

The Travels and Translations of Three African Anglican Missionaries, 1890–1930

by EMMA WILD-WOOD
Westminster College, Cambridge
E-mail: cw273@cam.ac.uk

Histories of the modern missionary movement frequently assert that converts were more successful missionaries than Europeans yet details of their work remain sparse. This article examines influential factors in the spread of Christianity in Sub-Saharan Africa in two ways. It explores the complex and variable processes through life sketches of the African missionaries, Bernard Mizeki, Leonard Kamungu and Apolo Kivebulaya, who worked with the Anglican mission agencies SPG, UMCA and CMS, respectively. It identifies common elements for further scrutiny including the role of travel, translation and communication, and the development of continental centres of Christianity and the trajectories between them and local hubs of mission activity. The transnational turn of contemporary history is employed and critiqued to scrutinise the relations between the local and global in order to comprehend the appeal of Christianity in the colonial era.

From the era of African political independence scholarship on African Christianity demonstrated a preference for research on institutions or movements that appear religiously heterodox (by western standards), ecclesially independent of Western control, culturally African and politically engaged.¹ Such an approach has often side-lined attention to mission-initiated churches and limited the perceived agency of their African leaders. Furthermore, it is unlikely that scholarly concerns surrounding indigeneity were of primary interest to many early African proponents of Christianity. Recent historiography has provided a more complex reading of missionary practice and African agency and offers an

BSAC = British South Africa Company; CMS = Church Missionary Society; *MQP* = *Mashonaland Quarterly Papers*; SPG = Society for the Propagation of the Gospel; UMCA = Universities' Mission to Central Africa.

¹ Paul Kollman, 'Classifying African Christianities; past, present and future', *Journal of Religion in Africa* xl (2010), 3–32, 118–48.

interpretive lens through which to analyse the motivations and movements of Africans closely associated with British Anglican mission agencies and working beyond their locality. Through a focus upon transnational connections and consciousness, current scholarship recognises collaboration between Africans and European missionaries as facilitating knowledge production and cultural preservation,² developing international friendships³ and aspiring to form a world Christian culture.⁴ In some respects this article follows the transnational trend yet, alert to the dangers of obscuring the perspectives of ‘native agents’ of Christian mission through large-scale studies of missionary networks, it innovates by bringing questions surrounding travel, translation and communication to the level of the translocal. Examining smaller-scale trajectories of Christian mission within the African continent provides a way of testing the nature and pervasiveness of its spread and examining the manner of its adoption and adaptation.

The paper takes a personal approach by examining three Africans who were intent on transplanting Christianity to new locales.⁵ Bernard Mizeki (c. 1860–96), the Revd Leonard Kamungu (c. 1870–1913) and the Revd Apolo Kivebulaya (c. 1865–1933) are relatively well-documented representatives of the SPG, the UMCA and the CMS respectively. The three men were praised for being ‘missionaries’ as they travelled within the continent with the express purpose of disseminating Christianity in its Anglican form. Short sketches of their lives allow an exploration of their motivations and commitments as purveyors of novel beliefs and practices. They also provide a comparative element to the study whilst limiting its geographical and denominational range. I suggest that Africans who worked to extend Christianity territorially did so because of an interest in its cosmopolitan nature and universal claims demonstrated in opportunities for travel and new relationships, which served to shift cultural norms in ways that they considered compelling.

Individual or corporate mobility and Christian conviction had already been connected in Sub-Saharan Africa. Communities of African migrants were instrumental in the dissemination of Christianity south of the

² Patrick Harries and David Maxwell, ‘The spiritual in the secular’, in Patrick Harries and David Maxwell (eds), *The spiritual in the secular: missionaries and knowledge about Africa*, Grand Rapids, MI 2012, 1–29; Sujit Sivasundaram, *Nature and the godly empire: science and the Evangelical mission in the Pacific, 1795–1850*, Cambridge 2005.

³ Dana L. Robert, ‘Cross cultural friendship in the creation of twentieth-century world Christianity,’ *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* xxxv/1 (2011), 100–7.

⁴ Hilde Hielszen, Inger Marie Okkenhaug and Karin Hestad Skeie, ‘Introduction’, in Hilde Hielszen, Inger Marie Okkenhaug and Karin Hestad Skeie (eds), *Protestant missions and local encounters in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: unto the ends of the world*, Leiden 2011, 1–22.

⁵ For a similar approach see T. Jack Thompson, *Touching the heart: Xhosa missionaries to Malawi, 1876–1888*, Pretoria 2000.

Sahara in the early and mid-nineteenth century. The freed slaves from Nova Scotia who developed a Christian settlement in Freetown, Sierra Leone, were joined by re-captives and developed a Krio community which perpetuated a missionary form of Christianity through trade, education and evangelism throughout West Africa. Many of the missionaries who worked among the peoples in the hinterland of Sierra Leone and present-day Nigeria were migrants to the region as re-captive slaves, or children of such, who had been settled in Freetown, and converted to Christianity there.⁶ Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther is, perhaps, the best known of these. In East Africa re-captives and escaped slaves also played a significant role in the missions of the CMS and UMCA. Freed slaves educated in Bombay volunteered to participate in the missionary endeavour in Kenya and Tanzania. Villages of freed slaves were created by missionaries intent on the Christianisation of populations and the creation of new societies. Escaped slaves independently found in Christianity a spiritual ideology that met their need for asserting their freedom.⁷ Recently David Maxwell has analysed the freed slaves returning from Angola to Katanga in Congo as new elites creating a missionary role for themselves through their experience of dislocation and their desire for respectability and the trappings of modernity.⁸ The dislocation suffered by slaves is understood to have allowed them to accept the new ideas presented by missionary Christianity and encouraged many to become missionaries themselves. However, the three men considered in this article were not directly connected with slavery.

Bernard Mizeki's martyrdom is commemorated in the Anglican Church in Zimbabwe on 18 June at Nhowe near Harare, the site of his murder. The growth in popularity of pilgrimage to the site prompted renewed interest in Mizeki decades after his death.⁹ Originally from Portuguese East Africa, he had already migrated to Cape Town before his conversion to Christianity. In Cape Town there was a sizeable community of fellow 'Mozbiekers', some of whom had been trafficked as slaves. They were frequently sought by

⁶ Jehu Hanciles, *Euthanasia of a mission: African church autonomy in a colonial context*, Westport, CN 2002, 5–14.

⁷ Colin Reed, *Pastors, partners, and paternalists: African church leaders and western missionaries in the Anglican Church in Kenya, 1850–1900*, Leiden 1997.

⁸ David Maxwell, 'Freed slaves, missionaries and respectability: the expansion of the Christian frontier from Angola to Belgian Congo', *Journal of African History* liv (2013), 79–102.

⁹ See H. P. Thompson, *The martyr of Mashonaland*, London 1937; A. W. Lee, *Two African martyrs*, n.p. SA 1947; Jean Farrant, *Mashonaland martyr: Bernard Mizeki and the pioneer church*, Cape Town 1966; Terence Ranger, 'Taking hold of the land: holy places and pilgrimages in twentieth-century Zimbabwe,' *Past & Present* cxvii (1987), 158–94; Dana L. Robert, *St. Patrick and Bernard Mizeki: missionary saints and the creation of Christian communities*, New Haven, CN 2005; Mark A. Noll and Carolyn Nystrom, *Clouds of witnesses: Christian voices from Africa and Asia*, Downers Grove, IL 2011, 21–32.

explorers and missionaries as guides and interpreters in their areas of origin, and were considered to be linguistic and cultural experts.¹⁰ Like others, Mizeki converted to Christianity and was noticed by the Cowley Fathers (the Society of St John the Evangelist) who sent him to Zonnebloem College for five years where his gift for languages was honed.¹¹ In 1891 Mizeki volunteered to travel with Bishop George W. H. Knight-Bruce (1852–96), a missionary with the SPG, who wished to take the Christian Church to the Ndebele and Shona.

Mizeki and his Zulu colleague, Frank Ziqubu, were stationed at chief Maconi's, thirty miles north-east of the main mission station at Umtali. At some point Mizeki decided to work at chief Mangwende's, sixty miles from Umtali, among the Nhowe people.¹² He learned Shona and was respected by SPG missionaries for his language acquisition; Knight-Bruce, in an early volume of the missionary periodical, the *Mashonaland Quarterly Papers*, wrote that 'it is generally allowed that Bernard, our Catechist, is the best Mashona scholar there is'.¹³ Mizeki toured the local area, often in the company of the SPG missionary Douglas Pelly, who describes their journeys, saying of Mizeki, 'many a long walk has he made bright with his interesting talk of native customs, thoughts and legends'.¹⁴ Pelly appreciated Mozbieker knowledge and mapped his own comprehensions of the Shona from it. Both Mizeki and Ziqubu were involved in Bible translation. One description of the process is telling: the translators were gathered at the new mission house at Umtali during the rainy season, when opportunities for travel were curtailed by swollen rivers and muddy routes, with the purpose of starting translation of 'parts of the Bible' and the Lord's Prayer, Ten Commandments and Creed. The team consisted of Mizeki, Ziqubu, the Revd T. A. Walker, Knight-Bruce and Shoniwa Kapuiya (later baptised 'John'), an early Shona convert from Mangwende, a 'headman's son' and speaker of the 'purest' Shona. The five men lived together and spent five hours a day in translation. 'Every word in the grammar and its pronunciation has to be passed by [Kapuiya] before it is allowed to exist.'¹⁵ A close working

¹⁰ Patrick Harries, 'Making Mozbiekers: history, memory and the African diaspora at the Cape', in Benigna Zimba, Edward Alpers and Allen Isaacman (eds), *Slave routes and oral tradition in southeastern Africa*, Maputo 2005.

¹¹ For an explanation of the Cowley Fathers' vision see Rowan Strong, 'Origins of Anglo-Catholic missions: Fr Richard Benson and the initial missions of the Society of St John the Evangelist, 1869–1882', this JOURNAL LXVI (2015), 90–115.

¹² Pamela Welch, *Church and settler in colonial Zimbabwe: a study in the history of the Anglican diocese of Mashonaland/Southern Rhodesia, 1890–1925*, Leiden 2008, 28.

¹³ *MQP* viii (Jan. 1894), 6.

¹⁴ This is quoted in Chengetal J. M. Zvobgo, *A history of Christian missions in Zimbabwe, 1890–1939*, Gweru 1996, 45.

¹⁵ Bishop's letter, *MQP* viii (Apr. 1894), 5–6.

relationship was established in which the youngest and least educated of the team had the final word on the task at hand, and in which Mizeki was considered to be the most adept outsider. The purpose was to render the Scriptures into a form of Shona which would communicate grammatically and idiomatically across its various dialects, thus transmitting a message considered to be of universal significance by the translation team. In the process a new, local text emerged. The international team was working intimately together on a task perceived to aid the Shona people, by making accessible an ancient text from a different cultural and geographical milieu from that of any of the translators.

Belief in the transnational nature of biblical texts and church creeds was embedded in these early encounters but so was an expectation of local cultural reformulations, as illustrated by the daily routine of SPG clergy and catechists. Accounts by the Revd Douglas Pelly two years later at 'Bernard's Station' show a timed programme framed by communal prayer: breakfast at 8 a.m. was followed by matins, then Mizeki and Ziqubu worked in the gardens for their subsistence or on buildings until 11.30 when they joined the translations team; at 1 p.m. prayers were held before lunch at 1.30 p.m.; the afternoons were spent visiting kraals until evensong at 6.30 p.m. followed by tea at 7 p.m. From 7.45 p.m. to 9.30 p.m. the school was in session, comprising of a 'lesson', catechism and the tonic solfa system of singing.¹⁶ The SPG-generated accounts note the points at which the lives of Christian Europeans and Africans met and their collaboration in the kind of common missionary tasks about which supporters in the UK would expect to read. They are less fulsome in their reporting of the relationships between catechists and the Shona amongst whom they lived. The stories that exist proudly show Mizeki operating as an exemplary Christian; for example, when Kapuiya falls ill and stoutly refuses his family's pleading to consult the spirit-medium and sacrifice a goat, Mizeki intervenes by carrying Kapuiya to the Mission hospital where he is healed.¹⁷ The power of bio-medicine to overcome 'heathen superstition' is a familiar trope in missionary literature. This story indicates that debates over body and soul could be fiercely fought at the sick-bed. Novelties were embraced by some Shona and shunned by others. Another Shona at Mangwende who was drawn to the novelties that Mizeki was introducing was the granddaughter of chief Mangwende, Lily Mutwa. She married Mizeki in March 1896, three months before he was murdered in the Shona uprising against colonial incursion. After his death Mutwa became a catechist in her own right.¹⁸

¹⁶ *MQP* xv (Feb. 1896), 14–15.

¹⁷ *MQP* xii (Apr. 1895), 8.

¹⁸ From 1904 she attended St Monica's school in Penhalonga for women and girls and from 1907 organised women's work in Rusapi: Welch, *Church and settler in colonial Zimbabwe*, 65.

Mizeki was killed in the second Anglo-Ndebele War, begun in March 1896, which many Shona joined in June.¹⁹ Although local villagers warned Mizeki of a threat to his life, he did not leave the area and was killed by relatives of Mangwende.²⁰ The nature of Mizeki's death demonstrates how closely he was associated with colonial forces by those antagonistic to the rise of white settlers and mining concessions.²¹ Rinderpest, drought and locusts were blamed on settlers, the imposition in 1894 of the hut tax was unpopular and by 1895 the country was under an often brutal and aggressive police rule. Mizeki's five years in the Mashonaland Mission had coincided with rapid social change. When he first arrived, he was a participant in Knight-Bruce's vision to create a rural, African Church untainted by European rule and far from settler involvement and mining concessions. It was to be based on the establishment of mission farms which would sustain and improve agricultural subsistence farming and provide communities for converts. Such a vision was unobtainable even before it had begun. Operatives of Cecil Rhodes's British South Africa Company were already moving into the area. Knight-Bruce resigned in October 1894, a sick and disappointed man, and subsequent mission leaders cooperated with colonial forces in various ways.²² The *Mashonaland Quarterly Papers* give regular accounts of the skirmishes between Shona and Ndebele with little consideration to the way in which colonial interests affected long-term concerns over land, cattle and autonomy. Members of the Mashonaland Mission supported British economic interests and Ziqubu, after Mizeki's death, acted as a guide to BSAC forces.²³ His knowledge of the area, gained in missionary itinerations, was offered for military service.

The mission which had been established in order to escape colonial interference found itself entangled in it. Mizeki's introduction of novelties associated with white people fell fatally foul of those who rejected white political control and culture. Prophetic spirit-mediums such as Murenga (after whom the war is sometimes called) or Mbuya Nehanda were active in plumbing traditional beliefs and practices to rally support and attack the BSAC, giving assurance of invulnerability to European bullets. They recast the African past and provided a millennial vision of a society without white interference.²⁴ As a migrant to the Cape Colony, Mizeki

¹⁹ A summary of the events and the historiography of the First and Second Anglo-Ndebele Wars can be found in Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 'Mapping cultural and colonial encounters, 1880s–1930s', in Brian Raftopolous (ed.), *Becoming Zimbabwe: a history from the pre-colonial period until 2008*, Harare 2009, 40–74. ²⁰ *MQP* xx (May 1897), 8.

²¹ At least two other African evangelists were also killed during the war, James Anta and Molimile Molele: Zvobgo, *Christian missions in Zimbabwe*, 36.

²² See Welch, *Church and settler in colonial Zimbabwe*, 40–2.

²³ *MQP* xviii (Nov. 1896), 8.

²⁴ Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 'Mapping cultural and colonial encounters', 48–57.

had already made a number of cultural and religious transitions and he expected that, through his brokering of Christian belief and practice, the Shona would do the same. He made judgements about the rectitude of local practices, cutting down some trees in a sacred grove and carving crosses on others, whilst also incorporating local stories of the supreme deity, *Mwari*, into his preaching on Christ and instructing European missionaries in Shona customs. For Mizeki, the beliefs and practices surrounding *Mwari* resonated with those that he held on the Christian God whom he preached, and he identified *Mwari* as the Shona high-god.²⁵ In turn Shona comprehensions about *Mwari* would have influenced their understanding of Mizeki's teaching. Mizeki encouraged a monotheistic interpretation in continuation with comprehension about *Mwari*, but he made a sharp distinction between acceptable and unacceptable mediators between God and humanity. Ancestors and spirit-mediums appear to have been criticised by Mizeki, whereas Jesus Christ and the 'Spirit of God', were considered acceptable protectors and mediators.²⁶ Mizeki's approach represents an African appropriation of Christianity which demanded significant rupture from traditional practices but maintained connections with previous theistic belief.²⁷ In parallel with Kupuiya's weighing of the words of catechists and European missionaries so that they be in Shona idiom or cease to exist, Mizeki weighed Shona beliefs and practices, either attempting to make them idiomatically Christian and thus capable of holding particular ethics and monotheistic beliefs, or expunging them from his spiritual repertoire. His recasting of Shona beliefs was more radical than that of Murenga or Mbuya Nehanda as he tried to subsume them within a universal Christian narrative.

The first Nyasa priest of the UMCA whose work has been recorded is the Revd Leonard Kamungu (c. 1870–1913).²⁸ An early product of the Likoma mission (established 1876), he graduated from St Andrew's Kiungani (1891–7) and from St Mark's Zanzibar (1899–1901) and was

²⁵ Scholarship differs on whether African societies possessed monotheistic religious traditions or whether this trait is conferred upon them by commentators educated within a Christian tradition: Robin Horton, *Patterns of thought in Africa and the West: essays on magic, religion and science*, Cambridge 1993. In this historical case Knight-Bruce did not perceive a high god but Mizeki did: Gift M. Makwasha, *The repression, resistance, and revival of the ancestor cult in the Shona churches of Zimbabwe: a study in the persistence of a traditional religious belief*, Lewiston, NY 2010, 22–34.

²⁶ Makwasha, *Ancestor cult in the Shona churches*, 120–1. For more on *Mwari* see M. L. Daneel, *The god of the Matopo hills*, The Hague 1970.

²⁷ For further commentary on the relationship between Christian practice and local and global frames of reference see Ranger, 'Taking hold of the land'.

²⁸ Jerome T. Moriyama, 'Building a home-grown Church', in Dan O'Connor (ed.), *Three centuries of mission: the USPG, 1701–2000*, London 2000, 330–42; James Tengtenga, *The UMCA in Malawi: a history of the Anglican Church, 1861–2010*, Zomba 2010.

made deacon in 1902, working in a number of places in Tanganyika and Nyasaland. The UMCA's first mission to Nyasaland in 1861 had failed because of insecurity caused by Arab- and Portuguese-initiated slave-raiding and the northwards migration and settlement of the Ngoni through the region. British anti-slavery treaties with the sultan of Zanzibar from 1873 and the subsequent formation of a German Protectorate in 1890 made missionary travel a little easier until the Maji-Maji rebellion of 1905–7 briefly challenged German colonial control. Kamungu lived through this period of social upheaval and chose to be at the vanguard of religious change. Ordained priest in 1909, in January 1911 Kamungu left the Nyasa for Msoro in north-eastern Rhodesia, demonstrating to the UMCA his missionary credentials. He was amongst the early staff of the diocese of Northern Rhodesia, which had been established with funds raised in Britain to celebrate the UMCA's jubilee. Before his untimely death from food poisoning, Kamungu baptised ninety-six people in Msoro. In doing so he extended the trajectory of UMCA's influence. Events of his life were recorded in his letters to a supporter in Cambridge, England, and form the basis of a short biography.²⁹

Kamungu travelled for education, to preach the Gospel and to plant churches. His letters also name other African evangelists and priests whom he met on his journeys: his delight in being reunited with his student peers and those who had taught him suggests the formation of new bonds of friendship and obligation. His contemporary at Kiungani, the Revd Yohana B. Abdallah, describes with enthusiasm the 123 'boys' there as being 'all of different tribes, Nyasas, Makuas, Bondeis and Yaos'.³⁰ Ties of friendship forged at Kiungani and Zanzibar remained supportive, and enfolded Christian community across differences of language and custom. *Msimulizi*, the student magazine, and correspondence between friends provided the new community with ways of disseminating news and upholding friendships once they left Kiungani; in these articles and letters the kinship language of 'brother', 'family' and 'children of Mother Church' is regularly repeated.³¹ UMCA policy prioritised the return of men to their own people but they were frequently expected to work among other ethnic groups too and such relationships were intended to facilitate understanding of others. When Kamungu was based among Nyasa people at Likoma and Chia in 1902 he was learning Yao in order to preach in that language. However, according to the UMCA missionary,

²⁹ D. Y. Mills, *An African priest and missionary: being a sketch of the life of Leonard Mattiya Kamungu, priest of the UMCA*, London 1914. Unfortunately, the original letters may no longer be extant.

³⁰ Yohana B. Abdallah to Isabel Hall, 4 June 1894, Bodleian Library, Oxford, UMCA A5 (as nn 37/38).

³¹ Anne-Marie Stoner-Eby, 'African leaders engage mission Christianity: Anglicans in Tanzania, 1876–1936', unpubl. PhD diss. Pennsylvania 2003, 185–93.

George H. Wilson, Kamungu, when stationed at Lungwena, did not ‘get on very well with the Yao’s [*sic*]’.³² Likewise Abdallah, son of a Yao chief, worked devotedly among the Nyasa whom he looked down upon.³³ Possibly the long years of slave raiding by the Yao contributed to mutual suspicion. It was optimistic to expect that a melting pot of motivated young men (and women) developing new social relationships at UMCA establishments would be adequate to meet the demands of living in the villages from whence their fellows had come. Yet for many the ‘sense of supra-tribal unity’ was an exciting part of conversion and church membership.³⁴

Apparent in the extended quotations from Kamungu’s letters is the extent to which his travels conflicted with family responsibilities. This perhaps explains his reluctance, articulated as unworthiness, to assume first the role of reader and then deacon. He did not marry³⁵ but maintained close ties with his family and felt a particular responsibility towards a sister, probably arising from obligations within the matrilineal forms of society among the Nyasa. He considered that his family did not understand the expectations laid upon him to travel. Unlike the first graduates of St Andrew’s and St Mark’s, who were freed slaves or re-captives, Kamungu’s attraction to Christianity did not arise through a disconnection from his roots and he articulated a sense of separation from his family and locality, even when working among fellow Nyasa. His tussle between his family and his vocation demonstrates two sets of obligations which were not easily resolved. In 1898 he wrote resolutely of leaving his family: ‘I cannot give up the journey, and if God will we shall meet again.’³⁶ Whilst Kamungu’s published biography quotes noble sentiments demonstrating his willingness to travel in order to communicate the Gospel, the extant private letters of Kamungu’s contemporaries include accounts of the hardships that they encountered as a result of the long journeys that they were expected to undertake. Abdallah outlines to his British sponsor the travails of six weeks’ journey between churches and asked her, ‘Have you ever travelled as much as 40 or 50 days? I mean by foot. I need your prayers much.’³⁷ He knew that in Britain there were trains to facilitate travel and he made his benefactor aware of the personal sacrifice he was making as a clergyman.³⁸ When another correspondent, Agnes Ajajeuli, wife of a catechist, wrote in 1912, the length of travelling had been reduced by the increase in churches and catechists and also by the introduction of bicycles.

³² George H. Wilson to Duncan Travers, St Andrew’s College, 17 Dec. 1906, UMCA A1 (xxiv). ³³ John Iliffe, *A modern history of Tanganyika*, Cambridge 1979, 230.

³⁴ *Ibid.* 234.

³⁵ Most UMCA missionaries were single but they wished to provide catechists and clergy with ‘wives that are fit for them’: *UMCA report of anniversary services and meeting, 1882*, London 1883, 30. Abdallah also remained single. ³⁶ Mills, *African priest*, 25.

³⁷ Abdallah to Hall, 1 Oct. 1894, UMCA A5.

³⁸ Abdallah to Hall, 18 Apr. 1901, Unungu, UMCA A5.

Yet she complained of the expense of such technology and the impediment of long grass to itineration. Her letter requested inner tubes for her husband's bicycle; the present ones, she said, could not be patched any further.³⁹ *Msimulizi* also chronicles the challenges and opportunities of journeys and notes the development of rituals surrounding them.

Traders and hunters were already accorded respect as travellers in many of the societies of the region. They were accompanied on the first part of the journey and expected to tell stories of their adventures. Likewise students from Kiungani, catechists and priests were accompanied after a service of communion. Outriders would greet them with gun-fire to announce their arrival and thanksgiving prayers were offered.⁴⁰ Consonant with UMCA's Tractarian-influenced church practice some of Kamungu's travels were liturgically focused: he first travelled the thirty miles to Likoma from Chia for intensive catechism prior to baptism. As a reader and deacon he was sent to Lungwena area on the south-east of Lake Nyasa and he was obliged to make extra journeys to receive the eucharist. Once he was ordained priest he took a carrying altar round five stations every month in the area around Nkhotakota, on the western side of Lake Nyasa. Conversion provided new reasons for travel, it modified rituals to ensure its safety and communal appeal and instituted new paraphernalia with which to travel.

By 1900 the letters that Kamungu writes to his sponsor at St Giles's Church, Cambridge, are in English and they explain his ministry and appeal for prayers from British Christians: 'I must go and start a new station and work there alone without any European and try and do the work of God ... I beseech you to pray to God to give me this blessing that I may be a good preacher and witness for Christ.'⁴¹ The language, information and sentiment indicate the extent to which Kamungu saw himself as participating in an international movement which bound its members together in a common cause. Letters from other Africans also request prayer for their work and some attempt to enter into the concerns of their recipients. Abadallah ends one letter, 'I hope the Boer War is finished and the trouble from China is over now.'⁴² Whether this is in direct response to the letter that he had received or whether his perceptions of the concerns of British Christians were mediated through British involvement (and interpretation) of world affairs is unclear. It indicates the interest of the educated in the world beyond their own region. It also demonstrates the way in which letters served to communicate

³⁹ Agnes Ajajeuili to C. C. Childs, 20 Sept. 1912 (trans. from Swahili), *ibid.*

⁴⁰ Stoner-Eby, 'African leaders', 160–2.

⁴¹ Mills, *African priest*, 18.

⁴² Abdallah to Hall, 18 Apr. 1901, UMCA A5. The Boxer Uprising in China, in which foreign missionaries and their converts were killed, was violently quashed by an eight-nation force, including Britain, in 1900.

concerns, events and daily patterns of life beyond the circle of people whom one had physically encountered. Through them transnational networks and interests were formed and shared.

Apolo Kivebulaya, the third example of an African missionary, was a native teacher and priest working with the CMS and in the employ of the Mengo Church Council and later the Toro Church Council.⁴³ He travelled much smaller distances than either Mizeki or Kamungu but spent all of his long ministry outside his home area of Buganda. He was converted during the convulsions of Ganda Kingdom as it recalibrated its systems of governance, embraced Catholic and Anglican Christianity, and formed alliances firstly with the British East Africa Company and then with the British colonial administration in order to extend its borders and influence into neighbouring kingdoms. Kivebulaya was baptised in 1895 once the Protestant leadership had secured its hold over the kingdom, under Prime Minister Apolo Kagwa. While Kivebulaya was preparing for baptism, his father insisted that he marry but when his wife died a few months later he decided that he would not marry again.⁴⁴ Within a few months, and without any formal training, he volunteered to work in Toro and in 1896 he first visited the area of Mboga which was to become Belgian territory. In 1899 he recounts a vision of Christ coming to him at night assuring him of his presence: ‘From that time I was utterly certain that I could not deny God one little bit ... It would be impossible to leave him ... And inside I was very happy in heart. God had protected me, helped me far more than any earthly person.’⁴⁵ As a result, Kivebulaya records, he has renewed courage for the task: ‘my need was this, that I might have power to bring people to Jesus Christ and to enter them into that life, He gave me that power, and I had no fear at all’.⁴⁶

Like Mizeki, Kivebulaya was involved in translation work, starting a Nyoro translation before CMS missionaries arrived in the area. He was committed to vernacular translation of the entire Bible, a position that was controversial in Uganda among those who believed that Luganda should be the regional *lingua franca* and one which divided CMS missionaries and Ganda churchmen alike.⁴⁷ He was ordained priest in 1903, a product of Bishop Alfred Tucker’s desire to ordain men of good Christian character regardless of their education.⁴⁸ Until he died in 1933, he worked either in Toro

⁴³ For analysis of the movement of evangelists in Uganda and Kivebulaya’s place among them see Louise Pirouet, *Black evangelists: the spread of Christianity in Uganda, 1891–1914*, London 1978, esp. pp. 39–72.

⁴⁴ Apolo Kivebulaya, unpubl. autobiographical notes, Africana collection, Makerere University, Kampala.

⁴⁵ *Idem*, Black Book, entry for 1899, *ibid*.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, entry for 1 Aug. 1899.

⁴⁷ Holger Hansen, *Mission, Church and State in a colonial setting, Uganda, 1890–1925*, New York 1984, 383–95.

⁴⁸ Christopher Byaruhengwa, *Bishop Alfred Robert Tucker and the establishment of the African Anglican Church*, Nairobi 2008, 127–9.

or the Mboga area and became famous in British missionary circles for his contact with the Mbuti pygmies in the Ituri forest. Of the three men discussed in this article he gained most international attention during his life and shortly after his death. The CMS missionary A. B. Lloyd, who at times worked closely with Kivebulaya, wrote three short biographies which formed the basis for children's books and missionary pamphlets.⁴⁹ The missionary tropes of pioneering work, exploring 'virgin fields' and 'pushing frontiers' are apparent in the biographies as he encounters exotic and 'dangerous' peoples in 'dark' and remote lands beyond the snow-capped Ruwenzori Mountains. Stories of his early sojourns in Mboga recount personal sacrifices and threats to his life.⁵⁰ Depicted as a remote and risky place, Mboga was, at the turn of the century, a thriving trading post of ivory and rubber to which other Ganda travelled on business. Missionary trajectories were not simply about distance, but about cultural and linguistic traverses, depicted as challenging and heroic.

Periodically Kivebulaya kept a diary in which many of the entries are notes on journeys.⁵¹ He records the days he travelled, those he travelled with and those who offered hospitality. He also notes where and to whom he preached, although the information he gives on the content of his sermons is extremely sketchy. In 1931 he made an entry every single day; the picture given is one of almost perpetual motion. He is rarely in the same place for a week. Although most of the itinerations are small in distance, they are usually carried out on foot in difficult terrain. He visits villages in the forest to preach, teach, pray, give medicine and aid the construction of church buildings. He returns to Mboga to teach at the girls' and boys' schools which he ran. In February Bishop J. J. Willis arrives with an entourage of white people and Kivebulaya repeats his itineration with them. He descends the Semiliki escarpment to attend church council meetings in Fort Portal, visiting old friends in Toro, preparing couples for marriage. He is able to travel the 200 miles between Fort Portal and Kampala in a car. In sharp contrast to his records of earlier journeys between the two places, the distance travelled takes only two days and thus he meets fewer people on the way. Once he arrives in Kampala he attends church meetings, preaches in schools and, on one occasion, visits an aeroplane at Entebbe and watches it take off – clearly a moment of

⁴⁹ A. B. Lloyd, *Apolo of the pygmy forest*, London 1923; *More about Apolo*, London 1928; and *Apolo the pathfinder – who follows?*, London, 1934; W. J. W. Roome, *Apolo, the apostle to the pygmies*, London 1934; Pat Yates, *Apolo in pygmyland*, London 1940; Margaret Sinker, *Into the great forest*, London 1950; M. L. Braby, *Four lessons on Apolo* (CMS pamphlet, n.d); Anne Luck, *African saint: the story of Apolo Kivebulaya*, London 1963.

⁵⁰ Emma Wild-Wood, 'The making of an African missionary hero in the English biographies of Apolo Kivebulaya (1923–1936)', *Journal of Religion in Africa* xl/3 (2010), 273–306.

⁵¹ Kivebulaya diaries and papers, Africana collection.

marvel for a man who was entranced by his first sighting of a bicycle in 1900.⁵²

Kivebulaya's short and frequently repetitive notes give not only a clear indication of the trajectories that he travelled but of the influences between the spheres that they connect. Namirembe hill in Kampala, close to the king's palace at Mengo, was the first hub of CMS activity in Uganda and on it the cathedral had been built. Fort Portal was a mission outpost when Apolo first arrived in 1895. In 1931 it possessed active mission institutions, including a hospital and a flourishing girls' school. These too were situated close to the king of Toro's palace. Mboga provided the main hub on Belgian Congo soil, but for ten years Kivebulaya had been building another church in the forest, at Kainama, complete with its own satellites. He attended the meeting 'for spreading the Gospel to the Nations' on 30 June in Namirembe, a cause for which he prayed every week in the church in Mboga. The entry for 13 March 1931 is typical: 'I taught the teachers. I preached in Boga church, praying for God's work done all over the world by the teachers.'⁵³ Although Kivebulaya's travelling routes were regularly circular, as he itinerated around churches that he had established, his vistas of further migrations were always outwards and beyond. The missionary vision of extending a chain of mission stations across the African continent, first articulated by the CMS missionary Johann Ludwig Krapf (1810–81), was shared by Kivebulaya but his prayers for the nations suggest a global purview of his work, consonant with the missionary hermeneutic centred on the so-called Great Commission of Matthew xxviii.19–21.

Like Kamungu, Kivebulaya corresponded with people in Britain and he kept some of their letters. He always wrote in Luganda and was usually translated by Albert Lloyd. At the end of his life he collaborated with the British and Foreign Bible Society on a gospel translation in the Mbuti language.⁵⁴ He also wrote letters of thanks to supporters: 'I thank you for your prayers. There is nothing that helps me so much as prayer.'⁵⁵ The assurance of prayers offered to God for Kivebulaya's work provides a sense of comradeship and a tool for the ministry that he undertook. Letters provided communication with absent friends and supporters whom he would never meet. They were also a potent conduit of fellowship and a symbol of the intimate connection developed through intercession about an endeavour perceived

⁵² Ruth Fisher, *On the borders of pigmy land*, London 1903, 109.

⁵³ 'Naigiriza abaigiriza. Nabulira Mukanisa Boga na kusabira Mulimu qua Katonda agukolebwa Munki zona abaigiriza' (trans. Wild-Wood).

⁵⁴ See correspondence 'Efe grammar and dictionary', unpubl., 16, Bible Society Archives, Cambridge University Library, E3/3/629file5c, F3/Smith/1.

⁵⁵ Apolo Kivebulaya to Miss [?] Clare of the Young Peoples Union of CMS, 8 Sept 1927, CMS Archives, Birmingham University Library, Acc 399.

to be held in common by Christians around the world who would never physically encounter one another and with the God whom they worshipped and served. Like Kamungu, Kivebulaya wrote as one engaged in the same cause and sharing the same aims as young CMS supporters in Britain.

Mizeki, Kamungu and Kivebulaya lived and worked outside their native regions and were frequently on the move, transcending geographical and psychological boundaries, learning new languages, living with new peoples and developing close networked relationships with fellow missionaries, African and European. They were probably unaware of each other's existence but it is likely that they knew of the missionary work in which each of them was involved. Alfred Tucker acted as bishop for the UMCA mission when Bishop Smythies died suddenly, and ordained Kamungu's colleague Abdallah, in August 1894. Between 1889 and 1894 the Kiungani students' magazine, *Msimulizi*, ran at least six articles on the Uganda Church, including two written by 'our brother', Henry Wright Duta, a prominent Ugandan church leader.⁵⁶ Stories of *Kabaka* Mwanga of Buganda's interest in learning to read had reached Umtali and were used to encourage Ziqubu and Mizeki when chief Maconi seemed uninterested in Christianity.⁵⁷ Differences in churchmanship between the missionary societies did not halt the sharing of stories and personnel.

These brief life sketches demonstrate that the processes of extending the influence of Christianity within a single denomination are complex and variable. Four elements may be identified which were influential in the shaping of Anglican Christianity on the eastern side of Africa and which would merit further investigation. Firstly, the movement of Anglican forms of Christianity within Africa in the nineteenth century was not simply a product of European missionaries, nor were all African missionaries products of the slave-trade. As the Mozbiekers illustrate, they had also been the companions and guides of European explorers, hunters and philologists. Africans had for centuries inhabited the roles of traveller, explorer, itinerant healer and trader. Christian mission provided another – and sometimes overlapping – reason for journeying. In the missionary role Africans worked independently as well as being consultants for Europeans, providing local expertise on language and customs and being interpreters of Europeans to other Africans. They were also in contact with organisations and supporters in Britain and influenced their perceptions. That converts in Africa, and in other parts of the world, were more successful than European missionaries in the dissemination of Christianity and its adoption and adaptation in local cultures has become a commonplace in studies of World Christianity. It was acknowledged at the time by European missionaries and by the emerging churches

⁵⁶ 'Uganda: Barua ya Ndugu Yetu', *Msimulizi* viii (Dec. 1889), 114, and 'Habari ya Uganda', *Msimulizi* x (Apr. 1890), 181, referenced in Stoner-Eby, 'African leaders', at p. 173.

⁵⁷ *MQP* ix (Oct. 1894), 12.

both of whom regarded as missionaries in their own right those mobile African Christians involved in evangelism and establishing churches beyond their ethnic group. Yet there is still considerable research to be undertaken in order to comprehend the missionary work of Africans, particularly when they were operating in locations beyond the missionary purview. A painstaking triangulation of sources is required: sources by Africans are scarce, scattered and often brief; the reading of missionary and colonial sources requires careful attention in order to perceive shared interests; and anthropological sources have historically shied away from points of religious encounter.⁵⁸

Secondly, the examination of mobility in the lives of these three men gives some insight into the appeal of Christianity as well as the trajectories of its dissemination and would repay further comparative scrutiny. Mizeki was a migrant before conversion, whereas Kamungu and Kivebulaya seem to have travelled largely as result of being accepted to work for a missionary society. Along with fellow Nyasa and Ganda, they both experienced societal upheaval and, in travelling, they remade their cultural identities, finding in Christianity an opportunity to trim away some customary particularities, including the expectation to marry and have children. Becoming a missionary of necessity meant becoming a migrant. In theories of conversion in Sub-Saharan Africa, migration, whether through slavery or trading interests, has often been considered to be a significant factor in the process. J. D. Y. Peel, in examining the conversion of the Yoruba from *orisa* cults to Christianity, notes the conversion of migrant traders whose social experience expanded once they left their own towns and who required a religion of increased social scale to respond to new circumstances rather than the cults that were peculiar to their locality.⁵⁹ Behind Peel's observation is Robin Horton's 'intellectualist' theory of conversion to Christianity or Islam which assumes that monotheism provides spiritual beliefs and practices that travel.⁶⁰ It is attractive to those who, voluntarily or otherwise, are dislocated or seeking novel ways of life. Mizeki's encounter with religious practices at Mangwende's, for example, appears to have at least sharpened, if not invented, *Mwari's* monotheistic potential.⁶¹ Yet the extent to

⁵⁸ One monograph which explores this perspective is Stephen C. Volz, *African teachers on the colonial frontier: Tswana evangelists and their communities during the nineteenth century*, New York 2011.

⁵⁹ J. D. Y. Peel, *Religious encounter and the making of the Yoruba*, Bloomington, IN 2000, 3.

⁶⁰ Robin Horton, 'African conversion', *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* xli (1971), 85–108, and 'On the rationality of conversion', parts I and II, *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* xlv (1975), 219–35, 373–99.

⁶¹ The ambiguity surrounding *Mwari's* pre-Christian status may be the result not only of the faulty perceptions of outsiders but also of religious changes already taking place among the Shona: Makwasha, *Ancestor cult in the Shona churches*, 25–30.

which individual rupture from past life or rapid societal change influence conversion appears to be variable. Generational issues also appear to play a role: the three men were relatively young and single when they embarked on their travels. The continuing single state of Kamungu and Kivebulaya maintained their position as mobile oddities in societies with a high regard for fertility. Whilst Christian practice provided a choice about whether to marry or not, deciding to remain celibate signalled a change that Christianity offered to only the most dedicated of converts. Youth and societal detachment may have increased mobility and a commitment to evangelism and church planting. The three men were migrants in a similar way to their European missionary counterparts, compelled to leave home and settle in new areas by a desire to preach and plant churches. The common usage of 'evangelist' hides the aspirations and commitments of significant numbers of African Christians and has created a racial distinction in African history, with the assumption that evangelists are black Africans working 'locally' and missionaries are white westerners working 'internationally'.⁶² The missionary task was not one which was considered to be the reserve of Europeans and North Americans. Ideally it was perceived as a collaborative effort to bear witness to the trans-cultural nature of Christianity based on a common humanity.⁶³

Thirdly, the journeys taken by Mizeki, Kamungu and Kivebulaya were always connected with a hub from which they were sent out. Their trajectories were part of an expanding network in which they were on prolonged visitation. Cape Town, Zanzibar and Kampala were metropolises of some longevity; they were trading centres, seats of political power, places of learning and meeting, and they were ethnically and religiously plural. They were all thriving hubs before the arrival of missionary Christianity but were critiqued and reshaped by it. The three African missionaries were themselves shaped by their own metropolises and their connections to it were supportive and significant although their relations to them varied: for example, Kampala was in Kivebulaya's home region and he returned regularly to it; Mizeki was a migrant to Cape Town and did not return to it once he was working among the Shona, although goods and personnel regularly came from it; Zanzibar was for Kamungu the mission and education centre to which he reported occasionally. The three centres were not perceived as refuges but as places of material and spiritual resource.

⁶² The usage also hides the involvement of African-Americans and Caribbeans in Missionary Societies. Today the term 'evangelist' is used for non-ordained church workers in Sub-Saharan Anglican churches; 'catechist' is used by Catholics and Anglicans.

⁶³ 'God ... hath made of one blood all nations of men': Acts xvii.26 (King James Version) is frequently quoted by missionaries.

Recognising the development of continental centres of Christianity, and their connection to trade and political power, encourages greater attention to the nature of polyvalent hubs used as missionary bases and the routes of movement to and from them. In attending to the processes of religious encounter and change in and between these hubs, studies may recalibrate the transnational focus of much of recent world history away from attention to influences of the colony upon the metropole and towards events and people acting within a multi-sited colony who understood transnational networks as signs of a wider community which resonated with regional concerns.⁶⁴

Finally, the examination of trajectories of mobility and the multiplicity of sending-hubs problematises a focus on either the local or the global. Until recently historiography has prioritised enquiries into an African Christianity that appeared to provide an ‘authentic’, indigenous, African, religious expression, by self-consciously adapting local forms of belief and practice. In contrast mission Christianity was regarded suspiciously as being associated with a hegemonic imperialism.⁶⁵ The Bible translation work and the relocation and itineration of Mizeki, Kamungu and Kivebulaya suggests a transcultural objective which critiques monolithic interpretations of empire, but is nevertheless fuelled by a conviction of the universality of Christian claims. The egalitarian claims of Christian fellowship were tangible to them in new relationships with other Africans and with Europeans. Letters to Britain, for example, demonstrate a transnational connectivity which employs the novelty of literacy and the improvement in maritime technology to enhance knowledge of the world and to extend Christian fellowship. Yet the contemporary turn to the transnational may enlarge the trajectories too far. Thus development of continental centres of Christianity, trade and political power allows a re-examination of the local and global which prioritises the connections between them. This reading of three African missionaries comprehends them not simply as ‘local’ actors but as individuals who were, on a regional scale, self-consciously allying themselves with a worldwide movement. The entangled nature of lives whose identity is cast beyond the local demonstrates the attraction of a transnational community which they believed was offered to them in Christianity.

New forms of travel and communication were not simply tools at the service of the missionary movement, they were portents of its message, tangible evidence of the universal claims of Christianity. Relationships formed in translation teams and *via* letters heralded an expectation of a more

⁶⁴ See, for example, Frederick Cooper and Laura Anne Stoler, ‘Between metropole and colony: rethinking a research agenda’, in Frederick Cooper and Laura Anne Stoler (eds), *Tensions of empire: colonial cultures in a bourgeois world*, Berkeley 1997, 1–56.

⁶⁵ See Kollman, ‘Classifying African Christianities’, 3–32.

integrated international society, an expectation that remained unrealised in the imperial age. To highlight collaboration and communication between European and African missionaries is not to deny the disparities of power between the two but to attempt to historicise inequalities and to recognise the influence and insight of African missionaries. Mizeki, Kamungu and Kivebulaya were cultural brokers mediating local and transnational concerns in a network of multiple centres and spheres of influences. They were all purveyors of a particular Christian vision of a united humanity preached by many in the modern missionary movement. It did not appeal to the Ndebele, Shona and Maji-Maji fighters whose societal vision was located in a patriotism that remade tradition. African missionaries, on the other hand, used the transfers and interconnections across the boundaries of continent and culture to forge their own identities and refashion society in order that they and others might belong to a wider community. Yet the transcendent nature of this community was always mediated through the peculiarities of the imminent and local: it demanded travel and translation.