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## Livingstone's ideas of Christianity, commerce and civilization

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### Abstract

*David Livingstone is often misunderstood as being a conscious promoter of European colonization of Africa. On the contrary, he believed that the key to Africa's future was the stimulation of indigenous development and good government. Such 'civilization' could only be achieved by the combination of Christianity with legitimate commerce, to replace the Slave Trade which had been the bane of Africa's development for centuries. This paper traces the roots of Livingstone's belief in the combination of moral and material betterment, derived from his personal origins and the Evangelical and Anti-Slavery movements. It shows how these ideas matured during his mission days among the BaTswana, during which he began to travel north to the Zambezi and beyond*

### Introduction

Livingstone's concept of missionary enterprise differed from most of his older colleagues among London Missionary Society (L.M.S.) missionaries. He saw mission centres not only for strictly evangelization purposes, but encompassing the whole spectrum of human activity. He divided this into three categories: commerce, Christianity, and civilization (meaning good government, education etc). Christian missions should be autonomous centres that provided for all the people's social, economic, political and spiritual needs. In a region such as central Africa, which was dominated by the inhumane activities of his fellow Europeans and Arab-Swahili in the form of slave trade, Livingstone believed that human suffering could only be alleviated by introducing genuine and legitimate commerce, and good government guided by Christian principles.

It was while addressing a series of meetings throughout Britain, notably his Cambridge lectures of December 4th. and 5th., 1857, that Livingstone uttered his important maxim: 'The end of the geographic fact is but the beginning of the missionary enterprise'. In his Cambridge addresses, attended by very large audiences consisting of graduates, undergraduates and visitors from the town and neighbourhood, Livingstone called on professional men to go to Africa as missionaries, with the view of promoting commerce, Christianity and civilization. He concluded:

I beg to direct your attention to Africa;—I know that in a few years I shall be cut off in that country, which is now open; do not let it be shut again! I go back to Africa to make an open path for commerce and Christianity; do you carry out the work which I have begun. I LEAVE IT WITH YOU!

Livingstone believed that Christianity, commerce and civilization had interests in common, and could therefore unashamedly support one another.

He argued that their united effect would improve the life and prosperity of Africans, stem the loss of population caused by slave trade, and transform the more violent institutions of African society.<sup>2</sup> Christianity would provide principles for moral guidance, while legitimate commerce and education would encourage Africans to produce their own goods from their fertile soil to trade with Europeans. All this, according to Livingstone needed a good system of government, to ensure civil rights for the people.

Livingstone saw the problems of slave trade and illiteracy to be among the greatest blocks to Christian progress and economic progress in Africa. The introduction of education, he thought, would prepare African people for development and would also provoke African initiatives in the development of their natural resources. Livingstone believed that the development of agriculture and industry would raise people's standards of living and eventually overcome their greatest enemy, "slavery".

Livingstone's twentieth century critics, however, have attacked him for having led the way for European colonization of Africa. One such critic is Cecil Northcott, who wrote:

Livingstone was a colonialist and was not ashamed of it. He was in Africa to offer the benefits of the white man's civilization, and no latter day beliefs in the black man's freedom, liberation and independence may be read into his actions.<sup>3</sup>

While it is evident that Livingstone's determination to open up Africa for commerce, Christianity and civilization, ultimately contributed to European imperialism, it would be a wrong assumption to say that Livingstone consciously promoted it. He was against any form of domination of Africans, and never tried to acquire personal riches or power at their expense. He also refused to be associated with individuals whose sole aim in Africa was to colonize and create permanent settlements for selfish reasons. What he worked hard for, was to open Africa for genuine commerce, education, etc. and to make it a peaceful environment for the spreading of Christianity.

The core of the African continent had previously been inaccessible to the rest of the world, due to lack of good harbours, the unnavigability of its rivers, and the fact that so much of it had not been fully explored. It was Livingstone's aim to remove these physical barriers, which had impeded both traders and missionaries.

Livingstone's intentions of carrying Christianity, commerce and civilization to Africa was therefore aimed neither at undermining the institutions of the people, nor simply introducing Western economics and forms of colonization. Livingstone genuinely believed that combining commerce, Christianity and civilization would not only benefit Africans, but was also based on very sound humane and practical grounds. His experience in Africa had taught him that for there to be progress in Christian enterprise these matters could not be ignored. Without Christianity and civilization, European commerce scandalously exploited Africa:

The desire of the Makololo for direct trade with the sea-coast concided with my own conviction, that no permanent elevation of a people can be effected without commerce.

Neither could there be a permanent mission here, unless the missionaries should descend to the level of the Makololo, for, even at Kolobeng, we found that traders demanded three times the price of the articles we needed, and expected us to be grateful to them besides, for letting us have them at all.<sup>4</sup>

### Evangelical revival in Scotland and England, and missions abroad

Livingstone shared the Evangelical world view in Scotland and England which closely linked the growth of Christianity to prevailing educational, economic and political factors.

English evangelicals and Scots reformers strongly believed that comprehensive improvement in education was necessary to uplift people's social and religious lives. From the 16th century onwards schools in Scotland were established by the Church, and helped to transform each successive generation. The Church pressured parents into sending their children to school. The Bible was the main textbook of the schools, and became the main reading at home.<sup>5</sup> Reading and writing became widespread throughout Scotland. The Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge, founded in 1709, began to work in the Gaelic-speaking Highlands of Scotland. By 1732 the Society had provided private 'English [-medium] schools' in one hundred and nine parishes, while from 1738 onwards it established several spinning schools to train girls in textile work. By 1748 there were 134 such schools with an enrolment of 5,187 boys and 2,618 girls.<sup>6</sup> At the end of the Napoleonic wars, in 1816, there were twice as many children in Scotland who were receiving some kind of education in private schools as there were in the 942 parochial schools. Private schools themselves had by then increased to 2,222 with an attendance of about 176,303.<sup>7</sup>

Thomas Chalmers' scheme for the betterment of Scotland divided up existing large parishes to provide more local churches, each with a school attached to it. He set a vigorous example in the St John's Parish in Glasgow, and his educational contribution led to much progress in Glasgow by the middle of the nineteenth century.<sup>8</sup>

Scottish churchmen were actively involved in the transformation of town and countryside in the period between the 1760s and 1780s that constituted the Scottish agrarian and industrial revolutions.<sup>9</sup> The combination of commerce and Christianity could be seen as having been in large part responsible for the economic boom in Scotland which eventually alleviated poverty. There was a rapid spread of the Gospel in those years. By 1782 education had facilitated great progress in agriculture, navigation, commerce, arts, and improvement in the general wealth of the country. It is also interesting to note that the largest proportion of the schoolmasters of the time were products of parish schools.<sup>10</sup>

Beyond Scotland, the idea of combining commerce, Christianity and civilization was exemplified by the missionary labours of William Carey, a pioneer in the Indian missionary field. Of Carey, F.W. Walker has written:

Carey was far from being a mere theorist. He was contemptuously called a "visionary", but his practical mind always brought visions down to the realm of possible achievement. It was so in this case. He carefully worked out the practical

details of his great vision. "Our finances being small, it will be necessary to live economically... Industry being absolutely necessary, every one would have his proper work allotted him, and would be employed at his post; some cultivating the land, some instructing, some learning, some preaching and the women superintending the domestic concerns".<sup>11</sup>

Like Livingstone, Carey wanted missionaries to come out to India to develop commerce and industry in mission centres. He called on young men with appropriate training to come out to India as medical missionaries, experts in industrial development, teachers in schools.<sup>12</sup> By 1794 he had opened his first primary school at his own expense and had begun to develop the local people's language. He subsequently conducted scientific experiments in order to improve agricultural and horticultural practices.<sup>13</sup> Carey also fought against local human injustices such as infanticide and the murder of widows.<sup>14</sup>

This idea of combining Christianity, commerce and civilization for humane causes can also be seen in the activities of the English evangelicals William Wilberforce and Thomas Foxwell Buxton. Wilberforce was born of a wealthy family, and entered the House of Commons as a member for Yorkshire in 1780. Wilberforce campaigned, together with a Society formed in 1787, for the Abolition of the Slave Trade. By the middle of the eighteenth century, at least 70,000 slaves were being seized annually in Africa and transported to the Americas.

Wilberforce and his fellow campaigners managed to push the Bill for the Abolition of the Slave Trade through Parliament in 1804.<sup>15</sup> But slave smuggling continued. Realising that legislation outside Africa was only a partial answer, T.F. Buxton suggested that the best means of eliminating slavery in Africa was the introduction of 'legitimate' commerce in Africa. Buxton believed that the opening up the African continent to legitimate commerce would undermine the Slave Trade at its source.<sup>16</sup>

Before he left England in 1840, Livingstone attended a gathering addressed by Buxton. In Africa, Livingstone took Buxton's ideas further. Slave trade in Africa had been created and sustained through the demand for desirable European goods. These goods could be supplied instead through commerce in agricultural produce and other products. In 1858 Livingstone told his audience in Britain: "A prospect is now before us of opening Africa for commerce and the Gospel."<sup>17</sup>

The Scottish evangelical John Philip went out to South Africa as a missionary in 1820, and subsequently became superintendent of the London Missionary Society (L.M.S.) in South Africa up to 1850.<sup>18</sup> He also argued that if Africans were given the opportunity of education they would do things for themselves. Philip blamed the corrupt colonial system of law in the Cape for the unjust treatment of Africans. He also argued that the source of the problem in the Eastern Cape was not the wickedness of the Xhosa, but that both Boer and British farmers had taken their land. He believed that Christianity could not be preached without developing the autonomy of all individuals—or without political, social and economic freedom and civil rights for all. He wanted dignity restored to those Africans forced to work for

Boers for no pay, by giving them legal contracts and conditions of service. John Philip's struggle for civil rights in South Africa created enmity between the L.M.S. and the Boers, who were intolerant of Philip's ideas.

John Philip noted similarities between Scotland and South Africa. Having witnessed the role of Christianity in the development of civilization in Scotland, he believed that the development of Christianity, education, better civil rights, industry and commerce would do the same in Africa. Literacy in particular was expected to lead to economic prosperity and increase the size of the class of skilled artisans and small businessmen.

Philip saw the Bethelsdorp mission near Port Elizabeth, whose first missionary was Johannes van der Kemp, as the model for this pattern of development. This mission centre, 600 kilometres east of Cape Town, had been created as a refuge to provide civil rights and social justice for the local Khoi ('Hottentots') otherwise engaged on white farms. Here, the Khoi were fully involved in Western civilization. They engaged in their own business, received proper schooling and health services, and attended Church. The mission flourished as a Christian community.

Philip argued that if Africans had their own freehold land and were given a chance to trade and to farm, in an atmosphere of basic human rights, that they could play their own part in advancing Christianity, commerce and civilization. Good government, he argued, would enable missionaries and honest traders to work in African communities to develop Christianity, commerce and civilization.<sup>19</sup>

### Livingstone's vocation as missionary

It was such benefit for people in Africa that influenced Livingstone to direct the attention of the British to Africa. Economic progress of Africa would follow from just laws, increased civil rights and social justice, the spreading of literacy, health facilities, rapid growth in commerce and industry, the involvement of the missionaries in social issues and vigorous preaching of the Gospel. Evangelical Christianity should address the question of race and commerce as well as Christianity.

David Livingstone was a child of the Evangelical Revival.<sup>20</sup> His earliest conviction to become a missionary shows that he believed that Christianity would lead to material benefit:

In the glow of love which Christianity inspires, I soon resolved to devote my life to the alleviation of human misery. Turning this idea over in my mind, I felt that to be a pioneer of Christianity in China might lead to the material benefit of some portions of that immense empire; and therefore set myself to obtain a medical education, in order to be qualified for that enterprise.<sup>21</sup>

Livingstone was influenced by his family upbringing, especially his father's reading habits. Neil Livingstone was fond of reading Scottish theology, and also about the new enterprise of the late eighteenth century—"the progress of the world," as he called it. He read any books that came to hand on travel and missionary enterprise. But, under the influence of the prevailing religious feeling of the time, Neil Livingstone would not admit novels or scientific

works into his house, as he saw them as unfriendly to Christianity. David Livingstone defied his father<sup>22</sup> by reading the works of Thomas Dick on the relationship between science and religion, which convinced him that the God of Nature and the God of Scripture were the same God.<sup>23</sup> This helped him to formulate his missionary objectives.

Another influence on Livingstone as a missionary was his boyhood experience as a worker in the cotton industry of Blantyre, Lanarkshire. As he said in his *Missionary Travels*, 'At the age of ten I was put into the factory as a "piecer," to aid by earning in lessening [my mother's] anxiety'.<sup>24</sup>

As well as his medical studies at Glasgow University, Livingstone studied theology with some Greek, and lathe-turning and mechanical work as a private student. This must have promoted his ideas of the connectedness of Christianity with material progress.

Livingstone's application for a missionary post with the London Missionary Society, written from Blantyre on September 5, 1837 is also very interesting.<sup>25</sup> It consists of his views on Christian doctrine, his motives for becoming a missionary, and his religious experience.<sup>26</sup> Among the seventeen questions which had to be completed<sup>27</sup> there was one very interesting answer. The question was "What do you apprehend are the proper duties of a Christian missionary?" Livingstone began his answer predictably enough, that they were to endeavour by every means to make known the Gospel by preaching, exhortation, conversation, and instruction of the young. But he went on to say that the missionary should also try to improve the temporal condition of the people he laboured amongst, by introducing the arts and sciences of civilization as well as Christianity. This approach distinguished Livingstone from all the other candidates.<sup>28</sup>

Before Livingstone proceeded to Africa, he stayed in London and was attached to the Charing Cross Hospital and Moorfields Hospital for the Blind in June 1840. This enabled him to attend a public meeting called by Thomas Fowell Buxton and the Society for the Extinction of the Slave Trade and for the Civilization of Africa, held in the Exeter Hall on the Strand. Buxton not only called for the complete eradication of Slave Trade, he also identified other necessary measures—exploration of the geography of the continent, stimulation of missionary enterprises, study of African languages, elimination of tropical diseases, introduction of more sophisticated methods of agriculture, and the institution of legitimate commerce and of engineering projects—all of which would facilitate the elimination of slave trading.<sup>29</sup> All of these factors influenced Livingstone's missionary ideas in Africa.

#### Early experience in Africa: the 'Bechuana' mission

When he landed at the Cape on the 17 March 1841, Livingstone spent some time with Dr. John Philip before proceeding to his final destination. He soon realised that L.M.S. missionaries at the Cape were divided over the question of Church-State relations. Some missionaries sympathised with the colonists; others with the African people. Livingstone right away took the side of those who fought to protect the rights of Africans.<sup>30</sup>

Writing about his first impressions of Africa and its people from Hankey near Port Elizabeth on 19 May 1841 he said:

The Hottentots of Hankey appear to be in a state similar to that of our forefathers in the days immediately preceding the times of the Covenanters. They have a prayer meeting every morning at four o'clock, and well attended. They began it during a visitation of measles among them, and liked it so much that they still continue.

Like John Philip, Livingstone saw a striking similarity between the African and Scottish environments, and between Africans and his own Highland ancestors.<sup>31</sup> Hence his belief that the African environment combined with education and Christianity would be a conducive environment for economic progress.<sup>32</sup>

From the Cape, Livingstone proceeded to Kudumane (Kuruman), the most northerly station of the L.M.S., among the 'Bechuana'. Evidence of his concern with the spread of civilization comes out in one of his early letters from Kudumane.<sup>33</sup> On 4 August 1841 he wrote:

The Bechuana are great retainers of news, every circumstance that occurs is handed from one spot to another. They are, too, perpetually on the move from one spot to another. We have people who come several hundreds of miles from the interior. This nomadic life is very favourable to the spread of the Gospel, although it is opposed to the spread of civilization.<sup>34</sup>

A letter to J.J. Freeman<sup>35</sup> on 3 July 1842 explained how he had been inspired to promote a more sedentary and 'civilized' life at the same time as true religion:

Not long after our arrival it occurred to me that it would be advantageous if we could lead out for irrigation the fine stream which winds round the foot of the hill on which their town is built. And this because it would both furnish the teachers with an available garden and also help to convince the people that they might by a little industry render themselves independent of those impostors called "rain makers."<sup>36</sup>

He realised how much drought affected people's economic activities and thus affected missionary work. He therefore introduced the idea of a dam to retain river water and irrigate crops during drought periods:

I declared that I could make rain too, not however by enchantment like them, but leading out their river for irrigation. The idea took mightily and to work we went instantly. Even the chief's own doctor went at it, laughing heartily at the cunning of the foreigner who can make rain so.<sup>37</sup>

Livingstone participated in village projects such as building of houses, cobbling shoes, smithing iron, and gun and wagon mending, carpentry, as well as vegetable and fruit gardening.<sup>38</sup> On the construction of the dam Livingstone wrote to his sister Agnes on 4 April 1842:

I am engaged in leading out the water to irrigate a garden for Pomore,<sup>39</sup> a native teacher. For this purpose we have been obliged to raise a huge dam of earth and stone and dig a canal. The Natives do it all themselves. I am only an overseer, for the first



day I got my legs and arms so burnt by the sun, although in the water almost the whole time, I was unable to stimulate them by my example.<sup>40</sup>

Livingstone later visited the BaKgatla-baga-Mmanaana, who lived at Mabotsa on the Ngotwane river in the vicinity of later Lobatse. He was deeply impressed by the industrial and commercial capabilities of these BaKgatla at Mabotsa, writing to Tidman<sup>41</sup>:

We procured specimens of the spindle and distaff with which they spin cotton,—the plant seems to be indigenous. They melt iron copper and tin and in the manufacture of ornaments know how to mix the iron and copper so as to form an amalgam. Their country abounds in ores.<sup>42</sup>

It was also part of Livingstone's missionary policy to establish schools and introduce people to reading and writing. In 1844 he thanked a Sunday school in Southampton, England, for the contribution of £15 towards the employment of a local teacher named Mebalwe.<sup>44</sup> A few weeks later he reported to Mary Moffat, wife of Rev. Robert Moffat at Kudumane, on the progress of the school:

All goes pretty here, the school is sometimes well, sometimes ill attended... A boy came three times last week, and on the third time could act as monitor to the rest through a great portion of the alphabet. He is a real Mokgatla, but I have lost sight of him again. If I get them on a little I shall translate some of your infant-school hymns into Sichuana rhythm and you may yet, if you have time, teach the tunes to them... Mebalwe teaches them the alphabet in the 'auld lang syne' tune sometimes, and I heard it sung by some youths in the gardens yesterday—a great improvement over their old see-saw tunes indeed. Sometimes we have twenty, sometimes two, sometimes none at all.<sup>45</sup>

The major reason for his transferring his mission centre from the BaKgatla to the BaKwena of Sechele in 1845 was *Kgosi* Sechele's interest in education:

We have far greater prospect of usefulness here than at Mabotsa. The chief learned the large, small and mixed alphabets in two days.<sup>46</sup>

Sechele's wives also made good progress. Within a short time Sechele himself had read through all the Setswana books in Livingstone's possession—the Psalms and the New Testament twice.<sup>47</sup> Livingstone's belief in the value of education is expressed in a letter to Rev. D.G. Watt<sup>43</sup> dated 13 February 1848.<sup>48</sup>

However, the aggressive nature of the neighbouring Boers of the western Transvaal would not permit the BaKwena to learn or to develop their economic, political and religious enterprise in peace.

From the moment of his arrival in South Africa, Livingstone had been a critic of the Boers, because of their ill-treatment of Africans. He accused the Transvaal Boers of wanton aggression, forcing Africans into unpaid labour on the ancestral lands they had seized for farms, raiding other Africans and seizing children as slaves. The Boers were opposed to the spread of Christianity, commerce and civilization among Africans, and tried to stop

British missionaries working among them. They also wanted to monopolise commerce in ivory and minerals from the north. They violated existing treaties with Africans, and tried to prevent other Europeans from travelling north. For these reasons, Livingstone began to travel north to seek ways in which mission work could preempt northward expansion of the Boers:

If our missions would move onwards now to those regions I have lately visited, they would in all probability prevent the natives settling into that state of determined hatred to all Europeans which I fear now characterises most of all Caffres near the Colony... The Boers hate missionaries, but by a kind and prudent course of conduct one can easily manage them.<sup>49</sup>

On 28 August 1852 a commando of Boers from the western Transvaal reached Dimawe, the Kwena capital to which Sechele and his people had moved from Kolobeng the year before. The commando demanded the surrender of *Kgosi* Mosielele of the Bakgatla-bagaMmanaana, who had fled their harrassment to seek refuge with *Kgosi* Sechele. Sechele refused and the Boers attacked, killing about 90 men and carrying off many captive women and children, and several thousand head of cattle and sheep. Livingstone's house at Kolobeng, about 12 kilometres away from Dimawe, was also broken into and plundered by the Boers.

Sechele went to the Cape Colony to seek the intervention of the British Government. He intended to proceed to England, but was disappointed by insufficient support and returned home.

David Livingstone's contentions that the Boers still practised slavery and raided Africans in order to capture young children stood as proven. Livingstone had been at Kudumane, 430 kilometres south of Kolobeng, at the time of the attack. But he still responded vigorously. Through the L.M.S. he wrote strong letters to protest to the British colonial authorities in Cape Town and London. He accused the Boers of violating treaty obligations with the British, but the British authorities replied that they could not interfere in quarrels north of the Vaal River. Livingstone later expressed his anger against the Boers in his published writings, and this had some influence on official attitudes in the British Government towards the Transvaal Boers, for many years to come—but did very little to actually help protect Africans from Boer incursions.

The Boers had long wished to bring Sechele under their control, and saw Sechele's defiance as provocative. They hated Livingstone because he had repaired and provided Sechele with firearms and ammunition and even, or so they believed, a cannon. The Boers demanded that the Bechuanaland district committee of the L.M.S. should immediately recall Livingstone from Kolobeng, or they would themselves take the necessary steps to remove him.<sup>50</sup>

The Boers' allegations against Livingstone persuaded the Cape Colony authorities to restrict the sale of arms and ammunition which he needed for his travels.<sup>51</sup> In the words of one of Livingstone's biographers:

When he set about trying to purchase the ammunition for his journey, government officials put every possible obstacle in his way, suspecting that it was really his intention to arm the African chiefs against the Boers of Transvaal.<sup>52</sup>

### Later experience in Africa: missionary travels

Livingstone could not stay.<sup>53</sup> He abandoned the Bakwena mission. The Boers barred his way to the east, and he felt himself called to start mission work in the north where he could not be badgered by the Boers. More densely populated regions in the north also had plenty of water. In early June 1851, Mrs Moffat wrote that 'Livingstone is again away to the Lake [Ngami], intending to seek a field there, or rather beyond it. He seems determined to get out of the reach of the Boers.'<sup>54</sup>

In central Africa, Livingstone met with new problems standing in the way of opening up a new mission field. One problem was communications—without which commerce with the outside world would be impossible:

I might have gone on instructing the natives in religion, but as civilization, and Christianity must go on together, I was obliged to find a path to the sea,...<sup>55</sup>

The other problem was the Slave Trade from the region of the upper Zambezi by Mambari (Afro-Portuguese) slave-traders, a lucrative business that stretched through Angola to the coast and across the Atlantic.<sup>56</sup> Livingstone's first mention of the trade had been in a letter he wrote while travelling back along the Zouga or Boteti River, in northern Botswana, on 1 October 1851:

That which claims particular attention is the fact that the slave trade only began in this region during 1856. A party of people called Mambari from the West came to Sebituane [of the MaKololo on the Linyanti or Chobe River] bearing a large quantity of English printed and striped cotton clothing, red, green and blue baize of English manufacture (for this they accepted nothing except boys of about fourteen years of age) and with these, bought from different towns about 200 boys. They had chains and rivets in abundance, and invited the people of Sebituane to go on a marauding expedition against the Bashukolompo [Baila] by saying you may take all the cattle we will only take prisoners. On that expedition they met with some Portuguese and these gave them three English guns, receiving in return at least thirty slaves. These Portuguese promised to return during this winter. The people confessed that they felt a repugnance to the traffic but they (Mambari and Portuguese) refused cattle for their clothing and guns. It seems to me that English manufactures might come up the Zambezi during the months of June, July and August or September by the hands of English and for their legitimate purposes as well as by these slave dealers for their unlawful ends.<sup>57</sup>

Still travelling along the banks of the Zouga river, he again wrote to Tidman on 17 October 1851 on the same subject:

The price of a boy was one old Portuguese musket or about nine yards of cotton or baize. When we reached Sebituane's people we were much pleased to see so many wearing European articles of clothing. And since our country's manufactures are so highly valued in the very middle of Africa, it is a pity the market cannot be supplied by legitimate commerce. There seems to be a large demand. Many tribes were

mentioned to us as possessing an abundance of supply. The Makololo purchased eagerly and though they promised to refrain from traffic in slaves, the only effectual means of stopping the trade would be by supplying the market with English goods in exchange for the produce of the country. The Christian merchants who may have enterprise enough to commence a trade in these parts would not be losers in the end... But I feel assured if our merchants could establish a legitimate commerce on the Zambezi, they would soon drive the slave dealer from the market and be besides great gainers in the end.<sup>58</sup>

Inspired by what Wilberforce called 'true practical Christianity'<sup>59</sup>, Livingstone endeavoured to open Africa for legitimate commerce. In 1854 he wrote to his brother-in-law about his determination to do so, saying:

I shall open up a path into the interior or perish. I never have had the shadow of a shade of doubt as to the propriety of my course, and wish only that my exertions may be honoured so far that the Gospel may be preached and believed in all this dark region.<sup>60</sup>

After travelling to the west coast overland, he concluded that more effective communications could be established from the east coast, up the Zambezi River and its tributaries, in the sphere of the Arab or Swahili Slave Trade of eastern Africa. He called on the British Government to use diplomatic means to persuade the Arab Sultan of Zanzibar, the commercial centre of the eastern Slave Trade, to prohibit the practice.

It was in this context that Livingstone formulated his famous catchphrase of three C's—Christianity, commerce, and civilization—for his lecture tour of Great Britain in December 1857, saying:

In going back to that country my object is to open up traffic along the banks of the Zambezi, and also to preach the Gospel. The natives of Central Africa are very desirous of trading, but their only traffic is at present in slaves, of which the poorer people have an unmitigated horror: it is therefore most desirable to encourage the former principle, and thus open a way for the consumption of free productions, and the introduction of Christianity and commerce. By encouraging the native propensity for trade, the advantages that might be derived in a commercial point of view are incalculable; nor should we lose sight of the inestimable blessings it is in our power to bestow upon the enlightened African, by giving him the light of Christianity. Those two pioneers of civilization—Christianity and commerce—should ever be inseparable.<sup>61</sup>

As a result of the popular reception to his 1857 lectures, Livingstone took on the leadership of a British Government expedition to the Zambezi, and up the Shire river towards Lake Malawi. He told John Kirk, economic botanist and medical officer of the expedition, that the aim of the expedition was:

to improve our acquaintance with the inhabitants and to engage them to apply their energies to industrial pursuits and to the cultivation of their lands with a view to the production of raw material to be exported to England in return to British manufactures; and it may be hoped that by encouraging the natives to occupy themselves in the development of the resources of their country a considerable advance may be made towards the extinction of the slave trade, as the natives will

not be long in discovery that the former will eventually become a more certain source of profit than the later.

He added:

it will be our duty to visit them (the three influential chiefs adjacent to the Zambezi) to turn the attention of their people to the cultivation of cotton, by giving them a supply of seed than that which they already possess, and also to explain the benefit that they would derive from an exchange of the natural productions of Africa, as ivory, cotton, oil beeswax, baize etc. for the manufactures in Europe, and generally to hold out every encouragement in order to induce them to give up their warlike and predatory habits and substitute the more peaceable pursuits of agriculture and commerce... to glean a general idea of the resources of the country to the North of Tete... Your attention is particularly requested to the discovery of dye stuff, gums, and medical substances, in the hope that should either these or fibrous tissues exist in quantities sufficient to warrant commercial enterprise, you may aid in the great work of supplanting by lawful commerce the odious traffic in slaves.<sup>62</sup>

The logic behind Livingstone's ideas of combining Christianity, commerce and education, was that Africans should produce raw materials which they could trade with Europe for manufactured goods. In central Africa he spotted the potential for export of materials such as seed oils, dyes, fibres useful for the manufacture of paper, sheep's wool, honey, sugar-cane, wheat, coffee, millet, cotton, indigo, iron, and coal. Critics might argue that this would still be a form of exploitation of Africa by Europe. But it was a more civilised way of exploiting people than destroying or taking its strong men and women across the seas to slavery.

### Conclusion

The core of Livingstone's point of view was the relevance of economic arguments to moral issues.

According to him the true salvation for Africa could be found in her fertile soil. African agricultural development would undercut the Slave Trade at source, providing much more profitable access to the Western manufactured goods that Africans desired. The Slave Trade, the obvious enemy of the Christian enterprise in Africa, could thus be eliminated by drawing on Africa's own resources.

Agricultural development and enhanced trade would help to produce conditions in which Christianity would spread. Such developments would lead to literacy and thus to printing, to new technologies in Africa, to roads and transport, to new forms civil organization and good government—that is, to civilization in Africa.<sup>63</sup>

### Notes and References

- 1 W. Monk, (ed.) (1860), *Dr. Livingstone's Cambridge Lectures*, 24.
- 2 A.F. Walls, 'The Legacy of David Livingstone' *International Bulletin Of Missionary Research*, vol. 11, No.3, July, 1987, 126.
3. C. Northcott, *David Livingstone: His Triumph, Decline, and Fall*, 74.
- 4 D. Livingstone, (1857), *Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa*, 228.
- 5 Mechie, S., (1960), *The Church and Scottish Social Development, 1780-1870*, 136.

- 6 Ibid, 137.
- 7 Ibid, 139-140.
- 8 Ibid, 140.
- 9 Ibid, 1-3.
- 10 H.G. Graham, (1935), *Social Life of Scotland in the Eighteenth Century*, 417-506.
- 11 Walker, F.D., (1926), *William Carey: Missionary Pioneer and Statesman*, 184-5.
- 12 Ibid, 189.
- 13 Ibid, 115-138, 260.
- 14 G. Smith, (1887), *The Life of William Carey: Shoe Maker and Missionary*, 52-3.
- 15 T.F. Buxton, (ndp), *William Wilberforce: The Story of A Great Crusade*, 8-114.
- 16 T.F. Buxton, (1840), *The Extinction of the Slave Trade and the Civilization of Africa: a review of "The African Slave Trade, and its Remedy"*, 171-190.
- 17.W. Monk, (ed.) (1860), *Dr. Livingstone's Cambridge Lectures*, 163.
- 18 See *London Missionary Register* No. 194.
- 19 A.Ross, (1986), *John Philip 1775-1851 : Missions, Race and Politics in South Africa*, 215-227.
20. Ibid, 215-8.
- 21 Livingstone, D. *Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa*, 4.
- 22 W.G. Blaikie, (1910), *The Personal Life of David Livingstone*, 10.
- 23 O.Ransford, (1986), *David Livingstone : The Dark Interior*, p.10; Blaikie, W. op. cit., 10.
- 24 Livingstone, D., op. cit., 3.
- 25 See the introduction David Chamberlin *Some Letters From Livingstone : 1840-72*. Also see National Library of Scotland: Missionary Studies Ref. 10778. The letter was written from Blantyre Works, dated 5th. Sept. 1837.
- 26 This letter was received by J.Arundel (1778-1848). He was the Home Secretary of the L.M.S. between 1819-46, hence Livingstone's first contact with the society: see *The Congregational Yearbook*, 1848, 211-13.
- 27 The completed forms were received by Arundel between January and July, 1838. The replies to 17 questions inquired about the religious belief and experience, education, health, vocation etc. See the National Library of Scotland : MS Ref. 10778.
- 28 Livingstone's application was read to a small committee of Directors of the Missionary Society on 23 July, 1838.
- 29 O.Ransford (1986), op. cit., 15.
30. R. Blaickie, (1910), op. cit., 31.
31. D. Livingstone, (1857), op. cit., 2.
- 32 A .Ross (1986), op. cit., 226-7.
33. George Drummond (1808-1893): he was a native of Cumnock, he studied at Glasgow and Ongar, and was appointed to Samoa in 1839, remaining till 1872. He was a good friend of Livingstone, and often sent him clothes and other necessities. See L.M.S. Register No. 407.
- 34 D. Chamberlin, (ed) (1940), *Some Letters from Livingstone:1840-72*, 5-6.
- 35 J.J. Freeman, (1794-185-): a missionary in Madagascar 1827-36, became a Joint Secretary of the L.M.S 1841-6; Home Secretary 1846-51 (L.M.S Register No. 264).
36. Ibid, 33.
- 37 H.H.Johnston,(1865), *Livingstone and the Exploration of Central Africa*, 72-6; J.M.Macnair, (1976), *Livingstone The Liberator*, 5-20.
- 38 D. Livingstone, (1857), op. cit., 18.
- 39 Pomore was a native teacher who was intended to station with a group of BaKwena that he and Edwards had visited the year before.
- 40 I. Schapera, (ed.) (1959), *Family Letters of Livingstone:1841-56*, 53.

- 41 Tidman (1792-1868): Congregational Minister at Salisbury 1814-18, at Frome 1818-28, and Barbican chapel, London 1828-51. He was also and latterly exclusively Foreign Secretary of the L.M.S 1839-68, and Livingstone's principal correspondent in the society both while he was a missionary and later. Also see *Congregational Yearbook*, 1869, 281.
- 42 D. Chamberlin, (ed.) (1940), op. cit., 99.
- 43 Livingstone's friend from Glasgow days. Later appointed as a missionary to Benares and arrived there in 1841. In 1847 went to Almora with the intention of commencing a station there, but his health failed him and he returned to England.
44. D. Chamberlin, (1940), op. cit., 115; W.G. Blaikie, (1910), op. cit., 66-7.
45. W.G. Blackie, (1910), op. cit., 57.
46. Ibid, 59.
47. I.Schapera, (1959), op. cit., Vol.1, 157
48. Ibid, 201-211.
49. W.G. Blaikie, op. cit, 67.
50. W.G. Blaikie, (1910), op. cit, 65.
51. W.G. Blaikie, (1910), *The Personal Life of David Livingstone*, 131.
52. J. Simmons, (1955), *Livingstone and Africa*, 42.
53. D. Livingstone, (1857), op. cit, 38.
54. J.S. Moffat, (1885), *The Lives of Robert and Mary Moffat*, 285.
55. W. Monk, (1860), op. cit., 151.
55. W. Monk, (1860), op. cit, 50-1.
56. I. Schapera (ed.) (1961), *Livingstone's Missionary Correspondence: 1841-56*, 151-2.
57. Ibid, p.156-7.
58. P. Cormack, (1983), *Wilberforce: the Nation's Conscience*, 42.
59. I. Schapera (ed), (1959), *David Livingstone's Family Letters*, Vol 2, 243-248. Also see National Library of Scotland: MS Ref. 10780 (6).
60. W. Monk, (1860), op. cit.,165.
61. R. Foskett, (1964), *The Zambezi Doctors: Livingstone's Letters to John Kirk: 1858-72*,40-1.
62. See A.F. Walls (1987), 'The Legacy of David Livingstone', *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 11 (3): 126.
63. Ibid, 126.