CHAPTER 5

PROGRESS AND PROBLEMS ON THE PERIMETER

CONSIDERATION OF the events leading up to and following upon the Berlin Conference and of their effect on Christian missions has led us into many parts of the continent. There remains however some notice to be taken of certain areas, not so directly affected by these political changes, to make the record of the period complete. These comprise North Africa and South—both regions of European colonization yet with sharply contrasting racial and religious situations—together with the Nile Valley and the Guinea Coast, areas once linked by the intervening Sudan, but, since the supremacy of sea-routes over caravan contact, each going its separate way.

(1) *The Muslim North*

The French control of the Mediterranean littoral between Morocco and Tripoli, and the return of the Roman Catholic Church to the scene of its triumphs and recessions in the early centuries, were the two factors dominating the situation from the 'seventies. Though both Church and State were French in personnel (save for the Italian Capuchins in Tunis), their interests were by no means identical. The anti-clerical rift in metropolitan France was reflected in North African affairs. Thus the suppression of the Jesuits by decree of March 29, 1880 led to their compulsory ejection from the college of Notre Dame in Algiers. An attempt was made to continue it in an attenuated form but had to be abandoned for lack of staff, and in 1881 the premises were transferred to the municipality.[1] The Ferry laws of 1881 and 1882—so called from Jules Ferry, Minister of Public Instruction, who was carrying out Gambetta's anti-clerical policy—making primary education at once free and compulsory and establishing its secular character in all State schools, were applied in Algeria and Tunis, thus introducing a national system of secular education. Gambetta, whose battle-cry had been, *Le cléricalisme, voilà l'ennemi!* had also declared *L'Anticléricalisme n'est pas un article d'exportation*, out of regard for Lavigerie's contribution to French prestige, with the result that decrees regard-

[1] A. Pons, *La Nouvelle Eglise d'Afrique* (n.d.), 166.

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ing the religious orders were not applied in Algeria.[1] What was felt as the heaviest blow, however, fell in 1909 when the laws of 1901, 1902, and 1904 were made applicable to Algeria, thus closing all the schools operated by religious congregations in the colony.[2]

The dominating personality of the period was that of Lavigerie, Archbishop of Algiers, who was raised to the cardinalate in 1882.[3] In the previous year had occurred the military occupation of Tunisia by France, to be followed in 1883 by the setting up of the French protectorate to the chagrin of Italy. To Lavigerie the opportunity seemed too good to be lost. He took the initiative in suggesting to Leo XIII that the time had now come to recall the ancient glories of the North African Church by reviving the archepiscopal see of Carthage carrying with it the primacy of Africa. On January 31, 1884 sixty of his clergy, convened in diocesan synod, with a unanimous *Placet* solemnly besought the Pope to re-establish this primal see of the continent. Leo XIII was complacently agreeable and on November 10 the same year announced his decision in an allocution to his assembled cardinals, committing the charge to Lavigerie, who was thus advanced to become Primate of Africa.[4] To the superiors of the Italian Capuchins who were serving in Tunis at the time, this development was anything but agreeable, whether on political or ecclesiastical grounds; the Italians were in due course withdrawn—the last had gone by 1891—and Lavigerie was left to organize his diocese with his own French nationals.[5] On November 12, 1890 at a state banquet in Algiers it fell to the Cardinal to propose a toast in which he made a pronouncement that became famous. For the sake of national unity, he asserted, Catholics should support the Republic, sacrificing all that conscience and honour permitted for the sake of *la patrie*; and he concluded that he was sure this would not be disavowed by any voice of authority. When later a papal encyclical endorsed it, speculation was rife as to whether pope or cardinal had taken the initiative. Whichever way, at least the agreement was complete in endeavouring to heal the breach

[1] Emile Bourgeois in *The Cambridge Modern History*, XII (1910), 117–18; Art. "Lavigerie" in *Ency. Brit.* (1947 ed.), XIII, 776.

[2] A. Pons, *op. cit.*, 167.

[3] *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi*, LIV (1882), 262–3.

[4] A. Pons, *op. cit.*, 251–3; *Cath. Ency.*, IX, 51; *Annales*, LVI (1884), 397–8.

[5] *Cath. Ency.*, III, 387; K. S. Latourette, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity*, VI, 14.

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between Church and State.[1] Lavigerie's vigorous leadership was now nearing its close. He died on November 26, 1892 leaving a great inheritance to his successors. Dusserre who succeeded him (1893–97) was followed by Oury (1897–1908) who now had to face in Algeria the full blast of the anti-clerical decrees.[2]

The missionary society Lavigerie had founded in 1868, whose members were known as the White Fathers, reported 233 fathers and brothers at his death.[3] The extension of their activity to Uganda, Tanganyika, Urundi, and the Upper Congo we have already recorded. It remains to notice their valiant attempts to establish contact with the Tuaregs of the Sahara. Despite the desert tragedy of 1876,[4] in 1879 a further attempt was made when L. Richard and Kermabon set out from their outpost at Ghadames to make a survey and seek to secure personal contacts. With three companions from the desert, two of whom were Tuaregs, they formed on their five camels but an inconsiderable cavalcade as desert caravans went. This, they claimed, disarmed suspicion and proved a point in their favour. They came in touch with noted brigands of the desert and reported having excellent relations with them.[5] They succeeded in visiting tribes of the Azger Tuaregs, one of the four main groups into which these people of the desert are divided. The Azgers occupy a region to the north of the Ahaggar plateau between Ghat and Murzuk.[6] They succeeded in establishing amicable personal relations with certain chiefs and believed that the way had been prepared for entry. Indeed, the town of Rat was recommended as the point to be occupied as an advance post in the desert. On December 12, 1881 Richard set out with two colleagues, Morat and Pouplard, to carry the recommendation into effect. And then came another tragedy of the desert: at the third stage of the journey from Ghadames they were murdered by the Tuaregs of their escort, and three more martyrs added to the White Fathers' roll of honour. The three missionaries remaining at Ghadames were prudentially withdrawn to Tripoli and that outpost of the desert temporarily closed down.[7] Saharan posts

[1] A. Pons, *op. cit.*, 135–6.
[2] *Ibid.*, 143, 166–7.
[3] *Ibid.*, 310.
[4] See Vol. II, 211–12.
[5] Richard sagely observed: "C'était peu honorable, sans doute, mais plus prudent."—*Annales*, LIII (1881), 321. He is described as "so Arabian in speech and bearing that no one suspected his nationality".—*Cath. Ency.*, XIII, 327.
[6] F. Rennell Rodd, *People of the Veil* (1926), 17–18.
[7] *Annales*, LIII (1881), 312–44; LIV (1882), 263; *Cath. Ency.*, XIII, 327.

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were later opened at Ghardaia (1884), Uargla (1891), and El Golea (1892).[1]

While the Brussels Conference of 1890 was in session, Lavigerie announced an enterprise he had in hand to establish Pioneers of the Sahara—engineering monks they have been called—who would at selected centres attend to the needs of travellers, receive fugitive slaves, care for the sick, and in general engage in charitable works. The first was Uargla to which, in 1891, six armed pioneers were posted. They are reported to have sent greetings to the cardinal: "We shall endeavour to hold high the banner of the Sacred Heart and the flag of France."[2] In 1891 the prefecture apostolic of the Sahara and the Sudan became a vicariate. Ten years later, in 1901, the prefecture apostolic of Ghardaia was separated from it.[3]

It was not until the early 'eighties, with the exception of work among the Jews and the activity of the British and Foreign Bible Society, that Protestant missionary agency became established in North Africa.[4] The Paris Missionary Society had, with the French occupation of Algiers, entertained the idea of work in the country, but its proposal was resisted by the French authorities.[5] The London Society for Promoting Christianity amongst the Jews early took North Africa within its purview, despatching a commission of inquiry in 1829. This deputation reported considerable Jewish communities—up to 5,000 in the town of Tripoli, 4,000 families in Algiers, and no less than 30,000 Jews in Tunis. An attempt to start work in Algiers in 1832 was forbidden by the French, but in 1834 F. C. Ewald established a mission in Tunis.[6] From this early beginning the work developed and other centres on the coast appeared, though occupation could not always be continuous. Tunis in the regency of that name, Constantine, Algiers, and Oran in Algeria, and Mogador on the Atlantic coast of Morocco were all centres where good work was done, and in due course even flourishing schools established.[7] Considerable itineration was undertaken by those with aptitude for it, notable among them being H. A. Markheim, a great traveller in the 'fifties both in

[1] J. Bouniol, *The White Fathers and their Missions* (n.d.), 151.
[2] *Cath. Ency.*, XIII, 327–8; *Missionary Review of the World*, IV (1891), 317.
[3] *Cath. Ency.*, XIII, 328.
[4] For the early activity of the Bible Society, see Vol. I, 308.
[5] See Vol. I, 308.
[6] W. T. Gidney, *The History of the London Society for Promoting Christianity amongst the Jews* (1908), 190–2.
[7] *Ibid.*, 262–3, 307, 308, 486, 567–8.

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Algeria (as it later became) and Morocco, and J. B. Ginsburg (later Crighton-Ginsburg) who in 1860 penetrated to oases in the Sahara where Jews were to be found, as at Ghardaia where he discovered a community of a thousand.[1] In 1870, thanks to Ginsburg, the first Anglican church in North Africa was opened in Algiers, with one at Tunis a few years later.[2] A constant feature of the work of the Society was the circulation of Hebrew Bibles along with Bibles, New Testaments, and Christian tracts in Arabic—a circulation that in course of time became extensive and represented a definite Protestant contribution to the region, in co-operation with the British and Foreign Bible Society.[3]

Other Societies concerned with work among the Jews were also active in North Africa at the mid-century. The Church of Scotland Jewish Mission (1840) began work in Tunis in the 'forties with Nathan Davis as the pioneer, Moses Margoliouth joining him as a colleague in 1847.[4] The Scottish Society for the Conversion of Israel (1845) received support from the United Presbyterians when that body emerged in 1847. Benjamin Weiss, a Continental convert, was active in Algiers in the service of the Church until the work was surrendered in 1863. The British Society for the Propagation of the Gospel among the Jews (1842) also had its agency.[5]

The Bible Society decided in 1881 to establish its own independent organization in North Africa, and was fortunate in securing the services of J. Löwitz who had served the British Jews' Society for thirty years. The agency, which included Tripoli, Tunis, and Algiers, was set up in 1882. Löwitz served until his death in 1893 when John May succeeded him. Meanwhile in 1884 W. Mackintosh had been appointed to the new agency for Morocco.[6]

These earlier Protestant enterprises were reinforced by other agencies of a more general character in the 'eighties. Even then in comparison with half a century earlier, conditions in French territory were not particularly favourable, for, apart from the known hostility of the Roman Church, the anti-clericalism of the Republic was anything but pro-Protestant in its radical,

[1] *Ibid.*, 307–10, 391.
[2] *Ibid.*, 392–3, 486. These churches were under the Bishop of Gibraltar.
[3] W. Canton, *The History of the British and Foreign Bible Society*, II, 26–7; III, 247–8, 249.
[4] D. McDougall, *In Search of Israel* (1941), 68–9, 90–1.
[5] *Ibid.*, 72–4; W. Canton, *op. cit.*, II (1904), 282–3.
[6] W. Canton, *op. cit.*, III (1910), 249; V (1910), 1–18, 408; R. Kerr, *Morocco after Twenty-five Years* (1912), 267–9.

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rationalist position. The new Protestant beginnings at this time were not the work of any organized Society, but were due to the deep concern of a few individuals for the Muslim population, deprived as it was of any evangelical Christian witness save what a circulation of the Scriptures might supply. George Pearse, who first visited Algeria in 1876, became interested in the Kabyles; Grattan Guinness of the East London Institute and Edward H. Glenny were drawn independently to the same field, and a mission to the Kabyles with Pearse as leader was set on foot in 1881. In 1883 a reorganization, in which these three were leaders, led to a council of management of what became known as the North Africa Mission.[1] Meanwhile an independent exploratory visit to the Kabyles had been made on behalf of the Southern Baptist Convention of the United States. E. F. Baldwin, one of their ministers, visited Kabylia in the spring of 1884 and reported favourably, but neither Southern nor Northern Baptists were then prepared to undertake the work. So convinced had Baldwin become that this was his vocation, that he secured a transfer to the North Africa Mission, of which E. H. Glenny was now secretary, and was appointed to Tangier, its first station in Morocco.[2] From these beginnings in Algiers (1881), Tunis (1881), and Morocco (1883) the work so developed that fourteen years later Glenny could report seventy missionaries of the North Africa Mission, out of a total of 120 of all Societies from Tangier to Alexandria. The Mission also maintained seven medical missions and hospital centres in which during 1894 some 30,000 patients were received.[3]

Christian Missions in Many Lands, under whose aegis the missionary work of the Plymouth Brethren is gathered, came on the scene in 1883 in Tunis and Algeria. Three years later, the Presbyterian Church of England began work in Central Morocco among Jews and Muslims. Robert Kerr, a Glasgow city missionary who had qualified in medicine, was their representative and sailed in February 1886. The twin cities of Rabat and Sallee, south and north of an estuary on the Atlantic seaboard, were his headquarters.[4] In 1888 there appeared two other missions limited to individual territories: the Algiers Mission Band and the Southern Morocco Mission. The Algiers Mission Band founded by Lilias Trotter ranks as a national

[1] K. S. Latourette, *op. cit.*, VI, 10; *Encyclopaedia of Missions*, 540–1.
[2] *The Missionary Review*, VIII (1885), 68, 166.
[3] *Missionary Review of the World*, VIII (1895), 478.
[4] R. Kerr, *Pioneering in Morocco* (1894), *passim*; R. Kerr, *Morocco after Twenty-five Years* (1912), 222–5, 233.

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society with headquarters in North Africa, though its income is derived from the United States and Great Britain. Lilias Trotter gave promise of an outstanding career as an artist but surrendered it, as did Alfred Tucker of Uganda, for a missionary vocation. She was a personal friend of John Ruskin who had been her guide in Italy to the stones of Venice and wished her to develop her artistic gift. The workers in the mission were mainly single women, and these even penetrated eventually into the desert at Ghardaia.[1]

The Southern Morocco Mission was due once again to individual enterprise. John Anderson of Ardrossan, on a visit to Morocco for his health, was much concerned that Southern Morocco should have remained an unoccupied field. In consultation with Robert Kerr he evolved his plan and E. F. Baldwin of the North Africa Mission consented to inaugurate it.[2] The Gospel Missionary Union of Kansas City was the solitary American Society to enter Morocco in 1895 and settle in inland stations where the men devoted themselves to translation and the women worked in Zenana.[3] In the following year the Raymond Lull Home, ranking as a national institution, was begun in Tangier.[4]

Three Protestant establishments in North Africa were concerned primarily with the European population. On November 20, 1887 the first Presbyterian church was opened in the suburbs of Algiers, the gift to the United Presbyterians of Scotland of Sir Peter Coats. Three years later an event occurred that marked its genuine missionary purpose when a young Muslim convert, an Arab qualified in medicine and holding a hospital appointment in the city, was publicly baptized and received into Christian fellowship, J. Löwitz of the Bible Society, himself a convert from Judaism, giving the address on the occasion.[5] In 1889 a French Protestant church was opened in Tunis, the result of seven years' work by a military chaplain, Durmeyer, connected with the French Reformed Church.[6] At a later date, in the winter of 1891–92, the McCall Mission of Paris started

[1] Beach and Fahs, *The World Missionary Atlas* (1925), 56; B. A. F. Pigott, *I. Lilias Trotter* (n.d.), *passim*; D. Campbell, *With the Bible in North Africa* (1944), 52–3.

[2] R. Kerr, *Morocco after Twenty-five Years*, 269–70.

[3] *Ibid.*, 272.

[4] Beach and Fahs, *op. cit.*, 56.

[5] *Missionary Review of the World*, I (1888), 634; III (1890), 533–4.

[6] J. J. Cooksey, *The Land of the Vanished Church* (n.d.), 49. Pastoral care of French Protestants in Algeria had been undertaken since the eighteen-thirties.—*Ibid.*, 70.

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work in Algiers for French soldiers but this was discontinued in 1897.[1]

The success of these missions in number of converts was small, though individual conversions were from time to time reported. In view of the fanatical temper of the Muslim Berber population great discretion was called for in the missionaries and no ordinary measure of courage in their converts. In the early days of the North Africa Mission when it was still known as the Kabyle Mission because of its origin, E. F. Baldwin wrote in some detail of various Muslims young and old who were deeply exercised in mind, and of whom some professed acceptance of the Christian message.[2] Of one in particular, who belonged to a distinguished family of Morocco with ancestral roots in Andalusia, he reported that it was when helping to translate the Bible from classical Arabic into that of Morocco that the First Epistle of John held him spellbound and precipitated his decision.[3] It was inevitable that with conversions there should be persecution and even danger of death for the converts, and no small risk for the missionary concerned.[4] If the Muslim reaction was likely to be violent, the attitude of the French authorities, for that very reason, might prove restrictive. In 1892 it was reported that a French official communication to Lord Salisbury on the matter diplomatically expressed the hope that the North Africa Mission might of its own accord withdraw its missionaries from Algeria and so avert the painful necessity of their expulsion. In the end an arrangement was reached whereby the missionaries might remain on condition of being law-abiding—which for them was no new undertaking.[5] French interference with the Mission was again threatened in 1895, but the situation once again subsided. However, it was still necessary for the missionaries to be wise as serpents as well as harmless as doves.[6]

[1] *Missionary Review of the World*, VI (1893), 410–11; X (1897), 906. The McCall Mission, founded by Robert W. McCall in 1872, was known in France as *Mission Populaire Evangélique* and had as its object the evangelization of the working people of France.—*Encyclopaedia of Missions*, 443–4.

[2] *The Missionary Review*, X (1887), 415, 422–3; *Missionary Review of the World*, IV (1891), 603.

[3] *Ibid.*, X (1887), 415–17.

[4] *Missionary Review of the World*, I (1888), 933–4; II (1889), 209, 525; V (1892), 608. Charles S. Leach, a doctor of medicine, in the service of the North Africa Mission, was murdered with two members of his family in Sfax in May 1896. The crime was due solely, it was stated, to Muslim fanaticism.—*Ibid.*, IX (1896), 923.

[5] *Missionary Review of the World*, VI (1893), 410–12. It was even suggested that this move was not unconnected with developments in Uganda.—*Ibid.*, 411.

[6] *Ibid.*, VIII (1895), 797; X (1897), 879. Glenny reported in 1897: "This year we have not had so much difficulty with the French authorities in Algeria . . . but it is still necessary to be very careful in all departments."

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