’s showcasing, it was obvious that K. K. was gradually declining as a result of a plethora of factors – among them, the resignation of Daly as Bishop of the Gambia and the Rio Pongas. At the request of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Daly replaced the Right Rev. John Orfeur Aglinby who resigned in April 1951 after 27 years as Bishop of Accra. Daly was enthroned as the new Bishop of Accra on May 1, 1951 – leaving Roddy N. Coote to succeed him as the second Bishop of the Gambia and the Rio Pongas. Losing a man of Bishop Daly’s caliber spelt bad news for K. K., which was completely dead as an experiment and model village by 1963.

The End of an Experimental Christian Village in The Gambia, 1951-1963

Despite the tremendous efforts of Bishop John C. S. Daly and the entire staff, K. K.’s education system had not resulted in an explosion of schooling or in the creation of a Western-educated Christian elite or farmers as originally anticipated. This failure was due in part to the Mission’s focus on a school curriculum that adopted the policy of four H’s (Health, Head, Heart, and Hands) rather than one that would have produced “semi-educated clerks.” From the very beginning, it was clear that many Gambians were not very enthusiastic about such hands-on education system, as most of them regarded formal education as the gateway to “the white man’s way of living – trousers and an office job.” Thus, an education policy that ignored that reality was bound to fail. In fact, K. K. was established at a time when European colonialism was on its

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130 Ibid., p. 157.
last leg in the Gambia, as in many other West African colonies. Consequently, it was most likely than not that some parents, not having acquired Western education themselves, would have rather wanted to see their children acquire the practical skills needed for successful merchant or entrepreneurial activities. Most importantly, as Cooper points out, the parents would have perhaps preferred an education system that provided fluency in colonial administrative culture that was even more important to the aspiring civil servant or politician during the last decades of British colonial rule in the Gambia.\textsuperscript{133} As Cooper observed in the Sudan, the idea of producing Christian farmers also seemed not to be too feasible in the Gambia. For instance, the technical skills taught to the children, such as cattle ploughing were almost useless in the villages where most of the parents could not afford the beasts of burden and equipment needed for the new farming methods. Perhaps an understanding of the futility of training the children in the long run might have resulted in the parents withdrawing them from K. K. School, contributing to the settlement’s final demise in 1963.

However, the most important factor that contributed to ending K. K. as an experiment in African Christian community living was the cancellation of the Hawkes Mission Fund. In her bequest, Mary Hawkes particularly emphasized that her trust, yielding over £2000 a year earmarked for “pioneer missionary work” should not be used in perpetuity in one missionary field, but should be moved from place to place, in particular for pioneer work.\textsuperscript{134} Consequently, the S.P.G. that had greatly supported not only the maintenance of the Diocese of the Gambia and

\textsuperscript{133} Cooper, \textit{Evangelical Christians}, pp. 253-289.
the Rio Pongas, but also the development of the missionary work in the Gambia, informed Bishop St. John Pike in 1963 that the Hawkes Mission Trust was to be used elsewhere rather than at K. K. This decision virtually hammered the last nail into the coffin of K. K. Without the Hawkes Trust Income, K. K.’s buildings could not be maintained and its boarders could not be supported. In fact, all the settlement did after 1963 was to keep a tiny school that provided the first rudiments of education to the local children.

In addition to financial and other difficulties, K. K. was seriously affected by the problem of migration of people from the rural areas to the urban ones. As many people moved into the urban centres in the 1960s, very few adults who remained in and around the villages surrounding K. K. really wanted their children to attend the settlement’s school. At this time, the Mission could not even maintain a catechist to gather a handful of children around him because the Internally Self-Ruled Government of Premier David Jawara would not provide any financial support. Classes needed to be of a certain size in addition to having a fully qualified teacher to be funded. The government’s reluctance to provide funds forced the final closure of K. K. in 1963.

It is noteworthy that the downfall of K. K. was not restricted to the problems mentioned above. Indeed, it was part of the broader picture of missionary enterprise failure in Africa in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. For instance, while in the Gambia for only a few years, Bishop Daly supposedly had a vision in which he saw the country with all its Muslim and non-

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135 He was the third Bishop of the Gambia and the Rio Pongas.
137 Ibid., p. 10.
138 He was later known as Alhaji Sir Dawda Kairaba Jawara, the first President of the Republic of the Gambia overthrown in a bloodless military coup by the current President, Alhaji Dr. Yahya A. J. J. Jammeh on July 22, 1994.
Muslim towns and villages being leavened by the existence in their midst of a village that would be to all intents and purposes, the same as them except that it would be Christian. This village would have a church, a school, and a dispensary, but its inhabitants would simply be farmers who would live in the same way as their fellow farmers in the surrounding towns and villages, except for the Christian religion that would be the centre of their lives. As we have seen, this vision never became a reality because it was a very unrealistic ideal that people should live and work together with no salary, simply for the love of Christ. It is obvious that even in the much more developed and financially secure United Kingdom at the time, very few Christians would be prepared to make such a sacrifice. In K. K., where the life of the settlement “hung fire for a long, long time while those responsible for it struggled to fan the dying flame, and many of those who worked there grumbled that they hadn’t got enough comfort and luxuries,” the issue of sacrifice was a wishful thinking.

As Rev. Mathias Charles George observed about K. K., “Before long every worker at Kristi Kunda was receiving a salary, as a teacher, as a dispenser, or as a farmer, and Kristi Kunda changed from being an African village into being a Christian Mission station.” According to Governor Sir Hilary Blood of the Gambia in a 1963 Dispatch to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, the attempt was no longer made to grow food crops for the maintenance of K. K. that could have been as well, if not better, grown by the local inhabitants. Instead, a wage system was introduced – deviating from Bishop Daly’s earlier ideas of having an African Christian and a

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140 *The Gambia-Pongas Magazine*, Autumn 1953, p. 11.
141 He was the priest in charge at St. Mary’s Pro-Cathedral in Bathurst, later appointed Archdeacon of Gambia on January 1, 1961.
142 Ibid.
self-supporting community. In fact, earlier, in a letter sent to the S.P.G. Accountant in 1949, Bishop Daly himself acknowledged that two things had caused the Mission to deviate from its original plan for K. K. Among them was a preoccupation with an English-speaking school that focused very much on Bathurst boys – an action that caused K. K. to accumulate more debt and contributed to its demise.

The fact that K. K. was transformed from being an African village into a Christian mission station was in itself very problematic. For instance, mission stations were usually built within some town or village with the intention of influencing their inhabitants towards the Christian religion. However, from the very beginning, K. K. was different because it was not built inside any town or village, but was a new and separate village. Consequently, when the original intention was abandoned and K. K. became a mission station, “everybody was a little in doubt as to the direction in which evangelistic effort should be turned.” Furthermore, as K. K. considered itself a mission to the Fula, Jao Kunda, the village targeted for the so-called Christian influencing was miles away from the settlement and most of its inhabitants were not interested in the new religion because those who tried to evangelize them were mostly foreigners. As a result, even though K. K. missionaries and workers had to work more to entice the people of Jao Kunda, most inhabitants of this village were never interested in what the Mission had to offer them. On several occasions, Bishop Daly convened meetings of the headman and the elders of the village and exhorted them to send their children to K. K. School, and in each of those occasions...
meetings, it was noted that they promised to do so, but they actually never did. Instead, most of them heeded the call of the Muslim clerics to adopt Islam.\textsuperscript{148}

As Jao Kunda and other Fula villages refused to send their children to K. K. School, the Mission was only consoled by the enrolment of Mandinka and Sarahulay children. These enrolments were mostly driven by the desire of the parents to have their children acquire Western education rather than to have them become Christians. Thus, K. K., whose original mission was intended for the Fulas, soon became a mission to nobody in particular. Despite this situation, the work at the settlement continued gradually, rather directing its own course, but was often hampered by a sense of frustration. The staff vaguely hoped that the parents of the remaining students, who they believed would never allow their children to convert to Christianity, might some day allow their own children to become Christians and acquire Western education. However, as we have seen, even this limited hope never materialized because K. K. ceased to exist beyond 1963. With its end also came the end of the Rio Pongas – the West Indian Mission to West Africa.

\textsuperscript{148} Ibid.
General Conclusion

In the final analysis, the Pongas Mission was another failed Christian enterprise in West Africa because of various reasons. As shown in this thesis, the experience of the West Indian missionaries in the Pongas Country was marked by constant struggle. Firstly, the Mission was hampered by the racism of the Church of England hierarchy, which consistently devalued the efforts of African-descended West Indian missionaries in West Africa, as well as the replication of the 19th century hierarchical slave societies of the West Indies that stemmed from centuries of slavery. These were in contradiction to the views held by the Mission’s organizers and supporters in Barbados and England that slavery created a natural relationship between Africa and the West Indies, and it also contributed significantly to the development of the West Indies, making Africa worthy of the spiritual and material benefit of a Christian enterprise. In the 1840s and 1850s, following the emancipation of slaves in the West Indies in 1838, these views also culminated with the enthusiasm of many African descended West Indians who became a potential source of recruitment for spreading these spiritual and material benefits in a region the Mission organizers considered to be their ancestral land. The consideration of Africa as a continent to establish a Christian mission with African descended West Indians becoming pivotal role players occurred with their perceived immunity to the “disease environment” of West Africa in mind. Considered as the “torch-bearers” of Western civilization in their ancestral land, many African descended West Indians were willing to accept the challenges of such an important role. Most importantly, however, they were eager to use the mission as an opportunity to escape the racial and hierarchical societies of places like post-emancipation Barbados in which whites were at the top and Blacks were at the bottom. As such, these potential missionaries wanted to be in a
place where they will not be judged by the colour of their skin and class status but by their human worthiness and capabilities. Because of their perceived immunity to malaria and yellow fever, West Indians of African descent were central to the Rio Pongas Mission. However, as we have seen in this study, this assumption of immunity was not true because like their European counterparts, African descended West Indian missionaries suffered and succumbed to the effects of these diseases.

Secondly, the Rio Pongas Mission was another failed Christian enterprise in West Africa because of African-descended West Indian missionaries’ own civilizationalist attitude toward the local population, including Western-educated Sierra Leonean teachers and catechists hired to assist them. As evident in this study, the enthusiasm of African descended West Indian missionaries and their quest to escape the entrenched hierarchical systems of places like Barbados was seriously hampered by the continuous racism of the Mission’s organizers during the formative years between 1855 and 1863. This situation was only rectified as a result of the cruel reality and proslytization necessity stemming from the successive deaths and resignations of white supervisors of the Mission after 1863. The lack of white supervisors finally forced the hands of the Mission’s organizers, providing the opportunities that African descended West Indian missionaries sought to fulfill their dreams in the Pongas Country. However, by choosing Western educated Sierra Leoneans as their assistants, West Indian missionaries of African descent identified and allied themselves with a segment of the local population that shared common Western values with them. This action complicated matters within the Mission in the Pongas Country.

These Sierra Leonean teachers and catechists challenged African descended West Indian missionaries for the behaviors and attitudes they believed were biased and condescending toward
Africans. Consequently, the challenges became the major sources of conflict between the two groups in the Pongas Country. While African descended West Indian missionaries were seen as behaving condescendingly and favoring their fellow West Indian agents at the expense of Africans in the running of the Mission, the actions of the African assistants were seen as competitive and a direct challenge and threat to the privileged positions of the West Indian missionaries. In the end, the escalation of the conflict contributed to the failure of the Rio Pongas Mission. Furthermore, the fact that the Mission’s overseas organizers put their original ambitious plans aside, while allowing this competitive situation between the opposing groups to continue in the Pongas Country never helped the course of the Rio Pongas Mission. By the 1870s, for example, the dominance of the West Indian missionaries of African descent over the control of the Rio Pongas Mission was seriously curtailed by the hiring of more Africans and empowering them. This move also resulted in dampening the enthusiasm for the Mission among African descended West Indian missionaries, thereby contributing to its failure.

Thirdly, the Rio Pongas Mission can be considered another failed Christian enterprise in West Africa because it did not succeed in its goal of establishing a self-supporting church and a thriving African agency. As discussed in the middle and later part of this thesis, the hiring and empowering of African teachers and catechists was strongly linked to the need for self-support and African agency in the propagation of the Gospel in the Pongas Country. African agency was particularly important for the Mission’s organizers because it was cheaper and thought to be more sustainable than using African descended West Indian missionaries. The Mission’s overseas organizers belatedly realized that Africans understood the language and customs of their people more than their West Indian counterparts. Most importantly, as the Mission organizers also found out later, the idea that African descended West Indian missionaries will be
immune to the tropical ailments of West Africa was proved wrong. However, by hiring fewer
African descended West Indian missionaries, the Rio Pongas Mission was also denied their
enthusiasm and important input. All of these failures were in addition to the reluctance of some
Eurafrican host chiefs to fully embrace West Indian missionaries of African descent because of
their believe that these missionaries could not encourage more British trade in the Pongas
Country. These host chiefs were convinced that only white missionaries could succeed in
encouraging more British trade in the region. As shown in this study, this belief contributed to
the soured relation between African descended West Indian missionaries and these Eurafrican
host chiefs in the Pongas Country, thereby contributing to the demise of the Mission.

Fourthly, the instrumentalism of the “converts’ and the fact that the Rio Pongas Mission
was established in an area already influenced by Islam and traditional forms of religious worship
made it even more difficult to achieve a successful and continuous proselytization process.
Together with the financial difficulties encountered later and protestations and restrictions of
French colonial authorities in Guinea prior and during the Second World War, the Pongas
Mission had no chance to succeed in the Pongas Country. French restrictions severely disrupted
decades of the freedom that the West Indian missionaries and the Mission had in proselytization
in French Guinea. Their closures of the Mission schools and restrictions on the expansion of its
churches contributed greatly to driving the last nail into the coffin of the Mission in the Pongas
Country. This explains the lack of an Anglican church with any heritage or affiliation with the
Mission in the current Republic of Guinea in West Africa.

In 1935 when the Gambia-Pongas Bishopric was created in the hope of rescuing the
Pongas Mission, Bishop John Charles Sidney Daly also outlined and emphasized that the main
goal of his Bishopric was to provide a spiritual home for the English settlers of Africa, to unite
people within the diocese, as well as to expand the Lord’s Kingdom within the diocese. Daly’s ultimate goal was to preside over a diocese in which the Anglican Church would function to its capacity and also to make sure that Anglican Christianity was adopted in every corner of the diocese. Apparently, the bishop’s ultimate goal was reminiscent of the ambitious plans and high hopes of the organizers of the Pongas Mission in the 1840s, which was to establish a church in West Africa that would be in full communion and fellowship with the Church in England – the Anglican branch of the Holy Catholic Church and to compensate Africa for its important contribution to the development of the West Indies through the transatlantic slave trade. As it was in the Pongas Country, in the Gambia, including Kristi Kunda discussed in Chapter 6, this grandiose task was a very difficult thing to achieve. As shown in Chapter 6 and throughout this thesis, converting children into Christianity in areas already influenced by Islam and traditional religion was an uphill battle for the Mission. Most “converts” in the Gambia like those in the Pongas Country as discussed in this thesis, joined the Pongas Mission for ulterior motives rather than for the love of Jesus Christ.

Finally, despite these failures, the Rio Pongas Mission had some success. For example, like the Republic of Guinea that currently has Anglicans who are connected with the Wilkinson, Gomez, Fernadez, and Curtis families and are holding prominent positions in the current Anglican centre at Conakry, the Gambia has an Anglican church with some heritage of the West Indian Mission to West Africa. Perhaps this is because the country is a former British colony and the efforts of the overseas organizers and missionaries of the Rio Pongas Mission also succeeded in establishing the current Diocese of the Gambia and the Rio Pongas with Banjul (formerly known as Bathurst) as the See City of its bishop. However, it is worth noting that the successful
establishment of this diocese in the early decades of the twentieth century was not only aimed at saving the Pongas Mission, but perhaps strengthening Anglicanism in the Gambia and beyond.

Another success of the Rio Pongas Mission, as we have seen in this thesis, is the fact that African descended West Indian missionaries, particularly John Henry A. Duport, who was the embodiment of achievement in the Pongas Country, contradicted the racist views of the Mission’s overseas organizers that West Indian missionaries of African descent were incapable of managing such a large Christian enterprise on their own. It was their determination and managerial skills amid trials and tribulations that enabled the West Indian Mission to West Africa to last long in both the Pongas Country and in the Gambia.
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Primary Sources

Mission Sources

Most of the literature used for this dissertation consist of the records of the West Indian Mission to West Africa – an Anglican Church enterprise that had its origin in Barbados, West Indies but received aid from many West Indian islands, including Barbados, and most importantly, from Great Britain. Although at one point the archives for these sources existed both in Barbados and in England, I believe the Barbados diocesan records are now located at Oxford University’s Rhodes House Library, Oxford where most of the research for this dissertation was conducted in 2002. The mission sources are divided into Manuscript Material and Printed Periodical Publication for clarity. The missionary sources consist mainly of their correspondence with the Mission’s organizers in Barbados and England, as well as their diaries, journals, and minute books. The minute books outnumbered other primary materials of the missionaries and thus used more to fill the existing gaps in this dissertation. Also used for this purpose were the Mission printed materials, which its organizers originally published in order to generate the interest of supporters of the enterprise in both the West Indies and England. These publications provided invaluable information about the Pongas Mission in the form of continuous commentary about its progress and the efforts of the missionaries.

Manuscript Materials

Most of these materials were found and consulted at Rhodes’ House Library, Oxford, England. They include the following:

- Diocesan Letter Book (1861-1874)
- Pongas Mission Minute Book (1850-1950)
- Letters Received, Originals, Sierra Leone (1856-1859, Series D. 8). These are original letters that the United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (USPG) received from the missionaries or their supporters regarding the Pongas Mission. They are found at RHL listed under Sierra Leone. Others are listed under the title: Letters Received, West Indies, Guinea, Vol./40/2A – 1861-74.
- Letters Received – Sierra Leone (1875-1945). Bound annually into volumes, 42-94 after 1875, these are a continuation of the “D” Series.
- Barbados Letters Received (1850-1866, Vol. II; 1868-1884, Vol. III; 1884-1890, Vol. IV). These are copies of letters the SPG received from Barbados and most are originals that the Pongas missionaries sent to Barbados but forwarded to London.
- West Indies Letters Sent (1834-1868, Vol. I; 1868-1888, Vol. III). These are copies of letters that the S.P.G sent to Barbados regarding the Pongas Mission. They include letters addressed to the Pongas missionaries, which were to be forwarded to them in West Africa from Barbados. Many are in bundles marked, CLS Vol. I – 1831-1868, Vol. II – 1868-

- **Missionary Reports** (1858-1951,1877-1879, Series E.32-34; 1883-1885, Series E. 38-40). These are original copies of the quarterly and annual reports that all SPG missionaries filed. The few numbers of these copies from Pongas missionaries are found in bundles under the title, “Sierra Leone.”

- Two boxes marked “X” Series are also found at RHL. They are miscellaneous series marked X/445/1 and 2. The boxes contain daybooks and journals from some of the S.P.G. mission stations in different colonies dating from 1894. They also contain the English Committee minutes for the Pongas Mission dating 1909-1927.


- PER 134 F. 14 by Bell and Daldy titled, *West Indian African Mission – 1859-88*.

**Printed Periodical Publications**

*Published in Barbados:*

Most of these periodicals were published in Barbados during the early years of the Pongas Mission when interest in the enterprise was very high. Also found at Rhodes House Library, Oxford, copies of the publications are enclosed in bounded volumes entitled “Pongas Mission.” They include the following:

- Appeals on Behalf of the Mission
- Quarterly Papers
- Progress Reports of the Pongas Mission – 1860-1872
- Chronological Accounts
- Yearly Reports – 1926-1933
- Notes of the Pongas Mission – 1871-1933

*Published by the S.P.G or the English Committee in England:*

- Occasional Papers (1857-1881)
- West Indian African Mission Reports
- Mission to the Heathen (1855)
- A Report on the Pongas Mission Made After A Tour of Inspection-----by Archdeacon Holme (1887). All of the above publications are in Rhodes House Library, Oxford bounded together in volumes entitled “Pongas Mission Reports.”
- The Mission Field (1856-1929). This was an SPG monthly periodical, which provide useful information on the Pongas Mission’s early years
The Gambia-Pongas Magazine – 1935-1963
The Gambia Magazine – 1848-1953
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Government Records

These Government of Great Britain Documents are found in the Public Records Office (PRO), Kew Gardens, London, England. They include the following Colonial Office documents:

- F.O. 2 (Africa, Consular) Series
- F.O. B4 (Slave Trade) Series
- British Parliamentary Papers and Foreign Office documents at John P. Robarts Library, University of Toronto

Published Primary and Secondary Sources

These sources consist primarily of the memoirs of missionaries in various parts of Africa, books, printed journals and other contemporary literature on Christian missions and other universal religions. Like other materials, these sources may vary in terms of value for this dissertation because of being either popular or sentimental accounts of their authors or because they were written purposely for propaganda about their own efforts or those of others in the propagation of the Gospel. However, some of these sources provided valuable historical information for this dissertation.

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