

**Missionaries, Indirect Rule and the Changing Mandate
of Mission in Colonial Northern Nigeria:
the Case of Rowland Victor Bingham and the
Sudan Interior Mission¹**

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In the latter part of Victoria's century Christianity seemed literally to be on the march, redrawing its historic Mediterranean and Euro-centric map to include the far-flung territories of the British Empire. North America, India, the South Pacific, all had by now experienced to a greater or lesser degree the impact of the King James Version. And by the 1890s Africa, too, was a target of the missionary imperative characteristic of earnest late-Victorian Christianity. This essay examines the early history and changing philosophy of one example of that imperative: the Sudan Interior Mission (SIM). Founded in the late 1890s by the British-born Canadian evangelical Rowland Victor Bingham, the SIM was at the time of his death in 1942 the largest Protestant interdenominational mission in Africa.

At the time of the SIM's founding much of sub-Saharan Africa was known generically as the "Soudan," literally, "land of the blacks." However, the early focus of the mission was Northern Nigeria, whose place in the annals of British colonial administrative history is assured mainly because of its demonstration of indirect rule, the system of governance inspired principally by the colony's first high commissioner and the "doyen"² of British colonial administrators, Sir Frederick (later Lord) Lugard (1858-1945). And it is the intersection of Bingham's SIM with Lugard's indirect rule that forms the core of this study.

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Changing the Verities of Mission: From Commerce to Christianity

By the 1890s mission Christianity in sub-Saharan Africa was no longer dominated by the mid-century Livingstonian axiom of “commerce and Christianity.” The missionary enthusiasm that had been rekindled by the great man’s famous 1857 speech to scores of highly receptive undergraduates at Cambridge had by now waned. The alliance between commerce and Christianity, though not dead, had ceased to be the guiding principle upon which the extension of the evangelical faith was based. The Lancashire cotton depression of the 1860s contributed decisively to this change. Later, the emergence of a commitment to an evangelism unsullied by commercial associations would confirm commerce and Christianity’s “disestablishment.”

But for the time being, “[t]he Christianity,” as Brian Stanley has told us, “which espoused the ideal of ‘commerce and Christianity’ was Christianity of a fundamentally evangelical variety.”³ He argues that the market orientation of “free trade in religion,” made clear and irrevocable by the English constitutional revolution of 1828-32 which had the effect of reducing the Church of England to “one sect among many,” naturally extended to the mission field where most evangelicals thought in terms of investment and return, in both souls and commodities.⁴ Other missionaries, however, did not, notably Roman Catholics who were forbidden to engage in trade by canon law, and the High Anglicans of the Universities’ Christian Mission, who were primarily concerned with establishing an episcopal system in sub-Saharan Africa. The evangelical Protestants though, infused with the Calvinist work ethic and inspired by Livingstone’s injunction that “[w]e ought to encourage the Africans to cultivate for our markets as the most effectual means next to the Gospel for their elevation,”⁵ disagreed. For them, the mission fields were “white already to harvest”⁶ with the unsaved waiting for the “lifeline”⁷ to be thrown their way. As such, most evangelicals initially considered their capitalist economic verities to be coterminous with their Christian faith. But, by the end of the century, this association could no longer be so easily made.

In fact, as Andrew Porter suggests, the relationship between “commerce and Christianity” “was never complete,”⁸ and the missionary move away from its strictures was clear after about 1860. Its completeness was never assured because mammon was never at all times or in all places thought by all evangelicals to be their ineluctable partner in missionary

endeavour. And certainly when Livingstone's plans failed to materialize, especially at the Makololo Mission in south-central Africa,⁹ the trial balloon that was "commerce and Christianity" was pricked. In any case it can be argued, as Robinson and Gallagher did in their classic account of the Victorians in Africa, that public interest in the continent in the late-nineteenth century was low and sporadic consisting only of "vague benevolence."¹⁰ Such an interpretation led them to conclude that "[m]ost Britons still agreed on the need for preaching the Gospel of Christ in the Dark Continent, if few regarded it as the duty of the state."¹¹ Fewer still, perhaps, regarded it as the Church's duty to give pride of place, rhetorically at least, to "commerce," in its best-known slogan.

At the London Missionary Conference of 1888 this idea dominated the proceedings. As Porter observes, "participants [were] conscious that far more often than not experience showed that commerce and Christianity had failed to support each other. Criticism of the standards of native converts everywhere began to grow, and was frequently directed at their involvement in commercial pursuits."¹² This feeling had been growing over the preceding two decades, spearheaded by the "faith" missions for whom "commerce and Christianity" had become an increasingly untenable association.

In West Africa, where the SIM would soon make inroads, "[m]any of evangelical persuasion felt that the Bible should no longer be yoked to the plough."¹³ Even though most evangelical missionaries during this period of intense missification believed in the superiority of their own civilization,¹⁴ and tended, in the words of Adrian Hastings, "to despise both African culture and African capacity,"¹⁵ they had largely ceased to espouse the old saw of "commerce and Christianity." And moreover, they had no time for its perverted cousin, the bully capitalism of Cecil Rhodes and Alfred Beit, leaders of the European imperial project in South Africa.¹⁶

In addition to these reasons for the shift away from "commerce and Christianity" on the mission field, can be added the advent of premillennialism. This belief, the expectation of Christ's return before the thousand years of peace on earth, gained widespread currency among many evangelicals and fundamentalists in the United States in the 1870s. It spread rapidly, and in missionary circles had the effect of stimulating a drive towards evangelization as opposed to conversion. If human history was going to end due to an act of ultrasupernaturalism, as the aggressive premillennialists impressed upon their often reticent colleagues and

superiors, what was the point of the traditional missionary concerns of civilization, education and commerce? Even the long-established (Anglican) Church Missionary Society felt this cleavage, especially in its West African work where missionary G.W. Brooke's unrelenting haste in evangelizing as many Africans as possible was powered by his premillennialism.¹⁷

The Embodiment of Mission: R.V. Bingham

It was within this changing missionary milieu that the SIM was founded. R. V. Bingham was a premillennialist, which helps to explain his zeal for missionary work. Born in Sussex in 1872, he emigrated to Canada as a teenager and settled in southern Ontario. Raised a Methodist, Bingham's "conversion" came at the hands of the Salvation Army, although he later left the denomination due to its policy of making financial appeals at open-air meetings.¹⁸ Shortly after his conversion he received a "heavenly call"¹⁹ to evangelism. A few years later this "call" was confirmed and strengthened as a result of a series of missionary sermons preached by the well-known Boston Baptist A.J. Gordon at the opening of Walmer Road Baptist Church in Toronto. "For three days," Bingham recalled years later,

in that beautiful new building, he spoke on 'The Holy Spirit and Missions' and laid out before me the plan of Christ to give His Gospel to the whole world. When he closed his messages with an appeal to every young man and woman to surrender his or her life to Him, to go whithersoever He sent, I felt such a call in that challenge, that, however imperfectly, I surrendered this earthen vessel. I there enlisted as a real soldier of Christ.²⁰

In June 1893, a short while after Bingham's missionary epiphany, he chanced to meet in Toronto a Mrs. Gowans, a woman with keen missionary instincts, who impressed upon the earnest twenty-year old the spiritual needs of the Sudan. "She spread out the vast extent of those thousands of miles south of the Great Sahara," Bingham recounted. "As she told of the sixty to ninety millions of people without a single missionary, she led me on from the rising waters of the Niger and the great river Nile . . . [A]nd ere I closed that first interview in her home she had placed upon me the

‘burden of the Sudan.’”²¹

Acting on this deep conviction, Bingham and two colleagues, Thomas Kent and Walter Gowans (Mrs. Gowans’ son) set out for Africa and in December 1893 landed on the Nigerian coast. Almost immediately Bingham took ill with malaria, and it was decided that he should remain in Lagos while Gowans and Kent proceeded to the interior. But dysentery and malaria respectively – the twin scourges of Africa – claimed their lives.²² The expedition a failure, the recovered Bingham eventually returned to Canada in the spring of 1895.

Deeply disheartened²³ but not bitter, Bingham proposed “to arouse interest in the Sudan and to form a responsible Board,”²⁴ something which Mrs Gowans, despite her indomitable spirit, could not alone provide. This activity was to engage him for the next five years. During this period Bingham considered becoming a medical missionary and to that end received some rudimentary medical training in Cleveland. As well, he attended the Bible Institute established in New York City by A.B. Simpson, the founder of the Christian and Missionary Alliance. In 1897 Bingham married, and shortly thereafter officially organized an interdenominational mission board in Toronto.²⁵ In January 1899 he became the full-time but unpaid secretary of the mission. And from this position he launched another missionary assault on the Sudan.²⁶

During the previous summer Bingham, in a late-century and therefore, as we have seen, anachronistic echo of Livingstone, had stated the philosophy of the newly-founded Africa Industrial Mission (AIM)²⁷ in the pages of the *Faithful Witness*, the missionary bulletin which he had begun and of which he was both publisher and editor. Entitled “Modern Industrial Missions: A Plea for Self-Supporting and Self-Propagating Industrial Missions in Africa,” Bingham argued for the Biblical and historical continuity of commerce and Christianity: “From its inception the early Church refused to divorce the spiritual from the secular . . .” Instancing William Carey, the “Father of Modern Missions,” Bingham argued for “the use of Industries as an auxiliary to the preaching of the gospel.” Reaching a crescendo he argued that “[i]ndustrial missions are not to be claimed among those innovations in the Church of Christ which are justified by the exigencies of the times, but historically date their existence not later than the period of Apostolic labours.”²⁸

The AIM had its first public meeting at the end of January 1899 at the Toronto Bible Training School, located at Walmer Road Church. After

prior consultation with the Zambezi Industrial Mission in Nyasaland, it was agreed that the AIM's two recently selected missionaries would go there for training in industrial techniques, followed by Hausa language instruction in Tripoli in the north, the site of a large Hausa community.²⁹ The plan then called for the purchasing of 1000 acres in Northern Nigeria, and the planting of coffee. The hope was that this mission station could achieve self-sufficiency in three years. The *Faithful Witness* reported: ". . . once the crop comes to maturity, no further money should be required for this station, and the Mission will then be free to establish others."³⁰

Given what we have already seen of the decline by this time in the efficacy of "commerce and Christianity" as a missionary slogan, the AIM's enthusiasm for a dormant, if not dead, style of enterprise is surprising. It is especially so because the AIM's theological underpinnings put it in the camp of the "faith" missions. Nevertheless, Bingham and the board were determined to keep alive the Livingstonian tradition – at least for awhile.

The SIM's first concerted effort to establish a station in Northern Nigeria occurred in the same year that the Union Jack was hoisted over the territory. Northern Nigeria was now a British protectorate, and that meant an inescapable encounter with its high commissioner, Sir Frederick Lugard.

Lugard and Indirect Rule: A "Theologian" and his "Theology"

Lugard, described in a recent book as an "imperialist entrepreneur,"³¹ is perhaps the best-known of British colonial theorists on Africa. He first came to prominence in this regard with the publishing of *The Rise of Our East African Empire* in 1894. He was "the archetype of the paternal imperialist,"³² as a popular writer on the Empire notes, active in India, East Africa, and later in Hong Kong. But it was in Northern Nigeria that Lugard made his most lasting impact, and from which he popularized the system of indirect rule for which he became famous.

Indirect rule did not, however, originate in Nigeria. Since about 1870 newly-acquired British territories in Asia, Africa, and the South Pacific had been governed through this system whereby traditional authorities retained their local ascendancy behind which stood British supervision. But Lugard refined indirect rule and turned it into *the* structure of government for Northern Nigeria, as well as for other colonial dependencies.³³ His theories were later codified in *The Dual Mandate in British*

Tropical Africa, published in 1922. Liberty and self-government for Africans comprised this “dual mandate.” Lugard declared in the book’s introduction:

It was the task of civilisation to put an end to slavery, to establish Courts of Law, to inculcate in the natives a sense of individual responsibility, of liberty, and of justice, and to teach their rulers how to apply these principles; above all, to see to it that the system of education should be such as to produce happiness and progress. I am confident that the verdict of history will award high praise to the efforts and achievements of Great Britain in the discharge of these great responsibilities. For, in my belief, under no other rule – be it of his own uncontrolled potentates, or of aliens – does the African enjoy such a measure of freedom and of impartial justice, or a more sympathetic treatment, and for that reason I am a profound believer in the British Empire and its mission in Africa.³⁴

Lugard, like many another son of the vicarage,³⁵ wore his Christianity lightly. And therefore, while it was clear to him that part of the “white man’s burden” was to take his faith to the far-flung areas of the earth, such faith was not to obstruct the achieving of the more general goal of civilization. After all, Lugard’s childhood hero apparently was Livingstone.³⁶ And though it may be ironic that some of indirect rule’s detractors have derided it for being a “theology,”³⁷ it certainly never overtly espoused a distinctly Christian one. Like his fellow imperialist the Canadian Sir George Parkin, first secretary of the Rhodes Trust, of whom it was said that God, Oxford, and the Empire were indistinguishable from one another,³⁸ Lugard believed the imperial mission to be a divine one. But “God works in mysterious ways his wonders to perform,” and such, in Lugard’s view, did not include over-zealous missionaries. And this prohibition was especially applicable to the laboratory of indirect rule, Northern Nigeria.

During the early 1900s the British consolidated their power in Northern Nigeria thanks to the combination of the maxim gun, little tribal resistance, and Lugard, who dissented from the Foreign Offices’s gradualist plan for exerting British suzerainty in the region and instead “was determined to carry through an altogether different program.”³⁹ “[R]eal control,”⁴⁰ Lugard’s goal, demanded anything but non-interference. Accordingly, in March 1903 the conquered people of the Sokoto Caliph-

ate, the largest and economically⁴¹ most promising of the colony's regions, were addressed by Lugard:

Every Sultan and Emir and the principal officers of State will be appointed by the High Commissioner throughout all this country. The High Commissioner will be guided by the usual laws of succession and the wishes of the people and chiefs, but will set them aside if he desires for good cause to do so. The Emirs and Chiefs who are appointed will rule over the people as of old time and take such taxes as are approved by the High Commissioner, but they will obey the laws of the Governor and will act in accordance with the advice of the Resident.⁴²

In this enunciation of the paradoxical way in which “indirect” rule would work in Sokoto Lugard also pledged that the government would not interfere with the Muslim religion.⁴³ Naturally pleased with this assurance “a murmur of deep satisfaction arose from the assembled masses.”⁴⁴ Local religion and the colonial state were now in formal relationship. What did this mean for mission Christianity?

During the nineteenth-century missionary endeavours in Northern Nigeria, especially the expeditions of 1841, 1854 and 1857, had been supported by both metropolitan and local political and commercial interests.⁴⁵ However, later in the century when Sir George Goldie and the Royal Niger Company dominated affairs in the region,⁴⁶ the relationship between missions and mammon deteriorated due to Goldie's desire to exclude African middlemen – who were often the relatives, friends, and parishioners of African missionaries – from trade.⁴⁷ Thus by the time the SIM entered the scene missions were no longer seen as a necessarily desirable means for extending Western civilization. More often than not they were seen as disruptive of the political and commercial relationships built up by the imperialists, whose aims did not usually include any concerted effort at adhering to the Great Commission.

For the evangelical missionaries of Northern Nigeria, whose activities had been inspired in part by the idea of trusteeship – the so-called “code of the British colonial empire” – the fraying of the relationship between missionary and trader marked a critical change in the equations hitherto worked out between them in the region. As Robinson writes of the earlier days of West African empire, “[b]y means of the trust idea . . . the

missionary could lean on the arm of the trader and official without hypocrisy.”⁴⁸ Now, it seemed, such accepted verities were no longer in force.

“Leaning” on the colonial official in Northern Nigeria was a task that fell to the SIM in earnest in 1900 when Bingham went out to the protectorate to scout for a suitable location for the establishment of the first station. The official policy of excluding Christian missionaries from the far-northern emirates meant that finding a site would be difficult. Since “Lugard’s policy was to disturb things as little as possible,”⁴⁹ missionary activity in the north was not encouraged. “I myself am of opinion,” Lugard stated in defence of his policy,

that it is unwise and unjust to force missions upon the Mohammedan population, for it must be remembered that without the moral support of the Government these missions would not be tolerated. And if they were established by order of the Government the people have some cause to disbelieve the emphatic pledges I have given that their religion shall in no way be interfered with.⁵⁰

But Lugard did not actively campaign against the expansion of missionary work in the north. And so, despite misgivings then and later about the “hostility”⁵¹ accorded the missionaries by some British officials, it was there, at Patigi, in the province of Ilorin, that the SIM established itself.

Emirates divided the vastness of Northern Nigeria into a less daunting landmass. Prior to the British conquest missionaries had been allowed to proselytize a village only on permission of its chief. Under the new colonial regime the importance of such chiefs was magnified because of the requirements of indirect rule. The cooperation of indigenous rulers was the cornerstone of the theory and therefore it was something that Lugard was loath to endanger. In the areas populated by “pagans” – so-called because of their non-Muslim animistic beliefs – the ruling Fulani emir was given free reign to continue as the local suzerain.⁵² The ruling classes of Northern Nigerian society were the ones that most interested Lugard, and his policy of religious neutrality was designed to ensure their continued cooperation.

By the time Lugard took up his proconsular position in Northern Nigeria his childhood evangelicalism had metamorphosed into a set of

unorthodox beliefs, guided largely by the firm conviction that the British were in Africa to fulfil their God-given mandate as imperial benefactors. And despite his occasional annoyance with the missionaries that caused him to write to his wife about “[t]heir ignorance of the usages of the world, their efforts to please and their damned bad tea. Their unconscious assumption that nothing matters except themselves . . . ,”⁵³ their admiration of him was not diminished. Such should come as no surprise since, as Clive Dewey maintains, Lugard’s “crusade for the regeneration of Africa reads like an evangelical morality tale.”⁵⁴ As “the chivalrous soldier protecting Christian missions”⁵⁵ Lugard embodied the best of his own middle-class evangelical traditions. It was thought that his “muscular Christianity” was precisely what was needed on the African frontier in order to subdue the manifestly barbarous native and extend the enlightening Gospel. All over the Empire paternalism was hitting stride,⁵⁶ and Lugard’s complete identification with it drew the highest praise from various missionary groups. Notably, Dr. Walter Miller, leader of the CMS in Hausaland, dedicated his first book⁵⁷ “To Lord Lugard, Africa’s Friend.”⁵⁸ And in his history of the SIM Hunter refers to Lugard as “an ornament to British colonial administration” and as someone who had the “highest regard”⁵⁹ for Christian missionaries.

In allowing the SIM to establish itself at Patigi Lugard had given at least tacit approval to their stated goal of bringing about an industrial mission. As we have seen, such a goal was an old one on the African mission field and during its early articulation was invariably offered in the context of the anti-slavery movement. As one-time CMS secretary Henry Venn flatly stated: “You [missionaries] must show the native chiefs that it is more profitable to use their men for cultivating the ground than to sell them as slaves.”⁶⁰ Slavery was still highly prevalent in Northern Nigeria and, for Lugard, the most pressing of problems: “. . . there is none more engrossing than that of slavery, and as to assist in its solution has been the consistent object of my efforts since I entered Africa.”⁶¹

To that end, Lugard supported “legal-status” abolition of slavery, first adopted in British India in 1843. Under this scheme slavery itself was not actually abolished, but the distinction between slave and free was removed and slaves could leave their masters without any formal emancipation.⁶² In effect, it was a system that granted “permissive freedom” to the slaves. Given the commonplace nature of slavery in Northern Nigeria, “[i]t was,” writes Margery Perham, “out of the question for the Government to

abolish slavery: as an immediate measure it was neither possible nor desirable, as the bottom would have dropped out of society and the country would have been flooded with masterless and homeless people.”⁶³ Accordingly, Lugard adopted a cautious approach to the eradication of slavery in the protectorate, as evidenced by his Slavery Proclamations of 1900 and 1901, and the memo on slavery he released in 1906.⁶⁴ In addition to the reason Perham gives for caution, however, there was also the question of political hegemony over the areas of the protectorate which were not under British control, and, most importantly, the support of the slave-holding chiefs required to ensure the maintenance of indirect rule.⁶⁵

By co-opting the Fulani, the leading native element in Northern Nigeria, Lugard was able to satisfy the indigenous authority’s claims on power while at the same time ensuring British paramountcy. Slavery, a key constant in native hierarchy, was therefore kept in place until its existence no longer mattered to its purveyors. That, of course, came later in the century when new relationships were worked out with the imperial overlord and is beyond the scope of this study. But for the SIM, Lugard’s slavery policy gave credence to its own advocacy of industrial missions, and goes some distance in answering the question of why the SIM set itself up on the Livingstone model. If “legitimate” commerce was still the goal in Northern Nigeria, then the SIM would help provide the means for its attainment. For “[i]t was the needs of the ‘Dark Continent,’” explained one writer in the December 1899 issue of the *Faithful Witness*, “and the conviction that more could be done to utilise industries as an aid to the spiritual work that brought the society into existence.”⁶⁶

Among the needs identified were “HEATHENISM, SLAVERY, [and] NAKEDNESS.” As for the latter, one missionary opined that “[n]one of them – men, women, or children – have more than a few inches of goatskin, bark-cloth, or a rag of cotton to cover their nakedness. Oh! the heart-breaking pity of it!”⁶⁷ But, such Victorian prudery was tempered by the measured tones of those like James Acton, AIM treasurer, who felt that nakedness might not be the most pressing of African problems. He emphasised that “as a Christian *business* man, the Industrial Mission appealed most strongly to him.”⁶⁸ Missionaries were expected to develop the resources on the field by employing and encouraging the natives in industry and self-support. They were forbidden to “trade, speculate or invest money on the foreign field for private gain.”⁶⁹ Industrial work – mainly meaning coffee production – was to be engaged in wholeheartedly

but never at the expense of the Gospel. Here we see an example of the tensions in the missionary world at this time between the old verities of civilization and commerce, and the rejuvenated injunction of preaching the Good News alone. The AIM's "Practises and Principles" stated unequivocally that its first work was "to evangelize."⁷⁰ Yet its working arrangement with the colonial authorities in Northern Nigeria was to school the native population in the ways of western commerce so as to gradually wean them away from slavery without at the same time imperilling indirect rule.

The AIM's approach to mission work was certainly not new. But what it illustrates is the resilience of the Livingstonian tandem of beliefs at such a late date – and within a "faith" mission. And such was true on both sides of the Atlantic. As the *Faithful Witness* reported:

The importance of industries as an aid to missions has received such prominence in England that a society entitled "The Industrial Missions Aid Society" has been formed . . . It is beyond dispute that Industrial Missions wisely managed are a valuable auxiliary to ordinary missionary work, and undoubtedly can be usefully and safely employed in such undertakings . . .⁷¹

The Calvinist current was strong in this propaganda. In a clear articulation of the Protestant work ethic, the successor of the *Faithful Witness*, the *Missionary Witness*, observed that "[t]he bulk of Christians are enjoined by apostolic teaching to pursue their ordinary avocation in life, and therein to labour as witnesses for Christ . . ." Ever more expansive it continued:

The opening of the field of industry to world-wide competition, and the international progress of commercial intercourse, is furnishing one of the grandest opportunities afforded to any age for men and women to plant themselves in every land, and, while pursuing their ordinary avocation, to become witnesses for Christ to the ends of the earth . . .⁷²

Philosophical Shifts within the SIM

Meanwhile, the Patigi station itself was meeting with less than success in its "industrial" ventures. Soil in the area was not proving conducive to the growing of either coffee or cotton. Moreover, the spiritual

harvest was equally depressing.⁷³ A member of the first group of missionaries to go to Patigi, Edwin Judd, wrote Bingham a long letter in 1903 detailing these and other problems, part of which reads as follows:

Regarding the industrial part of our work I see nothing discouraging though it is easy to see many difficulties in the way of making it a success . . . I am going to continue my search for good soil and next season we will plant the different things we desire to grow in the different places where good soil is found and after finding the soil needed we will have to have our farm in that place if possible . . . If we are to have industrial missions we must go to the places suitable for the industries we desire to take up . . . In a conversation with Mr. [William] Wallace, the high commissioner of Nigeria [he was in fact the Lieutenant Governor of Northern Nigeria], he said that the government was much in favour of our Mission and would be glad to help us in any way in our industrial work and would be willing for us to establish a mission in almost any small town within the protectorate but said that it would not be advisable to go to any of the large cities such as Kano or Sokoto.⁷⁴

This letter is interesting and revealing for at least a couple of reasons. First, it suggests that the idea of “industrial missions” was a hazy one. Apparently, Judd did not think that Patigi was ever going to bear much industrial fruit. Though the lines of international communication were relatively slow, it is doubtful that Judd would have been completely ignorant of the debate going on at home over whether or not missionary work should be linked to commerce. Could he have been presaging a change soon to become more routinized amongst evangelical missions, and by indicating as much hope to relieve the Patigi station of the added industrial burden? Second, it shows the degree to which indirect rule influenced missionary work in the north. William Wallace’s advice to the AIM to stay out of the larger cities is evidence of the government’s desire to limit the disruptive activities of missions and to honour its pledge to the emirs that precluded interfering with Islam. Patigi itself had a Muslim ruler, but it was an obscure place and not likely to engender much indigenous criticism. Nevertheless, in later years even some chiefs in the Patigi area “were irritated by young men from the educational institutions of the S.I.M. who went about preaching in what they considered to be an arrogant manner as if they knew everything about the world and their

elders knew nothing.”⁷⁵

Influenced partly by reports from the field and partly by his own premillennialism, Bingham was slowly coming to the conclusion that “industrial” missions might in fact be an impediment to the true work of the Gospel – evangelisation. Missionary self-support in the Livingstone tradition was not at issue as Bingham’s reply to Judd’s letter suggests: “I am still of opinion that cotton growing and its manufacture will prove one of the best industries . . .”⁷⁶ But the pervasive industrial and commercial ethos of the West, and its obvious divergence from the material simplicity of the New Testament, was having an effect on the purveyors of AIM-style missionary activity. In this vein Bingham mildly reprimanded Judd for allegedly patterning himself “too much after the CMS in the matter of food and meals, and many of their customs find their source in the English aristocracy. I would rather pattern after a simpler model if we are ever to have an extensive work in the Soudan.”⁷⁷

While it is undoubtedly the case that what passed for extravagance in Bingham’s eyes would have done so in those of few others, it is equally clear that the model missionary for the SIM was to be the highly spiritual ascetic. And this shift in emphasis was seen swiftly at the Board level. In the late-summer of 1905 the trustees of the AIM decided to change their enterprise’s name to the “Africa Evangelistic Mission.” In true evangelical style a “season of prayer” and “lengthy discussions”⁷⁸ preceded the decision which was explained thus:

Owing to undue emphasis upon the industrial phase of the work in the minds of the people, many of whom have thought that the object of the Mission was to civilize rather than to evangelize, it has been decided to drop the central word from the old name . . . The primary object of the Mission has ever been to make known the Glad Tidings to the benighted heathen. Industrial, medical and educational operations have simply been an adjunct to the spiritual work.⁷⁹

These evangelicals, it seems, were attempting to heighten the sense of evangelistic urgency in mission work and in so doing distance themselves from the secular civilizing mission of the larger imperial thrust, as well as from some of their own co-religionists on the mission field. For Bingham, his premillennialism compelled him to pull back from the creeping materialism and secularism of the industrial West because this

new belief placed before him a vision of a stripped-down Christian spirituality, unencumbered by the trappings of empire. Along with many others, he did not want the spirit of Christ presented as an incident of Imperial conquest.⁸⁰

In 1906, the year after the SIM had removed “industrial” from its masthead, Lugard left Northern Nigeria to take up the governorship of Hong Kong. (He returned in 1912 to orchestrate the unification of the North and the South.) He was succeeded as high commissioner by the Canadian railway builder Sir Percy Girouard.⁸¹ A Roman Catholic, Girouard had little sympathy for evangelical Protestant missionaries, whom he thought “half-civilized.”⁸² He continued Lugard’s policy of non-interference in Muslim areas, but “[p]ersonally I should like to see the Missions withdraw entirely from the Northern States,” he wrote to the former high commissioner, “for the best missionary for the present will be the high-minded, clean-living British Resident.”⁸³ Girouard did not get his wish, but neither did the government waver in its insistence that “[w]hatsoever threatened the Muhammedan religion threatened the authority of the Emirs and so imperilled the organisation of ‘Indirect Rule.’”⁸⁴ Girouard’s animosity towards missions was reciprocated by the SIM (after praising Lugard, Hunter is silent on Girouard, his fellow countryman).

Lugard’s departure from Northern Nigeria marks the end of the period upon which this study has focused. Indirect rule’s entrenchment in Northern Nigeria of course continued long after Lugard’s time, remaining in place until Nigeria achieved independence in 1960. During indirect rule’s earliest years in the protectorate the SIM was able to coexist with it largely because of Lugard’s essential receptivity to the idea of missions – if not always to their fact – and because the SIM did not greatly dissent from the general civilizing thrust that was indirect rule’s rhetorical backbone. Though indirect rule is now criticized by some for having been “negative and conservative,”⁸⁵ and Lugard himself is mocked by others for being great only in his ability to propagandize,⁸⁶ such an adversarial stance was not one conceivable to Bingham at the time. Lugard and the colonial state were the guarantors of the SIM’s operations, even though the apparent succour given to Islam in the name of indirect rule rankled.⁸⁷ But official religious neutrality was no barrier to general ideological receptivity. And such is what Lugard, as “the idol of the missionary lobby,”⁸⁸ offered to the SIM.

It was “commerce and Christianity” as a missionary slogan and as

a philosophical bulwark that was the SIM's chief focus for debate, not indirect rule. Helped along by Bingham's premillennialism, and by the increasing commercialization characteristic of life in the West – indicative of the Christian-Imperial “cultural hegemony” of which Gramsci later wrote so influentially⁸⁹ – the SIM partially jettisoned its commitment to the old verities of missionary service in order to embrace the premillennialist imperative of the lean and urgent evangelistic message. If indirect rule allowed for that to exist – indeed to flourish – then it comes as no surprise that Lugard's popularity would be widest among those whose missionary success could be attributed partly to his beneficence. Ironically, later in the century, it was often mission-educated Africans who were prominent in the drive for independence, and with its attainment came, of course, the end of indirect rule.

Endnotes

1. I would like to thank Professors George Rawlyk and Robert Shenton of the Department of History at Queen's University for their helpful suggestions when part of this paper was contained in an M.A. thesis, and Professor Paul Kingston of the Department of Political Science at the University of Toronto for reading it in its penultimate form.
2. Donald A. Low, *Lion Rampant: Essays in the Study of British Imperialism* (London: F. Cass, 1973), 68.
3. Brian Stanley, “‘Commerce and Christianity’: Providence Theory, the Missionary Movement, and the Imperialism of Free Trade, 1842-1860,” *The Historical Journal* 1 (1983): 72.
4. Stanley, “Commerce and Christianity,” 76.
5. Quoted in *Christianity in Tropical Africa*, ed. C.G. Baeta (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), 202.
6. A favourite image taken from John 4:35 used often by evangelical missionaries.
7. “Throw out the Lifeline,” is the title of a popular missionary hymn, still found almost unfailingly in evangelical hymnbooks.
8. Andrew Porter, “‘Commerce and Christianity’: The Rise and Fall of a Nineteenth Century Slogan,” *The Historical Journal* 28, 3 (1985): 616.

9. See Tim Jeal, *Livingstone* (New York: Putnam, 1973), 175-84.
10. Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher with Alice Denny, *Africa and the Victorians: The Official Mind of Imperialism*, 2nd ed. (London: Macmillan, 1981), 24.
11. Robinson and Gallagher, *Africa and the Victorians*, 24.
12. Porter, "Commerce and Christianity," 618.
13. Andrew Porter, "Evangelical Enthusiasm, Missionary Motivation and West Africa in the Late Nineteenth Century: The Career of G.W. Brooke," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 6, 1 (October 1977): 25-6.
14. As one historian forcefully puts it, "[t]he missionaries' unilinear, biblical, and teleological model of cultural development necessarily culminated in 'Christian culture,' and Christianity's first task was seen as bringing 'culture' to 'uncivilized' peoples . . ." (Horst Grunder, "Christian Missionary Activities in Africa in the Age of Imperialism and the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885," in *Bismarck, Europe, and Africa: The Berlin Africa Conference of 1884-1885 and the Onset of Partition*, eds., S. Forster, W.J. Mommsen and R.E. Robinson [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988], 100).
15. Adrian Hastings, *African Christianity* (New York: Seabury Press, 1976), 3.
16. For a recent study of the economics of empire, see Lance E. Davis and Robert A. Huttenback, *Mammon and the Pursuit of Empire: The Economics of British Imperialism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).
17. Porter, "Evangelical Enthusiasm, Missionary Motivation and West Africa," 40.
18. B.A. McKenzie, "Fundamentalism, Christian Unity, and Premillennialism in the Thought of Rowland Victor Bingham (1872-1942): A Study of Anti-Modernism in Canada," Ph.D. Diss., Toronto School of Theology, 1985, 39.
19. Quoted in McKenzie, "Fundamentalism, Christian Unity, and Premillennialism in the Thought of Rowland Victor Bingham (1872-1942)," 34.
20. R.V. Bingham, *Seven Sevens of Years and a Jubilee! The Story of the Sudan Interior Mission* (Toronto: Evangelical Publishers, 1943), 14-15.
21. Quoted in J.H. Hunter, *A Flame of Fire: The Life and Work of R.V. Bingham* (Toronto: Sudan Interior Mission, 1961), 55.
22. Gowans died in November and Kent in December 1894.

23. "My faith was being shaken to the very foundation," Bingham recalled. Quoted in Hunter, *Flame of Fire*, 69.
24. Bingham, *Seven Sevens of Years and a Jubilee*, 25.
25. Among those on the board was the influential Elmore Harris, scion of the latter half of the country's largest corporation at the time, Massey-Harris, first pastor of Walmer Road Baptist Church, and founder of the Toronto Bible Training School, forerunner of Toronto Bible College (John G. Stackhouse, Jr., *Canadian Evangelicalism in the Twentieth Century: An Introduction to Its Character* [Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993], 55).
26. The above biographical sketch is fleshed out in McKenzie's and Hunter's accounts, as well as in Bingham's own.
27. The SIM was known by various names before settling on the one that it has retained to this day.
28. *Faithful Witness*, 19 July 1898, Archives, SIM International, Toronto.
29. *Faithful Witness*, 7 February 1899.
30. *Faithful Witness*, 7 February 1899.
31. Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Knopf, 1993), 24.
32. James Morris, *Farewell the Trumpets: An Imperial Retreat* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1979), 388.
33. Lugard, observes one historian, raised indirect rule from being "just an expedient in times of financial hardship and lack of staff to a complete philosophy of Government for Britain's colonial peoples" (Michael Crowder, *The Story of Nigeria* [London: Faber and Faber, 1962], 201). Similarly, John Flint remarks that the British, "made native administration both a blueprint for action and a moral and theoretical philosophy with which to justify imperial rule in the twentieth-century" ("Frederick Lugard: The Making of an Autocrat (1858-1943)," in *African Proconsuls: European Governors in Africa*, eds., L.H. Gann and Peter Duignan [New York: Free Press, 1978], 291).
34. F.D. Lugard, *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa* (London: Blackwood, 1926), 5.
35. His father was a Church of England chaplain in Madras, and his mother was a missionary.
36. Flint, "Frederick Lugard."

37. Notably, Ronald Robinson. See, for instance, his "European Imperialism and Indigenous Reactions in British West Africa, 1880-1814," in *Expansion and Reaction: Essays on European Expansion and Reactions in Asia and Africa*, ed. H.L. Wesseling (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 1978), 162.
38. Richard Symonds, *Oxford and Empire: The Last Lost Cause?* (London: Macmillan, 1986), 253.
39. Flint, "Frederick Lugard," 298.
40. Flint, "Frederick Lugard," 298.
41. For a tightly-argued economic history of Sokoto see Robert Shenton, *The Development of Capitalism in Northern Nigeria* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986), especially chapters three and four.
42. Quoted in Margery Perham, *Lugard: The Years of Authority 1898-1945* (London: Collins, 1960), 13.
43. Perham, *Lugard*.
44. Charles Orr, *The Making of Northern Nigeria* (London: Cass, 1965), 128.
45. E.P.T. Crampton, *Christianity in Northern Nigeria* (London: G. Chapman, 1979), 16-22.
46. See J.E. Flint, *Sir George Goldie and the Making of Nigeria* (London: Oxford University Press, 1960).
47. Crampton, *Christianity in Northern Nigeria*, 22.
48. R.E. Robinson, "The Moral Disarmament of African Empire," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 8, 1 (October 1979): 87-88.
49. Crampton, *Christianity in Northern Nigeria*, 52.
50. F.D. Lugard, *Political Memoranda*, 3rd. ed. (London: F. Cass, 1918), 24.
51. Hunter, *Flame of Fire*, 116-17, 123-25.
52. For an elaboration of Northern Nigerian emirship see Michael Crowder and Obaro Ikime, eds., *West African Chiefs: Their Changing Status under Colonial Rule and Independence* (New York: Africana Pub. Corp., 1970), 162-210.
53. Quoted in Andrew Porter, "Margery Perham, Christian Missions and Indirect Rule," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 19, 3 (October 1991): 83.

54. Clive Dewey, *Anglo-Indian Attitudes: The Mind of the Indian Civil Service* (London: Hambledon Press, 1993), 25.
55. Dewey, *Anglo-Indian Attitudes*, 42.
56. The best example I have seen of this phenomenon is that of Cecil Earl Tyndale-Biscoe who was head of Kashmir School from 1890-1947, and whose philosophy is captured exactly by the title of his book, *Character Building in Kashmir*.
57. W.R. Miller, *Reflections of a Pioneer* (London: Church Missionary Society, 1936).
58. Quoted in Crampton, *Christianity in Northern Nigeria*, 55.
59. Hunter, *Flame of Fire*, 88.
60. *Faithful Witness*, 7 September 1990, Archives, SIM International, Toronto.
61. Lugard, *Political Memoranda*, 354.
62. See Jan Hogendorn and Paul Lovejoy, "The Development and Execution of Frederick Lugard's Policies Toward Slavery in Northern Nigeria," *Slavery and Abolition* 10 (1989): 1.
63. Margery Perham, *Native Administration in Nigeria*, 2nd ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), 50.
64. See Hogendorn and Lovejoy, "Development and Execution of Frederick Lugard's Policies," 9-10, 27-30.
65. Philip Igbafe, "Slavery and Emancipation in Benin, 1897-1945," *Journal of African History* 16 (1975): 417.
66. *Faithful Witness*, 19 December 1899.
67. AIM Leaflet No. 3, "Africa!! Its People and Their Needs," 1900, Archives, SIM International, Toronto.
68. *Faithful Witness*, 19 December 1899.
69. Edward Rice, *et al*, "Practises and Principles of the AIM," 1903, Archives, SIM International, Toronto.
70. Rice, *et al*, "Practises and Principles of the AIM."
71. *Faithful Witness*, 7 November 1899.
72. *Missionary Witness*, 15 November 1904.

73. During the first thirty years of the Patigi station's existence only seven Nupes, the prominent local tribe, were baptized (Patigi, Miscellaneous, 1904-1945, SR-28/A, Archives, SIM International, Toronto).
74. Edwin George Judd, Patigi, Nigeria (N.) to R.V. Bingham, Superintendent, Toronto, 2 August 1903, Archives, SIM International, Toronto.
75. Crampton, *Christianity in Northern Nigeria*, 54.
76. R.V. Bingham, Superintendent, Toronto, to Edwin George Judd, Patigi, Nigeria (N.), 7 October 1903, Archives, SIM International, Toronto.
77. R.V. Bingham, Superintendent, Toronto, to Edwin George Judd, Patigi, Nigeria (N.), 7 October 1903, Archives, SIM International, Toronto.
78. Board of Trustees minutes, 12 September 1905, Archives, SIM International, Toronto.
79. *Missionary Witness*, 17 October 1905.
80. Margery Perham, *Lugard*, 509.
81. See A.H.M. Kirk-Greene, "Canada in Africa: Sir Percy Girouard, Neglected Colonial Governor," *African Affairs* 83, 331 (April 1984): 207-39.
82. Quoted in E.A. Ayandele, *The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria 1842-1918* (New York: Humanities Press, 1967), 146. See also, Ayandele, "The Missionary Factor in Northern Nigeria 1870-1918," in *The History of Christianity in West Africa*, ed. O.U. Kalu, (New York: Longman, 1980), 133-58.
83. Ayandele, *The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria 1842-1918*, 147.
84. Colonial Office Statement of 1917.
85. Robinson, "European Imperialism," 163.
86. For instance, I.N. Nicholson, *The Administration of Nigeria, 1900-1960: Men, Methods, and Myths* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969).
87. See especially the views of Guy Playfair, former SIM field director (Hunter, *Flame of Fire*, 117).
88. Dewey, *Anglo-Indian Attitudes*, 13.
89. See Joseph V. Femia, *Gramsci's Political Thought: Hegemony, Consciousness and the Revolutionary Tradition* (London: Clarendon Press, 1981).

