

1. The Problem

Allen's Assessment of Western Missions

Roland Allen sets out to examine the ecclesiastical problems surrounding paternal mission stations and its negative effect on the indigenous Church. Not only did he evaluate the problems of growing resentment towards foreign missionaries, but in response, he proposed principled solutions to these problems. This overview for the discipline of missiology demonstrates his significant contribution as a methods analyst: first, through examination of the church-planting principles that he claimed resided in Pauline practice; and second, through his analysis of Western colonial missionary methods contrasted with what he believed were apostolic methods. This chapter attempts to examine his understanding of a Pauline hermeneutic for missionary practice.

The primary interpretative model which shaped his missiology was rooted in Pauline principles and his missionary practice. What were the basic presuppositions that formed his ecclesiological ethos to focus on Paul rather than any other apostle or missionary? Firstly, after his father's untimely death in Belize – without his family¹ – young Roland (less than five years of age)² was the product of a conventional Anglican rearing in England, where '[h]is upbringing was then solely put into the hands of his mother, who was a very strict person with a strong evangelical persuasion'.³ This backdrop of conventional Anglican rearing discloses his propensity towards an evangelical view of the Scriptures and a deep regard for Pauline epistolary, as evidenced throughout his lifetime. Secondly, his classical education at Oxford influenced the way he reasoned through and engaged with philosophical

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1. Hubert Allen, *Roland Allen: Pioneer, Priest, and Prophet* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans and Cincinnati: Forward Movement Publications, 1995), 10.
 2. See David Sanderson, 'Roland Allen and his Vision of the Spontaneous Expansion of the Church', Lambeth Diploma thesis, 1989.
 3. Ake Talltorp, 'Sacraments for Growth in Mission: Eucharistic Faith and Practice in the Theology of Roland Allen', *Transformation*, 29(3) (July 2012): 214–24 (214).

questions and theological doctrine.¹ Thirdly, his spiritual formation was enhanced by some leading fathers of the Oxford Movement, who personally influenced his thinking on sacramental theology, patristic ministry and apostolic order.² Fourthly, his missionary experience in China was pivotal in adding competence to his missionary theology, all of which moulded the way he thought and approached a contemporary application of Pauline missiology. This ecclesiological ethos played a significant role in how his missionary ecclesiology developed and the kind of questions concerning certain problematic missionary methods that he had started to raise, which were entrenched in the missionary situation he encountered. He specifically began to argue for a missiology which promoted 'independence' – shaped from Pauline influence – for indigenous converts and implicitly contended for all its members to take responsibility for its own development and maturity, which, he believed, was antithetical to a 'Peter Pan' (i.e., perpetual childhood) philosophy of 'mission station' paternalism.

Mission Stations and Allen's Critique of 'Peter Pan' Paternalism

After he returned from missionary work in China (1903) he was invited to present a paper at the John Rylands Library before the Federation of Junior Clergy Missionary Associations (JCMA) at their 19th Conference of Delegates from 71 distinctive associations (included in attendance were various bishops, canons and archdeacons from northern England).³ His thesis clearly stated that 'our Mission system'⁴ expects indigenous converts to be 'like automatons', even though 'the native church' has 'never grasped the fundamental principles on which it is based'.⁵ This comment

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1. Nias, *Flame from an Oxford Cloister: The Life and Writings of Philip Napier Waggett S.S.J.E. Scientist, Religious, Theologian, Missionary Philosopher, Diplomat, Author, Orator, Poet* (London: The Faith Press, 1961), 20-24, 47-56.
 2. Charles Gore (ed.), *Lux Mundi: A Series of Studies in the Religion of the Incarnation* (London: John Murray, 1889. Repr., 1890); see Ragnar Ekstrom, *The Theology of Charles Gore* (Lund, 1994); Bardwell L. Smith, 'Liberal Catholicism: An Anglican Perspective', *Anglican Theological Review*, 3/1972, vol. 54, 175-193; H.N. Bate, 'Frank Edward Brightman 1856-1932', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, volume 19, (London: Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press), 1-8.
 3. Roland Allen, 'The Work of the Missionary in Preparing the Way for Independent Native Churches,' USPG X622, Box 2, File J: 4, 12, Oxford, Bodleian Library.
 4. *Ibid.*
 5. *Ibid.*, 11.

was based upon a report that the delegates were familiar with, which, on one hand, promoted the idea of independence for the indigenous churches, but on the other hand, suggested that independence was ‘far distant’.⁶ He attributes this failure of missions to stem from how they imposed systems of ‘laws and customs’ instead of apostolic principles.⁷ He suggested an evaluation for ‘the true state of affairs’ of past and present mission work accomplished by missionaries, in light of the ‘accepted doctrine’ and ‘official policy of our great Missionary Societies’ which was beginning to place more emphasis on planting ‘independent native churches’.⁸ He encouraged the delegates to study these ‘theories’ and the ‘new methods tested’ and then to set out to determine what was the ‘germ of independence’ for these newer churches.⁹

Firstly, although he agreed with this shift towards planting indigenous churches, he disagreed with the general missionary methodology which still expected their converts to adapt by using ‘semi-Europeanized’ rituals, prayer books, church buildings and styles of worship based on the ways of ‘Rome, or of Sarum, or of Keswick’.¹⁰ Charles Kraft agrees and argues that ‘establishment’ branches of Christianity which are afraid ‘to alter the forms’ of worship in order to reach the current culture and have contented ‘itself with indoctrinating new generations and new cultures into forms of Christianity that are no longer culturally appropriate’, tend to ‘superstitiously’ preserve what they believe to be ‘the ‘sacred forms of worship’ that have been maintained for a long time.’¹¹ Allen argued for an indigenous ‘how to’ methodology that focused on ‘how to win Native Converts . . . how to organize village churches . . . how to educate Coreans [*sic*] to understand and use intelligently any Prayer Book at all . . . [and] how to adapt a native hut for worship’.¹² Lamin Sanneh correctly interprets Allen’s argument here when he suggests that he was challenging ‘the Western cultural captivity of the gospel’, which was, in effect, ‘strangling the gospel’.¹³ He called this a misrepresentation of Christianity, ‘slavery to a Foreign system’ which was ‘not their own’ and,

6. *Ibid.*, 13.

7. *Ibid.*, 12.

8. *Ibid.*, 7.

9. *Ibid.*, 7.

10. *Ibid.*, 4, 8.

11. Charles Kraft, *Christianity in Culture: A Study in Dynamic Biblical Theologizing in Cross-Cultural Perspective* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1980), 382-83.

12. Allen, ‘The Work of the Missionary’, Box 2, File J: 4, 8.

13. Lamin Sanneh, *Disciples of All Nations: Pillars of World Christianity* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 224-225.

consequently, the imposition of a ‘foreigner’s Church’.¹ As far as Allen was concerned, this was a betrayal of Pauline missiology, which opposed slavery to a ‘foreign system’, as clearly demonstrated when he defended the ‘freedom’ of the Galatian churches to reject the ‘Judaizing’ system which they attempted to impose upon the churches.²

Secondly, he believed the only way for the missionaries to reverse what Robert Young has referred to as the ‘long-lasting political hegemony’³ towards ‘independence’ would be to apply the following ‘three principles’ as part of the training process:

(1) to teach the native converts to recognize their responsibility as members of the Church; (2) to avoid the introduction of any foreign element unless it is absolutely essential; (3) to be always retiring from the people to prepare the way for final retirement.⁴

These three apostolic principles began to shape his thinking as he was attempting to train catechists in China. He recognized that the Anglican conventional methodology for leadership training actually limited any possibility to expand beyond his context. He quickly realized that unless the local converts took responsibility immediately to disciple, train and lead their own faith communities, then any idea of expansion would be slow. He reflects upon what he did in China:

I called the people together, told them it was high time that they were doing something for the spread of the Gospel, and asked them what they meant to do. I observe that people in England sometimes view such conduct with surprise. If they treated their people at home in the same way, I believe they would feel less surprise that it succeeded in China.⁵

Allen argued that his successful experiences in China shaped his missionary thinking to undergo reform by embracing a different methodology. This reform was shaped more through praxis than theory. He began to ‘flesh out’ his missiology by analyzing every aspect of missionary societies’ practices. This led him to develop as a methods analyst concerning the ‘whys’ and ‘wherefores’ of missionary methods.

1. Allen, ‘The Work of the Missionary’, Box 2, File J: 4, 12.

2. Cf. the Epistle to the Galatians.

3. Robert Young, *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), 334.

4. Allen, ‘The Work of the Missionary’, Box 2, File J: 4, 9.

5. *Ibid.*, 4, 11.

Thirdly, he warned against missionaries forcing foreign 'laws and customs' rather than allowing the converts to adopt familiar local customs with 'principles which they valued'⁶ as part of the contextualization process for local church development. He emphasized the need for missionaries to be more self-critical concerning their tendency to 'force' conformity to a foreign system that would likely be abandoned once either independence came through a devolved process, or, if the indigenous churches' frustrations with paternalism would eventually 'lead to rebellion'.⁷

Fourthly, he applied the principles of self-government and self-support to the Chinese catechists so that they would make 'what they have learnt their own'.⁸ He told the delegates how his 'reformed' methodology in China worked in bringing 'independence' to the local churches but that it was contingent on the locals taking ownership of their worship services and daily responsibilities within the faith communities. He said that the missionaries who expected quick results by imposing a 'cast-iron system', what Kwame Bediako calls 'missionary ethnocentrism',⁹ generally failed. In contrast, he told the delegates that the principle he applied was to build slowly and that 'we had better at first give them only so much as they can easily assimilate'.¹⁰

Finally, Allen comments on the extent to which the 'three principles' had been adopted: the first principle (i.e., converts recognizing their responsibility) was 'practised in different shapes very widely'; the second principle (i.e., restraint from imposing foreign elements unless it's necessary) was 'less widely' practised; and the third (i.e., missionaries retiring from their converts) was 'scarcely recognized at all'.¹¹

Hence, he concluded that the 'problem of independent native churches is the great problem of the day' and that the Western Church's missionaries needed to come to terms with: (1) understanding 'the native mind'; (2) feeling 'sympathy for the natives in their early

6. Ibid., 4, 12.

7. Ibid., 4, 12.

8. Ibid., 4, 13.

9. Kwame Bediako, 'Biblical Christologies in the Context of African Traditional Religions', in Vinay Samuel and Chris Sugden (eds), *Sharing Jesus in the Two Thirds World: Evangelical Christologies from the contexts of poverty, powerlessness and religious pluralism*, The Papers of the First Conference of Evangelical Theologians from the Two Thirds World, Bangkok, Thailand, 22-25 March, 1982, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 87.

10. Allen, 'The Work of the Missionary', Box 2, File J: 4, 13.

11. Ibid., 4, 15.

efforts'; (3) watching 'slow growth with patience and hope'; (4) realizing 'that Western Christianity is not the whole of Christianity'; and (5) watching how 'the Holy Spirit transforms strange forms of life into Christian forms of life unlike our own' by uniting multi-ethnic Christians as a 'complement of our own needs'.¹ As such, his thesis unpacked an emerging theology for Church unity seven years prior to the Edinburgh Conference of 1910. His developing ecclesiology presupposed an application of principles which reinforced 'independent native churches' to emerge slowly and which were 'indigenously led'.² Allen's insistence that all members take responsibility for their own development and maturity is an argument against a 'Peter Pan' philosophy of mission station paternalism.

*The Influence of 'Mission Stations' Upon the Establishment of Indigenous Churches*³

The generally agreed upon practice and 'object' of foreign missions in 1912 was for the planting and 'establishment of indigenous Churches'.⁴ However, for some time foreign missions practised an 'inherited' system – mission stations – which operated under a different philosophy of mission and was still being maintained in an increasing fashion 'year by year'.⁵ On one hand, not only was the practice widespread, accounting for the growth of Christianity in 'India and Africa and China', but, observed Allen, the number of Christians was 'rising more rapidly than any other is due, without doubt, to the establishment of these Missions'.⁶ On the other hand, he believed these 'mission stations' created a foreign subculture of which 'the first impression by which all later impressions are interpreted' actually misrepresented gospel ministry for the local converts. They tended to interpret the ways that missionaries claimed that their church buildings, rituals, houses and relationships with their 'paid helpers' were a necessity for the sake of establishing a civilized Christianity.⁷ The first impressions that missionaries gave to those they sought to convert frequently tended

1. *Ibid.*, 4, 14–15.

2. Sanneh, *Disciples of All Nations*, 278.

3. Roland Allen, 'Mission Stations: The Influence of "Mission Stations" Upon the Establishment of Indigenous Churches', *English Church Review*, vol. III, no. 35 (November 1912): 499–508.

4. *Ibid.*, 500.

5. *Ibid.*

6. *Ibid.*

7. *Ibid.*, 501.

to shape their subsequent relationships with communities. His point was that, frequently, their first impressions were ultimately detrimental to the application of apostolic principles for the establishment of indigenous churches, in that the converts tended to view the missionaries as businessmen.⁸ He describes this in three ways:

- (1) The establishment of a Mission is primarily a financial operation;
- (2) Secondly, the missionary who opens a new centre and establishes a Mission is commonly a European, and the land and property is held in trust by Europeans, therefore emphasis is laid upon the fact that the business on which he is engaged is a foreign business;
- (3) In the mission station the permanence of the foreign element is emphasized.⁹

He saw within this system ‘a certain incongruity’¹⁰ which misrepresented the Christian faith. He came to the conclusion that mission stations ultimately ‘controlled and directed every action’,¹¹ and embraced a threefold course of action of paternalism. Firstly, it imposed an authoritarian framework of ministry, which was designed to support, strengthen, guide and educate the converts until they were self-governing.¹² Secondly, it set out later to produce a co-operative approach ‘side by side with the growing Native Church life’.¹³ Thirdly, missionaries were supposedly prepared to operate with an intentional plan of retirement from the indigenous setting by giving the converts the mechanism to manage everything themselves.¹⁴ Allen regarded how this plan of action was flawed from the beginning due to its pervasive hegemonic infrastructure. However, this practice was not new. Andrew Porter writes that, in 1890, Harry Johnston, ‘Britain’s first administrator in Nyasaland and himself an unbeliever . . . none the less [*sic*] praised the missions’¹⁵ because

their immediate object is not profit, they can afford to reside at places till they become profitable. They strengthen our hold over

8. *Ibid.*, 502.

9. *Ibid.*

10. *Ibid.*, 503.

11. *Ibid.*

12. *Ibid.*

13. *Ibid.*

14. *Ibid.*

15. Andrew Porter, *Religion versus empire? British Protestant missionaries and overseas expansion, 1700-1914* (Manchester/New York: Manchester University Press, 2004), 269.

the country, they spread the use of the English language, they induct the natives into the best kind of civilization and in fact each mission station is an essay in colonization.¹

This illustrates the hegemonic attitude characteristic among advocates of what has been called ‘the scramble for Africa’. Missionaries were caught in the midst of what Allen called ‘the imperialistic spirit’² of the times and had to deal with the tension between leadership through service and leadership by control. Jehu Hanciles has argued how colonial hegemonic thinking was prevalent even later, noting that Stephen Neill, in his influential studies of mission,³ consistently failed ‘to take this into consideration’, and in the process presented ‘solutions that implicitly romanticize the role and involvement of the foreign missionary’.⁴

In actuality, the surrounding community benefited from these foreign resources, especially the converts who received various privileges due to their association with the mission, in contrast to those who lived outside its system. Instead of empowering the converts to cultivate a level of independence, Allen noticed that their infrastructure created negative results where independence ‘was sapped’ morally, spiritually and intellectually.⁵ Similarly, Young points out that Gandhi’s ‘different epistemology’ sought to propose a ‘third way’ whereby ‘a whole social system’ was created ‘with its own economics, moral and spiritual culture’⁶ to encourage independence. That said, as he notes, as far as Gandhi was concerned, the ideal

is that capital and labour should supplement and help each other. They should be a great family living in unity and harmony, capital not only looking to the material welfare of the labourers but their moral welfare also – capitalists being trustees for the welfare of the labouring classes under them.⁷

1. Ibid.

2. Roland Allen, ‘Jerusalem: A Critical Review of “The World Mission of Christianity”’ (London: World Dominion Press, 1928), 27.

3. See, Stephen Neill, *The Unfinished Task* (London: The Lutterworth Press, 1957); Stephen Neill, *A History of Christian Missions* (London: Penguin Books, 1964. Repr., Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1986).

4. Jehu Hanciles, *Euthanasia of a Mission: African Church Autonomy in a Colonial Context* (London & Westport: Praeger, 2002), 254.

5. Allen, ‘Mission Stations’, *English Church Review*, 504.

6. Young, *Postcolonialism*, 322-23.

7. Sunil Kumar Sen, *Working Class Movements in India, 1885-1975* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1994), 96; M.K. Gandhi, *The Collected Works of Mahatma*

Young argues that this supports a practice of ‘capitalist as trustee’ and makes Gandhi’s idea no different than that of ‘colonial administrators’.⁸ Allen seems to have been fully aware of this problem and sought ways to correct it in his own work.

The converts invariably continued ‘to look on the Mission as “the cow” . . .’ which was ‘not really a healthy condition, either for the converts or for the missionary’.⁹ These converts served within the mission station and received some financial compensation for their work, even though ‘they were not highly paid’ yet for them it was regular ‘material benefits’.¹⁰ However, the sustainability of the mission station was all hinged on foreign money and he argued that this system inevitably postponed any plan for missionaries to retire from controlling their organization.¹¹ His observations of this hegemony caused him to contend against a mentality of ‘dependency’, that being a ‘welfare’ mission system, and instead he argued for progress towards inculcating principles of dignity, responsibility and independence. His thinking progressed towards ways of empowering indigenous converts to break from dependency on foreign control by taking the initiative to manage their own independent churches.

Herein lies his *apologia* for ‘a fundamental teaching of the Gospel, the principle of self-sacrifice’¹² as taught and lived within the framework of the indigenous Church, in contrast to the paternalistic system of foreign mission stations which taught and practised ‘it is more blessed to receive than to give’.¹³ For Allen, although the *principle* of self-sacrifice was generally taught by the ‘individual missionaries’, it was the *system* of the mission stations that actually undermined the *principle*.¹⁴ He argued that the mission station is *not* the Church. Consequently, dependency on the missionary and the mission station directly contradicts what he delineates in *Missionary Methods*:

if the first converts are taught to depend on the missionary, if all work, evangelistic, educational, social is concentrated in his

Gandhi, 90 vols., Delhi: Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Govt. of India, 1958-84, 28: 47, as cited in Young, *Postcolonialism*, 334.

8. Young, *Postcolonialism*, 323; cf. Frederick John D. Lugard, *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa* (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1922).

9. Allen, ‘Mission Stations’, *English Church Review*, 504.

10. *Ibid.*, 503.

11. *Ibid.*, 505.

12. *Ibid.*

13. *Ibid.*

14. *Ibid.*

hands . . . a tradition very rapidly grows up that nothing can be done without the authority and guidance of the missionary, the people wait for him to move, and, the longer they do so, the more incapable they become of any independent action.¹

He believed that missionaries were to work themselves out of their temporary vocations. And yet, the system of the mission station acted as centrepiece for all its missionary organizational services of health, education and welfare. Eventually, missionaries realized that if the mission station began to decay the whole structure would collapse, especially if foreign financial support began to decline.²

Hanciles argues this very point in *Euthanasia of a Mission*, which examines Henry Venn's (1796-1873) indigenous 'three self' model and identifies 'the unhelpful dichotomy between church and mission inherent in Venn's thinking'.³ He rightly contrasts Allen's 'three self' viewpoint from Venn's in this way: 'Allen's central thesis – that the primary difference between the Apostle Paul's missionary method and the modern approach was that he founded 'churches' instead of 'missions' – and gives his arguments a different conceptual framework from Venn.⁴ To use a modern term, for Allen's missiology it can be said that he believed the Church to be *missional*. In his thinking, Church and mission cannot be dichotomized for the two are interwoven and that the Church inherently produced mission *not* that mission stations or mission societies produced the Church.

This distinction led him to critique another system which the missionaries had created as a solution to the 'fatal mistake' they had made.⁵ The missionaries eventually erected another organization 'side by side'⁶ designed to assist the existing 'mission station' structure. This new organization intended to function separately from the mission and was called 'the native church'.⁷ The indigenous converts were not only confused with the imposition of 'another system' but he said 'they preferred the easy irresponsibility of the old régime'.⁸ He thought that this reaction against the newer 'native Church' model indicated the way

1. Allen, *Missionary Methods*, 81.

2. Allen, 'Mission Stations', *English Church Review*, 505.

3. Hanciles, *Euthanasia of a Mission*, 254.

4. *Ibid.*

5. Allen, 'Mission Stations', *English Church Review*, 505.

6. *Ibid.*

7. *Ibid.*

8. *Ibid.*

that ‘children think, who dimly see that increasing responsibility involves larger effort, and are afraid of the demand which it makes upon them’.⁹ His retort was that the missionary societies created a ‘dual organization’: (1) the mission station; and (2) the ‘native Christian community with its organization’.¹⁰ His solution to this problematic ‘new situation’ was, firstly, to fix the system by applying the missionary principle of planting local churches *first* – not later – before introducing schools, hospitals or any other institutions. This back-to-front ‘dual organization’ system contributed to reinforcing his ‘ecclesiocentric’ missiology, but it also made room for what Hanciles calls the ‘semiautonomous status’¹¹ of emergent indigenous leadership. The problematic situation where indigenous ‘paid agents’ in the mission stations were ‘paid in a different form from those which the native community could supply’, he believed, hindered the ‘natives’ from taking the initiative to develop their own independent churches because ‘of financial security in the service of the Mission, which they would not enjoy under native control’.¹² He regarded this system as detrimental to the principle of unity, which he believed was the basis for diocesan networking churches. Secondly, his next solution was for the foreign missionaries to give these stations ‘to the native Christian community’.¹³ Thirdly, after the missionaries retire and transfer the mission properties over to the indigenous communities, he argued that the independent churches should freely exercise their right to discontinue ‘the larger and more expensive’ missions ‘because the native Church will not see any importance in maintaining them’. Moreover, since these missions ‘have not grown up with the natural growth of the people on the spot, they have been imposed on them by the needs of foreigners, and when the foreigners are removed the needs are removed’.¹⁴

Consequently, Allen concludes that this mission station system needs to be seen ‘as a thing of the past’ due to its creation ‘as the schools of a Christianity which is not of the country’.¹⁵ Again, his concern was that this imposition of foreign methodologies needed to discontinue since it seemed to create various difficulties for the future development of the indigenous Church.

9. Ibid.

10. Ibid., 506.

11. Hanciles, *Euthanasia of a Mission*, 209.

12. Allen, ‘Mission Stations’, *English Church Review*, 506.

13. Ibid.

14. Ibid., 507-508.

15. Ibid., 508.

A Question of Priorities: Educational Emphasis as Primary

Roland Allen was an advocate of holistic education. That said, when examining his view of education in the missionary situation, he makes some clear distinctions. Firstly, he was *not* an advocate for mission societies building schools to ‘evangelize’ children of non-Christian families. He argued against this method because it had ‘created a very confused idea among the people generally as to their real object’.¹ The initial intention of the mission societies to ‘educate leaders for the Native Church’ in their schools and to use these schools as institutions ‘for the conversion of the non-Christian children committed to their care’ he believed, was a deceptive methodology on the part of the missions since the non-Christian parents were under the assumption that their children were being ‘fitted to hold posts of influence and emolument in the country’.² His defence for ‘the advantages of Western education’,³ which the Chinese government requested remained intact; however, he was concerned with how the disingenuous mission practice cultivated a growing ‘suspicious’ perception of and resentment against Christianity.⁴

Secondly, he was an advocate for indigenous Church teachers who were appointed to educate the children and young people coming from Christian families. His argument for understanding this distinction is disclosed in the following response to H.J. Wallace when he questioned Allen’s article ‘The Chinese Government and Mission Schools’:⁵

I am persuaded that the true mission education lies outside schools created for the ‘education’ of the young, and is an education of the whole local Church, by the local Church, in the local Church, an education which missionary educationists today rarely mention, and scarcely attempt to practise, but an education of the most profound and fundamental character.⁶

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1. Roland Allen, ‘Education in the Native Church’, in *World Dominion* (London: World Dominion Press, 1926. Repr., 1928), 14.
 2. *Ibid.*
 3. *Ibid.*
 4. *Ibid.*, 15.
 5. Roland Allen, letter to the editor of *World Dominion* (London: World Dominion Press, April 1931) 19-23; Roland Allen, ‘Christian Education in China’ in The Report of the China Educational Commission of 1921-1922, *Theology*, March 1923 (London: World Dominion Press, repr., 1930).
 6. Allen, *World Dominion*, 22.

Allen's *apologia* for holistic education stemmed from his ecclesiocentric mission theology.⁷ The educational system was based upon: (1) the principle of indigenous Christian teachers hired by the local villages to educate their own people; and (2) the principle of 'liberty' where the teachers function as 'free agents' to train children and youth with applicable curriculum, vocational training, life skills and character development.⁸ He argued against mission stations attempting to educate from the foreign mission's base of operation and subsidized by foreigners. He did contend for the right of Christian 'native' teachers to freely educate out from the context of their locally managed churches. Thirdly, did Allen oppose Christian education? No. He clearly articulated his defence of Christian education.

Now what is needed is a Christian education which will grow with the growth of the Church and wax steadily in proportion as the Church increases in numbers and strength. What is needed is a Christian education which is of the Church, by the Church, for the Church, a Christian education which depends in no sense upon the supply of men or money from a foreign country, but which lives in the life of the Church.⁹

For indigenous Christian education to be currently effective and integrally ongoing, he believed, it is incumbent for the local churches to develop policies that refuse foreign aid for the general maintenance of its local work. Hanciles, similarly, wrote how these problems were also evident in West Africa's Sierra Leone Mission whereupon 'the spirit of paternalism which engendered chronic dependence' needed to be addressed.¹⁰ That said, Allen warned against not only foreign paternalism but also the hegemony extended through national government grants for schools – mission and indigenous – which was being encouraged and promoted among some Protestant denominations and mission societies who embraced the 'social gospel' methodology.

Allen's likes and dislikes for introducing Western learning for non-Western people groups must be examined carefully. He was *not* opposed to Western education being introduced into a non-Western culture *if* the

7. Cf. Kwame Bediako, 'Biblical Christologies in the Context of African Traditional Religions', Vinay Samuel & Chris Sugden (eds.), *Sharing Jesus In the Two Thirds World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983) 81.

8. Roland Allen, 'Educational Principles and Missionary Methods', *English Church Review* (January 1913): 23.

9. Allen, 'Education in the Native Church', 18.

10. Hanciles, *Euthanasia of a Mission*, 16.

country's government desired to implement aspects of its educational principles, as in the case of Chang Chih-tung.¹ He argued that Chih-tung's pragmatic desire for Western learning in China was incomplete if it was divorced from Christian faith and morals. Therefore, according to his understanding of what principles constituted Western education, he articulated:

- (1) that an ecclesiocentric educational system says 'The Church is the School of Christ',² which educates her members in the principles of personal discipleship, biblical teaching, community relationships and mutual responsibility;
- (2) that Pauline principles 'and his system of education [were] strictly by observation and experiment'³ and which provided the West's educational milieu for educators such as 'Pestalozzi, and Froebel, and Herbart, and Montessori'⁴ to contextualize these principles;
- (3) that the Pauline *spiritual* 'method was a training in activities'⁵ motivated by the charismatic dynamism, whereas Froebel's *natural* educational system 'was the principle of self-activity';⁶ and
- (4) the Western emphasis on 'scientific pedagogy' has as its foundation in Montessori's 'fundamental principle . . . the liberty of the pupil'⁷ which echoes the Pauline principle of 'liberty'.⁸ Leonard Elliott-Binns recalls how in the 1830s 'the minds of Englishmen turned again towards liberty; and the revival of a belief in the principle became a striking feature of the period'.⁹ The principle of liberty is integral to Western education's ethos and he argued that its roots were embedded in Pauline theology and practice.

1. Roland Allen, 'The Progress of Education in China', *Cornhill* (November 1908): 665.

2. Allen, 'Educational Principles', *English Church Review*, 19.

3. *Ibid.*, 21.

4. *Ibid.*, 20.

5. *Ibid.*, 21.

6. *Ibid.*

7. *Ibid.*, 23.

8. Cf. II Corinthians 3:17; Galatians 5:1ff; Allen, 'Educational Principles', 22-23.

9. L.E. Elliott-Binns, *Religion in the Victorian Era*, 1936, 21.

Education Designed to Proselytize

The missionaries' educational plan to proselytize the children of non-Christians rather than 'to educate leaders for the Native Church'¹⁰ was the primary cause of Allen's initial frustration. Not only did he think that missionary societies had been diverted from their main objective, but he was also concerned that they had lost their vision for an all-inclusive evangelism and instead sought 'to gain an influence over the more enlightened, progressive, and socially influential classes of the country in order to open doors for the propagation of their religion among these classes'.¹¹ He argued against this method, firstly because it was, he believed, a substitute of the Pauline principle to plant the indigenous Church within the environment of *all* classes of people groups. Secondly, this reminded him of a disturbing trend promoted at Edinburgh 1910. Stanley discloses this trend in his discussion of Timothy Richard's emphasis:

Educational missionaries had not yet realized that what was needed in response was a corresponding revolutionary readjustment in their methods: a world civilization (Richard even used the term 'a world Empire') was being born, and it was the responsibility of Christian missions to infuse the emerging new order with principles of divine wisdom. Richard's call for a 'higher type of missionary' who could fulfill the role of a Confucian sage and advise the rulers of the land on what would make for the good of the nation was a distinctive and rather eccentric variant of the Commission's theme of the role of education in the Christianisation of national life.¹²

Thirdly, Allen defined and contrasted the difference between 'proselytize' and 'convert'. He argued that 'to proselytize' was an endeavour to persuade a person 'from one system of thought and practice to another' and 'to convert' emphasizes bringing a person 'into relation with Christ'.¹³ In terms of missionary societies, he believed that their purpose for Christian education was designed specifically 'for

10. Allen, 'Education in the Native Church', 14.

11. *Ibid.*, 14-15.

12. Brian Stanley, *The World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh 1910*, Studies in the History of Christian Missions (Grand Rapids/Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2009), 190; cf. Ecumenical Centre, Geneva, Commission III replies, vol. 4: 268-69; and also, *Report of Commission III*, 83-84.

13. Roland Allen, 'Christian Education in China: The Report of the China Educational Commission of 1921-1922' in *Theology* (March 1923): 129-134, Box 2, File J: 17, 134.

Christians' not non-Christians and that its primary aim was to cultivate an educational environment which centred on children being 'instructed in Christ'.¹ Consequently, he was opposed to missionary societies proselytizing in order to 'introduce Christianity as a system of moral and religious thought'.²

Fourthly, he argues that there was sufficient evidence to prove how the failure of the 'Mission institutions' to convert 'large numbers of non-Christians' made room to 'naturally educate some opponents of the religion which they represent'.³ Institutional casualties are not an uncommon phenomenon. He referred to the 'anti-Christian societies' in China and how their publications quite often had contributing articles by 'students and ex-students of mission schools and colleges'.⁴ What is 'needed' to solve this dilemma, he suggests, is that Christian education ought to 'grow with the growth of the Church' so as to develop gradually 'in proportion as the Church increases in numbers and strength'.⁵ His ecclesiocentric approach to Christian education presupposes a comprehensive philosophy of indigenous ministry, 'which is of the Church, by the Church, for the Church'.⁶ That said, Allen's missionary ecclesiology inculcated the *apologia* – 'The Church is a school of the most valuable order' – for it assumes that her members are learning the 'virtues of self-control' as a disciplined approach for holistic life and for the purpose of promoting the 'practice' and 'the meaning of Christian government'.⁷ He believed that this *apologia* was 'the true foundation of all social and political progress'.⁸

Finally, the missionary calling to educate from a Christian world view, Allen believed, ought to stem from distinctly 'Christian' schools with indigenous faculty and administration that function 'independently' from government schools and choose not to depend upon government subsidies⁹ or foreign benevolence. His understanding was that school enrollment ought to consist of children from Christian homes who know what to expect in the curriculum, classroom management and religious emphasis which underpins the educational process.

1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

3. Roland Allen, 'Education in the Native Church', *World Dominion* (London: World Dominion Press, 1926. Repr., 1928), 15.

4. Ibid., 16.

5. Ibid., 18.

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid., 21.

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid., 12.

*The Hegemonic Dilemma:
Indigenous Leaders Perceived as ‘Inferior’*

A cogent reaction to his exposure of ‘the imperialistic spirit’ is disclosed in a letter to the editor of *The Living Church* by John Nichols (Shanghai, China).¹⁰ Nichols corrects Allen’s definition of ‘imperialism’ saying instead that it ‘is the desire and effort to extend national interests in external fields’.¹¹ Nichols states that the ‘missionary body in China is, flatly, not imperialistic’ and that missionaries have attempted to make Christianity ‘native and free’ but ‘to turn things over to Chinese control is far in advance of the inherent rights of the situation’ and he argues that even the Chinese recognized [that] they were not ready to assume this level of responsibility’.¹² He assumed that Allen’s method was ‘to ordain at random’ those who have not been trained and tested.¹³ Nichols argued for the ‘duty’ of missionaries to make sure that ‘the true faith is taught and a regulated ministry set up’.¹⁴ On one hand, Allen would theologially concur that the indigenous converts need ‘the true faith’. On the other hand, his ecclesiology anticipated ‘a ministry’ of men who were ‘above reproach’ (I Timothy 3:2)¹⁵ and who were not regulated by foreign missionaries, but were duly ordained indigenous ministers. He envisioned ‘fully equipped’ churches served by locally trained ministers who were *not* inferior to the missionaries who had mentored them. Nichols also assumed that he was *naïve* to suggest that Anglican missionary bishops could actually consecrate ‘native unpaid bishops’.¹⁶ Allen disagreed, because his visionary forecast for this practice was based on Pauline precedent and English Christianity. He argued that this was the historic practice of Anglicanism: ‘In our

10. John W. Nichols, letter to the editor, ‘The Imperialism of Missions in China’, *The Living Church* (13 April 1929): 833.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid.

14. Ibid.

15. Patrick Daniel, my teaching assistant at Arizona Christian University argues ‘that Paul was echoing Greco-Roman culture sentiment when it came to the issue of being “above reproach” in I Timothy 3:2, for the purpose of evangelism’ (Patrick Daniel, ‘The Overseer as a Witness for the Gospel,’ a paper submitted to Dr Andrew Pitts at Phoenix Seminary for BL595 – Judeo/Greco-Roman Backgrounds to the New Testament, 2015).

16. Ibid.

own history, St Augustine was consecrated bishop, not of England, but of Canterbury (AD 597) . . . and at that time all the bishops derived from Augustine were natives.’¹

An argument can be made for ‘native’ leadership to emerge through the means of a ‘foreign’ representative’s prompting, as in the case of Augustine of Canterbury. Although Rome’s papacy sent Augustine as a missionary bishop to England, it was only a matter of time before the ecclesiastical leaders who emerged were of English origin not transplanted foreigners. The English Church’s self-governing process was actually initiated by foreign leadership, and yet, was able to quickly propagate indigenous bishops and priests without foreign restraints.² That said, the hegemonic dilemma does exist where indigenous leaders are assumed to be inferior.

Today, this is a concern within postcolonial discourse, especially by what Young said concerning ‘empowering the poor, the dispossessed, and the disadvantaged, for tolerance of difference and diversity, for the establishment of minorities’ rights, women’s rights, and cultural rights within a broad framework of democratic egalitarianism. . . .’³ Although Allen was not a direct influence, it is clear that his work is prescient – it had much in common with the ideas of thinkers such as Young. Allen’s concerns about these items were addressed by him a century ago and are articulated in *Missionary Methods* (1912):

We have allowed racial and religious pride to direct our attitude towards those whom we have been wont to call ‘poor heathen’. We have approached them as superior beings, moved by charity to impart of our wealth to destitute and perishing souls. . . . We have managed their funds, ordered their services, built their churches, provided their teachers. . . . We have done everything for them, but very little with them. We have done everything for them except give place to them. We have treated them as ‘dear children’ but not as ‘brethren’.⁴

Allen articulated a clarion call for missionaries to *renounce* the attitude of superiority and recognize the commonality that exists with their converts as is exemplified within the principles of Christian unity.

1. Paton, *The Ministry of the Spirit*, 179.

2. This is not to dismiss Celtic Christianity’s influence within the Britannic Isles.

3. Young, *Postcolonialism*, 113.

4. Allen, *Missionary Methods*, 142-143.

Foreign hegemonic mannerisms quite often had difficulty recognizing local potential to lead without their assistance and when paternalistic attitudes could only envision indigenous immaturity, that being, again, a sort of ‘Peter Pan’ philosophy, by which the ‘natives’ never seemed to measure up to the foreign missionaries’ standards, then this ‘imperialistic spirit’ reinforces the racial divide where ‘the stamp of being the white man’s religion, a foreign religion’⁵ misrepresents the catholicity of the Church.

Another problem that missionaries encountered was the issue of ‘class’ distinction, not only as a result of the differences between Western and non-Western Christians, but also the ‘denominational’ class distinction between ‘liberal’ and ‘conservative’ missionaries. On the one side, the ‘liberal hope,’ Stanley says, was ‘that the great religions of the world would, under sympathetic missionary tutelage, locate the fulfilment of their highest ideals in the teachings of Jesus Christ.’⁶ For example, J.N. Farquhar’s *The Crown of Hinduism* (1913) presented Jesus Christ as the fulfilment of the highest ethical aspirations of Hinduism⁷ and promoted ‘the dogma-less Christ of social gospel liberalism, a teacher of ethical idealism and social justice who could command the devotion of all men’.⁸ On the other side, ‘conservative evangelicals’, such as Hudson Taylor, ‘adopted Chinese dress’ and was not interested in promoting ‘the values of Western civilization’ or ‘social regeneration’ but chose instead to contextualize the Gospel by emphasizing conversion as a personal faith in knowing Christ.⁹ Allen identified himself amongst the side of conservative evangelicals.

Stanley describes ‘a thesis defending the possibility of Christian missionary activity without empire’ and ‘was in part confessional, readily admitting the high-handed arrogance and easy dismissiveness with which many missionaries had approached religions and cultures other

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5. Henrik Kraemer, *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications [1938], 1969), 337.
 6. Brian Stanley, *The Bible and the Flag: Protestant Missions and British Imperialism in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Leicester: Apollos [IVP], 1990), 166.
 7. See Eric Sharpe, *Not to Destroy But to Fulfil: the Contribution of J.N. Farquhar to Protestant Missionary Thought in India before 1914* (Uppsala: Svenska Institutet för Missionsforskningenska); *Faith Meets Faith: Some Christian Attitudes to Hinduism in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (London: SCM, 1977).
 8. Stanley, 164; see J.N. Farquhar, *The Crown of Hinduism* (London, 1913).
 9. Stanley, 165.

than their own'.¹ Allen's apostolic principles, however, influenced the way he engaged cross-culturally with the ancient faiths and religious systems which developed from them. This is especially evidenced later in life, when he engaged with Muslims in Nairobi by translating 'Muslim epics from Swahili into English'.²

SAMPLE

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1. Andrew Porter, *Religion versus empire? British Protestant missionaries and overseas expansion, 1700-1914* (Manchester/New York: Manchester University Press, [2004], 2005) 6; cf. Stanley, *The Bible and the Flag*, 1990.
 2. Hubert Allen, 'Would Roland Allen still have anything to say to us today?' 184.