

# THE INTRODUCTION AND BEGINNINGS OF CHRISTINANITY IN EAST AFRICA

Watson A. O. Omulokoli

*In this article, Proffessor Omulokoli discusses the beginnings of Christianity in East Africa as begun by a trio of missionaries: Krapf, Rebmann, and Erhardt, all German Lutherans who worked under the Church Missionary Society. Lay men, Christian workers and scholars in varied fields will benefit from the legacy left behind by this trio of missionary pioneers.*

## Introduction

In May, 1944 Johann Ludwig Krapf and his wife Rosine settled at Mombasa in Kenya and embarked upon Christian work there in what turned out to be the beginnings of Christianity in East Africa. Krapf was a German Lutheran from the Basle Missionary College, but sent out by the Church Missionary Society (CMS), which was an Anglican Church missionary agency from Britain.<sup>1</sup> Prior to moving to Kenya, Krapf had served in Ethiopia as a missionary with the CMS in 1837-1843. In later years two other missionaries who survived longer than the others teamed up with Krapf to establish Christianity in East Africa, hence laying the foundation on which subsequent efforts were to be built. Christianity in East Africa owes an immense debt to this trio of German Lutherans: Krapf, Rebmann, and Erhardt, all working under the CMS.<sup>2</sup>

---

Professor Watson A. O. Omulokoli is the former Chaplain and Associate Professor in the Deapment of Religious Studies in Kenyatta University, Kenya. He earned the BTh in Biblical Studies and the BA in Theology from Warner Pacific College in Portland, Oregon; his MA in Church History from Wheaton Graduate School in Wheaton, Illinois, in 1967; and his PhD in Church History from the University of Aberdeen in Scotland in 1981.

### **Initial Efforts and Tragedy**

Soon after his decision to operate from Mombasa there were a number of activities which Krapf employed in endeavouring to lay a base for his Christian work. Firstly, he visited the people and the leaders of the surrounding area, as a public relations exercise. Secondly, he set out to learn and study the local languages and endeavoured to carry out the translation of the bible in them, with Kiswahili receiving particular attention. Thirdly, he moved around his vicinity, trying to acquaint himself with the geography of his operational territory. This was a pattern, which he was to develop and build on in his overall Christian outreach in later times..

For a time, these efforts were progressing well, but soon, they were severely interrupted in July, when tragedy struck in the family. At this time, a baby daughter had just been born to the Krapfs. Shortly thereafter, the family members were attacked by severe fever, with the result that the mother, Rosine, and the baby died within a few days of each other. When the baby died, after the burial of the mother, she was buried in a grave next to that of the mother. As all this was taking place, Krapf himself was still extremely weak with fever. Even in his frail state, Krapf displayed indomitable fortitude as he articulated his resolve, dedication, and utter commitment to Jesus Christ, and the cause for which he had gone to Africa.<sup>3</sup>

After regaining some measure of strength, he wrote to the CMS headquarters stating his own resolve to continue with the work, and also urging its officials to press ahead with the missionary enterprise. In very poignant words, he wrote "the memorable and often-quoted message,"<sup>4</sup>

Tell our friends at home, that there is now on the East African coast a lonely missionary grave. This is a sign that you have commenced the struggle with this part of the world; and as the victories of the church are gained by stepping over the graves of her members, you may be convinced that the hour is at hand when you are summoned to the conversion of Africa from its eastern shore.<sup>5</sup>

The double ordeal of bereavement and ill health affected the progress of Krapf's work quite adversely. It took several weeks before he could sufficiently recover both emotionally and physically. Once he made some

considerable recovery, however, he seemed to apply himself to the routine of the earlier endeavours with renewed zeal.<sup>6</sup> He added preaching to earlier tasks of meeting the people, language work, and visits to the surrounding areas.

### Two Years of Setting the Pattern

In the two years in which he was alone, Krapf's travelling took him to a continuously widening circle. As he went from village to village, prospecting on the mainland for a future site of the mission's central station, the general response was positive and welcoming. At crucial moments during these visits, he was careful to state the underlying basis of his work. He stressed that his main objective was to preach the message of salvation in Jesus Christ. On one occasion while visiting the elders of Old Rabai, he made this point clear in this manner,

I explained that I was neither a soldier nor a merchant, nor an official employed by the Arabian or English government, not a traveller, nor a Mganga nor Mchawi, physician, exorcist, nor enchanter; but was a teacher, a book-man who wished to show the Wanyika, the Wakamba, the Galla, and even the Watsumba (Muslims) the right way to salvation in the world to come.<sup>7</sup>

During this same period in which he was alone, Krapf thought and came up with a number of very significant ideas. In one direction, his mind was occupied with devising a scheme, which would, in his view, enable the Christian Church "to connect Eastern and Western Africa by a chain of missionary stations."<sup>8</sup> In another direction, he envisaged a time when the church would "establish on the east coast a colony for liberated slaves like Sierra Leone on the west coast, and that they might be employed as aids in the conversion of the Inner-African races."<sup>9</sup> It is clear that apart from the interest in helping rehabilitate these freed slaves, he was confident that once they embraced the Christian faith, their background was such that they were well suited to serve as evangelists who would spread the message of Jesus Christ into the interior.

Furthermore, in a direction in which he was way ahead of his time, from the very beginning of his work, he believed in the indigenization of the Church in Africa. He looked forward to a period in the near future when

there would be “a black bishop and black clergy of the Protestant Church.”<sup>10</sup> It is amazing that he espoused these advanced views even before a single convert was won to Jesus Christ. While dreaming in these ways about the future, Krapf was working very hard for the success of his dreams and the future. Thus, “For two years the solitary missionary toiled at the Swahili language, compiling a grammar and a dictionary, and translating the whole New Testament; occasionally visiting the Wanyika on the mainland; and prosecuting geographical and ethnographical inquiries all directions.”<sup>11</sup>

### **Krapf and Rebmann in Team Work at Rabai**

In 1846 two significant events took place. First, another missionary, Johann Rebmann arrived and joined Krapf at Mombasa on 10<sup>th</sup> June, 1846. Like Krapf, Rebmann was a German Lutheran who went out to serve in East Africa under the auspices of the British Anglican Church missionary group, the CMS. Secondly, after all the preliminary steps had been taken by Krapf in the two years in which he was alone, with the concurrence of Rebmann, the mission relocated its central station from the island of Mombasa to Rabai Mpya among the Mijikenda people on the mainland. This final step was taken jointly when Krapf and Rebmann moved there on 25<sup>th</sup> August, 1846. This was a very important event in that it signified the establishment of a crucial pioneer beachhead for Christianity in East Africa.<sup>12</sup>

As the two missionaries settled at Rabai Mpya, they worked hard to develop the place as a viable mission station with the required facilities, including a church for worship. At the same time, they took early steps to introduce some religious and spiritual traditions and practices. In this connection, when the church was ready, they held a service there, with about twelve to fifteen people attending the very first Sunday service. This was a commendable initial stage in the long and arduous task of ensuring that the adherents of the mission were slowly and steadily introduced to Sunday as a day of worship and rest.<sup>13</sup>

The arrival of an additional missionary and the relocation to Rabai Mpya gave the mission increased operational latitude in a number of directions. Building on previous efforts under Krapf, four areas of concern seem to have occupied the attention of the missionaries in this second stage

of the mission's work. Firstly, they continued with learning and studying the various languages, with Krapf and Rebmann at differing level of proficiency. In the second instance, Krapf was able to continue with his efforts in the translation of the bible. Thirdly, introductory attempts to focus on direct evangelism were taken through organized preaching of the message of salvation through Jesus Christ. Here, Krapf talks of how he would often visit the people in the surrounding villages "to speak to them about the salvation of their souls and to open up to them the Kingdom of Heaven."<sup>14</sup> Fourthly, rudimentary steps were taken to lay the foundation for providing education for the community when the missionaries "undertook the introduction of some boys."<sup>15</sup> What would have been the fifth area of concern, that of travelling in prospecting and exploring wider missionary opportunities, took an added dimension due to the extended territory and distances under consideration.

### **Reinforcements and Extensive Travel**

The resilience of Krapf and Rebmann was rewarded when reinforcements were sent out to join them at Rabai Mpya. This was in 1849 when two more German Lutherans under CMS service arrived in Kenya. These were the Rev. Jacob Erhardt as the clergyman, and Mr. Johannes Wagner, a mechanic. After arriving at Mombasa on 10<sup>th</sup> June, they travelled on to Rabai Mpya, reaching there a few days later. Unfortunately, Wagner died on 1<sup>st</sup> August, leaving Erhardt as the only one who now teamed up with Krapf and Rebmann for the missionary endeavours in the years ahead.

While Krapf and Rebmann had undertaken some journeys earlier, the duration of absence from the mission station, the frequency and length of the journeys had been limited. The increase in manpower, however small, meant that there was a higher percentage addition to the missionary force. This, in turn, meant that the missionaries could now do more in certain directions than they had been able to do earlier. Among the areas in which improvement was markedly noticeable was related to visits to places of prospective missionary endeavours. These journeys led the missionaries farther and farther from the coast, and more and more into the interior. In the initial years when Krapf was alone, he would make incursions into the nearby Mijikenda territory, and in the process he would become, as he put it, "acquainted with the condition of the interior where I intended to preach

the Gospel.”<sup>16</sup> Now the scope was much wider. Concerning the genesis of this new development, Krapf explained,

In the course of time it became more evident to us, impressing itself upon us with all the force of a positive command, that it was our duty not to limit our missionary labours to the coast tribes of the Swahili and Wanyika, but to keep in mind as well the spiritual darkness of the tribes and nations of Inner Africa. This consideration induced us to take those important journeys into the interior.<sup>17</sup>

As the missionaries traveled around trying to acquaint themselves with the people, the various leaders, and the territory in the vicinity they ended up, from the perspective of Europe, making some geographical discoveries. It is because of these achievements that, in some quarters, Krapf and Rebmann are recognized more as explorers than missionaries.

In this sphere of findings of geographical interest, three pieces of information were notable. First, Coupland has stated, Rebmann distinguished himself on 11<sup>th</sup> May, 1848, in that in him, “European eyes first looked on Kilimanjaro” with its 19,000 feet snow-covered summit.<sup>18</sup> Second, on 3<sup>rd</sup> December, 1849 Krapf in turn became the first European to see the 17,000 feet high Mt. Kenya, in the form of two peaks covered with snow.<sup>19</sup> The third instance is in 1856 when he was in Europe, that Erhardt published a map which he had worked on together with Rebmann in 1855. It showed the East African region, with a body of water on a location inland.<sup>20</sup>

When the findings of the missionaries were reported in Europe, the initial response was to dismiss them as impossible since they were not in tune with the preconceived geographical knowledge. After the publication of the map showing the presence of a lake in the interior of East Africa, however, new interest was generated in the information from the three-some team of missionaries. Among the group that showed keen interest was the Royal Geographical Society. Through the ensuing journeys of exploration by Baker, Burton, Grant, Speke and Stanley, the missionaries were not only vindicated, but also a much more startling information on East Africa came to light.<sup>21</sup>

### **Pioneer Nucleus of Converts**

In their work on the East Coast of Africa, these early missionaries did not win many converts to Jesus Christ. All the same, over a period of many years, a nucleus of early Christian converts in East Africa emerged. The first convert, Mringe, was baptized on 24<sup>th</sup> November, 1850, taking on the name of John. The next occasion of baptism was on Pentecost Sunday, 1860, when Abbe Gunja and his son, Nyondo, were baptized, and assumed the names of Abraham and Isaac respectively. On the third baptismal occasion, four were baptized on Easter Sunday, 1861. These were Joseph dena, David Mua Zuia, Jonathan Lugo, and John Zuia. On this occasion, Rebmann took the unusual and bold step of not limiting these converts to baptism, but also went ahead and “admitted them as communicants.”<sup>22</sup>

With regard to numbers, Rebmann indicated that in June 1862, there was a further increase of about six or seven persons as new inquirers enrolled to learn about the Christian faith.<sup>23</sup> These additions, conversions, and baptisms represented a tremendous accomplishment in the work of the CMS as well as for the cause of Jesus Christ in East Africa. On another level, this development heralded a major breakthrough and the beginning of new process – that of enrolling a community of Christians from the region in God’s external register, while establishing a nucleus of the Christian Church. It was this small, but significant, nucleus which was to serve as the foundation upon which all subsequent efforts in East Africa would be built.

### **Sequence of Tenure of Service**

On account of repeated incidents of ill health, Krapf left Rabai Mpya on 25<sup>th</sup> September, 1853, returning to Europe to see whether a visit there would help rejuvenate his health. At it turned out, this was the end of Krapf’s formal physical association with the CMS in East Africa. Despite his continued links with the CMS elsewhere in the next few years, his health never recovered fully enough to permit him another stint of continued service in East Africa with the CMS. For all practical purposes, his tenure of service in Africa under the auspices of the CMS came to an end in 1855. Under different arrangements, he returned to East Africa in 1861-1862 on a restricted mission of leading a party of missionaries sent by the United Methodist Free Churches, resulting in the establishment of their

mission station at Ribe, near Rabai, 1862.<sup>24</sup> Otherwise, he retired to his home in Kornthal, Germany where he died on 26<sup>th</sup> November 1881.

In the case of Erhardt, the deterioration of his health forced him to return to Europe in 1855. When his health improved, he could not return to service in East Africa because of the interruption of the work at Rabai in the years 1857-1858. Instead, he was transferred to India, where he served the CMS with faithfulness, success and distinction for about thirty-five years.

The third of the missionary trio, Rebmann, had travelled to Egypt in October, 1851, and married an English lady who was involved in the missionary enterprise there. Following the departures of Krapf and Erhard in 1853 and 1855 respectively, he remained the sole missionary in East Africa. His loneliness increased in 1866 when his wife died. Although other missionaries came, and either died or had to go back home because of failing health, Rebmann remained the only constant factor in the work of the CMS in East Africa for about twenty more years following the departure of the last of his earlier colleagues. He too finally left in May 1875, when the Rev. W. Salter Price arrived to replace him in the work. Although Rebmann worked until replacements should arrive, when Price arrived in 1874, he was "totally blind" and unable to work at his optimum due to ill health.<sup>25</sup> Back in Europe, the CMS committee received him with great respect and honour when he appeared before it in July, 1875.<sup>26</sup> He proceeded to his home at Kornthal in Wurtemberg, Germany, where his old friend and colleague, Krapf, also lived. It was here that he died in retirement on 4<sup>th</sup> October, 1876, when he was only about fifty-six years old.

### **The Legacy of the Trio of Pioneers**

Krapf, Rebmann, and Erhardt made invaluable contributions which represent their legacy to various fields of concern in general, and to Christianity in East Africa in particular. Whether viewed singly or together, the different categories of accomplishments present an impressive portrait to serve as a monument to their missionary labours.

#### **Foundational Foothold**

Krapf and his colleagues played a significant role by simply helping Christianity to gain foothold in East Africa. By introducing and establishing

the Christian faith in the region, they opened the door through which the indigenous population could come into contact with the message of salvation in Jesus Christ, and consequently embrace the Christian faith for themselves. Indeed, through their combined efforts the three missionaries laid a useful firm foundation upon which others would build in subsequent years and which they would employ as a springboard for later developments.

### **Missionary Station**

In 1846, Krapf and Rebmann opened a missionary station at Rabai, a mainland locality about fifteen miles to the west from the initial centre on the island of Mombasa. This was a very important step in that it gave the missionaries a concrete physical operational centre. In earlier days, 1844-1846, Krapf had worked from a base on the island of Mombasa, and in future years, in 1875, Rev. W. S. Price opened an additional station at Frere Town on the north coast mainland.<sup>27</sup> It was, however, the missionary station at Rabai with its varied infrastructure which proved pivotal in foundational missionary endeavours not only in approximately thirty years duration in which the pioneer trio of missionaries operated from there, but also well beyond these initial years. Apart from its very existence and the purposes which it served, the station also pointed to the future as an example and an encouragement of what could be achieved elsewhere in later times.

### **Nucleus of Converts**

Of all the achievements of the pioneer team of missionaries, the supreme accomplishment was definitely that in which a nucleus of indigenous converts embraced Jesus Christ as their Saviour and Lord. Beginning with the conversion of Mringe and his accompanying baptism in 1848-1850 as the first convert, several others espoused the Christian faith in succeeding years. Although the numbers were few and the progress slow, there was a measure of steadiness which resulted in a sizeable Christian community by the mid-1860s. Fulfilling Krapf's yearning, this nucleus has served as the vanguard of millions in East Africa who have committed their lives to Jesus Christ since, including the present generation.

### **Languages Study**

In some spheres of academic endeavours, Krapf and Rebmann are viewed not so much as missionaries, but rather as pioneers in the field of

language and linguistic development in East Africa.<sup>28</sup> While Rebmann was a junior partner in this scheme, his role was definitely pronounced. All the same, it was Krapf who deliberately made language study a major area of concern from the earliest days of his involvement in the missionary enterprise in East Africa. While Krapf's language study included Kiswahili, Kikamba, Kinyika (Ki-Mijikenda), the Pokomo language, and Galla language, his key contributions were in Kiswahili, Kikamba, and Kinyika. With Kiswahili as his priority language, which served as a pattern for the others, he isolated certain tasks upon which he concentrated. These included the establishment of suitable orthography, reducing these languages to writing, developing useful grammar, and creating a working dictionary for each case.

### **Bible Translation**

Together with language study per se, Krapf and Rebmann undertook the translation of the Bible into these different languages. Indeed their efforts at language study provided them with a foundation not only for conversation and preaching in these languages, but for Bible translation as well. While commendable progress was made in this direction in all of these languages, the greatest strides were made in Kiswahili.<sup>29</sup> At every stage in his language and translation career, Krapf was keenly aware of the need to involve indigenous manpower in the attendant exercise. A case in point was that of the Pokomo language where he secured a Pokomo individual to team up with him in the whole undertaking.

### **Literature**

Besides literature relating to language study and Bible Translation, there were other writings, which the trio of missionaries of Krapf, Rebmann, and Erhardt produced. Much of this writing was in the form of reports and letters to Europe, which were then produced there, especially in the various publications of the CMS. Of the more far-reaching of this literature, one of the most lasting legacies is Krapf's monumental work, *Travels, Researches, and Missionary Labours in East Africa*, published in 1860. Over the years this book has informed, educated, challenged, and inspired many a reader on the situation in East Africa in general, and on the Christian missionary task in particular. The book has had untold influence over the years. However, its immediate results was when the United Methodist Free Churches (UMFC) was moved to approach Krapf to lead a

contingent of their missionaries to East Africa in 1861-1862, resulting in the founding of the station at Ribe near Rabai.

### **Chain of Stations**

The three missionaries recognized their work on the Kenyan coast as but the beginning of a wider and larger enterprise, which would encompass the entire African continent. Krapf, in particular, was a dreamer who believed in a plan through which the Church would be able "to connect Eastern and Western Africa by the a chain of missionary stations."<sup>30</sup> Not content with merely working on the coast, they even made exploratory forays into the interior for the purpose of finding suitable locations for future missionary stations. Although they did not implement their plans, they inspired others who eventually fulfilled this vision.

### **Exploration**

Krapf, Rebmann, and Erhardt never set out to carry out general journeys of geographical exploration. Since they had no "thought or wish of making geographical discoveries," any gains they made in this sphere were "incidental to their missionary task" in their view.<sup>31</sup> This perception, notwithstanding their exploratory missionary visits, yielded much-treasured geographical knowledge of those interested in information on East Africa. Apart from those with keen interest on the Christian missionary front, there were those Europeans whose interest was primarily in the sphere of geographical expeditions. Following the information provided by the missionaries, there were intense exploratory activities in the years 1856-1876.

All this stemmed from the geographical findings of the missionaries in 1848-1855. First, on 11<sup>th</sup> May 1848, Rebmann distinguished himself as the first European to set his eyes on Mt. Kilimanjaro with its 19,000 feet snow-covered summit.<sup>32</sup> Second, on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 1849, Krapf again, became the first European to see, in the form of two peaks covered with snow, the 17,000 feet high Mt. Kenya.<sup>33</sup> In the third instance, following his return to Europe in 1855, Erhardt published a map in 1856 showing a body of inland water in the interior of East Africa as drawn jointly with Rebmann in 1855.

### **Inspiring Examples**

Krapf and Rebmann distinguished themselves as men whose missionary careers were characterized by indomitable sacrificial "courage,"

persistence, "perseverance," and forward-looking "vision."<sup>34</sup> These were high ideals, which set a high standard to be emulated by those of posterity who would seek to excel in their missionary vocation.

Krapf displayed unusual determination, sacrifice, and courage, when he elected to go on with the work, following the emotional and experience at the death of his wife and daughter only a few days apart during his second month of residence in Mombasa in July 1844. In the face of this personal tragedy and bitter loss, Krapf wrote of how the deaths only signified that the missionary enterprise had now commenced in East Africa, especially since "the victories of the Church are gained by stepping over the graves of her members."<sup>35</sup>

With regard to Rebmann, he proved himself over a period of about thirty years as the perfect portrait of persistence and perseverance. Following the departure of Krapf in 1853, and Erhardt in 1855, he remained alone working against great odds. His isolation and loneliness increased when his wife of fifteen years passed away in 1866. Sickly and blind, he refused to abandon his missionary post and the Christian community there until replacement had arrived. It was only when this condition was met that he retired to Europe where he had not been since leaving for East Africa thirty years earlier.

### **Conclusion**

The missionary endeavours of Krapf, Rebmann and Erhardt commenced in May, 1844, when Krapf opened a station at Mombasa. The terminus was May, 1875, when Rebmann departed for Europe after the Rev. W. S. Price had arrived to take over from him. For the duration of their service the three were able to register many accomplishments. Of these, the most significant was obviously that in which a nucleus of converts was won to faith in Jesus Christ.

These pioneer conversions proved to be a signal achievement that had a two-fold dimension. First, the nucleus of converts was a concrete demonstration that an indigenous body of Christians had emerged out of the pioneer missionary enterprise. Second, the very existence of this group of Christians meant that any further future missionary efforts in the area would not begin from scratch or in a vacuum. Rather, this nucleus served as

the foundation on which, and as the roots out of which, successive labours would grow. This was the scenario, which confronted the Rev. W. Salter Price when he arrived in the region to take over from Rebmann. In that context it served as the link between the past and future missionary work within the CMS family in particular, and in Christian endeavours in East Africa on the whole.<sup>36</sup>

---

### End Notes

<sup>1</sup> Eugen Stock, *History of the Church Missionary Society*, Vol. 1 (Church Missionary Society, 1899), 56. The Church Missionary Society was formed on 12<sup>th</sup> April, 1799 by a group of Evangelicals within the Anglican Church. For the first fifty years or so when no missionary personnel were available in Britain, recruits were supplied by the like-minded pietistic seminaries of Berlin and Basle. As a result, most of the pioneer missionaries were German Lutherans.

<sup>2</sup> J[ohn] Lewis Krapf (for Johann Ludwig Krapf), *Travels, Researches, and Missionary During an Eighteen Years' Residence in Eastern Africa*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition with an introduction by Roy C. Bridges, (London: Frank Cass and Co., 1968), 89. In the introduction to the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Bridges makes the point that, "Most of these foreign recruits were from Germany; the earliest contacts were with Berlin . . ." Regarding Krapf, Bridges continues, "The fact that he was a product of Basle Seminary was taken as sufficient guarantee, for by 1830's it was a principal source of recruits for the CMS."

<sup>3</sup> Krapf, *Travels, Researches, and Missionary Labours*, 131-132. At a time when Krapf was beginning to view his work with satisfaction and enjoyment, tragedy struck. He gives a sketch of the details when he, and his "family were subjected to a very severe trial."

<sup>4</sup> Stock, *History of the CMS*, Vol. 1, 461.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 461-462.

<sup>6</sup> Krapf, *Travels, Researches, and Missionary Labours*, 133.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 145.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 133.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 134.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 135.

<sup>11</sup> Stock, *History of the CMS*, Vol. 1, 462.

<sup>12</sup> Krapf, *Travels, Researches, and Missionary Labours*, 154-155. Two points need to be underscored here. One, as the pioneer mission station in East Africa, the opening of Rabai was historic. Two, this was achieved when Krapf and Rebmann were very sick and weak with fever. As Krapf pointed out, "Scarcely ever was a mission begun in such weakness; but so it was to be, that we might neither boast of

our own strength, nor our successors forget that in working out His purposes, God sanctifies even our human infirmities to the fulfillment of His ends.”

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 157-158.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 159.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 159.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 129.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 159.

<sup>18</sup> R. Coupland, *East Africa and its Invaders: From the Earliest Times to the Death of Seyyid Said in 1856*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1938), 393.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 399.

<sup>20</sup> C. P. Groves, *The Planting of Christianity in Africa*, Vol. 2, 1840-1878, (London: Lutherworth Press, 1954), 111-112.

<sup>21</sup> *Church Missionary Gleaner*, 3, No.25 (January 1876): 1-2. When news of these geographical features was first received in Europe, it was met with derision. “The news comes home, and is derided by the geographical world – ‘Who can believe this? It is only a missionary that says so.’ But the missionary proves right.”

<sup>22</sup> *Proceedings of the CMS*, (1861-1862), 56.

<sup>23</sup> *Church Missionary Record*, n.s. 8, no. 10 (October 1863), 346-347.

<sup>24</sup> R. Elliot Kendall, *Charles New and the East Africa Mission*, (Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau, 1978), 48.

<sup>25</sup> Stock, *History of the CMS*, Vol. 3, 84.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 84.

<sup>27</sup> *Church Missionary Gleaner*, 8, No.28 (April 1976), 37.

<sup>28</sup> Carl-Erik Sahlberg, *From Krapf to Rugambwa: A Church History of Tanzania*. (Nairobi: Evangel Publishing House, 1986), 40. Sahlberg notes that Krapf (and Rebmann) preceded missionaries of the Universities Mission to Central Africa in endeavouring to “subdue the catastrophe of Babel’s tower among the East African people.”

<sup>29</sup> Krapf, *Travels, Researches, and Missionary Labours*, 140-141. Here, Krapf talks of how he devoted himself to “prosecuting with great zeal the study of the Swahili language, into which by degrees I translated the whole of the New Testament, and composing a short grammar and a dictionary, continuing likewise my geographical and ethnographical studies.”

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 133.

<sup>31</sup> Groves, *The Planting of Christianity in Africa*, Vol. 2, 100n. As Rebmann had pointed out, “We came to Africa without a thought or wish of making geographical discoveries. We came here as missionaries, whose grand aim was but the spreading of the kingdom of God.” See *Church Missionary Gleaner*, 8, No.25 (January 1876), 1.

<sup>32</sup> Coupland, *East Africa and its Invaders*, 393.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 399.

<sup>34</sup> Roland Oliver, *The Missionary Factor in East Africa*, (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1952), 6. Oliver states that, "But Krapf and Rebmann, if they were somewhat impractical, had vision, tenacity and boundless courage."

<sup>35</sup> Stock, *History of the CMS*, Vol. 1, 461-462.

<sup>36</sup> Coupland, *East Africa and its Invaders*, 419-420. In a penetrating assessment of these pioneer missionaries, Coupland points out that although their evangelistic results were meagre, they left a positive impact on the minds of the indigenous people with whom they interacted. He goes on, "The natives of the interior had never seen a white man at all. They were to see many of them, white men of all sorts, coming to their country with various and mingled motives. But these first 'invaders' – and others of the same kind to follow them – had one motive only. They did not seek to make money from the natives. They did not covet their land or its produce. They did not even want to govern them. They only wanted to give them a new God and thereby make them better men." In his own way Roland Oliver commends Krapf, Rebmann, and Erhardt for their far-sightedness. Whatever their weaknesses and shortcomings, he notes that, "They were filled with the assurance that others of their calling would follow them, and they regarded themselves from the first as the pioneers of a continental system." See Oliver, *The Missionary Factor in East Africa*, 6.

**keeping up with contemporary Africa . . .**

## BookNotes for Africa

*BookNotes for Africa* is a twice-yearly specialist journal offering reviews of recent Africa-related publications relevant for informed Christian reflection in Africa.

Each issue of *BookNotes for Africa* contains 40+ one-paragraph evaluative reviews of titles selected especially for likely interest to theological educators and libraries in Africa and worldwide.

Now in its eighth year of publication, *BookNotes for Africa* has already provided learned reviews for more than 500 recent Africa-related titles. The journal thus represents a uniquely handy, affordable means of keeping current with contemporary Christian reflection in Africa.

*BookNotes for Africa* is jointly sponsored by distinguished theological colleges in Nigeria, Kenya, South Africa, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Reviews are provided by a team of contributors drawn from throughout the continent and overseas. A simple mode of production enables modest subscription rates for the intended readership.

Subscriptions are organised on a 2-year cycle (4 issues), with airmail posting included. For addresses within Africa the rate for 2 years is US\$8; for addresses overseas the rate is US\$12. Back issues are available at \$3 a copy in Africa, and \$4 a copy overseas. Cheques should be drawn on a US bank, and made payable to "BookNotes for Africa" (or you may propose a practicable alternative). Send all inquiries and subscription orders to: *BookNotes for Africa*, PO Box 250100, Ndola, Zambia.