

A STUDY IN PARADOX

Some contradictions in Anglican attitudes
to mission in the mid-nineteenth century
as embodied in the life of Francis T. McDougall
and his work in the Borneo Mission

by

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis has been composed by myself, that it has not been accepted in any previous application for a degree, that the work of which it is a record has been done by myself and that all verbatim extracts have been distinguished either by quotation marks or by single-spaced indentations, and all the sources of information have been duly acknowledged.

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Date: 4/9/98

ABSTRACT

Francis T. McDougall was consecrated in 1855 as the first Anglican bishop of Labuan & Sarawak after seven years spent in establishing the Borneo Church Mission in the territory ruled by rajah James Brooke. He has been much neglected in the published histories of Anglican Mission in the 19th century, barely mentioned in some books, totally ignored in others, the subject of only one biography – and that written in 1889 by his brother-in-law. It is the purpose of this thesis to examine his ideas and achievements by means of a careful study of such primary sources as his letters and sermons, correspondence from authorities in church, missionary societies and state, and letters from his wife Harriette and other family members

After an **Introduction** describing the genesis of the Mission in the imagination of Brooke **Chapter 1** outlines under three thematic headings the work of McDougall in Sarawak between his arrival in June 1848 and his first furlough at the end of 1852. These themes are examined in depth in the next three chapters, each of which looks at McDougall against the background of Anglican attitudes to Mission in general since the Reformation and in particular during the middle years of the 19th century

Chapter 2, under the title ‘First to civilise – then to Christianise’, traces how McDougall (in line with Anglican theory and practice in the post-Enlightenment era) established education for the Malays and medical facilities in the hope that these would lead to wholesale conversions. Becoming disillusioned with what he came to see as ‘merely civilising’, he maintained a consistent caring ministry as the first ever Anglican medical missionary in spite of suffering persistent bad health himself.

Chapter 3 evaluates McDougall as ‘a traditional churchman with an inclusivist missiology’, and shows a missionary from an orthodox background making a genuine attempt – unusual in his day – to appreciate the work of God in the Dayak primal religions and to prepare the way for the creation of an indigenous church. The nature of his own faith is then assessed in comparison with his other brother-in-law J. W. Colenso.

Chapter 4 examines McDougall’s elevation to the episcopate as either simply adding ‘a Bishop for the Mission’ to give Anglican authority to the enterprise, or creating the first ‘Missionary Bishop’ in the technical definition then emerging in the growing Anglican Communion. As the first English bishop to be consecrated overseas, and the first to be nominated to a country not under British sovereignty, he anticipated important new ecclesial trends in the Anglican Church worldwide.

Chapter 5 finally discusses four contradictions in McDougall’s own character and analyses their effect both on the initial progress of the Mission and on the Church he left in Sarawak which, in June 1998, celebrated the 150th anniversary of his arrival on Borneo.

*For Millicent,
'Harriette' to my 'Frank'*

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My interest in McDougall was aroused whilst teaching between 1988 and 1992 at the House of the Epiphany, the Anglican theological college in Kuching. The discovery that the last (and only) biography of him had been written by his brother-in-law in 1889 suggested that a period of research would be fruitful in revealing more details about the man and his work and revising the somewhat anonymous position he has occupied in Anglican mission history. Special thanks are thus due to the lay people and clergy of the Diocese of Kuching under the indigenous leadership of Bishop John Leong and Bishop Made Katib for stirring this interest in me, and to the Dayak and Chinese students and staff of the House of the Epiphany for giving my wife and I their friendship and affording me the opportunity for preparatory study on the very spot where McDougall initiated the Anglican Mission 150 years ago.

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as there are no surviving records, but I appreciated their courtesy. Time passed in the library of Lambeth Palace, London, was well spent and I thank Melanie Barber, the Deputy Librarian and Archivist, for granting me the pleasure of study there.

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ABBREVIATIONS

BCMI	Borneo Church Mission Institution
CMS	Church Missionary Society
EIC	East India Company
LMS	London Missionary Society
PECUSA	Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States of America
SPCK	Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge
SPG	Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts
UMCA	Universities' Mission to Central Africa
USPG	United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts

GLOSSARY

adat	custom and tradition
Datu	non-royal Malay chief
Datu Bandar	the chief of the town
haj	pilgrimage to Mecca
haji	one who has performed the pilgrimage to Mecca
Imam	religious leader in the Muslim community
kongsi	Chinese business co-operative
manang	Dayak shaman or healer
padi	rice
Pengiran	a Brunei noble
prahu	a Malay, Dayak or Illanun boat
Rajah	ruler
Rajah Muda	heir apparent

PREFACE

It appears to have been a common practice during the second half of the 19th century and the first part of the 20th century for the biographies of public figures to have been written within a few years of their deaths by relatives or close friends. Because of the relationship between author and subject – sometimes that of a widow, brother or son – these biographies were often uncritical and in the form of hagiography, and they could be written for defensive purposes in the face of hostile attack. But they should not be despised or neglected, for they invariably provide moving evidence of the strengths of such virtues as loyalty and devotion, and they afford valuable material for the discerning researcher.

Not a great deal has been written about the life and work of Francis T. McDougall, an Anglican priest missionary in Sarawak who became Bishop of Labuan. An account was published three years after his death in 1886 in *Memoirs* written by his wife Harriette's brother, Charles Bunyon. Polemical in nature in so far as it attempted to defend McDougall against adverse criticisms made during his lifetime, Bunyon's biography eschewed the details of his brother-in-law's religious faith and outreach, extolled the virtues of its subject whilst ignoring the flaws in his character, and omitted significant material about McDougall's attitudes to James Brooke, the Rajah of Sarawak, so as to avoid prejudicing the uneasy relationships between the second rajah and the second bishop. A short account of Harriette McDougall's contribution to the work of the Borneo Mission which was published by her Winchester friend Mary Bramston in 1911 followed a similar deferential pattern.

But the 20th century witnessed a change of emphasis. Motivated by the perception that the general histories of Sarawak and biographies of the first two Brooke rajahs tended to undervalue the contribution of the Anglican Mission as well as to misrepresent McDougall's role the Revd. A.J.M. (Max) Saint – who had worked in Borneo – published in 1985 his *Flourish for the bishop*. Saint is well aware of McDougall's failings and makes some shrewd judgements but does not claim to offer a complete analysis of the bishop's views and tends to concentrate on the quarrel with the rajah over the succession of his older nephew John Brooke Brooke. When Graham Saunders published his authoritative and extremely well-researched study of the relationship between the Anglican Mission and the Raj *Bishops and Brookes* in 1992 it was this political aspect of McDougall's role which most engaged him.

Saunders notes that very little had been published about the interaction of the Anglican Mission and the Brooke Raj. His judgements on McDougall are fair and objective, and his exposure of the tensions which arose between the bishop and the rajah – particularly after 1857 when a power struggle developed, fuelled partly by McDougall's elevation to the episcopate – reveals much about the characters of both men. Saunders comments briefly on the religious aspects of the work of the Mission and also on the ecclesiastical background, but in the main avoids any detailed analysis of missionary motives and theological positions.

But McDougall was not primarily a politician – he was an Anglican priest, a missionary, an ecclesiastic. In contrast to Saunders it is my intention in this thesis to explore and evaluate the missiological, theological and ecclesial aspects of McDougall's life and work. Some examples of these areas have already been exposed, not only by Saint but also in the writings and articles of two other priests who have worked in Sarawak, Brian Taylor and Peter Varney. The way has been prepared and the time has come, 150 years after the Anglican Mission arrived on Borneo, for a systematic and thorough examination of McDougall's own pronouncements in letters and sermons such as I am attempting in this thesis, and which should afford a fair and balanced estimate of his achievements. His voice may be heard in three arenas.

In the middle of the 19th century the notion of 'missiology' had hardly surfaced – according to the *Oxford English Dictionary* the term was first used in 1937 – and ideas about the meaning and purpose of mission were only being formulated in the most general terms. The subject of 'mission', for instance, was not even on the agenda of the first Lambeth Conference when it convened in 1867. McDougall went out to Sarawak with the traditional Anglican view that, as a missionary, he was to bring the light of truth to the heathens living in darkness and the benefits of Western Christian civilisation to degraded and ignorant cultures. So when disappointment later set in as a result of the failure of his educational efforts among the Malays, and his medical work became more of a burden than a joy, he had no alternative effective missiology to replace the dreams of 'civilising' with more positive salvific hopes. There was an inherent weakness here at the heart of 19th century Anglican mission, and McDougall's voice in this respect is basically pessimistic – and rendered gloomier when uttered from the cavern of his own ill-health.

But although he may not have recognised it at the time there was a lot to shout about in his growing theological awareness of the inclusive nature of the fatherhood of God, the light of

Christ and the universal work of the Spirit. Alan Race has defined 'inclusivism' in terms of both an acceptance and a rejection of other faiths – an acceptance of the spiritual power and depth manifest in them as a locus of divine presence, and a rejection of them as insufficient for salvation without the crucified and risen Christ. McDougall's gradual espousal of such an attitude, and expression in such sermons as those of 1851 and 1884, mark him as an 'inclusivist' well in advance of his time. Little notice may have been taken of him in the middle years of the 19th century, but as the 20th century progressed towards its end his ideas have become more acceptable.

There was to be one arena, however, in which actions spoke louder than words. The Anglican Communion as we know it at the end of the 20th century has grown out of developments which were set in motion in the middle years of the 19th century, and McDougall's part in this process was conspicuous. He may not have been a 'missionary bishop' in the technical sense in which that term was understood in the 1850s and 1860s, as either a bishop sent out with the original missionary party, or an overseer of native Christians not appointed by the Crown, but then the Church of England has never embraced the idea of 'missionary dioceses' with the same enthusiasm as the Episcopal Church of the United States of America. In the extension of the diocesan (and provincial) process on the lines of the English model, however, McDougall occupied a pioneering position in being the first Church of England bishop to be consecrated outside England, and the first such bishop to preside over a see – however flimsy its legality – which was not confined to the boundaries of a Crown colony. In effect he straddled the division between 'Crown' and 'non-Crown' appointments, and thereby foreshadowed the most significant future developments in freeing the notion of episcopacy from its establishment shackles. If the Church did not listen very much to what McDougall said she at least eventually came to recognise the merits of what he was – and what he did.

INTRODUCTION

THE GENESIS OF A MISSION

'First there was a Brooke'. So begins the first chapter of a recent study of the relationship between the Anglican Mission on the island of Borneo and the ruling power which called it into being.¹ That precedence was important. The first missionary, Francis T. McDougall, was preceded by the first rajah, James Brooke – the Borneo Mission by an extraordinary ruling dynasty – a precedence which was to determine the relationship between church and state in the Bornean kingdom of Sarawak for one hundred years, and stamp the church in that country with the mark of deference to the state which was to continue when in recent times a nominally Christian regime gave way to an Islamic power.

It is necessary, therefore, to look first at James Brooke.² He was born at Benares [modern Varanasi] in India in 1803, the younger son of a judge in the civil service employed by the East India Company, and his upbringing seems to have been fairly conventional in accordance with the traditions of the Church of England. His two sisters were later to marry priests of the Established Church, one of them (Emma Johnson) becoming the mother of the two nephews who were to be nominated in turn as his successor on the throne of Sarawak. Like so many children of colonial families Brooke suffered from an uneven pattern of education which left him restless in mind and adventurous in spirit.

A voracious reader all through his life, as a young man he developed wide-ranging interests in religion and philosophy, geography and politics, the natural world as well as human society. Allied to an enquiring mind and a humanitarian outlook this created a bold, free spirit who combined remarkable vision with a natural impatience towards those who did not share his dreams.

After being invalided out of the Bengal army James Brooke embarked in 1830 on a long voyage around the coasts of south-east Asia, during which he recorded in a journal

¹ G. Saunders, *Bishops and Brookes, the Anglican Mission and the Brooke Raj in Sarawak, 1848-1941*, Singapore, Oxford University Press, 1992, 1.

² For life of Brooke see G.L. Jacob, *The Raja of Sarawak. An Account of Sir James Brooke, given chiefly through Letters and Journals*, 2 vols., London, Macmillan, 1876.

observations which were to dominate his thinking and direct his actions in later years. For instance, a first serious reading of St. John's Gospel on this voyage led to a belief in what he called 'the simplicity' of the Fourth Evangelist compared with 'the damning dogmas of theologians',³ and provoked him to the conviction that doctrines like that of the Trinity could not be justified by human reason nor compel a response of faith. The tone was set for a lifelong scepticism which drew him towards unitarianism whilst retaining his Anglican loyalties, fostered a dislike of dogmatism and a tolerance of the faith of others with whom he disagreed, and induced a sense of relativity in his attitudes to the moral behaviour of his contemporaries. Such qualities were to make him a wise ruler of his culturally-mixed kingdom, but an uneasy colleague for a rather orthodox and cautious ecclesiastic.

Early in 1831 whilst ashore in Canton Brooke's initial inspiring encounter with St. John's Gospel was followed by his first (and equally challenging) meeting with a missionary.⁴ This was the American David Abeel, a young man of the same age, a missionary of the Dutch Reformed Church who had arrived at Canton in 1830 under the auspices of the Seaman's Friend Society.⁵ Before his death in 1846 Abeel was to visit (in 1832, and again between 1839 and 1841) Singapore, Malacca and some of the islands of the Eastern Archipelago, where it is possible that he encountered the Englishman again. Brooke was deeply impressed by Abeel's sacrificial nature and liberal views, and recorded in his journal:

I cannot help respecting this man who, from zeal in his religious belief, forsakes his home and his friends, and becomes a humble and despised missionary of the Christian religion. How much prejudice exists about missions and missionaries! – and prejudice soon leads to passion, and passion to violence.

As long, however, as the mission is of Christ, and guided by His precepts, there cannot possibly be any harm, and he must be a heathen who denies the good that might result.⁶

This early voyage through the area then known as the 'Eastern Seas' provoked in James Brooke a desire to study the region and its history, and a consequent attraction to the ideas and work of Stamford Raffles (who had died in 1826) convinced him that his destiny lay in south-east Asia. Before embarking on a second voyage with a more serious purpose in 1838,

³ Jacob, Vol. 1, 27.

⁴ Ibid., 28.

⁵ Bodleian Library. *Dictionary of American Biography*, London, OUP, 1942

⁶ Jacob, op.cit., Vol. 1, 28.

during which he was to have his first landing on Borneo, Brooke prepared a declaration of his aims which outlined policies concerned with 'the advancement of the native interests and the development of native resources in countries which present an extended field for Christianity and commerce'.⁷

HISTORY, FEATURES AND CULTURES OF BORNEO

Borneo is the third largest island in the world after Greenland and New Guinea, encompassing an area of 744,360 sq km and lying 600km east of Singapore. It is divided almost exactly in half by the equator, and its northern coastline measuring 1,000km in length forms the southern boundary of the South China Sea (see Map 1).

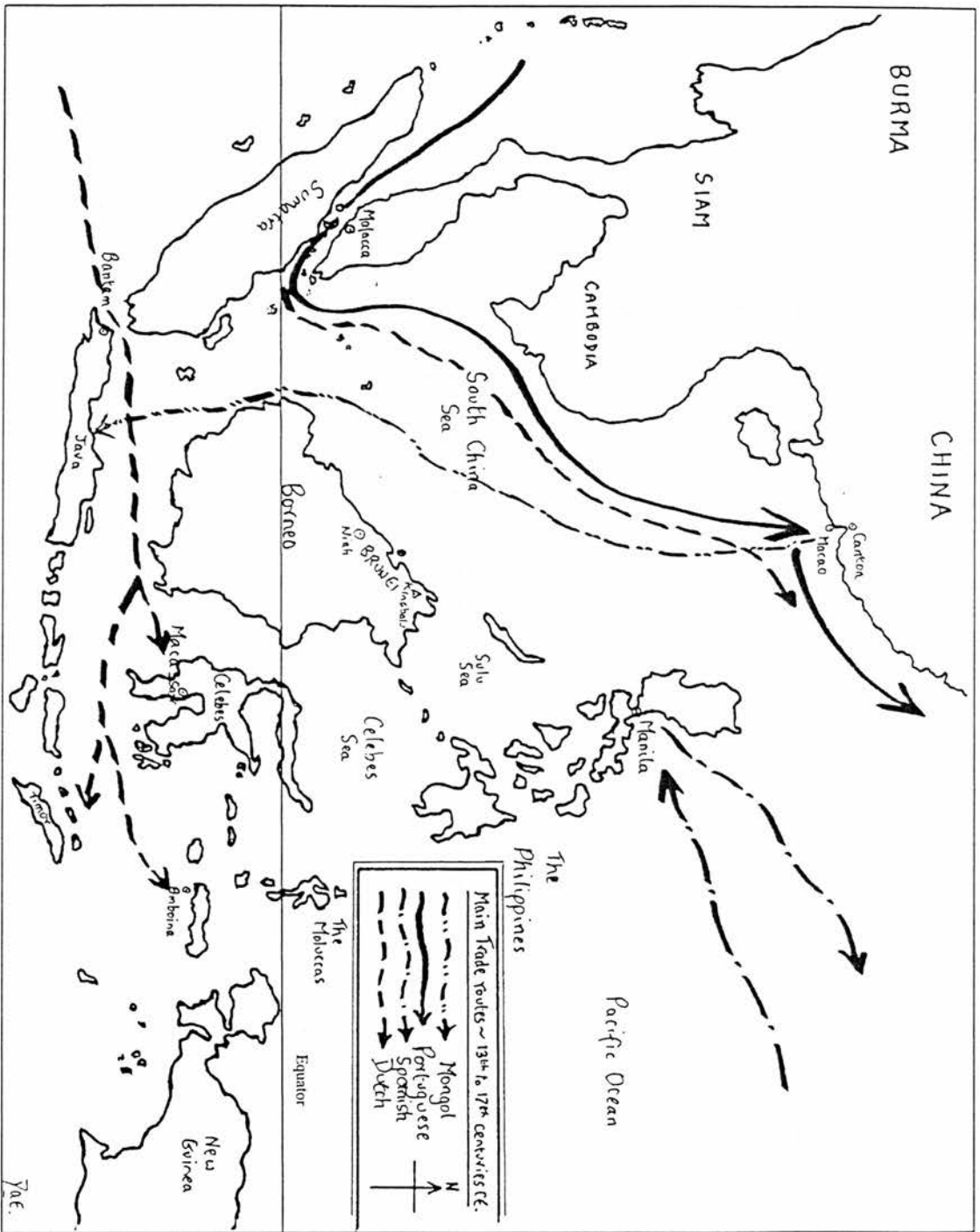
William Rivière in his recent novel *Borneo Fire* comments that 'Borneo had impinged itself upon the world extraordinarily little, when you considered how vast it was . . . it was an island which from the beginning of recorded history had uncommonly little recorded history'.⁸ Those records that did exist were written by outside observers and not by the indigenous inhabitants.

But from geological and archaeological evidence it is surmised that between 45,000 and 25,000 years BCE there was a land mass known as the Sunda Shelf which joined Borneo, Sumatra and Java to the Asian mainland and across which the original inhabitants and animals may have moved. Excavations in the great Niah cave in the limestone outcrop south of Miri in Sarawak have revealed the presence of a group of people around 39,000 BCE who lived by hunting, fishing and eating edible plants. About 10,000 years BCE the end of the ice ages resulted in the rising of sea levels in south-east Asia and the isolation of the islands from the mainland. Borneo was created.

⁷ J.C. Templer (ed.), *The Private Letters of Sir James Brooke KCB, Rajah of Sarawak, Narrating the events of his life from 1838 to the Present time*, 3 volumes, London, Richard Bentley, 1853, Vol. 1, 3.

⁸ William Rivière, *Borneo Fire*, Sceptre Paperback, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1995, 6.

MAP 1



The tropical climate meant that the island was quickly covered with dense rain forests, apart from the swampy coastal plain. A mountain range formed the backbone and occupied much of the interior, rising in one place (Kinabalu in Sabah) to a height of 4,101 metres. The rain forests sheltered animals like rhinoceros, orang utan and monkeys, wild deer and boar, as well as a great variety of reptiles, and crocodiles in the numerous rivers which flowed down from the mountainous interior to the sea and formed the defining feature of the Bornean landscape.

From about 3,000 BCE migration of peoples from the mainland of SE Asia began, and such contacts introduced the use of metals like iron. Population movements, trade across the water and sporadic conquests were henceforth to be the key to Borneo's future. In the 7th century CE the Buddhist Srivijaya empire spread from neighbouring Sumatra, to be replaced in the 13th century by the Hindu Majapahit kingdom which originated from Java. Artefacts from both these cultures have been found in Sarawak in the north-western coastal areas of Borneo, along with relics of Chinese origin. The Mongol emperors of China may have contemplated the annexation of Borneo, and Kublai Khan sent a fleet to the area in 1292 CE, but as was so often to happen they passed by the island and concentrated instead on Java. By this time Arab traders had arrived, and brought with them the religion of Islam together with its associated political systems. In the 14th century the Muslim Brunei sultanate established some sort of supremacy and gave its name to the whole island, Borneo being a corruption of Bruni.⁹

The earliest European visitor may have been the Franciscan Odoric, one of the brothers sent from Rome to support John of Monte Corvino in 1302,¹⁰ but the most notable early account came from the Spaniard Antonio Pigafetta who was on one of the surviving two ships of Magellan's fleet which anchored in Brunei Bay in 1521. The Portuguese followed (from Malacca after its capture by Albuquerque in 1511) in 1526, and these European visits led eventually to the establishment of a short-lived Roman Catholic mission at Brunei towards the end of the 17th century. That century also witnessed the first English arrivals in the wake of the East India Company, although no trade was formally instituted with the island, Bantam on Java being preferred as a centre for harvesting the growing export of pepper and other products from the riches of the 'Spice Islands'.

⁹ Sources for information on Borneo. Ed. L. Chin and V. Mashman, *Sarawak Cultural Legacy*, Sarawak, Society Atelier Kuching, 1991, 9-11. S. Baring Gould and C.A. Bampfylde, *A History of Sarawak under Two White Rajahs*, London, Sotheran & Co., 1909, 36-58.

¹⁰ Joan Lo, *Glimpses from Sarawak's Past*, Kuching, Agas (S) Sdn Bhd, 1986, 23.

The 17th and 18th centuries were characterised by disputes in the region between English and Dutch traders, although the sea routes navigated by these sailors largely passed Borneo by, either to the north or the south. The route from Malacca to Macao, Japan and China left the north coast of Borneo well to starboard, whilst the voyage to the lucrative Moluccas via Java, Macassar and Timor always had Borneo on the port side. The island of Borneo remained, in Rivière's words, 'a quietude . . . for all its size, slightly invisible',¹¹ though already on maps designed by Mercator and Van Noort.

'A quietude'? Externally – yes, but internally the 17th and 18th centuries witnessed great changes, particularly in relation to population. For these were the years which saw significant migrations to add to those in earlier centuries of the Chinese and Malays, movements of Asian peoples who practised primal religions from the mainland – first possibly into Sumatra, then into the southern half of Borneo, and finally northwards over the high mountain range into the northern areas of the island where the great rivers ran down through the already inhabited and cultivated coastal plains to the South China Sea. These migrations were caused primarily by the need for land, more land, fresh land for the growing of crops – land which, moreover, faced the main sea and trade route from India to China.

In this way did the people described in James Brooke's 1838 statement as 'natives' first arrive in the northern areas of Borneo. Lumped together initially by the Dutch under the title of 'Dyaks' (20th century 'Dayaks') from the word 'Daya' which simply meant 'people', they have since been analysed by origin, culture and language into the different groups of Iban, Bidayuh, Kayan and Kenyah. It was among such groups – divided simply in the 19th century according to their habitat into 'Sea Dyaks' and 'Land Dyaks' – that Brooke was to find his most 'extended field for Christianity and commerce'.

THE IDEA FOR A MISSION GERMINATES

James Brooke's second voyage to the East during 1839 and 1840 encompassed the Celebes and Borneo, and included a land-fall in the Sarawak river with the opportunity to survey

¹¹ Rivière, *op.cit.*, 6.

about 100km of coastline and visit one or two Dayak longhouses (see Map 2). He was provoked to the immediate – and superficial – conclusion that the Dayaks ‘had no religious beliefs of their own’ and were therefore ‘open to conviction of truth and religious impression’.¹² Any missionary who was called to work among such people would not, in Brooke’s judgement, find the task too difficult. But – an important proviso – Christianising must be preceded by Civilising. The indigenous inhabitants would first need to be educated and encouraged to European standards of living, ‘for without previous culture I reckon the labours of the missionary as useless as endeavouring to read off a blank paper’.¹³

These northern regions of Borneo were still at that time ruled nominally – and taxed mercilessly – by the Muslim Sultan of Brunei, acting often through regents whose corrupt administration provoked continual unrest among the more militant Dayaks and proud Malays. Whilst still in the area in 1840 Brooke offered to assist the regent of Sarawak, the Sultan’s uncle and heir the Rajah Muda Hasim, to quell a rebellion and restore order. In return for his help the regent promised to invest the Englishman ‘with the country of Sarawak, its government and its trade’ and suggested ‘that Brooke should have the title of Rajah’.¹⁴ Having fulfilled his half of the bargain, and with the submission of the local Malay chiefs ensured, Brooke was sufficiently impressed and excited by the regent’s offer to write to his mother in April 1841 and inform her that he intended to remain in the East and settle on Borneo. In the same letter he extolled the virtues of ‘an aboriginal population free from prejudice who, to a missionary, offers a field for his vocation not found elsewhere’.¹⁵

After some delay Brooke was duly invested as Rajah of Sarawak by Hasim on 24 September 1841, with a rather vague and practically unenforceable agreement that the country should remain under the ultimate sovereignty of Brunei. Another condition imposed on Brooke, which he was able and willing to accept, was that the Christian English ruler should respect and not interfere with the customs and religion of the people. The new Rajah seems to have

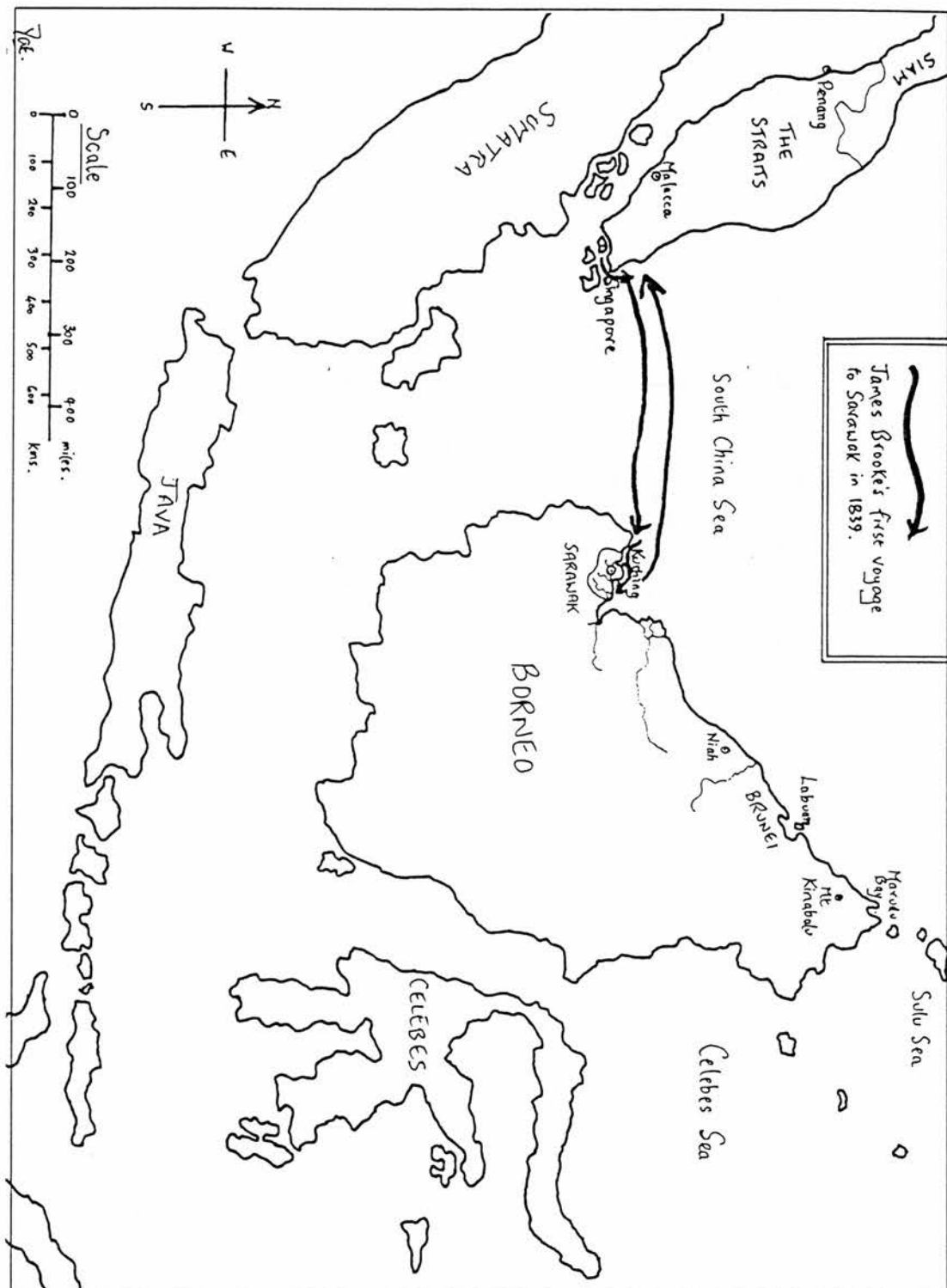
¹² H. Keppel, *The Expedition to Borneo of HMS Dido for the suppression of Piracy: with extracts from the Journal of James Brooke Esq*, 2 vols., London, Chapman & Hall, 1847, 57.

¹³ *Ibid.*, Vol. 1., 59-60.

¹⁴ S. Runciman, *The White Rajahs: A History of Sarawak from 1841-1946*, Cambridge, CUP, 1960, 63.

¹⁵ J. Brooke to Mrs Brooke, 7 April 1841, Templer, *op.cit.*, Vol. 1, 93.

MAP 2



interpreted this ruling as applying mainly to his Muslim subjects, for a few days after his investiture he informed his mother that the 'opportunity for conversion to the truth' lay with a people who had 'no religion of their own'¹⁶ and that could not be said of the Malays.

In the same letter James Brooke promised his mother that, after twelve months, he would 'enter into communication with some intelligent missionary' with a view to 'establishing some of his brethren'. But such a mission would only be approved if it reflected the principles remembered from Brooke's conversations with the American Abeel, whereby 'civilising' would take precedence over 'evangelising'.

I am inclined to believe the American missionaries, in general, superior to the English, not in religious qualifications, but in their general system. They aim almost solely at the education of the young, and ingratiate themselves with the older people by the practice of physic – some knowledge of which they almost all acquire'.¹⁷

It is interesting to note that David Abeel, the missionary whose philosophy and methods Brooke had early admired, was the son of a naval captain and had studied medicine before entering a seminary – and Francis T. McDougall, the missionary who was eventually to be chosen as head of the Borneo Mission, was the son of an army officer who loved the sea and had studied medicine before deciding to be ordained.

THE IDEAL MISSIONARY?

It cannot be said that James Brooke had encountered many missionaries when, in the year following his becoming Rajah of Sarawak, he outlined (in one of his last letters to his mother before her death) his preferences for the ideal kind of mission that would be welcome in his new kingdom. Some unnamed critic in England in 1842 seems to have cast doubts on Brooke's missionary concern, and he wrote indignantly to defend his position in words which are revealing enough to merit quotation at length.

¹⁶ J. Brooke to Mrs Brooke, 27 September 1841, quoted in Templer, *op.cit.*, Vol. 1, 122.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

The truth is, there are two sorts of Christian missions, the one of unmixed good, the other somewhat dangerous. Some missionaries begin at the wrong end, by preaching Christianity and running down Mahomedanism, or any other received belief: these show gross ignorance of human nature, and neglect the principles of toleration – for if we abuse another’s belief we confirm him in it, and make him a bigot, and he will rather retort abuse than hear reason. Such a mission will never succeed in any Malay country, and probably not amongst the Dyaks’.¹⁸

A mission of that kind was ‘dangerous’. The other sort of mission, ‘of unmixed good’, was of the American model, with missionaries ‘who live quietly, practice medicine, relieve the distressed, do not dispute or argue, and aim to educate the children’.¹⁹ If his critic desired ‘a red-hot missionary crusade, to begin by telling the natives that their religion is a lie’, then he – James Brooke – wanted ‘none such’. But if he desired:

a mission of reasonable and educated men, who know when to speak and when to be silent – who hold civilisation and education as a means of religion, who will strive to enlarge the native mind and to give them the outlines of our religion, its accordance with theirs in its earliest stages – to instruct the children, to benefit the adult, then the sooner they come the better.²⁰

In these somewhat confused but in many ways perceptive paragraphs James Brooke identified some different strands which have divided the practice of Christian mission throughout the centuries, and he came down clearly on the side of the more inclusivist approach. But how successful would he be – during the 1840s – in discovering a leader for his projected mission who would share his attitudes and thereby receive support from the Rajah and his government? An ideal missionary to found an ideal mission?

FOUNDATION OF THE BORNEO CHURCH MISSION

Brooke had to be patient for a few years before his dreams were realised. Appeals for sympathy and financial support which he issued in London in 1842 evoked no response from the religious and political establishments and seemed to justify the bitterness of his declaration of 1838, in which he had spoken of how fashionable it was in England to show

¹⁸ J. Brooke to Mrs Brooke, 16 October 1842, quoted in Templer, *op.cit.*, Vol.1, 229.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*

concern for Africa, Australia and New Zealand whilst remaining ignorant of India and Asia.²¹ For a time he considered recruitment from a wider Christian spectrum, including the Quakers Elizabeth Fry and her brother-in-law Thomas Fowell Buxton.²²

In the end, and not unnaturally considering his own upbringing and family links, Brooke issued a direct appeal to the Church of England. (The reasons for this will be examined in more detail in Chapter 2, 62-3.) In 1845 he sought the assistance of a distant relative, an Anglican clergyman by the name of the Revd. C.D. Brereton, whose son William had already entered his service in Borneo. He was not to be disappointed this time. After first attempting to interest both the SPG and the CMS in the project,²³ and being rebuffed by them because of their own financial constraints, Brereton set about establishing a specific Borneo Church Mission Institution (to be described hereafter as the BCMI).

A small provisional committee met in London on 2 May 1846 and decided to issue a proposal which made clear that the projected mission would be established as the direct result of Brooke's initiative and conducted in accordance with his views. The Rajah would 'encourage by all means in his power any well-advised scheme' for the education of his subjects and their 'elevation in the scale of social beings'. The crowning purpose of this 'civilising endeavour' would be the evangelising of the people of Sarawak, bringing them 'to the knowledge of the saving truths of the gospel'.²⁴

The proposal was combined with a financial appeal 'to the sympathies of the British public' and a vision of 'the Church of Christ' being speedily established not only in the State of Sarawak but with the blessings of Christianity gradually extended throughout the whole island of Borneo and into adjacent lands.²⁵

Under the patronage of the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London (still at that time regarded as responsible for spiritual jurisdiction in colonial territories), and stimulated by the great revival of interest in Colonial Churches and Bishoprics in the 1840s, the appeal of the BCMI fell on responsive ears. Over £4,000 was collected within a short time as well as a further £200 promised in annual subscriptions, and stock was quickly purchased in the

²¹ For Brooke's *Declaration of Aims* see Templer, op.cit., Vol. 1, 2-33.

²² J. Brooke to J.C. Templer, 22 August 1842, quoted in Templer, op.cit., Vol. 1, 209-210.

²³ The SPG (Society for the Propagation of the Gospel) had been founded in 1701, the CMS (Church Missionary Society) in 1799.

²⁴ C.D. Brereton, *An Address with a Proposal*, SPG Bound Pamphlets No. 15008, Item 15, 1.

²⁵ Ibid.

hope that the annual income would be sufficient to provide for the expenses of the new Mission. It only remained to select the first missionaries, and to await James Brooke's return to England in October 1847 in order that he might provide the romantic stimulus for a successful public meeting.

The public meeting to launch the Borneo Mission was held in London at the Hanover Square rooms on 22 November 1847 and attracted an enthusiastic audience.²⁶ Speeches were made by sundry bishops and clergy, by James Brooke himself and by Captain Henry Keppel who had accompanied him on some of his voyages, and finally by the Anglican priest who had been chosen to lead the Mission, the Revd. Francis Thomas McDougall.²⁷

In McDougall the Rajah seemed to have found his 'ideal missionary'. Trained in medicine at the University of Malta and King's College, London – a qualified doctor and an MRCS, with two years at Oxford before his ordination in 1845, 30 years of age and of an adventurous and practical disposition, and married to a strong, independent young woman from a family with close church and missionary society connections – it looked as though the BCMI had made the perfect choice to head the Mission which would fulfil Brooke's dreams. No time was lost inviting two other clergy to join the initial party (one of whom proved too ill to go), and within five weeks of the meeting in Hanover Square the first Anglican missionaries for Borneo were ready to embark.

VOYAGE AND ARRIVAL AT SARAWAK

The party of eight who sailed out of the Thames at the end of December 1847 consisted of McDougall and his wife Harriette together with their younger son Harry, the Revd. W.B. Wright and his pregnant wife, a female servant for each family, and Mrs Wright's nephew Harrington Parr. The voyage in the pre-steam age was long and potentially hazardous – the small barque *Mary Louisa* sank on the return journey – and the missionaries enlivened the duller days by endeavouring to learn the Malay language in Jawi script and teaching the

²⁶ BCMI, *Proceedings at a Public Meeting of the Friends of the Borneo Church Mission*, Hanover Square Rooms, Monday, Nov. 22 1847, SPG Bound Pamphlets 15008, item 19, 12-13.

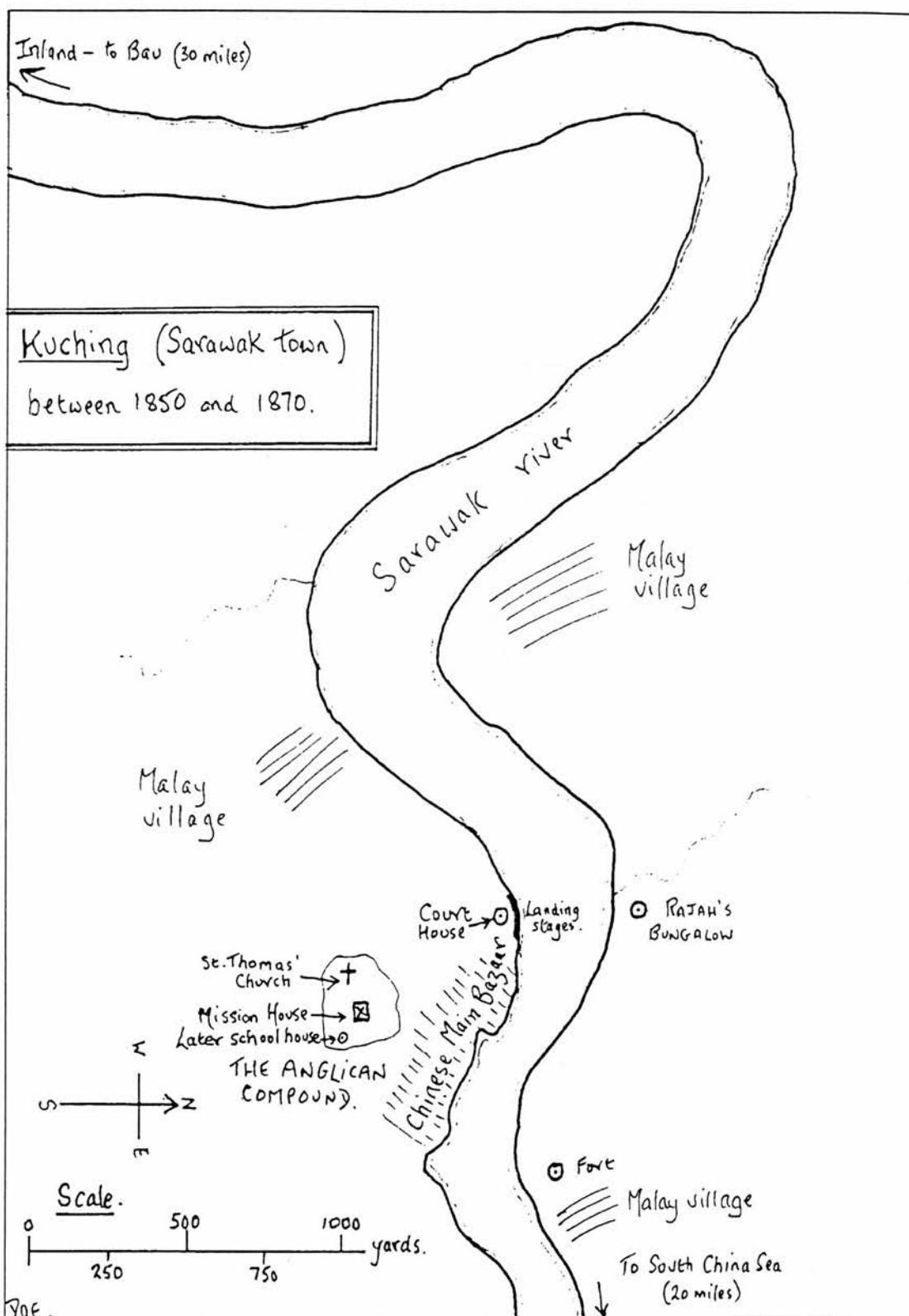
²⁷ For details of McDougall's early life see below, Chapter 3, 112-5.

crew.²⁸ They eventually reached the chief town of Sarawak²⁹ on the schooner *Julia* from Singapore on 29 June 1848, the Feast of St Peter. With the Rajah absent in Singapore the new arrivals occupied his large and airy bungalow for a few days, and then moved into accommodation provided in the upper rooms of the Court House on the other (south) bank of the river (see Map 3). This unhealthy and inconvenient building had been erected by a Rhenish missionary J.M.C. Hupe who had strayed across the border from Dutch Borneo in the hope of working in Sarawak, and it was to witness the early operations of the Mission.

²⁸ For details see (i) C.J. Bunyon, *Memoirs of Francis Thomas McDougall and of Harriette His Wife*, London, Longmans Green & Co. 1889. (ii) Harriette McDougall, *Sketches of our Life at Sarawak*, London, SPCK, 1882.

²⁹ In the 1840s called 'Sarawak' the town was renamed 'Kuching' in 1876. For clarity 'Kuching' is used in the thesis.

MAP 3



CHAPTER 1

McDOUGALL – THE PIONEERING MISSIONARY, 1848-1852

FIRST TO CIVILISE – THEN TO CHRISTIANISE

Hupe's square wooden Court House with its latticed verandahs, nicknamed by Harriette the 'big cage',¹ formed the headquarters of the Mission during the first twelve months of its operations in Sarawak before the completion of the purpose-built Mission House on adjacent land rented from the Rajah for an annual payment of one coconut. The early work was hampered by the cramped conditions, but commenced according to principles clearly in line with James Brooke's wishes.

Bearing in mind the Rajah's 'ideal mission', with his frequent insistence on the importance of introducing Christianity through practical good works, particularly in education and medicine, it was inevitable that the initial efforts of the Mission should have been concentrated in this direction. Medical work began immediately after the missionaries had moved in, a dispensary being opened in a small space behind a store room, and a morning class for men which was to become the inspiration for a Malay school was commenced by Wright in the same corner of the building. Both of these initiatives quickly introduced the new arrivals to the three indigenous peoples, the Malay, Chinese and Dayak, and were to be viewed not only as beneficial examples of Christian civilising but also as affording opportunities for evangelism by encounter.²

Education – the Malay School

Initial experiments

As Kuching was mainly a Malay town with a few Chinese and Dayaks it was towards the Malays that the first educational efforts of the new Mission were directed, and William

¹ H. McDougall, *op.cit.*, 18.

² F.T. McDougall to C.D. Brereton, 31 July 1848, MSS. Pac.s.104 (2), 4. F.T. McDougall to T.F. Stooks, 1 August 1848, MSS. Pac.s.104 (2), 9. Rhodes House Library, SPG archive material.

Wright, still in deacon's orders, was adjudged by McDougall the best person to be the schoolmaster.³ It was an arrangement which also kept Wright under McDougall's watchful eye!

A tentative effort to teach English in the men's class did not create much interest, and the proximity of class and clinic speedily proved too stifling for both. Within a month the class had been superseded by a more promising school for Malay boys which Wright opened in an adjacent building.⁴ Nine small boys attended on the first day, including some who were described as 'nobles', and the Datu Bandar (the young second-ranking Malay official in the town) expressed sympathy. It seemed a promising beginning.

Within a short time some Malay women and girls were visiting the wives of the missionaries, curious no doubt to inspect their new neighbours, and they were soon subjected to some informal teaching by the ladies. Mrs Wright assisted her husband for a short period, and in November was replaced by the McDougall's servant Elizabeth Richardson, spared after nursing Harriette at the birth and immediate death of her first Sarawak baby. McDougall asked the home committee to approve this appointment in the hope that it might induce the Malay women to form a separate class in the school where they and their daughters could learn to make and mend jackets. The committee for their part looked forward to receiving Wright's first report, regarding his 'department as one of especial interest' in which they hoped 'under God's blessing to look for the earliest opening for Missionary success' in Borneo.⁵

This report was sent to London early in November 1848, and revealed that as well as basic English and Arithmetic some measure of Christian religious instruction had found its way on to the syllabus. The books of Proverbs and Psalms had been introduced in order to afford some common basis of acceptable wisdom which might encourage conversation on more controversial matters, such as 'the existence and attributes of God, His Providence and His requirements'.⁶

³ McDougall to Brereton, 31 July 1848, *Ibid.*, 5.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 18 September 1848, *Ibid.*, 12.

⁵ Stooks to McDougall, 17 November 1848, CLS (Copies of Letters Sent) 54, 33. SPG archives, Rhodes House.

⁶ W.B. Wright to T.F. Stooks, 7 November 1848, CLR (Copies of Letters Received) 72, 25-27. SPG archives.

Wright appeared to be satisfied that such conversation was 'freely entered into and for the most part listened to with a strikingly grave attention'.⁷ Like McDougall in the dispensary (see below p. 24) he hoped that sharing matters of common concern might lead eventually to the conversion of some Malays. But he was acting unwisely in view of the Rajah's strictures on the 'dangerous' form of mission which 'runs down Mahomedanism' and neglects 'the principles of toleration' (see Introduction above, 10).

Of more potential danger, and alarming to McDougall, was Wright's developing enthusiasm for teaching Malay women and girls as well as boys. Instruction in needlework by the ladies had led one of the older Malay women to express interest in the Psalms, and to Wright this seemed a heaven-sent opportunity to include some women in his religious teaching. For McDougall however it provided evidence that Wright was prepared to act unilaterally and so exceed his authority – a disagreement which will be examined later (below, 48-9).

By the early months of 1849 a serious quarrel had erupted between the two Borneo missionaries, with McDougall arguing in letters home that Wright's suggestions for what was in effect a co-educational school were totally unrealistic in view of the local Muslim culture. 'Malays would not send their daughters to be taught by a man and together with boys'.⁸ The pursuance of such a policy would create an unnecessary confrontation with the Sarawak Malays only six months after the arrival of the Mission. Bearing in mind the Rajah's insistence on toleration there was no doubt that McDougall was correct in his judgement, and Wright wrong. On 23 February 1849 Wright sent his resignation to the home committee, but since they alone had the power to accept it (rather than McDougall) he and his family had to hang around in Kuching for six months before moving to Singapore and seeking fresh work.

Instability without discouragement

Wright was replaced as schoolmaster by the young Henry Steele, an employee of the Rajah who had shown interest in the Mission. Within a few months he accepted the post of court interpreter with the government and in June 1849 he resigned. The welfare of the Malay

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ McDougall to Stooks, 24 February 1849, CLR 72, 21-22.

school was obviously not being promoted by these sudden changes, nor was its stability to be assured by the next appointment.

Local excitement provoked by preparations for an expedition against the Sea Dayak pirates who lived up the Skrang and Saribas rivers (see Map 4), and for which 800 Malays were called out, only added to the uncertainty.

In desperation after Steele's resignation McDougall recruited a Malay whose name appears in the records only as Rati. This man had been educated in Singapore at a school founded by the ex-LMS missionary B.P. Keasberry, and was nominally a Christian despite being married to the daughter of a local *haji*. McDougall had visited the LMS school and had been unimpressed by Keasberry's scholarship and by his employment of a Muslim assistant in translating the Bible.⁹ This judgement appears rather superficial when put alongside Keasberry's pioneering work among the Malays and Chinese in Singapore in addition to his production of the second Malay language Bible, and it did not prevent McDougall from employing Rati as schoolmaster.

Initial suspicion that Rati could not be trusted without supervision caused McDougall to transfer the Malay school to the new Mission House on its completion in August 1849. Rati acted as schoolmaster for several months under McDougall's gaze, but when Frank and Harriette went to Singapore and Penang between January and June 1850 for a time of recuperation with the Rajah the school was temporarily closed.

It seems clear that during 1849 and 1850 McDougall was beginning to doubt the efficacy of direct teaching for the Malays, and wondering instead whether there might not be a better way of influencing them. In the same letter in which he had questioned the learning and wisdom of Mr Keasbury he enquired whether funds might be available for translating the Anglican Book of Common Prayer into Malay. He was preparing a short Malay service for daily use by the domestic servants attached to the Mission and suggested that prayer might be a more useful tool in his efforts with the Malays than religious teaching. 'A book of Prayers in Malay would I think be often received by those who would not receive the New Testament'.¹⁰

⁹ McDougall to Stooks, 6 January 1849, *Ibid.*, 31-32.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

Such doubts about the best approach early in 1849, and his breach with Wright at the same time, did not dent McDougall's optimism about the inevitability of the Christianising of the Sarawak Malays. His first report to the committee sent with that letter in January 1849 abounded in hope. After a swipe at Wright's unrealistic ideas – the Malays were 'jealous and ready to take offence at any ill-timed or injudicious attempts at introducing the more directly Christian truths to them' – and a confession that many Malays he had encountered 'had a deep sense of the truths' which their own religion inculcated he continued:

I think that we have sufficient common ground with them to enable us to bring them gradually to embrace those higher truths, whose sudden introduction would at once drive them away and set them against our teaching.

There is every reason to hope that by the judicious instruction of the adults in our day-school, and the careful education of such children as may be placed entirely under our control, the Malays of Sarawak will, at no very distant period, be brought into the Christian fold.¹¹

Later in the year McDougall claimed that the Rajah had agreed with the sentiments expressed in this first report, but it may be conjectured that Brooke was merely being supportive and encouraging rather than assenting to the generalised hopes of the author.

One of the main reasons for accepting the Rajah's invitation to recuperate with him in Penang early in 1850 had been the serious illness of Harriette after the death of her second Sarawak baby five days after his birth in the previous November, allied to Frank's feelings of being worn out by worry and hard work. For McDougall a break from the routine of Sarawak seemed to offer an ideal opportunity to develop his translation of some prayers in Malay, and include a Catechism as well.¹²

While in Singapore en route for Penang young Harry McDougall, aged three, died of diphtheria, a sore blow to both his parents, but the tragedy did not appear to dent his father's cheerful optimism with regard to his influence on the Malays. McDougall informed the Master of his old Oxford college, Magdalen Hall, that the Malays in Kuching 'do not appear to have an enmity to me as a Christian minister; indeed, I often have religious conversation

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Bunyon, *op.cit.*, 60-62.

with some of the best instructed and most respectable . . .'.¹³ He proceeded on the translations with renewed vigour, and on his return to Sarawak in June 1850 was able to have his Malay prayers and catechism printed. Showing a laudable sensitivity towards the cultural prejudices of his Muslim acquaintances he had the book lithographed because of Islamic objections to printing in the Arabic character. Some 'Dissenting Missionaries, both American and English', had circulated 'printed tracts of a violent controversial character', arousing Malay suspicions.¹⁴ McDougall was determined to avoid similar proselytising. During his absence at Penang there has been a revival among the Muslims in Sarawak, assisted by the return of a number who had gone on the Haj to Mecca. McDougall suspected, with good reason, that the arrival and growth of the Mission – albeit moderate – had helped to stimulate this Muslim revival.¹⁵ The evidence of history supports his contention that a fresh dose of Christianity can be quite effective in restoring to new life an apparently slumbering great religion. The converse could also be true.

McDougall claimed at the time not to be 'discouraged' by the renewed zeal of Islam in Sarawak, but he was scared by the prospect of an invigorated Muslim community turning with greater enthusiasm to mission itself – among the Dayaks, thus forestalling Anglican prospects. It was essential for the proposed Dayak mission to be mounted as quickly as possible, but that depended on the arrival of new colleagues. If that happened evangelism among the Dayaks might prove far more productive than education of the Malays, a thought which loomed larger in McDougall's thinking as the year 1850 wore on.

Throughout 1849 and 1850 he had soldiered on alone, the only priest-missionary in the country, but by the end of 1850 he received the good news that new recruits were on the way from England and Calcutta. Writing home in December he welcomed this development, but underlined the Rajah's alarm that the newcomers might make 'indiscreet displays of zeal' and, preaching 'on tubs', 'excite the Mahommedans against us'.¹⁶ A newly-appointed Imam from Mecca on the other hand, although 'a zealous man for Islam . . . does not oppose us at all'.¹⁷

¹³ Ibid., 63.

¹⁴ McDougall to Stooks, 10 June 1850, MSS.Pac.s.104 (2), 56.

¹⁵ Ibid., 29 June 1850, MSS.Pac.s.104 (2), 58.

¹⁶ Ibid., 13 December 1850, Ibid., 67

¹⁷ Ibid.

This tolerant new Iman made a suggestion which momentarily excited McDougall. 'At present he is my friend . . . HE WANTS THE MALAY CHILDREN TAUGHT IN THE MISSION SCHOOL'¹⁸ (McDougall's capitals). Immediately he clutched at straws. 'This will doubtless help our views in the long run, for as instruction is imparted to the Malays they will shake off Mahometanism'. He continued,

All the foundations and bulwarks of Mahommedanism are fast crumbling and mouldering away; education will undermine it and it will fall of its own weight, but if we attempt an open assault we shall fail, and only incite them to prop up their tottering walls, and rouse and double the now sleeping sentinels of bigotry and distrust.¹⁹

Conviction undermined by doubts

In the event it was not Islam that was undermined but McDougall's optimism. Though he kept it quiet for a year his change of attitude stemmed from the months of rest spent in Penang, Malacca and Singapore between January and June 1850, when he had noted the failure of the station schools to make converts. By March 1851 he was ready to reveal his doubts to the committee, claiming that his own Home School in Kuching taught Christianity

in contra distinction to the system which now obtains in the Missionary and other Public Institutions with Christian doctrines (just as we were taught the mythology of Greece and Rome) without making them Christians . . . the consequence of which system of casting pearls before swine is that they turn again and rend, and pour contempt on, that very Faith which it has been so injudiciously sought to bring them to.²⁰

Two weeks later McDougall was quite specific.

For my own part I look upon such schools for heathen and Mahommetan children as much less important in a Missionary point of view than our Home School where we bring up our children as Christians, and how far it is useful and proper to teaching Mahommedan and Heathen children as a mere intellectual lesson in these general schools I have great doubts.²¹

¹⁸ 'The Mission School' mentioned here is the institution generally known by the name of 'The Home School', started by McDougall in September 1848 for the specific Christian education of selected children who were baptised on entry. See below 40-1.

¹⁹ McDougall to Stooks, 13 December 1850, Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid., 29 March 1851, MSS.Pac.s.104 (2), 77.

²¹ Ibid., 15 April 1851, MSS.Pac.s.104 (2), 80.

An event which may have made McDougall more jaundiced than ever was the defection of the schoolmaster Rati which occurred at about this time. In the same letter in which he wrote about 'casting pearls before swine' in March 1851 Frank claimed that he had always doubted Rati's sincerity and had consequently refused the teacher's requests for baptism, a denial of course which might have encouraged him to return to Islam! In sour mood McDougall concluded with typical exaggeration that every graduate of Keasberry's school who had come to Sarawak had 'embraced Islam' when he became his 'own master'.²²

Bolstered by the arrival of new staff (the priest Walter Chambers and the catechists C.J. Fox and W.W. Nicholls) McDougall re-opened the Malay school under Nicholls' direction in August 1851, but with so much pessimism about the effectiveness of that form of education its future appeared somewhat shaky. A letter in the same month reveals that McDougall had already concluded that a government-sponsored school might be a better way forward, both for church and state. Indeed, the Mission's modest efforts in teaching the Malays might well prove to have been 'the first great move towards a system of national education in Sarawak'.²³

'Civilising' was still important but it should be promoted by the state rather than by the church. And who knows – in the long term, with the work of the state allied to that of the church, it could still result in the 'Christianising' of the Malay population.

The communication of sound secular knowledge, the allaying of religious suspicion and jealousy, and the careful teaching of the great religious and moral truths held in common by Christians and Mahommedans will raise this people at present both socially and politically, while in the long run it will prove a powerful auxiliary to our Missionary work by rendering them more capable of understanding and more open to the influence of Christian truth.²⁴

Although Fox was seconded to assist Nichols when the school reopened it never thereafter thrived, and McDougall's absence in Hong Kong for several months between January and May 1852 for the improvement of his health contributed to the instability. When the local Malay leaders began to see the school as a threat and withdrew their support the writing was on the wall, and the resignation of Nicholls in October 1852 in order to seek ordination back

²² Ibid., 29 March 1851. Ibid., 77.

²³ McDougall to Stooks, 15 August 1851, Ibid., 98.

²⁴ Ibid.

in Calcutta dealt the death-blow. In the same month Frank and Harriette left Sarawak to return to England for their first long leave.

Andrew Horsburgh, a deacon recruited by McDougall in Hong Kong, was left in charge of the Mission in Kuching, and he lost no time in informing the committee that work among the Malays was effectively finished. In words reminiscent of St Paul in Acts, 13:46, he wrote:

The Malays and Klings [from the Coromandel coast] are Mahometans, and such is their bigotry that all present efforts to bring them within the Church have failed. To the conversion of the immigrant Chinese therefore the efforts of the Mission have been . . . directed.²⁵

Medicine – The Dispensary

Healing of bodies – help or hindrance?

It was in his dispensary, opened in a small corner of the Court House soon after his arrival in Sarawak at the end of June 1848, that Dr McDougall first encountered the Malays whose ultimate conversion he had begun to contemplate. As with the education to be provided in the Malay school, the healing undertaken in this dispensary was envisaged as a ‘civilising’ force that would lead eventually to the ‘Christianising’ of the patients, their families and their neighbours.

Aware however of the need for caution and gradualness (as with the school) McDougall confined himself in his first letters back to England to generalised comments rather than specific predictions. As well as assisting him in mastering the Malay language, which had been studied only from books on the outward voyage, contact with his Malay patients would lead to a gaining of their confidence, so ‘paving the way for benefiting their souls as well as their bodies’.²⁶

²⁵ Horsburgh to Stooks, 19 October 1852, *Ibid.*, 155.

²⁶ McDougall to Stooks, 1 August 1848, MSS.Pac.s.104 (2), 9.

The dispensary was initially open from 12 noon until 3.00 pm, the hours of strongest heat when people would not be working, and during those hours McDougall received 'plenty of patients'. In his first letter to the committee at the end of July he quoted from his case book to the effect that he had admitted 50 fresh cases in a fortnight, 'of which about one half were ague, fever and rheumatism, the remainder diarrhoea, bronchitis and surgical cases'.²⁷ Pressure on space could only be relieved if the Rajah would finance a hospital, and that did not happen until October 1850. In these early stages McDougall was so busy as to become almost completely pre-occupied with healing bodily ailments to the detriment of his teaching Ministry. 'I sometimes feel annoyed', he complained, 'at my medical avocations occupying so much of my time . . . at night I am tired and unfit for study or sermon writing.'²⁸

But the social value of these early sessions provided one or two bonuses. Harriette was later to bear witness, 'I used to hear continual talking and laughing going on there [in the dispensary], and by this means Mr McDougall learnt to talk the Malay language'.²⁹ Her husband also learned early in the life of the Mission to respect at least one aspect of Muslim faith, for the month of Ramadan began on 31 July and his Malay patients would not touch a drop of their prescribed medicines until after sunset.

The initial success of McDougall's 'medical avocations', although agreeable in itself in establishing feelings of trust between the patients and their missionary doctor, continued to worry him. In September he grumbled again that the dispensary was taking up more of his time than was desirable, but he hoped that good would come out of it. As he gained the confidence of the people he would be 'better able to influence them for good when opportunity offers'.³⁰

He was not the only one to be worried. His reports also concerned the home committee, and they wrote to remind him of his primary missionary role whilst accepting that the dispensary might lead to evangelistic success.

We are however sure that you will under any circumstances look upon medical duties which you may judge it expedient to fulfil as to be undertaken only in connection with and subsidiary to your great spiritual

²⁷ McDougall to Brereton, 31 July 1848, *Ibid.*, 4.

²⁸ McDougall to Stooks, 1 August 1848, *Ibid.*, 9.

²⁹ H. McDougall, *op.cit.*, 19.

³⁰ McDougall to Brereton, 18 September 1848, MSS.Pac.s.104 (2), 11.

charge, and as enabling you to obtain the confidence of the natives in order to lead them more readily to the physician of their souls.³¹

The same tendency to separate the spiritual and practical elements in mission and to elevate the spiritual as primary can also be found in South Africa at this time, and will be analysed in Chapter 2, p. 100-1.

Before he had received the committee's letter McDougall wrote to them again to assure them that 'my medical employments were not, nor ever will be, of the smallest hindrance to my more immediate Missionary duties'.³² He had by then begun to employ a servant for the more basic tasks in the dispensary (why did he not use Wright, who was the son of a doctor and had himself studied medicine?³³), but he still felt it necessary to defend the amount of time he was spending there on pre-evangelistic grounds. Through the exercise of his medical skills his patients were now listening to him whilst he 'talked to them as a Padre', whereas had they regarded him only as a clergyman their apprehensions might have been aroused. Such had been the case with the German Hupe.³⁴

As with his hopes for the Malay school, cautious optimism was reflected in his letters. Having secured the confidence of the sick by 'saving lives and limbs' he was already 'able to develop and encourage those principles of religion, truth and equity which they (as Mahommedans) hold in common with ourselves: beyond this we cannot, as yet, dare to go, and we must be cautious'.³⁵

Having by January 1849 received the committee's warnings McDougall was able in his first report sent to London to reassure them that he agreed with their point of view.

. . . all that I do in regard to my medical employment is and has been subservient to my higher calling and to which I am sure it is proving, and will prove, a powerful auxiliary.³⁶

These remarks may have been couched deliberately for public consumption, for privately McDougall remained more sceptical of the committee's fears. Later in 1849 he commented

³¹ Stooks to McDougall, 19 October 1848, CLS 54, 30.

³² McDougall to Stooks, 30 November 1848, MSS.Pac.s.104 (2), 16.

³³ Testimonial for Wright, 26 April 1847, CLS 54, 10.

³⁴ McDougall to Stooks, 30 November 1848, MSS.Pac.s.104 (2), 16.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ McDougall to Stooks, 6 January 1849, CLR 72, 27-28.

to Bunyon (Harriette's brother) that the authorities in the BCMI 'seem to have taken fright at the idea that the Mission was too much occupied with the bodies rather than the souls of men'.³⁷ A simple example would demonstrate the effective way in which his healing of people's bodies could open windows into their souls.

A great deal of interest had been aroused in Kuching by a cure McDougall had effected on a blind Malay woman who had suffered for years from cataracts in both eyes.

The present case has amazed them not a little, and I trust that they will learn thereby to give glory to God, who enables us thus to benefit their bodies, that we may gain their hearts and win their souls for Him who lived and died that the blind might see, the lame might walk, and the captives of error be set free to follow 'the light of the World'.³⁸

There is a certain ambivalence in McDougall's understanding of the significance of his medical work. On the one hand his allusion in the above letter to Christ's 'sermon' in the synagogue at Nazareth (Luke, 4:18-19, quoting Isaiah, 61:1-2) might suggest there was an holistic element in his healing. On the other hand he appeared to be mainly interested in impressing his patients as a doctor in order to lead them on to consult the 'physician of their souls'. We look in vain for any coherent or developed theology of healing in McDougall, but he was not a callous or calculating man and he believed that he was following Christ by using the talents he had been given. He had after all been trained in medicine before any other discipline and was obviously skilled at it – it was his first love and always excited him – and he was undoubtedly moved with compassion at the sight of sickness and convinced that it was his plain Christian duty to help where possible.

McDougall's attitude was not untypical of his day. When David Livingstone was admitted as an Honorary Fellow of the Faculty of Physicians & Surgeons at Glasgow in 1857 he responded to the President's remarks by admitting;

In the country to which I went I endeavoured to follow the footsteps of my Lord and Master. Our Saviour was a physician; but it is not to be expected that His followers should perform miracles. The nearest approach which they could expect to make was to become acquainted with medical science and endeavour to heal the diseases of man.³⁹

³⁷ McDougall to Bunyon, 26 October 1849, quoted in Bunyon, *op.cit.*, 35-37.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ W.G. Blaikie, *Personal Life of David Livingstone*, London, John Murray, 1880, 1913 reprint, 184-5.

Harriette McDougall shared her husband's views on the link between Christianity and healing. In the same month in which Frank wrote to her brother she commented in a letter to her friend Ellen Robson (who was looking after her eldest child Charlie at her home in Norfolk) about a magistrate from Singapore who had come to Kuching 'for Frank to doctor him'. The McDougalls had by this time moved into the newly completed Mission House. 'I always said this house on the hill would be a Hospital, and I think it is a very suitable part of our Mission . . . the old religious houses were always hospitals'.⁴⁰ But, she lamented, 'where is the money to come from?'

It is to Harriette that we owe a story which illustrated Frank's compassion. Whilst cutting rattans in a shed one of their former Malay servants had been bitten on his thumb by a cobra. When in the evening his arm began to swell, 'instead of going to the *doctor* (my italics) who then lived close by he must needs go to [Frank] to cure him'.⁴¹ Although they were just sitting down to dinner McDougall responded immediately, cauterised the wound and administered two bottles of brandy together with other stimulants. Then, Harriette laconically recorded, her husband 'sat up with him all night'.⁴²

This story underlines the fact that there were of course other doctors in Sarawak at the time, Malay physicians and Chinese practitioners as well as Dayak healers. This needs emphasising in view of Harriette's belief that, when Frank was absent from Kuching 'there was no medical man in the town',⁴³ and Bunyon's published comment that 'McDougall was for years the only doctor in Sarawak'.⁴⁴ What McDougall did was to bring to Sarawak the whole apparatus of Western European medicine, and with it the prejudice that this was superior to and more effective than Asian models.

Both Frank and Harriette yearned for the day when an official European doctor might be appointed by the state government, but it was to be a long time coming (in fact, in 1862). In the meantime, as the years passed by, more and more medical work was loaded onto his willing shoulders. In 1849 a number of naval casualties from the Rajah's expedition to

⁴⁰ H. McDougall to Ellen Robson, October 1849, MSS.Pac.s.104 (1), 9-11.

⁴¹ H. McDougall, *op.cit.*, 27-28.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 107

⁴⁴ Bunyon, *op.cit.*, 211.

subdue the Sea Dayak pirates had to be accommodated in a makeshift hospital and tended by McDougall. In October 1850 five thousand refugees of mixed Chinese and Dayak parentage fled into Sarawak from the areas under Dutch control in order to escape a violent insurrection. There were many sick and wounded among them, and McDougall built what he called a 'native house' (Harriette referred to it as 'a long shed'⁴⁵) to be used as 'a temporary hospital for the worst cases'. He attended this hospital in the mornings, admitting at first 15 patients and then reducing the number to 10 to avoid overcrowding, before going on to his dispensary at mid-day.⁴⁶

The hospital at first suffered from teething troubles in so far as the death of one patient was the cause of all the others who were mobile running away from the body, but the addition of a separate room for corpses removed such cultural pressures. Expense was a worry, but by February 1851 the Rajah's liberality had resulted in the erection of a more substantial and airy hospital with 24 beds in a long room above the fort in Kuching, with an adjacent dispensary.⁴⁷

A postscript to the letter reporting this illustrates further McDougall's compassion – he had to end the letter hurriedly in order to go down river to tend several Malay children who had fallen sick ('one child dead and 5 raving mad') after eating jungle fruits.

One important evangelistic consequence which resulted from the building of the first hospital was the baptism of several Chinese men on their recovery,⁴⁸ the first Chinese converts in Sarawak. Another result was that a number of the refugee Chinese 'acquired sufficient confidence' in McDougall to hand over their children to him to be brought up as Christians in the Home School. When Frank reported this gleefully to the home committee⁴⁹ their attitude softened, and they began to accept without further complaint his finding time for medical work. (Their grumbling was transferred instead to the financial implications involved in the necessary enlargement of the Home School!) So Bunyon was able to record that 'from 1850 onwards we do not hear of any objection being made to his doctoring'.⁵⁰ McDougall had made his point.

⁴⁵ H. McDougall, *op.cit.*, 83.

⁴⁶ McDougall to Brereton, 23 October 1850, MSS.Pac.s.104(2), 63.

⁴⁷ McDougall to Stooks, 24 February 1851, *Ibid.*, 75.

⁴⁸ H. McDougall, *op.cit.*, 83.

⁴⁹ McDougall to Brereton, 23 October 1850, MSS.Pac.s.104 (2), 64.

⁵⁰ Bunyon, *op.cit.*, 67-68.

All missionaries are doctors

The three new missionaries – Chambers, Fox and Nicholls – arrived during these months of greater medical activity, and McDougall determined to share some of his skills and knowledge with them. He felt it important that the new men should acquire at least the rudiments of basic medical practice before proceeding to work in country areas, to provide them with the means of establishing a sympathetic entry into the lives of those among whom they were establishing a mission. In 1851 McDougall described to Bunyon a typical day in Kuching, beginning with school at 7.00am, church at 8.00am and breakfast at 9.00am.

From 10 to 12 I am employed with Fox and Nicholls at the hospital and dispensary, showing them practically what I can, and giving a daily lecture on the principles of medicine and surgery.

According to Bunyon when recording this McDougall would then leave the classroom and take his colleagues on an expedition to a Dayak area where he would ‘introduce his mission by kind words and the practise of medicine’.⁵¹

Harriette saw the hospital as furnishing ‘good instruction to the new missionaries’, as it was ‘quite necessary’ that they should know something about healing ‘the ailments to which natives are most subject’.⁵² ‘The first question the Dyaks asked, if told a new missionary was coming, would always be “Is he clever at physic?”’.⁵³ This thorough training seems to have worked, for in June 1855 Horsburgh (recruited from Hong Kong in 1852) had at Banting set a fractured thigh ‘very nicely’.⁵⁴ Indeed, it was Horsburgh who had to treat the Rajah when, during McDougall’s furlough in England in 1853, he succumbed to a virulent attack of smallpox.⁵⁵

The rural mission stations established gradually from 1851 onwards afforded good examples of church-state co-operation, in that the missionaries with their newly-acquired knowledge of ‘physic’ took with them a supply of medicines and surgical instruments, the stocks of which were thereafter replenished by the government. Chambers was to discover the importance of working with the civil power when in September 1851 he became the first of McDougall’s colleagues to go and live among the Dayaks. Assistance from the young local resident on the

⁵¹ Bunyon, *op.cit.*, 82.

⁵² H. McDougall, *op.cit.*, 82-83

⁵³ *Ibid.*,

⁵⁴ Bunyon, *op.cit.*, 111

⁵⁵ Jacob, *op.cit.*, 78-80.

Skrang river, Willie Brereton – who had himself benefited from McDougall’s medical skills when sick with fever in 1848 – was given to Chambers as soon as he had arrived on station, and within nine days he had established a clinic. But Chambers was not to be permitted the ambiguity over the significance of his work which had afflicted McDougall’s early months. Brereton found time to remind the people that ‘the real work of padres is connected with the worship of God, and that our attention to this of giving them medicines arises from our compassion for their bodily sufferings’.⁵⁶

McDougall’s own poor health

McDougall’s sympathetic family biographer was to record how much his brother-in-law delighted in his practise of medicine and kept up to date with his technical knowledge as the years went by. How strange then that this skilled physician could not heal himself! One of the mysteries surrounding McDougall’s mission in Sarawak – which will be discussed in Chapter 2 – concerns the inability of a man who was clearly highly respected both in the European community and the mission areas for his medical ability to conquer the debilitating effects of almost constant sickness. This was one of the first doubts to prick the bubble of his early confident optimism and cause him to question whether in fact he would ever be fit whilst living in Sarawak. The question was certainly unanswered when the committee of the BCMI allowed him to return to England at the end of 1852 in an attempt to repair his health and strength.

A TRADITIONAL CHURCHMAN WITH AN INCLUSIVIST MISSIOLOGY

McDougall’s evangelical zeal in relation to the ultimate conversion of the Malays as expressed during his early years in Sarawak, and his vision of the medical work as an important auxiliary to evangelism, derived in part from the influence of a childhood home affected by the power of the Evangelical Revival and subsequent marriage into an Evangelical family. These influences will be examined in detail in Chapter 3. Two years at

⁵⁶ Chambers to McDougall, 28 October 1851. Quoted in Brian Taylor, *The Anglican Church in Borneo 1848-1962*, Bognor Regis, New Horizon Press, 1983, 26.

Oxford under the spell of Newman, although introducing him to the traditional and Catholic inheritance of the Church of England, did nothing to diminish this inbred and nurtured concern to win new converts for Christ and his Church. Such convictions sent McDougall to Borneo in the first place and sustained him throughout the long and often disappointing years of mission.

Early indifference to the Chinese

But this evangelical conviction and concern made little headway among the immediate neighbours close to the Mission in Kuching, the Chinese populace whose homes and shops surrounded the hill on which the Mission House and church were erected (see Map 3). McDougall's early letters home showed an almost complete indifference to the presence of the Chinese in Sarawak, and such references as did appear were quite derogatory. Whilst excavating the foundations for the new Mission House in November 1848 he noted with scorn that the Chinese labourers refused to use anything 'but their own little baskets and hoes', unlike the Malays who were 'excellent navvies'.⁵⁷ A year later he suggested offensively that the Mission land was being fenced 'to protect it from wild pigs and china-men'.⁵⁸ There seems a racist element here which will be discussed in Chapter 5.

A contempt for what he would have regarded as Chinese 'superstitions' combined with the fact that, in contrast with Islam, traditional Chinese beliefs seemed to afford little common ground on which Christianity could be engaged, may partly explain this neglect of evangelism among the Chinese inhabitants. Also, preoccupation with the Malay challenge and with his medical work must have taken up a lot of McDougall's time and energy and marginalised concern for the Chinese, who were after all a minority group. Such crumbs as fell from the table were however accepted – such as the healing and teaching of some of the Chinese refugees from Dutch Borneo in October 1850 (see above, p. 29), and the recruitment of a Chinese schoolmaster named Ayoon from Singapore in 1851 to help teach the new intake into the Home School. By October 1851 short services in one of the Chinese dialects were being organised, with Fox encouraged to learn enough of the language to say prayers.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ McDougall to Stooks, 30 November 1848, MSS.Pac.s.104 (2), 17.

⁵⁸ Ibid, 2 November 1849, Ibid, 46.

⁵⁹ Ibid, 11 October 1851, Ibid., 109.

Three adult Chinese catechumens resulting from work in the hospital were mentioned in March 1851,⁶⁰ and in the following September these three plus another one were baptised and a further Chinese convert was received from the Roman Catholic Church. At the service for the commissioning of Chambers when McDougall preached his important sermon (see below, p. 39) on 7 September 1851 these five were admitted to Holy Communion.⁶¹ It was a small beginning destined to have significant results.

McDougall's visit to Hong Kong for recuperation in January 1852 stirred up in him a greater interest in mission among the Chinese, and whilst there he recruited the deacon Andrew Horsburgh for service in Sarawak. On returning to Sarawak in May a Chinese day school was opened in Ayoon's house, with the teaching shared with another of the refugees from across the border, Foon Ngyen Khoon, who had been baptised in the previous January. Evening lectures created more interest, with the result that on Whit Sunday in May 1852 nine further Chinese converts received the Holy Communion.⁶² It is interesting to note that all these new Christians were admitted to the Sacrament without prior Confirmation.

By this time McDougall had become preoccupied with making arrangements for his furlough. Of more importance were the plans and preparations for the Dayak mission which were then at an advanced stage. Any further efforts at evangelism among the Chinese had to wait.

The Dayak Mission

It is necessary to emphasise at this point that, unlike many previous excursions of Anglican clergy to colonial territories, the aim of the Borneo Mission from its inception was not primarily the pastoral care of the British emigrants but rather the conversion of the indigenous populations. As noted earlier (above, 7-9) such an aim accorded well with the vision of James Brooke, who described to his friend John Templer soon after his appointment as Rajah in 1841 the opportunities for Christianity – as well as the commercial advantages – to be found in his new realm.⁶³

⁶⁰ Ibid, 29 March 1851, Ibid., 79.

⁶¹ Ibid, 13 September 1851, Ibid., 105.

⁶² McDougall to Stooks, 31 May 1852, Ibid., 144.

⁶³ J. Brooke to J.C. Templer, 10 November 1841. Quoted in Templer, *op.cit.*, Vol. 1, 136.

As Brooke saw it the development of Sarawak under his beneficent rule would provide 'a vast field for Christianity', and any missionary who joined him would be regarded as a 'guardian angel' by the previously oppressed but now liberated Dayak population.⁶⁴ Such a missionary 'would have every advantage, and his doctrine would be beneficially introduced by the amelioration of the temporal conditions of a most unhappy race'. The Rajah would 'expect a rapid advance in Christianity when once they were relieved from oppression'.⁶⁵ Clearly 'civilising' would be the prelude to 'Christianising'.

From that moment onwards, in letters first to his mother and then to his friends, James Brooke reiterated constantly his hopes for the conversion of the Dayaks. In consequence, when his appeals were finally heard and the BCMI established in 1846 (see p. 11 above), its small organising committee had no hesitation in expressing their conviction that 'the grateful and simple-minded Dyaks were ready to welcome with cheerful confidence any who will come among them in the name of their "white friends"'.⁶⁶ This romantic vision was formally conveyed to the enthusiastic audience at the meeting to launch the Mission in the Hanover Square rooms on 22 November 1847. The Rajah in his speech performed a neat balancing act between the aspirations of his subjects and the methods of the new Mission, where

a labour of patience and forbearance is needed, that we may gradually and slowly proceed to the training of the Dyak population without giving offence to or meeting with opposition from their Malay brethren.⁶⁷

The head of the new Mission, on being introduced to the supporters present, spoke in rather more general terms about the need to 'proclaim the truths of the Gospel to those yet sitting in darkness and the valley of the shadow of death'.⁶⁸ But there can be no doubt that Frank McDougall set sail for Borneo five weeks later with the objective of a Dayak mission firmly in his mind.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ C.D. Brereton, *op.cit.*, 1.

⁶⁷ BCMI, *Proceedings at a Public Meeting of the Friends of the Borneo Church Mission, Hanover Square Rooms, Mon. Nov. 22 1847*. SPG Bound Pamphlets 15008, item 19, 12-13.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

Early contacts and visits

It has been noted already that the dispensary established soon after the arrival of the mission party in Kuching brought McDougall into immediate contact with local Malays. It also proved the place where he met Dayaks for the first time, and they created a favourable impression on the missionary doctor by what he saw as their transparent honesty and seeming lack of guile. He wrote in his first letter home that

much, very much may be done with them even in this generation, but the only way of reaching them is by having a set of men attached to the Mission who will live amongst these simple, unsophisticated woodmen.⁶⁹

He calculated that at least 20 missionaries would be needed to cover all the different tribes, and uttered what was to be the first of a long series of pleas to the committees both of the BCMI and the SPG over many years for more recruits and greater support. 'O, do try to send us some Dyak apostles; make a beginning at least with one or two'.⁷⁰ The poverty of the response from home did not augur well for future success.

McDougall had soon observed that Kuching was primarily a Malay town, and the Mission would not meet many Dayaks if its evangelists were content to remain at headquarters. He had also come to the conclusion that his duty lay in remaining in Kuching 'to direct others', and he was unwilling to send Wright into the jungle villages (see below, p. 47-8), but he realised the urgency of at least visiting Dayak areas as quickly as possible. Within three months of the arrival of the Mission he began to investigate the nature and conditions of the rural peoples with a view to an expedition among them as soon as circumstances permitted.⁷¹

By the end of 1848 he had managed an initial four-day visit to a community of Land Dayaks within easy reach of Kuching. More pacific and settled than their warlike Sea Dayak cousins who lived on the banks of the rivers in the remoter areas, the Land Dayaks were the group originally in James Brooke's mind when he first envisaged inviting a Christian Mission.

In his first report home in January 1849 McDougall informed the committee and supporters of this initial visit. He claims to have told the Dayaks as they sat with him on the verandah

⁶⁹ McDougall to Brereton, 31 July 1848, MSS.Pac.s.104 (2), 4.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ McDougall to Brereton, 18 September 1848, Ibid., 11.

of their longhouse that 'God was their and our Father', an interesting early confirmation of McDougall's inclusivism, and received from them the surprising news that they did indeed have a religion of their own.⁷² He seems to have made a sincere attempt to understand Dayak beliefs as described to him, and concluded that the indigenous people worshipped 'the unknown God' in much the same way as St Paul's Gentile listeners in Lystra and Athens as recorded in Chapters 14 and 17 in the Book of Acts.⁷³

With the Dayaks already possessing beliefs on which the Church could build and in his judgement ready for conversion McDougall sensed the urgency of commencing a mission among them. But the lack of support from home and the inability of the BCMI to send him a single new colleague meant that for two whole years, 1849 and 1850, such a mission could not be launched. All that McDougall could do was to continue with his own sporadic visits to those rural areas which had been pacified and build up a wider knowledge of the customs and beliefs of the people to whom a wider mission would eventually be directed – without losing the original vision.

He dreamed of the day 'when our wild people, like the New Zealanders [the Maoris] whom I fancy they much resemble, all become a most interesting and powerful Christian nation'.⁷⁴ The industrious nature of the Dayaks as he had observed them not only distinguished them from other Asian peoples (surely a shallow judgement?) but predisposed them to 'English rule and influence' and 'adapted them for the more speedy reception . . . of the Gospel'. In conclusion, provided 'our Mission is properly strengthened for its work all Borneo must sooner or later fall'.⁷⁵

Such was the optimistic (and unrealistic) dream which sustained McDougall during the unrewarding months of 1849. And when the first Dayak, an orphan baby girl brought back to Kuching by the Rajah from his punitive expedition that year among the riverine pirates, was baptised in September 1849 and admitted into the Home School, McDougall could not be denied his exultation at the promise that she would be 'the firstborn of a new generation' for whom 'the day of mercy has come'.⁷⁶ The child was christened Mary Nelson in the hope that Lord Nelson, a BCMI supporter in England, might adopt her by paying for her education.

⁷² Report of the BCMI, 1849, CLR 72, 34-5.

⁷³ Ibid

⁷⁴ McDougall to Stooks, 2 May 1849, MSS.Pac.s.104 (2), 30.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ McDougall to Stooks, 24 September 1849, Ibid., 44.

The final months of 1849 and early 1850 were clouded by illness and the deaths of Frank and Harriette's baby Thomas and three-year-old son Harry, so that the weeks of recuperation with the Rajah at Penang in March and April 1850 were much appreciated. From Singapore on his way there McDougall informed his old college head Dr McBride of 'the prospect of extensive missionary operations' among the indigenous people of Sarawak. 'Tribes upon tribes of Dyaks have asked me to send them teachers; some have even expressed their desire to become white men, meaning Christians at once'.⁷⁷ All that was required was a good supply of 'labourers'. It was time for the Rajah himself to inject a note of urgency in supporting McDougall's pleas to the committee.

Whilst in Penang in April 1850 James Brooke wrote a letter to Frank which was clearly intended for onward transmission to London. In it he contended that his submission of the Sea Dayak pirates in the previous year had opened up a large area along the Skrang and Saribas rivers for Christian evangelism, and that in consequence the BCMI committee should treat the prospect of a Dayak mission more seriously. Here would be a noble example of his ideal of co-operation between church and state. 'As we suppress piracy and head-taking the hope of success increases, and to effect these objects is a task worthy of the Church missionary as well as the Statesman'.⁷⁸ So the Mission should be placed 'on a higher footing than at present', and with 'an efficient organisation' and a steady supply of the right kind of labourers – young men who would be obedient and good at languages – the result would be 'satisfactory'.⁷⁹

With McDougall 'regulating and superintending' and 'controlling' their work the new missionaries would be sent to stations in places selected by the Rajah, and the outcome – in Brooke's view – would be mass conversion.

The Dyaks, as I know, have but a slight hold on their present religion, and if they begin to profess Christianity the example of a few will bring over the entire body in any one place.⁸⁰

In this revealing letter James Brooke clearly stated his conviction – 'without dictating' as he put it – that his authority must be paramount over the strategy of the Mission, and there would be little doubt that McDougall at this stage would have endorsed this position. He sent

⁷⁷ McDougall to Dr McBride, Singapore, 6 March 1850. Quoted in Bunyon, *op.cit.*, 62-4.

⁷⁸ J. Brooke to McDougall, Penang Hill, 27 April 1850. Quoted in Bunyon, *op.cit.*, 60-2.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

copies of the Rajah's letter with approval to the BCMI committee, to the secretary of the SPG (for Brooke had queried whether BCMI funds were adequate) and to the Principal of Bishop's College, Calcutta. Within 12 months three new missionaries (Chambers, Fox and Nicholls) had arrived in Sarawak, thereby quadrupling the size of the staff.

For the remainder of 1850 after his return to Kuching in June McDougall was preoccupied with completing the church of St Thomas (whose foundation stone had been laid in 1849), printing his Malay catechism and worrying about the Malay school, and coping with the healing and education of the huge influx of refugees from Dutch Borneo. In January 1851 Daniel Wilson, the elderly Bishop of Calcutta, came to Kuching to consecrate the church and reported to the committee that Sarawak was now like 'the Paradise of God', with the peace established by James Brooke 'like that of the Roman Empire at the Incarnation of our Lord'.⁸¹ 'There was no mission field on the face of the earth' to be compared with Borneo, so the time was obviously ripe for a strong forward move.

The early months of 1851 were a time of preparation and promise. With the new church consecrated and in use, and the Home School and hospital established – with three new colleagues and health temporarily improved – McDougall could start to plan more exactly the areas in which the Dayak mission could be commenced. He suggested that Chambers should go to the remoter Skrang river villages, Nicholls to Lundu (along the coast west of Kuching), but that Fox should remain behind to teach in the Malay school. Although he professed himself 'as anxious as the Committee can possibly be that we should at once commence working directly with the Dyaks'⁸² it was to be several months before a start could be made, and then only Chambers had been trained to go.

Meanwhile McDougall continued his own investigative visits to rural stations. In November 1850 he had accompanied the Rajah on a trip to the Land Dayak area of Merdang about 30 miles from Kuching, and his journal revealed a sensitivity to the customary hospitality of his hosts and a determination not to offend them.⁸³

Whilst Chambers (who had recently arrived) was in Kuching engaged in learning the Malay language and practising a little 'physic' McDougall set off in April 1851 with James Brooke

⁸¹ Bishop of Calcutta to Brereton, 24 January 1851, CLR 72, 117.

⁸² McDougall to Stooks, 24 February 1851, MSS.Pac.s.104 (2), 74.

⁸³ MSS Journal of McDougall, 11/1850, p.4f. To be examined in detail in Chapter 3, p. 126.

on a longer visit to the former Sea Dayak piratical strongholds on the Skrang river, and further afield to Kanowit on the Rejang (see Map 4). Although this expedition caused McDougall considerable discomfort, in that the difficult terrain aggravated an already inflamed knee joint, it convinced him that the Skrang longhouses offered the most promising area for the start of the Dayak mission.⁸⁴ In fact, as will be seen, his optimism was a little premature. But by September 1851 Chambers was ready, having partially at least prepared 'his English tongue and ears' and modified 'his English ways and habits'⁸⁵ (as McDougall warned would have to be the case), and plans were made to commission him at a service in St Thomas's church.

A significant sermon

McDougall decided to preach a sermon at this service on 7 September 1851 which would contain reflections arising from his experiences of Dayak religion and culture during his three years in Sarawak. The sermon will be analysed in depth in Chapter 3 below, and it is sufficient to outline at this stage that in it he developed the early convictions expressed in his report of January 1849 that St Paul was the great example for the Christian missionary. In McDougall's uncritical (and pre-critical) thinking St Paul at Lystra and Athens, and with the Roman Felix and the Jew Agrippa, had acknowledged divine truths and moral insight in all those to whom he was sent to witness. It followed that the Christian missionary in Sarawak should not condemn Dayak religion and culture as dark and meaningless, but endeavour to discover in them signs that God had already been at work in the expressions of truth and goodness which were clearly evident (to those who were prepared to look and listen) in the outlook and behaviour of the Dayak peoples.⁸⁶

When Frank and Harriette returned to England for their long leave at the end of 1852 Chambers and a newcomer W.H. Gomes were left in Sarawak to work out the implications of this sermon in two Dayak areas – Chambers at Lingga and Banting (off the river Lupar) whence he had retreated after trouble on the Skrang, and Gomes at Lundu. Both did their best and developed useful and lasting ministries sympathetic to the indigenous people among

⁸⁴ McDougall to Sir F. Beaufort, 26 April 1851. See Peter D. Varney, *The Anglican Church in Sarawak from 1848 to 1852*, Sarawak Museum Journal, Vol. 16, 32-33, 1968, 395.

⁸⁵ McDougall to Stooks, 24 February 1851, MSS.Pac.s.104 (2), 74.

⁸⁶ F.T. McDougall, *Sermon No. 2* in unclassified sermons presented by the Revd. A.J.M. Saint to Rhodes House Library, Oxford.

whom they lived, without in either case demonstrating the inspiration that the sermon demanded. But there are still (in 1998) strong Anglican churches at Banting and Lundu staffed no longer by expatriate missionaries but by Dayak clergy.

Indigenous Ministry – The Home School

The importance of Christian education

The plight of the Mission in receiving so few recruits in the early years has already been noted. McDougall's constant plea, beginning with his appeal for '20 Dyak apostles' a month after his arrival, and supported by the Rajah in April 1850, could not be answered by the home committee. It was not that the BCMI was unsympathetic to the need but, as a small society, it was hampered by shortage of funds which precluded the selection of married candidates, and by a lack of quality in most of those who did from time to time offer their services. McDougall realised at an early stage that total dependence on expatriate colleagues would prove fatal, and resolved to develop a subordinate indigenous ministry – which might eventually assume even the leadership of the local Church itself.

Within three months of his arrival in Sarawak he had become convinced that another institution was needed alongside the Malay school, in which selected local children could be housed and brought up as Christians 'entirely apart from Malay influence'.⁸⁷ Plans for the new Mission House included space for what he called 'our home school', and the Rajah's active support was sought.

The Rajah has directed the mothers of four children, orphans [sic] whose fathers were English, to give them up to us as soon as I have got the place ready to receive them and a servant to take care of them.⁸⁸

The four children – Mary, Julia, Peter and Tommy – were surnamed after their English fathers – Douglas, Steward, Middleton and Jonathan. A fifth child, a baby named Ann Steel was admitted shortly afterwards, but she was to die a year later. The children came from two

⁸⁷ McDougall to Brereton, 18 September 1848, MSS.Pac.s.104 (2), 12.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

Malay and three Dayak mothers, and what these mothers thought of the action was not recorded, as at the time their views would not much have counted. McDougall's description of the children as 'orphans' suggests that he did not think the women's position was important. It is indicative of the Rajah's complete authority at the time that no protests were recorded over this arbitrary action, and the McDougalls accepted the transfer of parental rights to them without complaint. That the British overseas at that period did not always behave in this fashion is illustrated by the contrast with McDougall's brother-in-law Colenso, who as Bishop of Natal in the same decade accepted only those children whose parents had agreed voluntarily to hand them over for his boys' school at Ekukhanyeni.

These five Eurasian children formed the nucleus of the 'Home School', regarded by the McDougalls thereafter as probably their best-loved and most creative achievement of the Sarawak years. And from the beginning it was clearly regarded not just as a school for Christian education but also as a school for evangelism. In embryo here was a training college for missionaries to come. At the end of November 1848 McDougall reported that the children were to be baptised on Advent Sunday, with Harriette, only just on her feet after her difficult confinement, as godmother. His aim was clear.

This is the first beginning of our school of Education [McDougall's underlining] if I may so term it, from which we may hope in due time to send forth those who will be instrumental in Christianising their unconverted brethren.⁸⁹

Commenting later on McDougall's use of the expression 'in due time' Bunyon (who was close to the mind of his brother-in-law) suggested that the first adult generation of converts was liable to be 'but half Christianised'. It was the second generation who would consistently profess their faith, and provide 'teachers and a native clergy' who could combine the benefits of having been trained 'under superior European instruction' with the ability to 'alone fully enter into the thought of their countrymen'.⁹⁰

McDougall himself at this early stage did not refer to an indigenous clergy, and it may be that he envisaged at first the training of young people to be catechists, teachers (Julia Steward became schoolmistress before marrying a government clerk) and missionary wives (Mary Douglas was later to marry the schoolmaster Owen). He quickly secured the approval

⁸⁹ McDougall to Stooks, 30 November 1848, MSS.Pac.s.104 (2), 17.

⁹⁰ Bunyon, *op.cit.*, 37.

of the BCMI committee who recorded in their 1849 report that 'the School shows promise of providing future missionaries for the evangelisation of their fellow-countrymen'.⁹¹

One of the reasons for the stability of the Home School compared with its Malay counterpart lay undoubtedly in the fact that Harriette McDougall was encouraged to play a major part in its operation – at first, perhaps, in compensation for the death of her first Sarawak baby. In January 1849 Frank wrote that 'our little Christian children' were 'her own especial charge', and they were 'civilising fast'.⁹² 'Christianising' and 'civilising' were to go hand in hand. The children 'have improved in appearance and behaviour in so short a time, and it is quite delightful to hear the elder ones lisping the Lord's Prayer in Malay'.⁹³

Throughout 1849, even though numbers remained small, the Home School prospered. In June McDougall reported that 'my wife's little school thrives under her care . . . Our own children are getting quite like Europeans'.⁹⁴ It was clearly better in his judgement for mixed race (i.e. half white) children to be brought up as 'white people' and not left among Malay or Dayak cultures. (We can see the same philosophy in the 20th century separation of mixed-race Aboriginal children in Australia.)

The addition of another teacher, the servant Elizabeth Richardson who had come to Sarawak with the original Mission party in 1848 and married the German carpenter Stahl who built the Mission House, enabled more individual tuition and a wider syllabus.⁹⁵ The death of Ann Steel in November 1849 had been balanced by the acquisition of Mary Nelson, and the same month also saw the admission of a six-year-old Malay boy. McDougall claimed that his father, a Brunei prince who had fallen on hard times, had surrendered his son voluntarily and 'had no objection to him being baptised' and left in the school for ten years,⁹⁶ but in view of later suggestions (see below, p. 44) it may be wondered whether some financial incentive had been offered in exchange. On his baptism in December McDougall expressed the hope that his ten years' Christian education might render the boy capable – like the other children – of assisting 'in converting his brethren'.⁹⁷

⁹¹ Quoted in Varney, *op.cit.*, 388.

⁹² McDougall to Stooks, 6 January 1849, CLR 72, 19.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ McDougall to Stooks, 9 June 1849, MSS.Pac.s.104 (2), 33.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 25 August 1849, *Ibid.*, 36.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 2 November 1849, *Ibid.*, 46.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 21 December 1849, *Ibid.*, 47.

Financial stringency was not confined to Malay princes. In January 1850 the BCMI committee informed McDougall that their 1849 receipts had not been encouraging, and requested that he make economies. Perhaps the Home School should not be free to all – ‘the natural born children of Englishmen should receive parental support’.⁹⁸ In April 1850 McDougall wrote from Penang to reassure the committee that Peter Middleton was in fact being financed in this way.

The School becomes a College

Whilst in Penang and Singapore in 1850 McDougall had observed the work of the Roman Catholics in south-east Asia and profited by their example. Like most of his Anglican contemporaries he had no love for the Church of Rome, but he could not help admiring their ‘two Colleges under Jesuit rule, one at Pinang . . . and one more recently established at Singapore’.⁹⁹ Their activity was a reproach to Anglican ‘apathy and remissness’ – if they had a mission in Sarawak they would have put a bishop and a large body of clergy in place within a short space of time. To forestall such a possibility his Mission House had been built ‘on such a scale that it will render it suitable for a College’.¹⁰⁰

The influx of thousands of refugees from Dutch Borneo in October 1850 not only increased McDougall’s medical workload but also substantially increased numbers in the Home School. Several Chinese patients were sufficiently impressed by their doctor to give him their children ‘to bring up as Christians’, and the school must be enlarged ‘with a view to its one day being a college’.¹⁰¹ Thirteen Dyako-Chinese children were accepted in this way, bringing total numbers in the Home School up to a healthy 20, and putting pressure on the Mission to create a new school for Chinese boys along the lines of the existing Malay school. (McDougall was able to open the Chinese boys’ day school when Ayoon arrived in 1851.)

This large increase in the number of children in the Home School inevitably added to the expense entailed in its management. The Rajah, who fully approved of what the Mission was doing, was able to provide government money for the new hospital but not for enlarging the

⁹⁸ Stooks to McDougall, 24 January 1850, CLS 54, 56.

⁹⁹ McDougall to E. Hawkins (of SPG), May 1850, MSS.Pac.s.104 (3), 2.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ McDougall to Brereton, 23 October 1850, MSS.Pac.s.104 (2), 64.

school. McDougall however was confident that British supporters would back his efforts. God would surely move the hearts

of His faithful children in England to gather these little ones into her bosom and to bring them up and send them forth hereafter as the messengers of peace to their Dyak and Chinese kindred around us'.¹⁰²

But God moves in a mysterious way. As at the start of 1850, so by the end of the year the finances of the BCMI were in a parlous condition. Having already warned McDougall that the funds of the Mission must be spent less on buildings and more on strictly 'missionary purposes' the secretary confided in January 1851 that 'by the end of this year we shall be almost beggared'.¹⁰³ McDougall was rebuked for increasing Mrs Stahl's salary without permission and ordered to submit proper estimates for work intended. Then followed 'the unkindest cut of all'. Stooks continued,

So large and sudden an extension of the school is a greater pressure than the funds of the Mission will bear for that particular object . . . Mr McDougall is requested to discontinue all expense on account of children of Dyako-Chinese parents mentioned in his letter [of 23 October 1850]'.¹⁰⁴

The committee made one rather desperate suggestion for saving money which they must have known would receive short shrift in Kuching – perhaps the Home School might be amalgamated with the Malay day school, and more consideration be given to promoting government schools?

Before he received the committee's bombshell McDougall – in February 1851 – produced an ingenious suggestion for spending the Mission's limited funds. A Dayak leper in the hospital seemed prepared to surrender his two grandchildren to the Home School. McDougall vowed:

I will get them if I can – perhaps I shall have to give a little money for them, but it will be worthwhile as they are very promising children. It is astonishing how difficult it is to persuade the Dyaks to let their children go away from them . . . but the greatest distress or large bribes will induce them to do so'.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Stooks to McDougall, 21 January 1851, CLS 54, 79-80.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ McDougall to Stooks, 24 February 1851, MSS.Pac.s.104 (2), 75

The chief missionary, who was happy to leave his eldest son behind for years in England on sailing for Sarawak, had not yet understood the closeness of Dayak family life. He was also as naïve in thinking that the committee would accept his suggestion as they were in hoping that he would approve theirs. By March the secretary's letter of 21 January had reached him, and in his reply – surely headed deliberately 'College Hill, Sarawak'? – McDougall breathed defiance.

Your last letter is discouraging to us all . . . with regard to the [Home] School that really must not [McDougall's underlining] be given up. I look upon it as the one great fact that has resulted from our labours in Sarawak, the nucleus of an Institution which will one day supply a native Ministry for Borneo'.¹⁰⁶

Here was McDougall's clearest affirmation since the inauguration of the Mission that he entertained the vision of an indigenous ministry, and combined with his doubts about the Malay school it indicated that specific 'Christianising' was assuming a higher priority. His rejection however of the committee's suggestion that the schools might be amalgamated seems strange in view of his enthusiasm a few months earlier for the new Imam's idea that the Malay children might be taught in the Home School. It is likely that he considered this possibility as enabling him to teach Christianity to Muslim children, retaining the particular ethos of the Home School, whereas he suspected that the committee's proposal would lead to a diluted 'mythological' version of the Christian Faith being given to all children. He was adamant that under no circumstances would he renounce the pure and separate teaching of baptised young people, the firstfruits of his dream of a College of Ministry for the future Church in Sarawak. If the BCMI could not raise sufficient funds to finance this then they should offer the Borneo Mission to the SPG, who had the means to attract greater support.¹⁰⁷ That was to happen within two years.

In May 1851 it was the committee's turn to respond to McDougall's suggestion of offering money to Dayak parents (or grandparents?) in exchange for children. Their reply was equally as negative as his had been.

As to any intention of buying any Dayak children or bribing the parents to part with them, the Committee particularly request that you will abandon any such idea. They are entirely of the opinion that it should only be on

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 29 March 1851, Ibid., 77.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 78.

the expressed wish of the parents and on actual application that any child should be admitted . . .',¹⁰⁸

A month later, having received his March letter from 'College Hill' and being impressed that McDougall would not compromise, the committee agreed to his retention of all the new Chinese children in an enlarged Home School. The fact that he had already baptised these children before knowledge of the committee's disapproval reached him afforded them the opportunity to succumb gracefully. For 'having admitted them into the Church of Christ you cannot of necessity refuse them the training of the Church and throw them back again into the darkness of heathenism'.¹⁰⁹ Honour had been satisfied all round!

Although three of the Chinese children (out of a total of 25) left in August 1851 to return to China with their parents the Home School flourished, and within a year its status as a college for ministry seemed to be realised. In May 1852 four of the older boys had proved 'useful assistants' during an attempt to establish the Mission's presence in the Chinese gold-mining town of Bau, about 30 miles from Kuching.¹¹⁰ Here was promise for the future if only stability could be maintained and consistency established. But McDougall was already making plans for returning to England for a furlough to last two years.

The year 1852 also saw an increase in support and interest at home, with the revival of a scheme floated by McDougall in September 1848¹¹¹ but not taken up then, whereby supporters might sponsor a child in the Home School (Lord Nelson had not sponsored Mary in 1849). In February 1852 an old school friend of the Rajah in Norwich informed the committee that two local ladies wished to adopt two children in Kuching. They were to be named after their sponsors, Emily or John Morse and Lucy or George Morse.¹¹²

By the time Frank and Harriette sailed for England in October 1852, leaving the Home School in the hands of Horsburgh and Elizabeth Stahl, the future of the college of ministry seemed assured. But McDougall's authority during his 2½-year absence was to be sorely missed, for in 1853 carelessness on the part of those he had left in charge resulted in the schoolmaster Ayoon being able to seduce some of the girls, thereby almost wrecking the institution.¹¹³ At the same time Chambers and Gomes came to value some measure of

¹⁰⁸ Stooks to McDougall, 24 May 1851, CLS 54, 87.

¹⁰⁹ Stooks to McDougall, 24 June 1851, *Ibid.*, 89.

¹¹⁰ McDougall to Stooks, 31 May 1852, MSS.Pac.s.104 (2), 144.

¹¹¹ McDougall to Brereton, 18 September 1848, *Ibid.*, 11.

¹¹² Bunyon, *op.cit.*, 73.

¹¹³ McDougall to Horsburgh, 3 October 1853, Copy Letter Book.

independence with their leader far away and on their own initiative established the Mission at Banting and Lundu on firm foundations.

A BISHOP FOR THE MISSION – OR A MISSIONARY BISHOP?

Initial confusion over authority

By the time that Chambers reached Sarawak in March 1851 McDougall's authority as head of the Mission had become reasonably well defined. But when the first missionary party sailed from England at the end of 1847 there had been no clear demarcation of the respective roles of McDougall and Wright and little understanding as to how authority, if needed, was to be exercised. No doubt (and a later letter from the committee seemed to confirm this) the BCMI assumed that all that Christian missionaries required to solve any differences which might arise between them was a spirit of 'amity and brotherly love'.

When the fledgling BCMI in April 1847 requested grant aid from the SPCK they recorded their intention to send McDougall to Sarawak 'with a coadjutor in Deacon's orders'.¹¹⁴ In June W.B. Wright, the lay Scripture Reader at Christ Church, Woburn Square (the church where McDougall was assistant curate) was ordained as that Deacon. The next stage was to secure the approval of the Archbishop of Canterbury for the selection of a Mr Montgomery 'as another assistant missionary'.¹¹⁵ [In the event Montgomery died before he could be sent out.] Finally in November the Bishop of London was requested to license McDougall as 'the Principal Missionary of the Mission'.¹¹⁶ With such phrases the matter was left to the good sense of those who sailed in December and arrived in Sarawak in June 1848, with the promise of further and clearer regulations to follow.

'Coadjutor', 'assistant missionary', and 'principal missionary' – such general expressions as appear in the preceding paragraph were not likely to ensure smooth relationships between McDougall and Wright, especially as it became immediately obvious that the former was prone to pass judgement on his colleague. Wright 'was not a man that would thrive in the

¹¹⁴ C.D. Brereton to Secretary SPCK, 29 April 1847, CLS 54, 11.

¹¹⁵ Memo of 11 October 1847, *Ibid.*, 12.

¹¹⁶ Stooks to Bishop of London, *Ibid.*, 27.

jungle' declared McDougall in his first letter home.¹¹⁷ (One is tempted to ask why in that case he was selected to go to Borneo, although the fact that he was married with a child might have suggested he was more suitable for work in Kuching.) The result was that the two first missionaries of the BCMI and their families were based in the main town, and in the upper rooms of the same house, too close for comfort.

Within ten weeks of arrival disagreement had arisen between the two men. In September McDougall urged the committee to sort out 'the point of subordination' before there was any further increase of staff.

I have had some trouble in this respect already with regard to the management of the school, and it is possible I may have more of it if it is not distinctly understood that I have the direction of affairs'.¹¹⁸

Differences of opinion and personality clashes were exacerbated by the cramped conditions of the Court House, with the families divided from one another only by mat walls. Sickness made matters worse, as Frank recognised in relation to Harriette's impending confinement and Willy Brereton's fever. 'A word spoken in one room is heard all over the house'.¹¹⁹ Its proximity to the river also made the Court House a very unhealthy home. But McDougall seemed unaware of the effect all this was having on the Wrights.

In his September letter he appealed for 'the instructions if they have not already left', but at the end of October the regulations had still not reached him and he sent another urgent appeal home. Plans for the Mission could not be carried out 'if those who are under me choose to act independently of me and to consider themselves irresponsible to me'.¹²⁰ Some sympathy should be extended to McDougall in his dilemma. Sent to Borneo as head of the Mission, nominally at least, and seeing his role as one of remaining in Kuching 'directing others', he was faced by an early disagreement with his colleague and lacked the powers to resolve it – apart, that is, from the ability to compromise. But such was not in his character, nor in Wright's.

¹¹⁷ McDougall to Brereton, 31 July 1848, MSS.Pac.s.104 (2), 5.

¹¹⁸ McDougall to Brereton, 18 September 1848, *Ibid.*, 11.

¹¹⁹ McDougall to Brereton, 31 July 1848, *Ibid.*, 7.

¹²⁰ McDougall to Stooks, 26 October 1848, *Ibid.*, 15.

The differences of opinion between McDougall and Wright over the running of the Malay school have already been noted (above, p.17). Two other problems combined with the school to bring matters to a head in February 1849 – Wright’s smaller salary, and McDougall’s refusal on financial grounds to accede to Wright’s request for a separate home when designing the new Mission House.

On 23 February 1849 Wright sent his resignation to the committee, avowing that ‘as I can do no good to this Mission; I shall endeavour not to encumber it’.¹²¹ Then – strangely in view of McDougall’s estimate that he was not fitted for a jungle ministry – he offered himself for an independent mission to the Dayaks. He must have known that the committee would never agree to that, so perhaps his offer was a ruse to save face in the eyes of the authorities at home who had first selected him.

On the following day McDougall sent his version of events home, outlining the points of dispute and registering a number of criticisms of Wright, some of which were more justified than others. The main relevant point which emerged was that Wright seemed to envisage himself as in sole command at the Malay school and would not accept McDougall’s overall authority – although we only have the latter’s evidence for this. ‘He told me . . . that he would not allow me anything to do with the school and if I interfered in any way he would give it up and go to Singapore’.¹²²

At the end of this letter McDougall reiterated even more strongly his hope that the committee would impress upon all future appointees that they must ‘refer to and consult with’ him ‘in all public matters’. He could not possibly continue with the Mission if ‘those who are sent out act in the opposing and independent manner Mr Wright has done’.¹²³

Matters were at a stalemate for several months, owing to the time in which it took these letters to be received and acknowledged by the committee, and McDougall’s inability, through lack of the necessary authority, to accept Wright’s resignation. That was the committee’s responsibility, but as letters took so long to be received and answered Wright and his family had to hang around in Kuching for almost six months before he knew that his resignation had been accepted. In Frank’s sour judgement they formed ‘the only discordant

¹²¹ Wright to Brereton, 23 February 1849, *Ibid.*, 58.

¹²² McDougall to Stooks, 24 February 1849, *Ibid.*, 21.

¹²³ *Ibid.*

element' in the small British community,¹²⁴ but that did not prevent the European residents calling on Wright's services on occasions when McDougall was absent! When Wright requested payment for work done subsequent to the date of his resignation the committee tartly informed him that the Mission was under no obligation to provide public worship for 'the English residents' alone when the missionaries were absent from Kuching and that they must make their own arrangements.¹²⁵ It was an interesting confirmation of the fact that the Borneo Mission was not created as a chaplaincy for expatriates but as a mission to the indigenous peoples.

The BCMI committee received Wright's letter of resignation and McDougall's comments at the end of April 1849, and after careful consideration despatched their reply on 24 May so that it reached Kuching in July. It was an interesting response and contained explicit criticisms of both missionaries whilst upholding McDougall's overall authority.

'Deep sorrow' was expressed over dissensions between two Christian missionaries causing potential scandal in the eyes of all the peoples of Sarawak and hindering the progress of the Mission.¹²⁶ Wright was mistaken in thinking that he had been given 'exclusive management' of school work, and McDougall was correct when he insisted on the oversight of both teaching and rules.

The Revd. F.T. McDougall, then, is to be regarded as the principal clergyman of the Mission, and on him will rest all the responsibility of managing its important concerns. The management of the Schools (subject to Mr McDougall's superintendence) will form the particular department of the Revd. W.B. Wright.¹²⁷

The committee reminded their missionaries that these definitions had been read to them before they left England, but it must be admitted – and Wright was later to emphasise this – that the 'instructions' were rather imprecise and open to misunderstanding.

Both men were rebuked for making such a fuss over their living arrangements – their 'dissensions ought to have been obviated by the mutual exercise of Christian charity and forbearance' – and McDougall separately for his lack of tact. The committee hoped that

¹²⁴ McDougall to Stooks, 2 May 1849, *Ibid.*, 31.

¹²⁵ Stooks to Wright, 23 October 1849, CLS 54, 52.

¹²⁶ Stooks to McDougall, 24 May 1849, CLS 54, 40-3.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

their 'principal missionary' would exercise the authority they had given him 'with a due regard for the wishes and feelings of the gentleman entrusted with the Educational department' and in a way that would not undermine his influence and standing. Neither should McDougall have accepted Wright's resignation (with alacrity?) – such was not in his power. The 'coadjutor' should have continued in office until confirmation of the termination of his ministry was received from London.¹²⁸

The committee's letter ended with a promise of continued support for McDougall despite their 'plain speaking'. Their letter to Wright by the same mail appeared slightly softer in tone, with the suggestion that he might have 'forgotten how clearly the point of subordination was laid down' in the instructions read to him in England, and the hope that his services might not be irrevocably lost to the BCMI.¹²⁹ In the event, on hearing in July that his resignation had been accepted, Wright and his family moved to Singapore in search of alternative employment.

From Singapore Wright attempted to justify his conduct, suggesting to the committee that his differences with McDougall related 'to the point where Management ended and Superintendence began'.¹³⁰ It was a good point. No doubt the committee's instructions had been too vague, but if McDougall had been a wiser and more diplomatic leader he might have been able to encourage his colleague to exercise initiative within a general framework of obedience arising from Christian charity and mutual respect. As it was the sorry affair only exposed a weakness in McDougall that was to affect his relations with later colleagues even after he had received the more precise authority derived from the office of a bishop. He could not suffer gladly those whom he considered to be fools.

However, in McDougall's favour it should be recorded in fairness that he was not the sort of man to bear grudges for long. There was a generosity in his character. Unaware of Wright's letter to the committee from Singapore McDougall wrote to him and offered him some form of reinstatement in post, although without much hope that Wright would respond. Harriette informed her mother:

I do not suppose it will be any use, for should the Gentleman be disposed to return the Lady will not; however Frank does well and kindly to make

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Stooks to Wright, 24 May 1849, CLS 54, 44-5.

¹³⁰ Wright to Stooks, 26 July 1849, MSS.Pac.s.104 (2), 54.



the offer, the instructions having definitely fixed his authority in all points of the Mission.¹³¹

In putting the blame on Mrs Wright Harriette showed that she could at times be as prejudiced as her husband, raking over the old sores caused at the end of 1848 when Mrs Wright had propelled a sick Harriette into teaching by prematurely resigning her school post. But she correctly diagnosed that the Wrights would not return to Sarawak, and when Frank's offer was refused the generous side of his nature was temporarily subsumed under a display of petulance. His former colleague was 'a well-meaning but very prejudiced old man, and under the rule of a wife who neither improves his temper nor his wisdom'.¹³²

In the same letter as that sour comment McDougall reflected wryly, 'It is a pity he [Wright] did not find out our incompatibilities before we left England'.¹³³ The same accusation could have been levelled of course at McDougall. No doubt the BCMI had yoked together two awkward colleagues, but later events were to prove that being incompatible did not preclude sympathy altogether. In 1857 McDougall, by then a bishop, was to examine Wright in Singapore and ordain him to the priesthood. And in 1862 Wright would return the favour and spring to the defence of McDougall when he was accused of mistreating his clergy. Why could not this mutual tolerance have been evident in 1848 and 1849? The committee were surely correct in diagnosing in their letter of 24 May 1849 that, with a little more flexibility on both sides, authority in the Mission need not have been threatened.

Initiatives for a Sarawak bishopric

The conflict between McDougall and Wright (and Mrs McDougall and Mrs Wright) has been discussed at some length because it formed the prelude to the early tentative moves towards creating a momentum which would result in the 'principal missionary' becoming the first bishop. The need for a bishop was regarded by many as growing from the need for firm and clear authority – a Bishop for a Mission which was suffering from the lack of such an authority.

¹³¹ H. McDougall to Mrs Bunyon, August 1849, MSS.Pac.s.104 (1), 6.

¹³² McDougall to C.D.R. Bethune, December 1849, MSS.Pac.s.104 (2), 75.

¹³³ Ibid.

It was not surprising that, after the physically and emotionally exhausting year 1849, Frank and Harriette McDougall felt tired and overworked and in need of a rest. The first half of 1850 saw them recuperating with the Rajah at Penang and formulating plans for the Dayak mission, outlined in James Brooke's letter to the committee via McDougall in April 1850 which has already been noted (above, p. 37). This same letter introduced a plea for an equivalent authority in the church to that which obtained in the state.

Taking up a point which McDougall had made on his arrival in Sarawak, that he saw his role as remaining in Kuching to direct the Mission rather than living among the Dayaks in the country, James Brooke noted how the head of the Mission would therefore 'regulate and superintend' those under him from his headquarters in the capital.¹³⁴ The Wright debacle had underlined the need for clear authority, and in the event of an influx of enthusiastic new young missionaries – for which the Rajah was pleading – such an authority would become even more urgent. How could McDougall be given more power?

Surely, Brooke wrote, there should be powers vested in McDougall 'of controlling and arranging' the functions of the new recruits, a policy which would ensure that the Mission was placed 'on a higher footing'. 'Little can be expected where little is attempted'.¹³⁵

Was this a less-than-subtle hint that McDougall should be made a bishop, thereby emphasising the importance of the church in his country? It could be a feather in the cap of the ruler, especially at a time when he was seeking recognition from the British government, to have his state created a diocese from the Established Church at home. The previous decade, the 1840s, had been marked by vigorous debate and action in England over the provision of a Colonial Episcopate, and with his passion for keeping up to date with knowledge James Brooke would have followed these proceedings with interest.

In the event the year 1850 was slightly too early for the creation of a Borneo bishopric, with only one priest working in the area and BCMI funds limited – and becoming daily more strained. A separate fund had been opened to endow such a bishopric during the Rajah's visit to Oxford in 1847 to receive the honorary degree of DCL,¹³⁶ and the money had been invested until such time as it might be needed.

¹³⁴ J. Brooke to McDougall, 27 April 1850, Bunyon, *op.cit.*, 60-62.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ Taylor, *op.cit.*, 37.

Early in 1851, with the advent of three new missionaries imminent, the Rajah stepped up the pressure with a more explicit suggestion. Having consistently worried for some time about the deleterious effect on his subjects of over-aggressive evangelism he expressed his concern lest the newcomers should prove too indiscreet. Not that McDougall was unaware of Brooke's feelings – he had in December 1850 noted the Rajah's 'alarm' about 'indiscreet displays of zeal'¹³⁷ (see above, p.21).

In a letter from Singapore (where he had already met Chambers) dated 28 January 1851 the Rajah expressed his fears and hopes clearly to McDougall. His country was reasonably firmly under his control,

We have now toleration, charity and peace, and these blessings must not be risked by the indiscreet zeal of Christian men striving to introduce their faith among others.¹³⁸

How then could any prospective excessive enthusiasms in the new missionaries be curtailed? 'There ought to be some power in the Church itself to give unity of design and execution, and to prevent and to check the slightest tendency towards the evil I have mentioned'.¹³⁹ But did McDougall possess the necessary 'ecclesiastical authority to control and direct other clergymen?'

If you have not, what objection could there be to making you the Bishop of Sarawak? There would be no objection on my part . . . some authority within the Church itself is necessary to control the clergy and to offer the government a responsible person with whom to treat.¹⁴⁰

No doubt there was a political agenda behind the Rajah's concern, but what else could have been expected from a head of state? Saunders finds 'a clear contradiction' in Brooke's attitude – 'he expresses a desire for missionaries among the Dayaks, but is suspicious of that zeal which one would expect a man who became a missionary to have'.¹⁴¹ To be fair to the Rajah it should be pointed out that he wanted to avoid the peace of his realm, which he had struggled to achieve, being disturbed by overt proselytising. He was performing a difficult

¹³⁷ McDougall to Stooks, 13 December 1850, MSS.Pac.s.104 (2), 67.

¹³⁸ J. Brooke to McDougall, 28 January 1851, CLR 72, 132-3.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Saunders, *op.cit.*, 37.

balancing act himself to keep the different cultural and religious groups in Sarawak content, and was naturally sensitive to the dangers posed by aggressive evangelism, particularly in relation to the Malays. McDougall he knew was 'aware of this danger and know that I speak the words of sober reason, when I say that, let the bigotry of Islam once be roused, the mission will not succeed, and wars and bloodshed may attend an attempt to introduce Christianity'.¹⁴² Given the witness of Church history it was a reasonable attitude to take.

The welfare of the Borneo Mission depended on the state maintaining security in the areas where it proposed to work, so the missionaries must not say or do anything which would threaten that security. It is a familiar argument in 20th century autocracies – but it is surely not unreasonable to expect discretion as well as zeal in the promotion of the Christian Gospel?

The Rajah's letter was the catalyst needed to move matters forward. McDougall sent the letter home to the committee in March, recording in his covering note that he had also heard from Jacobson, the Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford, about the 1847 appeal.¹⁴³ Jacobson had been impressed by the previous letter from Brooke at Penang in April 1850 in which it had been suggested that McDougall should have powers to control his missionaries, and wondered whether 'the foundation of a bishopric' was in the Rajah's mind when he wrote this. 'The language certainly seems to point to that'.¹⁴⁴

Events moved quickly. In June McDougall was informed that the Rajah's letter had received the committee's 'most serious attention', and copies had been sent to the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London.¹⁴⁵ An Oxford meeting was planned, fulfilling McDougall's hopes in March that 'Oxford will do something to establish us effectually'. In July the Rajah, on his arrival in England, was invited to address the committee, and no doubt used all his charm in person to cajole and persuade in a way which was impossible when he was thousands of miles away. But what sort of bishop was the projected diocesan intended to be?

¹⁴² J. Brooke to McDougall, 28 January 1851, CLR 72, 132.

¹⁴³ McDougall to Stooks, 29 March 1851, MSS.Pac.s.104 (2), 77.

¹⁴⁴ Bunyon, *op.cit.*, 86.

¹⁴⁵ Stooks to McDougall, 24 June 1851, CLS 54, 91.

A Missionary Bishop?

The progress of the negotiations for the creation of the Borneo see will be discussed in detail in Chapter 4 and will not be anticipated at this point. But the scene may be set by outlining in brief one or two salient points in relation to the role of the prospective bishop.

It will already be appreciated that the primary practical reason for having a bishop in Sarawak in the minds both of McDougall and the Rajah was that there should be a centre of authority in the church there. Past experience (over Wright) and future anticipation (of new missionaries) combined to plead for a 'Bishop for the Mission'. But the matter was not so simple as that. The proposal for episcopal government in Borneo arrived on the negotiating table at a significant moment in the Anglican Church's process of defining (and refining?) the nature and meaning of Episcopacy. The choice and appointment of a bishop for Sarawak could not be conducted in isolation from the wider questions.

In the 1830s the vision of G.W. Doane, Bishop of New Jersey in the American Episcopal Church, of the 'Missionary Bishop' leading out the original mission party to territories then outside the boundaries of the Church had impressed Anglicans already swayed by the high notions of episcopacy emerging in the Oxford Movement. In the same decade the Church Missionary Society (CMS), representing the Evangelical presence in the Church of England, was engaged in working out its view that bishops were needed not so much as leaders in the original evangelising mission but as the consummation of the pioneering work, coming in to complete functions essential to the Anglican conception of the Church, such as confirmation and ordination, once the local church had been established. In the 1840s a further element was added to the debate with the passing of the Colonial Bishops Act in 1841 and the beginning of a rapid expansion in the number of 'Colonial Bishops'. How would the new bishop projected for Borneo fit into these different patterns of episcopacy?

McDougall was to give one elusive hint of his own position when he avowed in a letter in September 1851 (after his sermon on commissioning Chambers) that 'this Mission needs the

full organisation of the Church'.¹⁴⁶ Did that align him with Doane and the Tractarians – or the CMS – or suggest that Sarawak needed a Colonial Bishop? Chapter 4 will attempt to answer that question. McDougall was permitted to return to England in 1852 partly in order to recover his health, but also that he might be on hand as the creation of the new bishopric was under negotiation, able to contribute his views to the general discussion. That he would himself be the first bishop for the Borneo Mission was not in doubt.

¹⁴⁶ McDougall to Hawkins, 17 September 1851, MSS.Pac.s.104 (3), 5.

CHAPTER 2

FIRST TO CIVILISE – THEN TO CHRISTIANISE

WHY AN ANGLICAN MISSION?

The three Sarawak cultures

It has been pointed out already¹ that the establishment of a Malay school and a medical dispensary by the Borneo Mission immediately after McDougall's arrival in Sarawak at the end of June 1848 were envisaged as the first steps in the process of influencing the peoples of the country towards a sympathetic acceptance of the Christian faith. These measures were in accord with the principles of Rajah James Brooke whose support was vital if the Mission was to survive and progress. But it needs to be emphasised that Brooke's notion of civilising paving the way for more specific evangelism applied primarily to his Dayak subjects. His attitude towards the Malays, who were Muslims, was more ambivalent – perhaps intentionally so – and concern for the Chinese was minimal.

James Brooke had after all, when assuming sovereignty over Sarawak in September 1841, promised 'not to infringe upon the customs and religion of the people',² and 'people' here meant the Malay people. The Sultan of Brunei's regent Hasim, the previous governor of Sarawak, who signed the deed of cession of power would have insisted that the new ruler respect the Muslim faith of his subjects, and Brooke accepted this.³

He would have been well aware of the need to avoid offending the local Malay leaders in his new country on whose influence and support he would depend in establishing and maintaining order, especially in the coastal areas. With very few European civil servants at the beginning and virtually no army or police force the willing encouragement of the Malay chiefs was crucial to the success of the Raj. Any disturbance of the Muslim religion must be avoided at all costs.

¹ See Chapter 1, 15

² S. Baring Gould and C.A. Bampfylde, *A History of Sarawak under its Two White Rajahs*, London, Henry Sotheran and Co., 1909, 85.

³ See Introduction, p 7.

Harriette McDougall was one who later came to appreciate the Rajah's position. When James Brooke laid the foundation stone of the new St Thomas's church in Kuching in August 1849 he was entrusted with the task of explaining the meaning of the ceremony to the attendant Malays. Informing her brother of this Harriette confided that the Rajah 'is very anxious at all times that the Malays should not think that we came here to convert them – in fact he says always "Religion is a good thing, but one religion need not interfere with another".'⁴ Harriette of course disagreed, affirming that 'the truth shall prevail' whilst sighing that 'Sir J. Brooke thinks that Mohammedanism is but one shade lower than Christianity'.⁵

Harriette's judgement was a little superficial. Brooke's vision of Christianity was certainly that it was a tolerant faith, and any missionary invited to Sarawak must share that view and desist from stirring up hostility.⁶ But privately his attitudes, as has been suggested above, were more ambivalent, and he was prepared to admit that the ultimate truth lay with Christianity.

In his letter to his mother describing the ideal missionary in October 1842 there was a revealing postscript. Brooke was criticising the kind of 'red-hot missionary crusade' which begins 'by telling the natives that their religion is a lie, and their prophet an imposter' and adds in parenthesis – 'for though this be true, it should not be told'.⁷ The reference was clearly to Islam, which is condemned as 'a lie' by the Christian (albeit unorthodox) Brooke. But 'it should not be told' in public, lest opposition be stirred up among the Malays. Outwardly toleration must prevail.

Further evidence of the Rajah's ambivalence towards Islam may be discovered in a letter he wrote to his agent in Sarawak, G. Ruppel, after the Hanover Square meeting in November 1847. Brooke asked Ruppel to 'speak of the Mission to the Natives', but should he perceive 'the least disposition to alarm amongst the Natives on account of their religion' he was to 'laugh it off'⁸ [Brooke's underlining]. 'Tell them we shall not meddle with their religion unless they ask us to do so'. Clearly the 'natives who have a religion' are the Malays, since

⁴ Charles Bunyon, *Memoirs of Francis Thomas McDougall and of Harriette his Wife*, London, Longmans Green & Co., 1889, 50.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ See Introduction, 10.

⁷ J. Brooke to Mrs Brooke, 16 October 1842. J. Templer, *The Private Letters of Sir James Brooke etc.*, 3 volumes, London, Richard Bentley, 1853, Vol. 1, 229.

⁸ J. Brooke to G. Ruppel, November 1847, CLS 54, 24.

Brooke had previously claimed that the Dayaks had no religion of their own,⁹ so evangelism amongst the Muslim population may be permitted if requested voluntarily. But the missionaries must use 'discretion' (a popular word with Brooke) and 'temper their zeal as to prevent even the faintest chance of uncharitable feeling arising between the Christian and Mahometan communities'.¹⁰ The Rajah's wide reading of history had taught him that there was 'no hatred like the hatred theological', so there was a danger in planting a Christian mission in his country that they would have to say farewell to 'hopes of improvement and peace'. But it was a risk worth taking. 'I do not fear, and the cause is so good and so sacred that we must risk even peace to forward it'.¹¹ The cause? Of diffusing Christian civilisation among the different ethnic groups who composed the population of his new kingdom. And somehow that had to include the Malays.

The Chinese element seems never to have been mentioned, either because racially they were deemed unworthy of consideration, or because at this time they were a minority in Sarawak who could be ignored. In relation to the Dayak peoples however Brooke's approach was unambiguous. Since in his judgement they had no religion of their own their conversion to Christianity was eminently desirable, but it must be attempted in an indirect fashion – as with the American missions. Civilising must come first, the 'unhappy temporal conditions' under which the Dayaks had been living under Brunei rule 'ameliorated' before the missionary's 'doctrine' was introduced.¹² Brooke's priorities were clearly outlined in the public appeal for British support which he sent to his London agent James Gardner for transmission to the Colonial Secretary at the end of 1841. The freedom of the [Land] Dayaks

from all prejudice, and their scanty knowledge of religion, would render their conversion to Christianity an easy task, provided they are rescued from their present sufferings and degraded state, but until this be done, it will be in vain to preach a faith to them, the first precepts of which are daily violated on their own persons.¹³

The Rajah would not of course have thought in terms familiar to later missiologists, but he was suggesting a 'praeparatio evangelica' rather than a 'social gospel'. Redemption from social misery must precede the preaching of redemption from the bondage of sin.

⁹ See Introduction, 7.

¹⁰ Brooke to Ruppel, November 1847, CLS 54, 24.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² See Chapter 1, 34.

¹³ J. Brooke to J. Gardner, 10 December 1841, Templer, *op.cit.*, Vol. 1, 158.

. . . if a case of misery ever called for help, it is here; and the act of humanity which *redeems* [my italics] the Dyak race from their condition of unparalleled wretchedness will open a path for religion, and for commerce, which may in future repay the charity which ought to seek no remuneration.¹⁴

The programme for approaching the Dayaks was clear. Having first freed them from the corruption and taxation of the Brunei Sultanate, proceed to liberate them from their inclination to piracy and head-hunting, introduce orderly government together with good education and health care, and the Gospel may be presented with the certainty of success. Missionaries invited to share in such a programme could not fail provided that they were prepared to be patient.

If we proceed gradually, if the members of the Mission, whilst they show a Christian example, strive in every way to gain the love and the confidence of those around them; EDUCATE – ALLEVIATE SUFFERING – ATTEND THE SICK [the capitals are Brooke's] – gradually change the native character – then indeed our success will be very great.¹⁵

By the time the Rajah spoke these words in November 1847 at the Hanover Square meeting his choice of the Church of England to establish this Mission of 'gradualness' had been made and the first missionaries were introduced to the gathering of supporters. But – what lay behind his selection of the Established Church?

The most free of communions

It has been noted already¹⁶ that James Brooke's theological position was heterodox and that he sat rather loosely to the creeds of the Church. 'My religious goddess' he wrote to a friend in 1837, 'will not be quite naked, but she discards much of the meretricious ornament heaped on her by the zeal and ill-judgement of her votaries'.¹⁷ Bearing in mind his admiration for the American Abeel, a member of the Dutch Reformed Church, James Brooke could have spread his net wider than the Church of England, and when awaiting a response in England to his appeal in 1842 he praised his friend Templer for cultivating a Quaker interest. 'Your design

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ BCMI, *Proceedings at a Public Meeting of the Friends of the Borneo Church Mission, Hanover Square Rooms, Monday Nov. 22 1847*, 12-13. SPG Bound Pamphlets 15008, item 19.

¹⁶ See Introduction, 2.

¹⁷ J. Brooke to Mr Cruickshank, 6 November 1837. G.L. Jacob, *The Raja of Sarawak. An Account of Sir James Brooke*, 2 Vols, London, Macmillan, 1876, Vol. 1, 65.

upon Mrs Fry is most laudable, and I trust she will lead all the religious world . . . don't forget Sir Fowell Buxton . . . he is a man of influence'.¹⁸

In the event Elizabeth Fry did not lead the religious world. There was no response in England to the Rajah's general appeal, and he began to consider whether it might not be more fruitful to concentrate on one particular communion. Evidence is lacking as to the precise shift in his opinions, since the death of his mother in 1843 removed his most intimate correspondent, but by 1845 it seems certain that his decision to invite the Church of England to form a Borneo Mission had been made.

But it would have to be the Church of England of his own experience, in which he had been brought up in the first three decades of the 19th century – a church with an open and broad mind, a tolerant church which eschewed such extremes of faith and practice as would manifest themselves as the century progressed. A ruler who could describe Tract 90 in 1842 as 'a disgrace to Mr Newman and all whom it may concern; it is in the worst jesuitical spirit, false, subtle, and hypocritical',¹⁹ would not have entertained missionaries who represented the emerging Tractarian movement. Nor would the more militant evangelicals have been welcomed, as the Rajah was to make clear in 1850 when Harriette McDougall's ill health was in danger of hastening Frank's premature retirement from Sarawak. James Brooke begged the BCMI committee not to appoint in his place a 'zealot, intolerant, enthusiast'. Men like that,

with brains heated beyond the rational point, who preach on tubs, and display such-like foolery, and who begin the task of tuition by a torrent of abuse against what their pupils hold sacred, shall not come to Sarawak . . .

²⁰

Saunders has suggested that 'it was natural' that the Rajah 'should turn to the English Church', bearing in mind that he was 'an English gentleman' ruling with the support of the Royal Navy, 'seeking recognition from the English government', and with family connections to English clergymen.²¹ So far as it goes that is fair comment. But there was more to Brooke's choice of an Anglican Mission than mere 'natural selection'. Seeking as he was a middle way between intolerant extremes, anxious to encourage missionaries who would not stir up conflict, the Rajah estimated the Church of England as he had known her

¹⁸ Templer, *op.cit.*, Vol 1, 209.

¹⁹ J. Brooke to Mrs Brooke, 20 March 1842. Templer *op.cit.*, Vol.1, 185.

²⁰ J. Brooke to Captain Mundy, 28 February 1850, *Ibid.*, Vol. 2, 269.

²¹ G. Saunders, *Bishops and Brookes*, Singapore, OUP, 1992, 10.

(with the new zealous movements still shallow-rooted) to be the most open and tolerant of Christian communions, manifesting at best the discretion and sound judgement which he required in a Mission.

In his 1889 memoir of his brother-in-law and sister Charles Bunyon quotes the Rajah's private secretary Spenser St John as claiming in the biography of his employer and friend written in 1879 that James Brooke 'acknowledged in Christianity the highest form of religion', and 'invited the Church of England to be the channel because he believed her to be the most free, as he trusted that she would be the most patient and loving of communions'.²² That rings true. St John was the Rajah's closest confidante at the time of the establishment of the Borneo Mission, and his highly critical attitude to McDougall later on in the 1860s only makes his appreciation of the Anglican position more believable. Clearly around 1845 the traditional ethos of the Church of England made her the best possible candidate in the Rajah's search for a congenial and successful Mission.

Possible political motives

There was also no doubt another element in Brooke's thinking, an element which has caused some critics to accuse him of cynicism. His experience of the Established Church as she had been created and developed in England would have encouraged him to think of her as a more pliable instrument when relating to secular authority. Anglican missionaries would be more likely, in his judgement, to accept his authority as Rajah than their nonconformist (or Quaker!) brethren, and in that way also less prone to stir up trouble. In the letter he wrote to his agent Ruppel in November 1847 assuring the Malays that the incoming Mission would not meddle with their religion unless requested to do so²³ the Rajah suggested that the missionaries could be commended for 'their willingness to live under and obey the laws of the country; their desire to support myself and the Datoos etc'²⁴ [Datu = non-royal Malay chief]. Such a commendation should occasion no surprise – it would be taken for granted at the time that good churchmen in any country would support the established government, and the Malays from their Islamic roots would have expected the same. To that extent James Brooke's selection of the Church of England may be adjudged 'political'.

²² Bunyon, *op.cit.*, 123.

²³ See above, 59.

²⁴ Brooke to Ruppel, November 1847, CLS 54, 24.

Bunyon however seems to go further. On the same page as his quotation from St John's biography he opined that 'when Sir James Brooke invited the Mission to Sarawak it is certain that his motives were in the first instance political'.²⁵ 'Certain'? 'In the first instance'? This seems too strong a judgement of a complex character, discounting the possibility that the Rajah was sincere in his desire to have a leavening Christian presence in his country, and that this desire was at least as much a priority as more overtly political motives – if not more so. Bunyon justified his cynicism explicitly.

The conversion of the Malays was probably never contemplated by him [Brooke] at all, and that of the Dyaks was looked to as a counterpoise to Mohammedan influence, and very desirable as a matter of statecraft for the consolidation of the power of a European ruler.²⁶

Of course James Brooke was anxious to hold on to power. But the evidence provided by his governing of Sarawak, and that of his successors, demonstrates that – at least in his own mind – he wanted power in order to use it wisely, for the benefit of his subjects rather than for personal gain. In the early declaration of his aims written in England in 1838 before he sailed on the long voyage which was to land him on the shores of Borneo Brooke insisted that territorial possession of land in south-east Asia was necessary because it afforded

the best means to acquire a direct and powerful influence in the Archipelago, but any government instituted for the purpose must be directed to the advancement of the native interests and the development of native resources, rather than by a flood of European colonisation, to aim at possession only, without reference to the indefensible rights of the Aborigines.²⁷

It is as easy to fall into the trap of forming an uncritical view of James Brooke's motives as it is to be over-cynical. But his later actions are in accord with his early declaration. Disenchanted he may have been with organised religion, dogmatic churchmanship and aggressive evangelism, but there was a genuine purpose in his mind to introduce the peoples of Sarawak to what he conceived to be the benefits of Christianity. If this involved a 'civilising' process before direct Christian witness was attempted, then Brooke had the testimony of centuries of Anglican belief and practice behind him.

²⁵ Bunyon, op.cit., 123.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ The full text of James Brooke's *Declaration of his Aims in the East* may be found in Templer, op.cit., Vol. 1, 2-33.

THE HISTORIC ANGLICAN TRADITION

The 16th century – a missionary vacuum?

Bunyon's use of the word 'statecraft' in the quotation on page 64, and his inference that for James Brooke it involved some form of religious manipulation, is reminiscent of the atmosphere of 16th century Europe and the conflicts of the Reformation. In England 'statecraft' had been exercised with supreme skill by the Tudor monarchs Henry VIII and Elizabeth I. Their acquisition first of the title of 'supreme head', and then that of 'supreme governor', of the Church of England may be seen as a classic example of the use of power in order to gain religious advantage and political influence. It delineated that particular Anglican view of the relationship between church and state which goes under the name of the Establishment.

For the English, and for European Protestants in general, the power struggles of the 16th century were largely internal in nature, confined within national borders. For the Roman Catholic powers – Portugal and Spain – they spread across the oceans, accompanied by the Jesuit and Franciscan missions to Asia and the Americas. This has led the majority of commentators to conclude that, for the emerging Reformed Churches and the countries which witnessed their birth, there was little or no interest in Mission. Using a phrase coined by Van den Berg, the 16th century was a period in which – for Protestants – there was a 'missionary vacuum'.²⁸

If this were true it would not be surprising. Little time could be spared for mission – at least overseas mission, even if the inclination was there – in a Protestant world which had been both stimulated and exhausted by the upheavals of the Renaissance and the Reformation, and challenged by the vigour of the Counter-Reformation. There was not much energy left to expend by those who were channelling all their efforts into establishing new insights about theology and the Bible, reforming the worship patterns of their churches, and resolving internecine conflicts between different sectarian communities. Not until the religious struggles were over in Britain and the rest of Western Europe at the end of the 17th century did the Reformed Churches begin to look beyond the 'Judaistic' controversies which had dominated their minds to the challenge offered by the 'Gentiles' who were being encountered in other and more distant areas of the world.

²⁸ J. Van den Berg, *Constrained by Jesus' Love*, Nr., Kampen, J.H. Kok, 1956, 4.

But Van den Berg's dictum is not entirely true. It is wrong to suggest that the 16th century Protestant world was completely bereft of missionary interest. David Bosch has analysed in the writings of men like Luther and Calvin what he calls the 'Protestant theology of mission', which emphasised how the work of human salvation derived from God's action in Christ, and that therefore witness could not be dependent on man's efforts alone.²⁹ That insight could have been used at the time to justify a policy of inertia in relation to evangelism, but it was to influence mission practice in more positive ways in subsequent generations.

Although not apparent at the time, Anglican thinking was to be stimulated by two significant figures, one at the beginning of the 16th century and the other at the end. The first was well-known, in some respects notorious – the second almost anonymous – but between them they were to shape the missiology of the Church of England as it began to crystallise in the 19th century. Desiderius Erasmus and Adrian Saravia were both Dutch, so it is not without interest to note that one area in which their influence was to mark an Anglican mission was the island of Borneo, a land to be divided between British and Dutch political and commercial interests.

Erasmus – pagans and the Logos

Undoubtedly the outstanding exponent of the new Christian humanism of the Renaissance, Erasmus made a number of visits to England in the early years of the 16th century. In the course of these he formed close relationships with notable figures in the English Church, including Colet, More and the Archbishop of Canterbury, Warham. Through the influence and support of the latter Erasmus was even for a short time appointed as incumbent of parochial charges in Kent.

He wrote no systematic treatise dealing with Mission, and his views have to be extracted from a number of different works. But a constant theme running through many of his writings is the way in which he recognised God's wisdom as having been diffused among

²⁹ D.J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, New York, Orbis, Maryknoll, 1991, 244.

pre-Christian philosophers. In his revival of classical learning we find the definition of Erasmus's 'evangelical humanism'.³⁰ So he could write in his *Antibarbari*,

Everything in the pagan world that was valiantly done, brilliantly said, ingeniously thought, diligently transmitted, had been prepared by Christ for his society. He it was who supplied the intellect, who added the zest for inquiry, and it was through him alone [Erasmus's underlining in both cases] that they found what they sought.³¹

In a sense this idea was not original – Justin Martyr had come to similar conclusions in the 2nd century CE. But Erasmus seems more daring, building on Justin Martyr's suggestion that all who lived according to the Logos are Christians an even more challenging avowal of the participation of pre-Christian thinkers in God's saving purposes. That divine wisdom who is Christ the Logos has dispelled human folly and 'cast for the pagans of antiquity a role in the economy of salvation, a positive role which emphatically predates the Incarnation'.³²

Phrases like these caused Luther to accuse Erasmus of belittling Christ's death on the Cross, but the latter denied this.

The Creator did not endure his image to perish, but rescued it by the very death of the Son through whom it had been formed, so that it might be a new creature. All nations are therefore crucified with Christ, so that they may enjoy a renaissance in him, and by walking in newness of life deserve to be glorified.³³

In 1536, shortly before his death, Erasmus supervised in Basle the printing of his final work – *Ecclesiastes*. It was intended to be a treatise for the clergy on the art of preaching, in which the author reflected on the 'evangelical seed' which has been cast abroad, the Christian wisdom whereby 'wild peoples might be tamed'.³⁴ Proclamation pursued for this cause would arise from the loving hearts of 'men who desire to see many souls freed from Satan's tyranny'.³⁵ Such evangelical zeal may not have had much effect on the Church at the time, but the concerns of the great Dutch thinker were to be resurrected both by the founder of the SPG and during the years which led to the creation of the CMS.

³⁰ Marjorie O'Rourke Boyle, *Christening Pagan Mysteries: Erasmus in pursuit of Wisdom*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1981, Prologue, xi.

³¹ Erasmus, *Antibarbari*, ASD, 1-1, 83 11, 17-19. Quoted in Boyle, *ibid.*, 11. Being unable to trace English translations of Erasmus I am indebted to Boyle for this.

³² Erasmus, *Enchiridion*, H. 38. 11, 21. Quoted in Boyle, *ibid.*, 16.

³³ Erasmus, *Colloquia*, ASD 1-3, 368. Boyle, *ibid.*, 80.

³⁴ Erasmus, *Ecclesiastes*, LB V, 813b and 814b. Boyle, *ibid.*, 93.

³⁵ Van den Berg, *op.cit.*, 13.

It must be emphasised that when Erasmus referred to ‘pagans’ he was of course talking about the Greek and Roman peoples of classical antiquity. He had not, so far as we know, encountered any of the indigenous cultures of Africa, Asia and the Americas which were gradually being revealed by the voyages of the great explorers during his lifetime. But the principles he enunciated about the place of those who had not known the incarnate Jesus in God’s economy of salvation, and the concern he showed for the proclamation of a Logos Gospel, were to surface in later generations and certainly to inspire Anglican missionary thinkers and practitioners.

Saravia – bishops and mission

The second and lesser-known Dutch theologian to influence Anglican attitudes to mission was Adrian Saravia, who lived and wrote towards the end of the 16th century. A professor at Leiden in 1582, his views on the importance of the apostolic succession brought him close to English scholars, and in 1587 he moved to England and was appointed a Canon of Canterbury. In 1590 he published in London a tract entitled *De Diversis Ministorum* in which he defended the Elizabethan episcopate as part of the historic apostolate.

Saravia’s importance lay in his use of the so-called ‘Great Commission’ (Matthew, 28:19-20) as a proof text to link the missionary command of Christ, the formation of the Church’s ministry and the abiding presence of the Lord among his disciples. In contrast to most of the Reformers, who held that this final command of Jesus was addressed only to the eleven original apostles in Galilee and that therefore salvation must be sought through acceptance of their teaching, Saravia maintained that the ‘Great Commission’ had permanent validity. The Church could only receive the promise of Jesus – to be with his followers always until the end of time – if her ministers obeyed the command of Jesus – to make disciples of all nations. More controversially, the true heirs to Christ’s commission to the original eleven apostles were those bishops who stood clearly in the traditional ‘apostolic succession’. Missionary bishops? Not as this term came later to be understood. But in many ways Saravia anticipated the conclusions of G.W. Doane in the 1830s, as he also heralded the utterances of William Carey in the 1790s.³⁶ It is easy to exaggerate his importance, and in his day he was overshadowed by Hooker, but it is clear that by the end of the 16th century threads were

³⁶ For information on Saravia see Bosch, *op.cit.*, 247-8, and Van den Berg, *op.cit.*, 22-3. Also Stephen Neill, *A History of Christian Missions*, 2nd edition, London, Penguin Books, 1986, 189.

appearing which were to weave a pattern for later Anglican missiology. The immediate impact, however, was not on thinking but on practice – which, for Anglicans, often takes precedence.

‘Then shall Religion to America flee’

The title quotation is from George Herbert,³⁷ writing in 1632 at a time when morals and manners both at the Court of Charles I and in the country seemed on the decline. As in the New Testament period the Christian Gospel and Church had seemed to travel in an east-west direction, so it was meant to be. But the process had begun 50 years before Herbert’s prophecy, with the westward voyages of Drake, Frobisher and Gilbert opening up lands across the Atlantic to English colonisation. Richard Hakluyt was firmly convinced that these voyages had brought to England the opportunity for evangelical as well as commercial enterprise, but with evangelism preceding trade instead of following on behind. ‘There would be new markets for English clothiers when the converted heathen would have been taught to dress in Christian apparel’.³⁸ Van den Berg is in no doubt that ‘the idea of the conversion of pagan peoples played a not unimportant part in the westward expansion of England from the voyage of Martin Frobisher in 1576’.³⁹

This was reflected in the early Charters granted by the monarch to individuals and companies. That given by Elizabeth I to Sir Humphrey Gilbert ‘for discovery and plantation’ in 1578 referred to the compassion of God ‘for poor infidels, it seeming probable that God hath reserved these Gentiles to be introduced into *Christian civility* [my italics] by the English nation’.⁴⁰ The idea of England’s destiny in the divine purpose, repeated often by McDougall and others in the 19th century, emerged early in Anglican history.

‘Christian civility’ is a revealing phrase. In the Charter granted by Charles I to the new colony of Massachusetts in 1629 it was hoped that ‘the good life and orderly conversation of the English settlers may win and incite the natives of the country to the knowledge and obedience of the only true God and Saviour of mankind and the Christian faith’.⁴¹

³⁷ G. Herbert, *The Church Militant, Works*, ed. F.E. Hutchinson, Oxford, OUP, 1941, 190-8.

³⁸ Van den Berg, *op.cit.*, 22.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ Neill, *op.cit.*, 191.

⁴¹ Van den Berg, *op.cit.*, 23.

Massachusetts – unlike Virginia in 1607 – had been colonised not by Anglicans but by the Mayflower pilgrims and their successors. On both sides of the Atlantic during the first half of the 17th century it was the Independent groups rather than the Established Church which demonstrated the greater concern for mission, for Christianising through civilising. John Eliot in New England was matched by Richard Sibbes in old England. In his *Light from Heaven* which reflected the deep impression made on him by the efforts of his co-religionists in North America Sibbes suggested that

God in preparation for the most part civiliseth people, and then Christianiseth them . . . the Spirit of God will not be effectual in a rude, wild and barbarous soul.⁴²

Roger Williams, who became minister at Boston, Mass., in 1631, expressed the idea even more succinctly. ‘Civility may be a leading step to Christianity’.⁴³ It is not surprising that the distinction of forming what one American author has called ‘the first voluntary missionary society in the non-Roman Catholic world’⁴⁴ should belong to the Independent Long Parliament in 1648. Its proclamation in support of foreign missions was followed in the next year by practical expression, with the incorporation of *The President and Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in New England*. Twenty seven years after the establishment of the Roman Catholic *Congregation* English Christians had a minor equivalent – but not founded by the Church of England.

The first governor of the New England society after the Restoration of the monarchy (and the Established Church) was an Anglican layman, the distinguished chemist Robert Boyle. With men like this, of broad sympathies and open mind, a new spiritual climate began to affect the Church of England, inspiring a clear concern for mission at last. As had happened in the 16th century, the catalyst for change in England at the end of the 17th century came from across the Channel, emanating from the new Pietists in Germany like Von Welz and the philosopher Leibniz. The latter’s enthusiasm for a cultural expansion of Christianity impressed a number of Anglican clergy, notably Thomas Tenison, who was to be Archbishop of Canterbury during the crucial years from 1694 to 1715. The preaching of another German Pietist, Anthony Horneck, who became a select preacher at the Savoy chapel in 1671, stirred numbers of young people to meet together in ‘societies’ for personal

⁴² Quoted in Max Warren, *Social History and Christian Mission*, London, SCM Press, 1967, 87.

⁴³ Quoted in Christopher Hill, *The English Bible and the Seventeenth Century Revolution*, London, Allen Lane/Penguin, 1993, 138.

⁴⁴ W.W. Manross, *Calendar of SPG Papers*, London, Lambeth Palace Library, 1974, Introduction.

holiness of life and practical philanthropy, and paved the way for the foundation of Christian societies with similar aims.⁴⁵

Thomas Bray, the SPCK and the SPG

'The one consecrated spirit' who was needed (as so often in Church history) to 'light the flame'⁴⁶ was found in Thomas Bray, a farmer's son from the Welsh borders who was ordained in the Church of England and became Rector of Sheldon in Warwickshire (now a suburb of modern Birmingham) in 1690. Of significance is the fact that Bray had been greatly moved by the study of Erasmus's *Ecclesiastes*, which painted for him a high ideal of the character and duties of a priest.⁴⁷

In 1695, impressed by Bray's concern for improving the commitment of the clergy and catechising young people in true belief and higher morals, the Bishop of London – responsible for Church affairs in the colonies – made Bray his Commissary for Maryland. The energetic Bray issued 'Proposals for encouraging Learning and Religion in the Foreign Plantations' and proceeded to recruit suitable clergy for the colony and provide them with books and libraries, all with the aim of improving morale and moral standards among the British settlers across the Atlantic. Initially sent, as to India, as chaplains to the European community, a wider vision of their work was soon apparent. The preface to the printed version of Bray's ordination sermon in St Paul's cathedral in 1697 included a plea for more schools for the education of colonists' children, with the additional suggestion that provision should be made 'for the Instruction of half-a-dozen Indian Youth, to be sent afterwards amongst their own People, to civilise and convert them'.⁴⁸ Too much should not be made of the order of these words – 'civilise' first and 'convert' second – but Thompson has no doubt at this point that Bray already possessed 'the full missionary vision'.⁴⁹

During 1698 Bray prepared a scheme for an Anglican Society which would enshrine his previous proposals by 'propagating Christian knowledge' in the plantations, and included a clause to finance pensions for 'such Ministers as shall most hazard their persons in

⁴⁵ For an analysis of these trends see Van den Berg, *op.cit.*, 16, 32, and H. Cnatingius, *Bishops & Societies: a study of Anglican Colonial & Missionary Expansion*, London, SPCK, 1952, 11.

⁴⁶ H.P. Thompson, *Into all Lands: A History of the SPG 1701-1950*, London, SPCK, 1951, 1.

⁴⁷ H.P. Thompson, *Thomas Bray*, London, SPCK, 1954, 12.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 21.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

attempting the conversion of the Native Indians'.⁵⁰ The direction of his thinking is clear – towards a mission which will not only afford pastoral care for the Anglican colonists, but also engage in the civilising and Christianising of the indigenous inhabitants.

The progress of Bray's plans, from initially conceiving one society which would both promote Christian knowledge and propagate the Christian Gospel, has been often told and will not be repeated here. These were to be the twin peaks of traditional Anglican missionary vision, and it is not too fanciful to subsume them under the heading of 'civilising and Christianising'. In the event it was only possible at first to found a voluntary Society 'for Promoting Christian Knowledge' (SPCK), which came into existence on 8 March 1698/1699. The Society 'for the Propagation of the Gospel' (SPG) had to wait another two years, finally seeing the light of day as a Chartered Society on 16 June 1701.

In his petition to King William requesting a Royal Charter Bray suggested that the work of the Society should be effected among 'the inhabitants of Your Majesty's Provinces in America', since the monarch had already shown interest 'in the state of the Souls of Your Majesty's subjects in those parts'.⁵¹ The wording seems – to modern ears – ambiguous, but Thompson is in no doubt that 'inhabitants' and 'subjects' included both the British colonists and the indigenous peoples.⁵² More conclusive evidence of the aims of the founders of the SPG may be found in the Society's first annual sermon by the Dean of Lincoln in February 1702, in which he argued,

The design is, in the first place, to settle the State of Religion as well as may be among our own People there [America], which by all accounts that we have very much wants their pious care; and then to proceed in the best methods they can towards the Conversion of the Natives.⁵³

By 1710 a commission chaired by Archbishop Tenison proposed – and the Society concurred – that 'the principal design' of the SPG 'was the conversion of the heathens and infidels'⁵⁴ The way forward was clear.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 37.

⁵¹ Thompson, *Into all lands*, op.cit., 15.

⁵² Ibid., 16.

⁵³ Ibid., 20.

⁵⁴ Van den Berg, op.cit., 48.

Within a few years Thomas Bray had retired from active involvement in the affairs of the SPG, but his creative mind continued to generate important principles. He can be found opposing a proposal to establish a Ministerial Training College in Bermuda, to which candidates would be brought from North America, on the grounds that, as pioneered by the Jesuits, prospective clergy and catechists should be trained in their own environments.⁵⁵ Thompson tells a story of two young African men, names unknown, who had been brought to England for education. When Bray encountered them he quickly raised funds to send them back to their African homes accompanied by an English instructor who, on arrival, was to

persuade the natives to build houses and cultivate the land around them with crops and fruit; these crafts the men should learn; the women would be taught to make bread, butter and cheese, to brew, to cook meat, to spin and weave.⁵⁶

After they had been 'weaned to a settled life' the teacher was to inform the indigenous people that 'the good God had sent the English among them. First settle and civilise them; then you can teach them Christianity'.⁵⁷

FIRST SETTLE AND CIVILISE THEM – THEN YOU CAN TEACH THEM CHRISTIANITY. It was a classic statement of what was to become the popular Anglican position – derived from Erasmus, experimented upon in the colonies, bequeathed to the Church of the future. No wonder that Bray, when he died in 1730, left instructions in his will that copies of *Ecclesiastes* should be supplied to all young men at Oxford and Cambridge who were contemplating ordination.

Anglican Mission in the 18th century

The work begun in the American colonies by the SPG with the arrival of their first two missionaries at Boston, Mass. in 1702 flourished in spite of the denial of bishops to the growing churches.⁵⁸ By the outbreak of the American War of Independence in 1774 around 350 Anglican missionaries had been sent across the Atlantic, and along with the large numbers from other churches had established strong and vigorous Christian communities in

⁵⁵ Thompson, *Thomas Bray*, op.cit., 93.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 94.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ For a discussion of early attempts to provide bishops in America see Chapter 4, 172-4.

the 13 colonies. That these survived the Revolution, and were not simply scorned as 'English', is a testimony to the fulfilment of George Herbert's prophetic poetry. Religion had not only fled westwards *to* America but was poised to flee westwards *in* America.

The severance of ecclesiastical control over the American colonies at the end of the War of Independence diverted the SPG north of the border to Canada. Missionaries had been working there also throughout the century, and in 1787 – having learned no doubt from her experiences south of the border – the Church of England consecrated her first colonial bishop, the SPG missionary Charles Inglis, as Bishop of Nova Scotia.

In the same period it is important to mention how the SPG's sister society the SPCK supported missionary work in India. 'Religion' fled east as well as west. As a voluntary society, and without a Charter, the SPCK was prohibited from engaging in direct mission in colonial territories, but it could support others in fulfilment of its aims to 'promote Christian knowledge'. Thus in 1710 the SPCK provided a printing press for the Danish-Hallensian missions of Ziegenbalg and Plutschau at Tranquebar, and after 1728 moved on to support the Lutherans when they commenced evangelism around Madras.⁵⁹ Here was a remarkable ecumenical experiment in mission, made possible by the continuing Anglican tolerance for other Protestant communions which stemmed from the 16th century Reformation and only grew lukewarm in the first quarter of the 19th century.

Revival and Mission

The transference of SPG concern from the east coast of America to that of Canada after 1784 and the subsequent appointment of the first Anglican colonial bishop is but one element in many towards the end of the 18th century which created a convergence of interest in evangelism in many countries. Van den Berg has described this phenomenon as 'simultaneity', a striking sign of the fact that the time was ripe for new developments in mission both in Europe and in other areas of the world.⁶⁰ Other elements included the voyages of Cook and others which created a romantic interest in Britain in the new peoples encountered, the writings of Rousseau and the propagation of the so-called 'myth of the noble savage', a greater humanitarian concern for the oppressed as witnessed in the thinking

⁵⁹ Neill, *op.cit.*, 197.

⁶⁰ Van den Berg, *op.cit.*, 125.

of men like Burke and Paine, and the eschatological expectations of the 'Parousia' aroused in many by the French Revolution.

But of paramount significance were the great charismatic religious movements which swept through the 18th century – Pietism, Methodism, the Evangelical Revival and the Great Awakening in America – which were eventually to challenge the principles of the Enlightenment on which the SPCK and the SPG had been built. In doing so they exposed the weakness which – as Luther had suspected – flawed the Erasmian outlook, namely its lack of a soteriological emphasis centred on the historic Cross. In the Church of England this missing emphasis was introduced by the Evangelicals in the foundation of the Church Missionary Society (CMS) in 1799 – one hundred years after the establishment of the SPCK.

Nevertheless it is interesting to find the shadow of Erasmus hovering over the debates of the group of Evangelical Anglican clergy and laymen who met under the name of the 'Eclectic Society' before founding the CMS. In 1797 there was published in London a small booklet which contained extracts from Erasmus's *Ecclesiastes* translated into English, to which was attached *The substance of a Charge to a Missionary*.⁶¹ The preface was addressed to the Bishop of London in his capacity as the ecclesiastical authority for the Anglican Church abroad.

There are several references in the extracts from *Ecclesiastes* to the duty of the preacher to inculcate 'the divine knowledge' and distribute 'the treasures of heavenly wisdom'. The idea of Jesus as 'the Logos' is emphasised, and as the Father created 'all things' by his Word the preacher must be prudent to take into account the culture of his listeners.

... if he is faithful, who is diligent and attentive to his Lord's commands, he is not less wise who looks carefully to the times and seasons and circumstances in discharge of his duty. St Paul himself observes, "All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient" ... to "babes in Christ he gives milk; strong meat to such as are of full age".⁶²

The *Charge to a Missionary* which forms the second half of the booklet breathes Erasmian attitudes to the presence of God's spirit in the pagan world. Whilst 'the great design of your

⁶¹ *Ecclesiastes or the Preacher. An Essay on the duties of a Public Religious Instructor: chiefly taken from a Latin treatise on this subject by Erasmus etc.* London. Printed for Messrs. Rivington, Faulder & Gardner, 1797. Bodleian Library Ms.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 37.

Mission is to remove the clouds of error and unbelief from the minds of the deluded and the ignorant' the missionary must derive confidence

from the conviction which this instance may afford you, that God by his Spirit is, according to his gracious promise, present with his faithful servants in every country, at every period, and in every situation.⁶³

It is often assumed that the CMS was born in a more exclusive era than the SPG. This is only partly true, for the latitudinarian spirit was as alive at the end of the 18th century as at the beginning. It enabled the CMS, when commencing its work in India soon after 1800, to recruit Lutheran pastors to supplement the shortage of Evangelical Anglican clergy, many of whom were more enamoured of the home mission field. After 1820 attitudes began to harden – the CMS after all, although not founded on 'the High Church principle', was certainly established 'on the Church principle' – and no further missionaries were sent without episcopal ordination. By 1825 the SPG had also commenced work in India, assuming responsibility for the SPCK efforts. Both CMS and SPG appointed local committees in Calcutta and Madras, and areas of disagreement were not uncommon between these largely lay committees and the Anglican bishops whose presence began with the arrival of Middleton in 1814.

The example of the Evangelicals also stirred the SPG into new life, and both societies set up a network of local committees in England which produced the interest and the funds not only for sending missionaries (and bishops) to the West Indies but also for anticipating new challenges stimulated by the movement for Reform in the 1830s and the expansion of colonial bishops in the 1840s.⁶⁴ It was an important period in the development of Anglican attitudes to mission, a time of consolidation before a great move forward, a prelude before the opening chapter of a story which was to see historic Anglican principles married to contemporary Anglican practice. No early Anglican mission was to be of greater interest in this story than the Borneo Church Mission which arrived in Sarawak in June 1848.

⁶³ Ibid., 105.

⁶⁴ See Chapter 4, 181-5.

MCDOUGALL'S DISILLUSION WITH 'MERE CIVILISING'

A detailed account has already been given⁶⁵ of the way in which the Borneo Mission established immediately after its arrival on the island a Malay school and a medical dispensary. It has also been shown how these were envisaged as a means of introducing the local peoples to the benefits of European civilisation and thereby encouraging them to consider converting to the Christianity which had inspired that civilisation. The presentation of the Gospel was to be the climax of a process which had begun with social improvement, in line with the kind of thinking which has already been noted in men like Sibbes and Bray.⁶⁶

Positive first impressions

But was there not 'civilisation' in the cultures already on Borneo? There is no doubt that McDougall was initially both surprised and impressed by some aspects of Islamic culture which met him on his arrival in 1848. He had not been prepared for appreciating any positives in Islam by the prejudices instilled during his upbringing and education. A month after he and his party landed in Kuching he was given pause to think, with the commencement of the Feast of Ramadan and an obvious contrast between observed Muslim and Christian attitudes to the demands of seasons of abstinence. He wrote home,

The Mahommedan Lent began yesterday, which the Malays keep very strictly . . . though they worship God in error I am sure they do so in sincerity. These Mahommedans are surely a rebuke to the Christians in these countries, who have the light but choose not to walk in it. The very name of our Christian fasts and feasts seems almost forgotten by them.⁶⁷

The judgement on his compatriots seems rather sweeping in view of the fact that McDougall had only lived in south-east Asia for a few weeks, but his admiration for Islamic discipline was genuine. He was led to understand that Christian and Muslim cultures did share some common practices – indeed, not just practices but some 'principles of religion, truth and equity' which might afford opportunities for bridge-building.⁶⁸ By November 1848 he was gaining the confidence of some of the Malays, welcomed into their homes to discuss mutual

⁶⁵ See above, Chapter 1, 15-31.

⁶⁶ See above, 70, 73.

⁶⁷ McDougall to Stooks, 1 August 1848, MSS.Pac.s.104 (2), 9.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 30 November 1848, *Ibid.*, 16.

religious and moral concerns, but anxious to exercise caution and make haste slowly.⁶⁹ It was not surprising that his first report to the committee in January 1849 was hopeful that the Malays would be brought gradually to embrace the higher truths of Christianity, but their dedication to their own religion would make the task of the Mission difficult. 'It must be admitted that very many of them [the Malays] are now strict Mahommedans and firmly attached to their creed . . .'.⁷⁰

Another 'civilising' method which would hopefully pave the way for Malay conversions in addition to the school and clinic lay in the direction of emulating early pioneers in America like John Eliot. Advice along the same lines had also been given by Thomas Bray when he advised his English teacher in Africa to persuade the local peoples to 'build houses and cultivate land'.⁷¹ During 1849 the Rajah gave what were described as 'cottages' to some Malay workmen so that they could abandon what he called 'their irregular gypsy-like life' and settle down. McDougall was aware of the opportunity.

I hope if the Mission thrives and an estate can ever be made . . . we shall easily be able to make little 'reductions' of agricultural and settled Malays, who in due time and with proper management will I am sure be brought to embrace Christianity.⁷²

The Mission certainly established its 'estate', and the missionary compound eventually covered several acres which are still Anglican property in 1998, but nothing came of this suggestion. Whether through 'improper management', McDougall's concentration on other matters or his growing disenchantment with work among the Malays, the opportunity was missed. He knew it – eight years later he lamented, 'I wish we could have begun in the same way' in response to news of a Roman Catholic mission in Brunei which had imported 20 Christian families from the Philippines to settle among the Brunei Dayaks 'to teach them agriculture etc'.⁷³

At the precise moment (the end of 1849) when McDougall might have taken advantage of the proposal to settle some Malays on their own land ill health forced him and Harriette to leave Sarawak for six months for their rest with the Rajah at Penang. He travelled with his optimism about the Malays unabated. In his letter from Singapore to Dr McBride, Master of

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 6 January 1849, CLR 72, 35.

⁷¹ See above, 73.

⁷² McDougall to Stooks, 25 August 1849, MSS.Pac.s.104 (2), 37.

⁷³ McDougall to Hawkins, 26 August 1857, MSS.Pac.s.104 (3), 143.

Magdalen Hall, in March 1850⁷⁴ he enthused about his reception by the adherents of Islam. The Sarawak Malays 'are orthodox Mohammedans, but they are neither bigoted nor well-taught in their own texts; indeed they often come to me to read the Koran to them . . . they read the psalms of David with me, and some have read parts of the history of our Lord'.⁷⁵

The approach of the Mission to the Malays appeared to be progressing in the 'gradual' way which the Rajah had envisaged, and in accordance with McDougall's own attitudes. Evidence of a Muslim revival presented to him on his return to Kuching in June 1850 did not seem to dent his optimism. The revival 'was to be expected', he wrote home, 'and does not much discourage me'.⁷⁶

Thus within two years of arriving in Sarawak it appeared as though the Borneo Mission had made an ideal start in its encounter with the Malay population and the Muslim religion, thoroughly deserving the Rajah's approval and support. McDougall's approach (unlike Wright's) had been patient and judicious, friendly and non-judgemental, and he had clearly proved a good listener, learning to appreciate some of the finer points of Islam. A kind of dialogue in an eirenic atmosphere had begun to develop, and when taken in conjunction with his healing work promised much future success for such transparently Christ-like witness and common sense. That it all began slowly to collapse is one of the more melancholy aspects of the work of the Anglican Mission in Borneo.

Some flaws in McDougall's outlook

In the middle of 1850 however McDougall was beginning to doubt the value of Malay education as a pre-evangelistic civilising agent.⁷⁷ In his letter to the committee in June (see above) he had admitted that he was 'not much' discouraged by signs of an Islamic revival in Sarawak – which presumably meant that he was at least a little discouraged. This uncertainty foreshadowed the start of a period of growing scepticism about the contribution which Malay education could make to the Christianising of his Muslim acquaintances. It was to lead to a complete withdrawal from all attempts to influence the Malays, and finally to an exaggerated

⁷⁴ See Chapter 1, 20.

⁷⁵ McDougall to Dr McBride, 6 March 1850. Quoted in Bunyon, *op.cit.*, 62.

⁷⁶ McDougall to Stooks, 29 June 1850, MSS.Pac.s.104 (2), 58.

⁷⁷ See Chapter 1, 22.

fear – expressed in apocalyptic language – of Muslim hostility and danger to the Mission. This progression will now be traced, but not before a comment has been made about certain weaknesses in McDougall's position which began to manifest themselves in these early years.

There seems little doubt that, in his initial enthusiasm and because of his lack of experience, McDougall seriously underestimated the strengths of Islam. It may at times have appeared weak to him and on the point of collapse, but the zeal of its adherents only needed a perceived threat from another culture to be roused. This has been a common experience of religious history, as writers like Max Warren have suggested.

A fascinating subject for study and research is the process by which these ancient religious cultures of the Arab lands, of India, and of the Buddhist countries reacted either to the threat of, of the experience of, western rule . . .⁷⁸

Warren comments that this reaction has often led to the development or recapturing of 'a genuine sense of nationhood'.⁷⁹ That would be a long time coming in south-east Asia, but renewed religious enthusiasm was not so slow in appearing when the established cultures felt under attack from the Western Christian intruder.

Allied to this inability to appreciate the inner strengths of Islam – and to understand that the Muslim faith as well as the Christian had given birth to a 'civilisation' – was the mistaken assumption that the Islamic world was a coherent, united international and aggressive force organised in opposition to the Kingdom of God. When McDougall wrote at the end of 1850 of 'all the foundations and bulwarks of Mahommedanism . . . fast crumbling and mouldering away'⁸⁰ the impression is given that he conceived of an Islamic 'empire' being defeated by the Christian armies. It is another Crusade, though fought with the weapon of truth rather than the sword. Such a vision, couched in heroic terms, might well have appealed to a missionary brought up in a military home, but it bore little relation to the reality. Islam – like Christianity – even spreading world-wide was no such monolithic structure.

One final flaw in McDougall's analysis of the Mission's progress in relation to the Malays is noted by Saunders. It arose through inexperience of their cultural norms. The missionaries did not understand 'that Malay courtesy cloaked prevarication', and McDougall 'was not the

⁷⁸ Max Warren, *The Missionary Movement from Britain in Modern History*, London, SCM Press, 1965, 132.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ Quoted in Chapter 1, 22.

first missionary to confuse gratitude, courtesy, curiosity or a desire for useful knowledge with incipient conversion'.⁸¹ There was in McDougall a naivety born out of optimism.

A new scale of priorities

One perceived 'threat' to the Kuching Muslims which has not hitherto been mentioned was the sight of the imposing new Christian buildings arising near the town centre on College and Church hills. Here were rival focal points of religious worship and instruction, visible throughout the community.

There is no doubt that McDougall envisaged the early erection of the church, mission house and school as a priority. They would be both useful for the work of the Mission and symbolic of the arrival of the new faith, and much of his energy in the first three years was spent on building work. For Harriette the new church was even in itself a kind of civilising agent. 'This church seems to bring us nearer to England and all that is good and beautiful', she wrote to her brother.⁸²

The committee of the BCMI seemed to have been surprised by the amount of money that McDougall was spending on the mission house and the church. In January 1850 they informed him that 'the expenses of the buildings have been far heavier than we at first contemplated' and warned him not to embellish them with 'unnecessary ornaments'.⁸³ A year later, with their finances in an even worse state, they rebuked him for drawing out money without specifying what he intended to do with it, and demanded proper estimates in the future for approval.⁸⁴ McDougall pointed out to them that materials cost far more in Singapore and Sarawak than had been anticipated, but desisted from suggesting that much time would be wasted if he had to consult home all the time.

Towards the end of 1850, with the church all but completed, the committee – either through conviction or because of their financial straits – attempted to change McDougall's priorities away from his concentration on buildings and towards that great purpose which he had been

⁸¹ Saunders, *op.cit.*, 20.

⁸² H. McDougall to C. Bunyon. Quoted in Bunyon, *op.cit.*, 70.

⁸³ Stooks to McDougall, 24 January 1850, CLS 54, 57.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 21 January 1851, *Ibid.*, 80.

appointed to achieve. Ordering him first to close his building account they then reminded him that

all material interests [must] now give way to the one great object of bringing the natives under the teaching of the Gospel . . . the Committee consider that the time has now arrived when the Mission must stand forth in its true character, as the instrument in God's hands not *merely* [my italics] of civilising the natives, but of bringing them into the Church of Christ.⁸⁵

The committee trusted that from henceforth their chief missionary would turn his 'undivided attention' to the best means of accomplishing 'the great spiritual work for which the Mission was originally established'.⁸⁶ He must consider all else as 'of secondary importance' and the scarce funds of the Mission were to be devoted 'to strictly missionary purposes'.⁸⁷

The committee's letter was interesting in its differentiation between 'merely civilising' – which was part of God's purposes, and 'Christianising' – which included both responding to the Gospel and membership of the Church. McDougall should proceed from the first to the second with all possible speed – a message which was reinforced by the Bishop of Calcutta when he reported to the committee after consecrating the new church of St Thomas in January 1851.

The Evangelical Daniel Wilson reminded supporters in England that Christian Britain 'was herself 1400 years ago in as low a state of barbarism as the Dyaks today', and look at what the Gospel has achieved in the home country.⁸⁸ The civilising process was important, and James Brooke was to be commended for delivering the Dayaks 'from a worse than Egyptian bondage', but by itself it was not enough – it needed completion. 'The Christian Mission is begun to sanctify and crown all these secular blessings'.⁸⁹ The peace established by the Rajah, like that of the Roman Empire at the Incarnation,⁹⁰ was not only a sign of civilisation but also 'prepares for the Gospel and renders the diffusion of it practicable'.⁹¹ The Borneo Mission must now turn its undivided attention to that task.

⁸⁵ Stooks to McDougall, 22 November 1850, *Ibid.*, 72-3.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ Bishop of Calcutta to Brereton, 24 January 1851, CLR 72, 117.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ See Chapter 1, 38.

⁹¹ Bishop of Calcutta to Brereton, 24 January 1851, CLR 72, 117.

In fairness to McDougall it should be emphasised that he would not have dissented from the Bishop of Calcutta's vision, although he regarded the elderly prelate rather wearily as giving him holy advice from a lofty position above the fray. He took comfort from Wilson's reminder that patience was needed before the effect of a Mission could be properly judged. And his insistence on 'building well' was to be justified – the mission house and church on which he lavished so much time, energy and money between 1848 and 1850 are still standing and in use 150 years later. The mission house, now revered by all communities as the oldest building in Kuching, is (in 1998) the residence of the Anglican Bishop of Kuching and houses the diocesan offices. The old church of St Thomas has been replaced by a new cathedral, and transported plank by plank ten miles down river from the centre of Kuching to be re-erected as the parish church for a congregation of rural Dayaks.

Keeping the Malays in good humour

Transferring the priorities towards Christianising meant a switch of interest and resources from the Malays to the Dayaks, and that was to be the main emphasis in 1851. 'The rekindling of the dying flames of Islamism', with the consequent fining of Malays for not attending the mosque, and an unexpected bonus for the Mission in that some Malays fasted with such zeal that they made themselves ill and had to attend the clinic in the evenings for treatment, were reported by McDougall at the end of 1850.⁹² In these circumstances, and with enthusiastic young missionaries on their way out, 'an open assault' on Islam should be avoided.⁹³ But with the Dayaks a different strategy was possible.

With the Dyaks the case is far different; we may at once storm the citadel and plant the banner of the Cross where the grim and gory flag of bloodshed and superstition has so long held its sway – but while we do so we must keep the Malays in good humour, for they have still sufficient power to set the Dyaks against us.⁹⁴

Clearly, 'civilising' must be applied to the Dayaks as well as to the Malays, with customs like head-hunting ('the gory flag of bloodshed') eradicated. The government could do much to achieve this, but 'planting the banner of the Cross' – i.e. Christianising – would in McDougall's view be the most effective agent for change. 'The hearts [of] the Tribes must

⁹² McDougall to Stooks, 13 December 1850, MSS.Pac.s.104 (2), 67.

⁹³ See Chapter 1, 22.

⁹⁴ McDougall to Stooks, 13 December 1850, *ibid.*

be changed, their minds enlightened, better habits and customs taught them before it [head hunting] can be really abolished, and this work can only be done by Missionary Agents living amongst them and educating them'.⁹⁵

These are the sentiments of a convinced evangelical missionary, still believing in the importance of introducing European values but becoming more sceptical of the effectiveness of 'mere civilising'. McDougall's increasing lukewarmness about the general Western-style education which his school was providing for Malays at this time has been described in Chapter 1⁹⁶ and will not be repeated. He certainly had no intention of sacrificing the Home School 'for any schools however numerous where the object is to impart Christianity as a mere intellectuality to those who have no intention of embracing it'.⁹⁷ The committee, as we have seen, retreated in the face of such determination but still urged McDougall to maintain the 'civilising' influence of the Malay school within the general work of the Mission.

The day schools give a much wider influence over the general mass of the Community than the Home School can possibly do, and although in a Christian point the day schools have little direct bearing, yet indirectly all tells for the extension of the effect produced by the Mission.⁹⁸

McDougall duly reopened the Malay school in August 1851, but he had by this time begun to question whether a state-sponsored school might not be the solution of the need for a general civilising education. He had also begun to consider whether such general mission schools, as well as proving rather useless in forwarding the process of Christianising, might not also be positively harmful.

Civilising undermines traditional cultures

Writing home in April 1851 McDougall observed that he could not 'find that many converts' were being made through the teaching of 'mere intellectuality'.

The children grow up to follow the religion of their father, and very often not that; they have learned enough it may be to make them despise their

⁹⁵ McDougall to Brereton, 6 December 1851, CLR 72, 184.

⁹⁶ 22-4.

⁹⁷ McDougall to Stooks, 15 April 1851, MSS.Pac.s.104 (2), 80.

⁹⁸ Stooks to McDougall, 24 July 1851, CLS 54, 93.

own religion and yet they do not embrace Christianity but remain practical infidels'.⁹⁹

Here McDougall had put his finger on a danger which may be inherent in the traditional Anglican approach to mission. A small dose of Christianity, masked in the guise of wisdom rather than presented as a life-changing experience, can serve not only to deter its recipients from accepting the Christian faith but also to inoculate them against religion altogether. This was a criticism which recurs frequently in the history of Missions, with missionaries accused of undermining what was most stable in other religions and cultures without substituting a more durable and life-enhancing philosophy.

It was a criticism which was to surface in Sarawak in 1877, ten years after McDougall had left the country. In an edition published in May of that year the *Sarawak Gazette*, the official government newspaper, suggested that educating Dayaks in the schools established by the missionaries at the out-stations separated them from their own people and culture.¹⁰⁰ In the following year the American taxidermist W.T. Hornaday visited Sarawak, where he obtained material about the Dayaks which was included in his book *Two Years in the Jungle* when it was published in 1885.

From his experiences among other cultures Hornaday concluded that,

Savage tribes deteriorate morally, physically and numerically, according to the degree in which they are influenced by civilisation. Those which yield most readily to the mild blandishments of the missionary . . . are the first to disappear from the face of the earth. Behind the philanthropic pioneer of Christian civilisation, even though he bears in his head only the Bible and spelling book, there lurks a host of modern vices and diseases . . .¹⁰¹

'To improve a savage race', in Hornaday's view, 'is to weaken it; to wholly civilise and convert it is to exterminate it altogether'.¹⁰² The Dayaks, however, Hornaday noted, 'had mildly but effectively resisted the best efforts of the missionaries, whether Muslim or Christian', apart from submitting to the suppression of head-hunting and piracy.¹⁰³ Hornaday was perceptive in assessing the resistance qualities of primal religion in his day. It is a pity

⁹⁹ McDougall to Stooks, 15 April 1851, MSS.Pac.s.104 (2), 80.

¹⁰⁰ *Sarawak Gazette*, 19 May 1877.

¹⁰¹ W.T. Hornaday, *Two Years in the Jungle*, London, Kegan, Paul, Trench & Co, 1885, 443-445.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ Hornaday, OUP reprint, Kuala Lumpur, 1993, 154.

that Christian missionaries have not always been equally perceptive in analysing the reasons why non-Western peoples converted and in estimating the completeness of their conversions.

But even the Dayaks have not been able to resist the total, sometimes remorseless, at other times insidious, onslaught of Western 'civilisation'. At the end of the 20th century William Rivière can lament

a Borneo the destruction of which is almost complete; its forests felled; its kampongs [villages] and longhouse communities unsettled and dispersed; its myths and its crafts being forgotten; its tribes' animistic religions savaged by Muslim and Christian missionaries, the indigenous genii hounded from their shrines of rock and tree and waterfall, harried to oblivion.¹⁰⁴

The prose is rather purple, but at least the perception of missions as part of a wider problem is fair.

It was too early in 1851 to make a reasoned judgement upon the effects of 'civilising' on the indigenous cultures of Sarawak, and McDougall went as far as he could in blaming nominal Christian teaching – and too far when he included Duff and Noble in India in his strictures. But it gave him the excuse gradually to withdraw from Malay education which, by the end of 1852 when he and his wife left Sarawak for their long furlough, had been virtually abandoned in Kuching.

There is one further element which must be mentioned, and it will be noted again in Chapter 3. One of McDougall's weaknesses seems to have been his inability to persist with a declared policy in the face of difficulties and disappointments. He was undoubtedly an adventurous man, prepared to take risks and explore new challenges, and not lacking in courage. But over some matters he clearly lacked stamina. One example must be the cessation of 'civilising' education among the Malays in 1852 when immediate success seemed to have eluded him. It was fortunate for India in the same generation that Alexander Duff – who only recorded 33 converts in 18 years of similar work¹⁰⁵ – did not also give up. But maybe Islam was more resistant than Hinduism?

¹⁰⁴ W. Rivière, *Borneo Fire*, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1995, 10.

¹⁰⁵ Neill, *op.cit.*, 234.

Optimism replaced by pessimism

During McDougall's absence from Sarawak on furlough in 1853 and 1854 no further work with Malays was attempted, and the efforts of the missionaries left on station were concentrated less on the Chinese (as Horsburgh had hoped) and more on the Dayak mission. But when McDougall returned to Kuching in April 1855 in order to prepare for his consecration as bishop he temporarily revived the notion of a Malay school.

It must be admitted that his main reason for this was less the hope of any Malay conversions and more pragmatically the reduction of Muslim opposition to the Dayak mission. He wrote in July to the secretary of the SPG – who had taken over the BCMI in January 1853 – that he proposed re-opening 'the Malay Day School . . . which was discontinued in my absence' as soon as a successor to Fox (who had lost his faith and entered government service) could be found.¹⁰⁶ It was important for the Mission to retain its influence with the Malays for, 'by gradually enlightening their minds we shall remove and lessen bitter and hostile prejudices', with the positive result that this would remove active Muslim opposition 'to our work among the Dyaks'.¹⁰⁷ Interestingly, at the same time, he put the finishing touches to his translation of the Book of Common Prayer into Malay, in Jawi characters. It was printed by the SPCK in 1857.

In the event the Malay school was not re-opened, and within two years McDougall's thinking had swung in the opposite direction. Rather than providing the scope for 'civilising', sections of the Malay population were perceived as so hostile that Islam itself was seen as posing a threat to the very existence of the Mission. With the Rajah absent in England, and the British government refusing to accept any responsibility for Sarawak, such moderating influences as might have restrained McDougall's increasingly pessimistic and exaggerated language were effectively removed.

The year 1856 was quiet, with McDougall adjusting himself to the novelty of episcopal status and the Mission assimilating a number of new missionaries. But in February 1857 an insurrection of Chinese gold-miners from Bau, about 30 miles from Kuching (which will be discussed in Chapter 5), resulted in English deaths and the destruction of much property. The

¹⁰⁶ McDougall to Hawkins, 30 July 1855. Quoted in SPG publication *The Mission Field*, 1856, 9.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

rebellion, in the defeat of which McDougall played a notable part, failed and the Mission survived, but health was damaged and confidence shaken.

News from other Asian countries fuelled the growing sense of insecurity in Sarawak. The so-called Indian Mutiny – or, for Indians, the first War of Independence – broke out in May 1857. The T'ai P'ing movement in China had been in power since 1853, with missionaries there uncertain of how to react. McDougall had no doubt that a new mood of religious conflict was imminent in Asia, and his letters home reflected a growing sense of anxiety which he attributed to the Europeans generally, but which was more probably personal to himself. In August 1857 he wrote to the SPG in apocalyptic terms.

Throughout the East the Devil has stirred and is stirring up enmity, hatred and persecution against all who bear the name of Christ. Here people are in a chronic panic in dread of a Mahometan rising.¹⁰⁸

Unrest in Java, described by McDougall in revealing language as 'a crusade against the Christians', had been temporarily suppressed by the Dutch, but was to break out again in 1859 and drive the Rhenish Mission from southern Borneo to Sumatra. Perhaps a similar outbreak in Sarawak was only being avoided because of 'the esteem' which Muslims there felt for the Mission.¹⁰⁹ The gradualism practised by the missionaries, in his perception, had prevented 'Mahometan jealousy' from 'breaking out into a flaming and open opposition'.

A martyr complex entered McDougall's correspondence at this point, understandable in view of the lives lost during the Chinese insurrection, but unhelpful in that it distorted his general view of Islam. It also persuaded him of the false parallel with the early Church in the Roman Empire, where the shedding of the blood of the saints had been the prelude to the overthrow of the 'anti-Christ' and Christian victory. 'Happen what may of persecution or trial in our time', he wrote, 'I feel sure and confident of the result – this is the last kick of Islam'.¹¹⁰

McDougall's optimism seemed as strong as ever. But then a note of realism crept into his thinking, provoked by the possibility that the 'civilising' which had marked the dealings of the Rajah and the Mission with the peoples of Sarawak might not have been as effective as had been hoped. His letter ended with a warning.

¹⁰⁸ McDougall to Bullock, 15 August 1857, MSS.Pac.s.104 (3), 137.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

When the great Apostasy which has been so long letting [i.e., hindering, obstructing] us is removed there will come a glorious time for the spread of the Christian Church at last for men to proclaim His name to all people in the East – but whether they will hear or not, how few or how many will embrace the truth, who shall say? Hearts are very hard, men love darkness rather than light.¹¹¹

The confession in that final sentence marks the first hint in McDougall's correspondence that he was aware of the depth of human sin and the impossibility of 'mere civilising' removing it. But 'the great Apostasy' would be removed – of that he had no doubt. He was still unwilling to admit that Islam was a more resilient religion than he had anticipated, but no longer prepared to engage in the dialogue of the early years. Events in 1858 and 1859 were to harden his heart to the extent that he would abandon altogether any dreams of the Church defeating the Muslim community in Sarawak, and suggest that the state might do it instead. For the Mission the conversion of the Dayaks was the only goal worthy of consideration and effort.

Charles Bunyon, with the benefit of hindsight, was to admit 30 years later that the hope expressed in McDougall's first report to the BCMI committee that 'the Malays of Sarawak will, at no very distant period, be brought into the Christian fold'¹¹² 'has never been fulfilled'.¹¹³ However, he did not consider that a special discredit should be attached to the Borneo Church Mission because it had failed 'in an attempt universally unsuccessful elsewhere'.

The author is not aware of any Mohammedan country which has been converted to Christianity in recent times, or indeed in any times except by the methods of which Ferdinand and Isabella were exponents among their Moorish subjects, which could scarcely be proposed in the nineteenth century or to the Rajah of Sarawak.¹¹⁴

One does not have to espouse the methods employed by the Spanish Inquisition before being entitled to criticise Frank McDougall both for his rather facile optimism in his initial encounters with Islam and for his impatient abandoning of all creative contact ten years later.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² See Chapter 1, 20.

¹¹³ Bunyon, *op.cit.*, 41.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

Insecurity and the future of the Mission

Rumours of Malay-inspired intrigue surfaced in 1858 whilst the Rajah was absent in England on one of his periodic attempts to secure official support from the British government for his independent regime. During his absence his elder nephew John Brooke Johnson, having assumed the name of John Brooke Brooke, was left in control of affairs in Sarawak. McDougall was pessimistic about the devolution of power, blaming Brooke Brooke's unsociable manner and 'stinginess' for the clear absence of any Malay affection for him compared with his uncle.¹¹⁵ As a result the loyalty of the local Malay aristocracy would be put under strain.

In the middle of 1858 McDougall confessed that the Kuching community was being subjected to 'panics and alarms', with the result that he always slept 'with a revolver and sword' at his pillow and an array of loaded guns in the mosquito room.¹¹⁶ Towards the end of the year he became convinced that a Malay uprising was a real threat if the British government did not respond to the Rajah's pleas for recognition and offer British residents in Sarawak naval protection. If the situation deteriorated he might even have to recommend that the headquarters of the Mission be moved to a safer place.

Mahometan bigotry and jealousy are on the increase, and unless it is known that the power of England is at our back – and manifested – there is no saying what may happen; and if this is not done . . . this will no longer be an eligible place as a Missionary centre of our Church.¹¹⁷

Martyrdom beckoned. A family letter of the same date as the above raised the prospect of the Malays being roused 'by some stupid frenzied Hadjie', and as 'the religious head of the Kaffirs' McDougall felt himself to be 'a marked man'.¹¹⁸ In the months that followed his letters were dominated by anxiety about security and the safety of the Mission. His idea of transferring to a more protected area was boosted by a proposal, dependent upon the British government assuming control of the Straits Settlements [on the mainland], to divide the unwieldy Diocese of Calcutta in half and create a separate diocese in the Straits centred on Singapore.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁵ McDougall to Bunyon, 11 October 1858, MSS.Pac.s.104 (1), 105.

¹¹⁶ McDougall to Bunyon, 20 May 1858, *Ibid.*, 97.

¹¹⁷ McDougall to Hawkins, 11 October 1858, MSS.Pac.s.104 (3), 168.

¹¹⁸ McDougall to Bunyon, 11 October 1858, MSS.Pac.s.104 (1), 105. By 'Kaffirs' McDougall did not mean the derogatory word for South African Bantus, but the Arabic word for 'infidels'.

¹¹⁹ This matter will be examined in Chapter 4, 218-22.

In June 1859 news reached Kuching of the riots in Dutch Borneo which resulted in the deaths of four German missionaries and their families and 20 Dutch officials, and the consequent removal of the Rhenish mission to Sumatra. McDougall hoped that the Malays in Sarawak would not 'catch the infection' from their co-religionists across the border'.¹²⁰ In the same month the European community in Kuching was shocked by the killing of two of the Rajah's brightest young officials, Charles Fox and Henry Steele, at the fort in Kanowit on the Rejang river. Both men had earlier worked for the Mission, ironically in the Malay school in view of the suspicion that the instigators of the attack on the fort were local Malay leaders. Even more irony may be derived from the fact that one of the suspects had been a frequent guest at the Mission House, where he used to sit quietly and listen to five-year-old Mab McDougall [born in England in 1853] telling the stories of *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* and *Cinderella*.¹²¹

The Rajah's younger nephew Charles Johnson punished those who had attacked the Kanowit fort with great severity. McDougall, somewhat perversely in view of his mounting fears, was inclined to trust in the innocence of the two chief Malay suspects until their guilt was proved, and in the letter in which he revealed this he felt the need to defend himself against the accusation that his conversation and correspondence had been full of scaremongering. 'Recent events' – like the murder of Fox and Steele – would surely prove to supporters at home that his views of the state of the country were correct, in contrast to the Rajah and his officials who would naturally 'take the bright side of things'.¹²² 'My standpoint is different', claimed McDougall, 'and my view, as one unclouded by personal interests, is more likely to be the true one'.¹²³

To write that his standpoint was 'unclouded by personal interests' was a bit rich when it is remembered that he was clearly using the security problem as a lever to obtain the removal of the headquarters of the diocese and the Mission to Singapore. Nor were the Sarawak government the only people to look on 'the bright side'. McDougall's own wife was later to comment on these years that the general insecurity 'for a time magnified every little disturbance of the peace into a public danger'.¹²⁴ It was a pity that Harriette could not transfer a little of her robust sense to her husband.

¹²⁰ McDougall to Bullock, 29 June 1859. MSS.Pac.s.104 (3), 178.

¹²¹ H. McDougall, *op.cit.*, 182.

¹²² McDougall to Hawkins, August 1859, MSS.Pac.s.104 (3), 182.

¹²³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ H. McDougall, *op.cit.*, 164.

In one final effort to deny the charge that he was creating an unnecessary sense of panic McDougall attempted to shift the blame to the three new missionaries – Hackett, Chalmers and Glover – who had arrived in Sarawak in March 1858. There was no doubt that Hackett and his wife (who accompanied him) were of a nervous disposition, and they did after a short time forsake the Mission out of fear for their safety. But it was outrageous of McDougall to say at the height of the final rumour of Malay intrigue in October 1859 that ‘my colleagues’ views of the affairs are far more desperate than my own, and I shall have some difficulty in preventing too precipitate an action on their parts’.¹²⁵ That this was written a few days before he and Harriette embarked for his second long furlough in England beggars belief!

Enclosing reports from Hackett and Chalmers with this letter McDougall continued,

It is plain to me that nothing will keep either him [Hackett] or Mr Chalmers in this country even if things do quiet down again. I am sorry their reports put things in so bad a light. I think that, although true, fear has somewhat coloured them; at least I am more hopeful than they’.¹²⁶

In fact Chalmers’ disenchantment was at least partly caused by his realising after only 18 months in the country that ‘mere civilising’ was not the primary task of the Christian missionary ‘Are we as missionaries’, he queried in his report, ‘called up to risk our lives, not in a matter of religion, but in a matter of European and Malay supremacy?’¹²⁷ His answer was in the negative and he eventually left for Australia in 1861, but not before he had laid the foundations of a Christian congregation at the Land Dayak village of Quop which is still 150 years later a vital centre of Anglican church life.

One side-effect of all the unrest was that a brake was temporarily put on the work of the Mission among the Dayaks. McDougall recorded in August 1859 that ‘Dyak minds are again disturbed, head-hunting has received another impulse and it will be some time before we can push our work in fresh places’.¹²⁸ But he was not too disheartened, affirming that the Mission would ‘yet reap the fruit of its labours’ in Dayak areas – since ‘the trustworthiness of the Christian Dyaks . . . affords proof of the success of our work’.¹²⁹ This confidence in Dayak loyalty was promoted by a story told by Harriette in which it appeared that certain Dayaks were responsible for warnings about Malay plotting. ‘Some Christian Dyaks of Lundu and

¹²⁵ McDougall to Hawkins, 18 October 1859, MSS.Pac.s.104 (3), 185.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ W. Chalmers to Secretary of the SPG, 10 October 1859, *Ibid.*

¹²⁸ McDougall to Hawkins, August 1859, *Ibid.*, 182.

¹²⁹ McDougall to Hawkins, 18 October 1859, *Ibid.*, 185.

Banting disclosed to their missionaries [Gomes and Chambers] that Malays had visited them to say they had better turn Mahometans, for soon there would be no English left in the country'.¹³⁰

McDougall reckoned that this evidence of Dayak support meant a future for Sarawak government in which the indigenous peoples would supplant the Malay elite in the administration of the country, even though – as he grudgingly admitted – there was still ‘a good party among the Malays’. Much would depend on the measures which the Rajah and his nephew Brooke Brooke adopted in the future. McDougall’s advice was unequivocal – ‘the Malay (or Mahometan) element must be gradually eliminated and the Dyak introduced’.¹³¹ ‘Civilising’ of Malays by the Mission had not worked and was abandoned in favour of more specific evangelism among the Dayaks. The influence of Islam was too strong to be undermined by Christian persuasion. It must in future be eliminated by government action. Fortified by this conviction, and the knowledge that the ringleader in the Malay plotting had been deported, Frank McDougall embarked with his family for England at the beginning of November 1859. But he wanted the SPG to realise that the position of the Mission in Sarawak had ‘been a critical and by no means a pleasant one’, with ‘danger or death’ for the missionaries ‘providentially averted’. For the present there was safety, and confidence was returning – ‘but what to predicate of the future I know not’.¹³² One reason for McDougall’s furlough at this time was clearly to promote the possibility of a Singapore bishopric.

The weakness of ‘mere civilising’

The McDougalls were away from Sarawak on leave for over two years, returning at the end of March 1862 with Harriette recording the revealing admission that ‘Sarawak is always a series of dissolving views’.¹³³ One view which had certainly ‘dissolved’ was the notion that civilising without specific Christian teaching would bring success for the Borneo Mission. Within a few months of his return to Kuching McDougall expressed his new-found realism in two different letters.

¹³⁰ H. McDougall, *op. cit.*, 181.

¹³¹ McDougall to Hawkins, 1 November 1859, MSS.Pac.s.104 (3), 188.

¹³² *Ibid.*

¹³³ H. McDougall to Eliza Bunyon, March 1862, MSS.Pac.s.104 (1), 141.

In the first, to the SPG early in August, McDougall unfairly blamed the Rajah for painting a rosy picture of the prospects for the Mission in the early days – unfairly, for had he not prophesied the same? He admitted that the visible results of the Mission’s work had not been encouraging, certainly not enough to

satisfy the morbid cravings for success of some people at home or to gratify the notions of those out here, who hold that a so-called Christianity without Christ, a civilisation without distinct religious teaching, a nominal Church without Apostolic rule and order are the necessary requirements of a Mission that would meet with rapid success among the people of these countries’.¹³⁴

One of those ‘out here’ who in McDougall’s estimation had embraced a ‘Christianity without Christ’ would certainly have been Spenser St John, the Rajah’s private secretary in the early years of the Mission, and a close friend of both James Brooke and his nephew – and, over many years, of the McDougalls. In May 1862 St John published a book entitled *Life in the Forests of the Far East*, the final chapter of which contained severe criticisms of the Borneo Mission because of its apparent lack of success. By August McDougall had received a copy, and his second letter to the SPG that month attempted an initial response to St John. He wrote that

Persons like Mr St John, who write about Missions in an offhand way, look for rapid results and find fault with things not to their mind, but never while they look on Christianity *merely as the civilising of the outward man* [my italics] take into account the difficulties and obstacles it encounters in the inner man, which prevent us easily leading people to the Saviour and convincing them of the necessity of the change of heart as well as of customs’.¹³⁵

Was there a weakness here in traditional Anglican missiology, as it had arisen in the 17th century from its Erasmian roots, found expression in Thomas Bray and the creation of the SPCK and the SPG, and been practised by McDougall since his arrival in Sarawak in June 1848? Did it neglect ‘the inner man’, the need for a ‘change of heart’ – as had been suspected in 1857 (p. 89 above)?

¹³⁴ McDougall to Hawkins, 6 August 1862, MSS.Pac.s.104 (4), 24.

¹³⁵ McDougall to Hawkins, 20 August 1862, MSS.Pac.s.104 (4), 38.

Van den Berg, a stimulating commentator, has adjudged that the Age of Reason, which gave birth to missions from the Church of England, directed Anglican practice in a negative as well as a positive manner. It certainly enabled the Established Church to discern

a correlation between moralism and ecclesiastical activity, between rationalism and the propagation of Christian knowledge, between a broadening of the horizon and a renewed expansion of the Church, between the idea of charity and the awakening interest in the fate of Indians and negroes.¹³⁶

As such it was right for the Anglican Church to relate her missions to 'civilising' as an expression of Christianising. But the Age of Reason also provided a negative emphasis. It 'could also lead to a shallow optimism with regard to man's natural capabilities' and transform missions 'into articles of ecclesiastical or cultural propaganda'.¹³⁷ Both of these dangers were evident in Sarawak between 1848 and 1862.

Van den Berg's judgement is made from hindsight. But it is fair to point out that there were Church leaders in the middle of the 19th century who were aware of the dangers, although expressing their apprehensions in simpler and more direct language. In his report to the committee of the BCMI after consecrating St Thomas's church in Kuching in January 1851 the Bishop of Calcutta recorded that in Sarawak

nothing has yet been effected as to the instruction and conversion of the natives . . . and nothing can be done in a hurry to any good effect. Nothing of a secular and merely external success is to be aimed at. The salvation of souls by the atoning sacrifice of Christ and the sanctifying grace of the Holy Ghost must be the object in view'.¹³⁸

Making allowances for its evangelical rhetoric still leaves a basic truth in Daniel Wilson's judgement. And he went on to point out that Anglican missions in West Africa and India were bearing fruit – but 'it took time'. Patience was also needed in Borneo. McDougall would have been wise to have taken note of the warnings of the old man – but patience he lacked, the patience to persist through disappointment and await response.

¹³⁶ Van den Berg, *op.cit.*, 39.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³⁸ Bishop of Calcutta to Brereton, 24 January 1851, CLR 72, 117.

THE FIRST ANGLICAN MEDICAL MISSIONARY

McDougall's impatience was that of the healer. As a doctor he anticipated results, and expected to see signs of healing reasonably quickly. But would his medical work result not only in cured bodies but also encourage at least some measure of response in his patients to Christ the divine healer in whose name he ministered? Here again, as with education in the Malay school, the signs were not hopeful, but the evidence is more difficult to assess. It has always been a problem to judge accurately the evangelistic results of the tireless work of Christian medical missions. Indeed – should such a judgement be made? The very compassion of the missionary doctor is in itself evidence of the power of the Gospel.

Doctor missionary or missionary doctor?

It is interesting to note how many missionaries in the first half of the 19th century had medical leanings. David Abeel, the American who had so impressed the young James Brooke, considered the study of medicine before his conversion diverted him in another direction.¹³⁹ Karl Gutzlaff's pamphlet in 1834 which had so impressed David Livingstone 'argued that a medical training made the missionary far more effective in converting, for gratitude inevitably followed the relief of physical suffering'.¹⁴⁰ William Wright, who went out to Sarawak with McDougall in 1848, was the son of a doctor and 'engaged in qualifying himself for that profession, he has some knowledge of medicine and the treatment of disease'.¹⁴¹ A possible rival for McDougall?

Frank McDougall himself as a young man had planned to become a doctor. Whilst living in army quarters on the island of Malta he had, at the age of 15, enrolled to study medicine at the old Jesuit college in Valetta, and a year later (1833) came to England to train in surgery at King's College, London. He proved a bright pupil by winning the gold medal in the examination for the Diploma in Surgery and was subsequently appointed as Demonstrator in Anatomy. In 1838, still only 21, he was elected a Member of the Royal College of Surgeons and was happy to teach for a time in the medical schools. That same year he seems to have been introduced to the Bunyon family,¹⁴² and it is fanciful to wonder if he also might have

¹³⁹ Dictionary of American Biography, article, 'Abeel'.

¹⁴⁰ T. Jeal, *Livingstone*, London, William Heinemann, 1973, 14.

¹⁴¹ Testimonial, 26 April 1847, CLS 54, 10.

¹⁴² For details of McDougall's early life see Bunyon, *op.cit.*, 11-12.

encountered Livingstone who came to London in 1840 to attend medical lectures at the hospitals.

Within two or three years the tedium of the classroom began to bore the adventurous McDougall, brought up as he had been to lead an active life in Mediterranean islands, and he found employment as resident doctor to a wealthy young man. When his employer went up to Oxford in 1841 McDougall accompanied him and took up residence at Magdalen Hall for two years. Coming under the spell of Newman, like so many of his contemporaries, he began to wonder whether his destiny really lay in a medical career or whether his studies in Oxford were not rather directing him towards ordination in the Church.¹⁴³

The crucial decision was probably precipitated by his engagement to Harriette Bunyon, the second daughter of Robert J. Bunyon whose wife Frances Bignold was herself the daughter of the founder of the Norwich Union Fire & Life Company (later the Insurance Society).

The Bunyon family were strongly in the Evangelical tradition, with links to the CMS, and Harriette was alleged to have vowed only to marry a clergyman. In any case, residence at Oxford would eventually have committed Frank to holy orders. But his medical training would not be wasted. Harriette mentioned sometime in 1842 (the month was not recorded) in a letter to McDougall's sister Sophia that, during his time at Oxford

Frank has had an interview with the Bishop of London who, with his chaplain, examined him for an hour. The Bishop said that Frank's "medical knowledge would be very useful among the sceptical", so you see the years of study he has spent as some people think in vain [Harriette's underlining] will all conduce to his greater usefulness in the Church.¹⁴⁴

Harriette considered that 'scientific acquirements give people such great influence over all ranks that a clergyman ought, to be perfect, not only to be a learned Divine but everything [Harriette's underlining] else'. 'Will not our Frank be an accomplished Minister?', she concluded.¹⁴⁵ Sadly as it turned out 'the sceptical' in Sarawak would not find McDougall's 'scientific acquirements' very stimulating, for he was to manifest a total reluctance to engage in controversial discussion or to debate religious and philosophical issues with the Rajah's circle of bright young men.

¹⁴³ For Newman's influence see Chapter 3, 115-7.

¹⁴⁴ H. Bunyon to S. McDougall, 1842, Turner Papers, MSS.Ind.Ocn.s.292/3.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

Saunders suggests that McDougall's lack of confidence in theological argument may have been due to 'his late decision' in favour of ordination.¹⁴⁶ He delayed for three years after leaving Oxford, choosing for a time to manage Bunyon's iron works in South Wales, and only when that closed down was he – on receiving his MA – ordained deacon at Norwich in January 1845 at the age of 27.

The promise of eventual ordination, however, was enough for Harriette, and she and Frank were married on 11 July 1843 at Pembrey church, Carmarthen, the officiating priest being John Colenso who was engaged to her elder sister Frances. After ordination they made their home near Norwich, where Frank was made priest in January 1846, and where they brought up their first two babies Charles and Harry. Within two years the Revd. Dr F.T. McDougall, MA, MRCS, was on his way out to Sarawak to inaugurate the Borneo Mission, to be all the more useful to the Church in the estimation of the wife who accompanied him because of his combination of 'divine' and 'scientific' learning.

Medical work in a subordinate role?

The immediate opening of the dispensary on arrival at Kuching, and the way in which McDougall endeavoured to see his practice of medicine as 'auxiliary' to his work as a missionary priest have been outlined above.¹⁴⁷ He genuinely believed that the early concentration of time and energy on 'doctoring' would only be temporary, and that a state-appointed physician would ultimately release him for his more important role as chief missionary. But, like many people, he could not say 'no' – he could not shut his eyes to medical need. A certain Dr Treacher was expected in Kuching en route for employment in Labuan, and at first McDougall thought of asking Treacher to look after the dispensary for a few days whilst he visited a nearby Land Dayak area. In the event Treacher took on extra medical work during his stay in Kuching, and on his eventual removal to Labuan McDougall proposed to assume this work as well. When the committee heard of this they were alarmed. In the same letter in which they reminded their chief missionary that his 'medical duties' were to be reckoned as 'subsidiary' to his 'great spiritual charge'¹⁴⁸ they warned him to be careful.

¹⁴⁶ Saunders, *op.cit.*, 12.

¹⁴⁷ See Chapter 1, 24-9.

¹⁴⁸ See Chapter 1, 25.

With regard to the arrangement of which you speak, that you are to take Dr Treacher's medical duties upon his removal to Labuan, we judge from your report that this charge is merely casual and temporary, but we would desire fuller and more detailed information on the subject.¹⁴⁹

Writing to the committee before he had received that letter McDougall assured them that his 'medical employment' was not hindering his 'missionary duties', and in a parenthesis claimed that the former was only 'temporary'.¹⁵⁰ But it was important in that his ministry to the 'saving of lives and limbs' was affording openings to his ministry 'as a Padre' whereby he was able to discuss religious and moral principles held in common with his patients.¹⁵¹ His work as a doctor, seen as an expression of Christian compassion and a practical way of exercising the gifts which had been nourished by his training in Valetta and London, was to be the channel for the salvation in Christ of his patients. Time-consuming though it no doubt was at the beginning, this could not be avoided, and as with the pre-evangelistic work in the Malay school ultimate success was assured. Eventually – so McDougall anticipated – the dispensary and the medical home visits would clearly be seen to assume a subordinate place in the life of the Mission, and the chief missionary freed from the daily concerns of giving injections and prescribing medicines, tasks which could be performed by assistants whilst he exercised a supervisory role. But what a blessing for the Church, as this healing of bodies afforded access for 'the grateful patients' (Gutzlaff's idea) to respond to the Gospel – when it was preached to them – in trust and confidence.

Healing in church and mission

In one way it seems surprising that McDougall and the committee, and many others in the missionary societies during the first half of the 19th century, should have relegated medical work to a subordinate place in the pantheon of mission activity. In a discussion spread over several pages in his memoirs of the McDougalls Charles Bunyon noted that physical healing had always been counted an integral part of the Church's outreach.

It is one of the glories of Christianity that she came with gifts of healing in her hands and that, following the ancient traditions of the Church, hospitals have sprung up throughout Christendom, the embodiment as it were of the thought of its Founder.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁹ Stooks to McDougall, 19 October 1848, CLS 54, 30.

¹⁵⁰ McDougall to Stooks, 30 November 1848, MSS.Pac.s.104 (2), 16.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Bunyon, *op.cit.*, 35-7

It is certain that the Jesuit settlements in Asia and America in the 16th century would have included hospitals as a part of their economy. But Protestants, as with Mission itself, were slower to respond, and Eliot's Christian villages in the North American colonies in the 17th century were an isolated example. The exact moment when medical missions as such entered Protestant practice is uncertain. Neill records that the Tranquebar mission had doctors in the 18th century, and a doctor named John Thomas was the companion of William Carey, but they were not accredited missionaries.¹⁵³ The Americans seem to have been more advanced, with John Scudder reaching Sri Lanka in 1819, the first of a distinguished family of missionary doctors over many generations.¹⁵⁴

One of the first Protestant missionary doctors in that significant final decade of the 18th century was J.T. Van der Kemp, an Edinburgh MD who went to the Cape with the LMS in 1798. But before sailing he was ordained, and he seems not to have practised medicine at Bethelsdorp between 1803 and 1811. The historian of these particular missions in South Africa has concluded that

when Van der Kemp joined the LMS, he was mainly concerned with enlightening the indigenous people of the Cape with the Christian message. He was primarily an evangelist.¹⁵⁵

In the next two decades missionaries in South Africa began to realise that physicians were essential in their mission centres, to look after their own health as well as that of the Africans. Pleas for a doctor to the Glasgow Missionary Society, founded in 1796, went unheeded,¹⁵⁶ but other societies – again led by the Americans – listened and responded. The early American Zulu Mission included two doctors on its staff, stressing however that they were being sent primarily for evangelism – with their first duty as doctors to be the care of sick missionaries and their families and only then, where possible, the cure of Africans who were ill. Gelfand's comments echo Gutzlaff 150 years earlier.

¹⁵³ Neill, *op.cit.*, 216-7.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 235.

¹⁵⁵ M. Gelfand, *Christian doctor and nurse: the history of medical missions in South Africa from 1799 to 1976*, South Africa, Sandton, 1984, 18.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 23.

When the sick [Africans] recovered they would be grateful to their doctor, to the mission and to the medicine, and above all might turn to Christ and the Kingdom of God. The mission doctor was thus a part of the purpose of the mission, which was to bring the light to unbelievers.¹⁵⁷

It was against this background that Robert Moffat called to the LMS for medical assistance and eventually, with such profound consequences, received the services of the 27-year-old David Livingstone. For a man with such an independent outlook it is interesting to note that Livingstone shared the contemporary view of the subordination of his medical role. One of his many 20th century biographers concludes that Livingstone 'never from the outset regarded his medical work as other than of secondary importance in comparison with his work directly as a missionary'.¹⁵⁸ In support of this contention is a quotation from an undated letter which Livingstone sent to the Revd Richard Cecil, who had been his tutor at Chipping Ongar in 1838.

The spiritual amelioration of the people is the object for which I came, but I cannot expect God to advance this by my instrumentality if much of my time is spent in mere temporal amelioration.¹⁵⁹

The use of the word 'mere' is reminiscent of the later McDougall,¹⁶⁰ and Livingstone's conclusion was similar to McDougall's, a wish that his medical work might reduce.

The first Anglican

It was not until 1889 (as noted by Gelfand) that the first Anglican priest/doctor, the Revd W.E. Smyth, reached South Africa, to be followed in 1893 by the Revd F.W. Walters. Both men were trained first for the ordained ministry and second as physicians. By the time Smyth arrived at Isandhlwana McDougall had been dead for three years, so it seems fair to claim for McDougall the distinction of having been the first medical missionary in Anglican church history. Bunyon did not hesitate to make this claim.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 20.

¹⁵⁸ G. Seaver, *David Livingstone: His Life & Letters*, London, Lutterworth Press, 1957, 62.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ See above, 94.

It seems clear that the committee of the BCMI in 1849 shared the general Protestant opinion that all 'material' considerations, including medical care, must be subordinated to the over-riding 'spiritual' purpose of mission. Their fears that McDougall was preoccupied with the bodies rather than the souls of the indigenous peoples have been noted in Chapter 1.¹⁶¹ Bunyon – writing with hindsight in 1889 – expressed surprise at the committee's attitude. He felt it strange that the home committee 'should have been alarmed at the medical side of the mission', for – appointing a doctor as chief missionary – 'the prospect of such a development was made one of its leading features from its very commencement'.¹⁶² Recalling James Brooke's ideal missionary as one who 'practices medicine'¹⁶³ and the glorious Christian tradition of healing¹⁶⁴ Bunyon felt it 'imperative upon those who seek to preach Christianity that they should make medical science its companion'.¹⁶⁵ Perhaps, he felt, allowances should be made for the committee in those early day.

These things were not so well understood forty years ago [1849] as they are now [1889] but, whether it were intended by its managers at home or not, the fact remains that Bishop McDougall's enterprise was in effect the first medical mission of the Church of England.¹⁶⁶

The suggestion that such an important departure from tradition might have been in the first instance 'unintentional' accords well with the haphazard way in which the Church of England has often made significant changes! In 1849 they were not long in coming. By the end of 1850 the committee had come round to accepting McDougall's healing work,¹⁶⁷ and so in a small way he was a pioneer in the normalising of medical missions.

Later on in his biography Bunyon summed up his satisfaction with his brother-in-law's work.

In the last chapter we spoke of this mission as the first medical mission of the Church of England. All through the history, while in Borneo, he [McDougall] will be found uniting the practice of medicine with his clerical office, but anxious that the one should not interfere with the other He kept up to date with his technical knowledge, but did not practise for gain and had much delight in his practise'.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶¹ pp 25-7.

¹⁶² Bunyon, op.cit., 37.

¹⁶³ See Chapter 1, 10.

¹⁶⁴ See above, 99-100.

¹⁶⁵ Bunyon, op.cit., 37.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ See Chapter 1, 29.

¹⁶⁸ Bunyon, op.cit., 68.

This picture of the contented, purposeful physician was tempered later in the book by a note to the effect that McDougall 'gradually drifted into becoming the doctor of the place' and found it rather a burden at times, which was 'one reason why he wanted his HQ moved to Singapore'.¹⁶⁹ But he shouldered his burdens in a spirit of dedication combined with resignation, accepting without too much complaint every additional opportunity which came along to share his compassion and demonstrate his skills, however time-consuming they might be.

As well as treating sickness in the missionaries and among the European residents, caring for patients from the three indigenous races in the dispensary, and responding to emergencies whenever and wherever they arose, McDougall was given the extra responsibility of looking after the casualties of various government campaigns against pirates and other dissidents. In August 1849 for instance, after the Rajah's bloody punitive expedition up the Skrang and Saribas rivers, he recorded that '. . . the care of the sick and wounded, added to my other duties, has fully occupied all my time for the last few weeks'.¹⁷⁰ Another tiring emergency, this time caused by the neighbouring Dutch administration, was the arrival of the 5,000 refugees from across the border in October 1850.¹⁷¹ This rendered 'the calls upon us every day more urgent', creating a sphere for action which was 'spreading more and more beyond my reach and powers'.¹⁷²

In spite of all this McDougall always relished opportunities to practise his skills and (as Bunyon recorded) keep up to date with his technical knowledge. In July 1849 the *Singapore Free Press* reported that (with Dr Treacher) he had successfully amputated both arms of a sailor injured by the explosion of a cartridge at the salute in honour of the Queen's birthday. 'Besides his zealous labours as a Missionary' McDougall, in the words of the article, 'is ever ready to afford the aid of his medical knowledge, which must always be a great recommendation to a Missionary, but is doubly so when placed . . . in an isolated position at a distance from all other aid'.¹⁷³

The remoteness of south-east Asia meant that, for keeping up to date with advances in medical knowledge, McDougall had to wait for his furlough in the West. The Singapore

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 211.

¹⁷⁰ McDougall to Stooks, 25 August 1849, MSS.Pac.s.104 (2), 36.

¹⁷¹ See Chapter 1, 29.

¹⁷² McDougall to Brereton, 23 October 1850, MSS.Pac.s.104 (2), 63.

¹⁷³ *Singapore Free Press*, 7 July 1849, quoted in Bunyon, *Ibid.*, 59.

hospital provided better facilities than could Kuching, but when McDougall was in London in 1854 he was able to attend 'hospital practice and medical lectures to rub up and learn all the new improvements in the healing art',¹⁷⁴ and was made an FRCS. The European mind had not yet learned to appreciate the alternative and complementary skills of Eastern medicine. There were many such doctors in Sarawak at the time, but Bunyon could still refer to McDougall as 'the only doctor in the place'.

Even when in Calcutta for his consecration, with all the attendant 'spiritual' pre-occupations which would have engaged him in October 1855, McDougall could not resist an opportunity to practise his love of medicine. The principal British hospital surgeon in Calcutta at the time later told Bunyon of a moment shortly after McDougall had been made bishop when the two men met. On being told that the surgeon was on his way to hospital to perform a dangerous operation the bishop 'exclaimed, "Let me go with you". "By all means", I answered, "jump into the carriage", and he did so, and in twenty minutes he was standing with his coat off, and his arms up to the elbows in blood, and the operation had been most successfully performed'. McDougall, the surgeon added, 'was the best assistant that I ever had in my life'.¹⁷⁵

Missionary – doctor – and bishop

It might have been thought that, after his consecration in October 1855 and return to Sarawak the following December with increased responsibilities, McDougall would have been relieved of some of his medical duties. But it was not to be – he could not shake off his unofficial role of state-physician, and in the end, amongst the Europeans especially, it was to prove the employment for which he was to be best remembered and honoured.

These were the years when his own health deteriorated, and in consequence he yearned for more support. Only a month after his return from Calcutta McDougall recorded that his small daughter Mab was ill and he himself was suffering from a liver complaint. 'It is very trying', he wrote, 'that there is no Medical Man here when I and my family are sick'.¹⁷⁶ A year later, a few days before the Chinese insurrection¹⁷⁷ in February 1857, the position was no better.

¹⁷⁴ Bunyon, *op.cit.*, 68.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 69.

¹⁷⁶ McDougall to Bullock, 2 February 1856, MSS.Pac.s.104 (3), 58.

¹⁷⁷ See Chapter 5, 238-42.

He informed his brother-in-law that ‘every case of sickness among Europeans is as it were forced upon me, and will be until there is a medical man they can trust here’.¹⁷⁸ Occasional treatment by a naval surgeon on a visiting ship, combined with some care from a Dr Cowper in Singapore whilst recovering from the privations of the Chinese attack, kept him going, but on his return to Kuching in August 1857 he was again faced with having the sole medical responsibility. ‘Oh for a good medical man’, he sighed, ‘as the medical charge of the place super-added to my proper duties is a great tie and often a trial to me’.¹⁷⁹ His sighs fell on deaf ears, and it needed a crisis in connection with the birth of an heir to the throne to inject a note of urgency.

John Brooke Brooke, who was being groomed by his uncle to succeed as Rajah, had returned to Sarawak in 1857 (with his young wife Annie) after the Chinese insurrection. In September she gave birth to a son. McDougall tended her, but his correspondence was silent on the event, probably because it passed off successfully. Harriette however was later to remember ‘the care and anxiety’ which had surrounded such a birth ‘in a place where there was no doctor except the Bishop’.¹⁸⁰ Though all had gone well with the confinement, she thanked God,

we said it ought never to happen again – there should be a medical man whose sole duty it was to care for the bodies of the community, while the Bishop was free to minister to their spiritual wants.¹⁸¹

Clearly a full-time physician rather than a part-time episcopal doctor was badly needed in Kuching. The government acted and Brooke Brooke, who was in charge of affairs whilst his uncle was in England, selected a man named Conroy (Saunders refers to him as Correy).¹⁸² The appointment was a fiasco, demonstrating to the Rajah his nephew’s poor judgement.

Dr Conroy arrived with his wife and six children in August 1858, but left after only a month and returned to England. Harriette was scathing, particularly with Mrs Conroy’s romantic illusions that she would encounter shops, amusements, cool weather and cheap food in Sarawak’,¹⁸³ but she hinted also at a financial disagreement about Conroy’s salary.¹⁸⁴

¹⁷⁸ McDougall to Bunyon, 9 February 1857, MSS.Pac.s.104 (1), 39.

¹⁷⁹ McDougall to Bullock, 15 August 1857, MSS.Pac.s.104 (3), 140.

¹⁸⁰ H. McDougall, *op.cit.*, 158.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸² Saunders, *op.cit.*, 97.

¹⁸³ H. McDougall, *op.cit.*, 166.

¹⁸⁴ H. McDougall to Mrs Bunyon, 4 September 1858, MSS.Pac.s.104 (1), 101.

No immediate attempt was made to seek a replacement, with the result that McDougall was left two months later to face on his own the worst medical crisis to strike the European residents of Kuching since his arrival ten years earlier. In November 1858 Annie Brooke gave birth to her second son and, after contracting a fever, died ten days later. The little expatriate community was devastated, not least McDougall who had nursed her with great devotion during her short illness. Harriette was to describe the period as 'the sad, dark time at Sarawak' and to lament that 'all the happy holiday days passed away with Annie Brooke'.¹⁸⁵ The loss was made even more poignant in that she had successfully given birth to a son Herbert a month earlier.

Her husband recorded a week after the tragedy that he was 'quite knocked up and ill with anxiety, fatigue and the care of watching and nursing (which always falls upon me when anyone is ill here) . . .'.¹⁸⁶ Writing to Bunyon at the same time McDougall recorded his sorrow, as he and Harriette were 'very fond of Annie', and expressed some surprise at her death. Her fever 'would not yield to medicine in any way . . . I cannot account for it in any other way than that this has been a very unhealthy year, with much fever here'.¹⁸⁷ He was referring to a virulent outbreak of cholera which afflicted Kuching in 1858. The Rajah was sensitive to this apportioning of blame to his kingdom, and in communication with Bunyon in February 1859 he implicitly rebuked the Bishop. Annie Brooke's fatal sickness was 'no uncommon disorder whether here [in England] or elsewhere, and there is no occasion to seek for local causes that might have produced it'.¹⁸⁸ Even more strongly the Rajah seemed to question McDougall's faith. 'We all know it [Annie's death] was in the course of nature . . . our folly is in regarding death when it comes to our own door as something extraordinary'.¹⁸⁹ This was the time when the leaders of the state in Sarawak were suspecting McDougall of denigrating the country in order to pressurise the Established Church and the SPG into moving his HQ to Singapore, and it looks as though the Rajah saw his remarks about 'the unhealthy year' contributing to Annie's death as one more stage in this process. His phraseology was, however, rather callous.

Other Europeans in the Sarawak administration were more appreciative of McDougall's efforts. Annie Brooke's brother Charles Grant, who was government resident at Belidah fort

¹⁸⁵ H. McDougall, *op.cit.*, 169.

¹⁸⁶ McDougall to Hawkins, 1 December 1858, MSS.Pac.s.104 (3), 170.

¹⁸⁷ Bunyon, *op.cit.*, 178.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 179.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

upriver from Kuching, had previously expressed doubts to his father John about the Bishop's wisdom, but he was impressed by the medical care extended to his sister. He wrote to his parents,

I must not forget to mention the Bishop – he has been so tender, so attentive indeed the stay of the house – and we all felt that our lost one could not have been in more skilful hands. Poor Bishop – he and also Mrs McDougall have felt this bitterly.¹⁹⁰

John Grant himself assured McDougall that 'your tender care for our beloved Annie as a physician, as well as your holy office as a Bishop, we shall never forget'.¹⁹¹ There is a suspicion that the bishop's role was regarded as subordinate to the physician's, and when the European community in Sarawak decided in 1859 to recognise McDougall's 'tender care' they tried to suggest this without being too indiscreet. The sum of £130 was raised, and Brooke Brooke – who was then on leave – purchased some silver at Garrards which was presented to Frank and Harriette during their furlough in 1860. The inscription on the salver read,

Presented by the European inhabitants of Sarawak to the Rt. Revd. F.T. McDougall DCL, Lord Bishop of Labuan and Sarawak, as a token of respect and esteem, and in grateful remembrance of his unvarying kindness and sympathy.¹⁹²

Saunders suggests that McDougall 'chose to see [this gift] as an appreciation of his work as missionary and bishop, but it is clear that this was not the case'.¹⁹³ It was meant as a thank-offering for his work as doctor. At the same time the Borneo Company gave him £500 – although Bunyon insisted that he did not practise for gain – in recognition of the services he had rendered to their employees 'in a medical capacity'.¹⁹⁴ Brooke Brooke pointed out to his uncle that the testimonial was given to the Bishop 'in particular for his kindness in sickness',¹⁹⁵ a quality which even McDougall's strongest critic St John recognised when composing the chapter on the Mission in his book *Life in the Forests of the Far East*. 'I, among the other Englishmen who have dwelt in Sarawak', wrote St John, 'have to thank him [McDougall] for a patient and skilful attendance'.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁰ C. Grant to J. and L. Grant, 27-29 November 1858, MSS.Pac.s.90, Vol.10, 161.

¹⁹¹ Bunyon, op.cit., 180.

¹⁹² Ibid., 210.

¹⁹³ Saunders, op.cit., 99.

¹⁹⁴ Bunyon, op.cit., 210-11.

¹⁹⁵ J.B. Brooke to J. Brooke, 21 October 1859, MSS.Pac.s.90, Vol.5, 197.

¹⁹⁶ Spenser St John, *Life in the Forests of the Far East*, 2 vols., London, Smith, Elder & Co., 1862, Vol. 2, 377.

In replying to his nephew's letter the Rajah commented that 'the Bishop deserves more than we can afford to give for his kindness accorded to each and all of us'.¹⁹⁷ Since this was said at a time when relations between James Brooke and Frank McDougall were strained it was clearly a sincere comment. But for the Bishop genuine compliments and silver salvers were not enough – he had hoped that his compassionate medical attentions would have resulted in a more specific Christian response, a deeper faith and commitment from the European residents. 'He felt too, that goodwill thus shown was the readiest means of access to the hearts of those by whom he was surrounded, and that his labours were thus indirectly bestowed on his mission'.¹⁹⁸ So far as the Europeans were concerned such hopes were to be dashed. In relation to the indigenous peoples the 'spiritual' results of McDougall's medical work are impossible to quantify with the same confidence.

As with the Malay school and friendly dialogue with the local Muslims, so also the kindness and skill shown by McDougall the doctor failed to lead to any significant 'Christianising'. In expecting that it might do so was there not a serious flaw at the heart of this particular theory – and practice – of mission?

'They do not like spiritual doctors'

After returning to Sarawak from his second furlough in March 1862 McDougall continued to exercise his medical skills, although less was required of him because an official government physician arrived at the same time. In contrast to Conroy the young Dr E.J. Houghton settled down to work in Sarawak for many years, and even seems to have been employed in treating some of the missionaries as well as the other European residents. In 1874 he was to complain that he had been ministering to the staff of the Mission for eleven years without a proper contract with the SPG.¹⁹⁹

McDougall however continued to care for his colleagues and their families, particularly in emergencies. Harriette mentioned to her brother an incident in 1865 when, although in pain himself and not sleeping, her husband got up at 3.30am one day to treat the sick eldest child of the missionary F.W. Abe. 'I sometimes wish Frank were not a doctor', she wistfully

¹⁹⁷ J. Brooke to J.B. Brooke, 25 October 1859, MSS.Pac.s.90, Vol. 2B, 539.

¹⁹⁸ Bunyon, *op.cit.*, 211.

¹⁹⁹ E.J. Houghton to Secretary, SPG, 7 July 1874, OLR, D36c.

added, 'it entails so much on him when he is not well himself'.²⁰⁰ By this time Harriette's disillusion with life in Sarawak had become very marked.

She suggested in the same letter that Dr Houghton was not so competent – or experienced – that he could minister alone without Frank's assistance. 'The other day Dr Houghton wrote begging him [McDougall] to go immediately and assist him at Mrs Hewet's confinement . . .'.²⁰¹ There was no doubt an element of sour grapes in this comment.

Frank himself seems to have had a rather jaundiced view of Houghton's accomplishments. He grumbled to Bunyon about a cholera epidemic which was affecting Kuching in March 1865 and – in his judgement – preventing him from leaving the town and visiting Labuan.

I should have been going about now – but I dare not leave my people here while the cholera is bad – and if I went and left them the panic here would be greater, as there is no confidence felt in the new Doctor who has behaved wretchedly and shews himself utterly unprepared for the emergency.²⁰²

'My people'? There is a proprietorial air about this phrase, as though McDougall could not quite relinquish what had been for years his eminent role in the Sarawak community. There is the sense of indispensability which can affect anyone around whose skills the welfare of a society has revolved for a long time. He was proud of what he had achieved, and yet must have been conscious in his heart that it was in the 'secondary' sphere of work as a doctor rather than in his 'primary' responsibility as a missionary – using terms which would have been congenial to him in the mid-19th century rather than acceptable to missiologists at the end of the 20th. So it was left to the shrewd Harriette to record her husband's epitaph, writing home to her brother in the year before they finally left Sarawak, never to return. 'I am amazed to find how much more deference is paid to him [Frank] when he is acting Physician – but they do not like spiritual doctors'.²⁰³

Therein lay the dichotomy that McDougall never managed to reconcile. Nor could he within the boundaries of 19th century missionary thinking. Bunyon's comment, recorded above,²⁰⁴ that medical science should be the 'companion' of evangelism suggests that he recognised

²⁰⁰ H. McDougall to C. Bunyon, February or March 1865, MSS.Pac.s.104 (1), 206.

²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² McDougall to Bunyon, 16 March 1865, MSS.Pac.s.104 (1), 211.

²⁰³ H. McDougall to Bunyon, 21 August 1865, Ibid., 224.

²⁰⁴ p. 102.

some sort of equality between the two disciplines. But McDougall never managed to think in this way. For him the work of the doctor was always a means to the end, never the end itself. His medical efforts would 'pave the way' for benefiting the souls of his patients as well as their bodies.²⁰⁵ As a doctor he thought he could gain the confidence of those he treated so as to be 'better able to influence them for good'.²⁰⁶ Because of his physical healings he was being listened to 'as a Padre'.²⁰⁷ His medical employment was 'subservient' to his 'higher calling', a 'powerful auxiliary' to his evangelistic purpose but in no way complementary.²⁰⁸ God was enabling the Mission to 'benefit the bodies' of the indigenous peoples of Sarawak 'so that we may gain their hearts and win their souls'.²⁰⁹ The theme was consistent.

Bunyon too, despite the more open comment recorded above, would have generally supported his brother-in-law. He saw the goodwill engendered by McDougall's medical work as 'the readiest means of access' to the hearts of his patients.²¹⁰ Certainly McDougall 'united the practice of medicine with his clerical office'.²¹¹ But the unity was never obvious – sometimes the two were in competition, the one 'hindering' the other, whilst at other times they were held in separate compartments. McDougall, alleged Bunyon, was anxious 'that the one should not interfere with the other'.²¹² It makes medicine and evangelism sound like rivals rather than companions.

It would be wrong to criticise McDougall for expressing so clearly the attitudes which were shared, as has been noted in Chapters 1 and 2, by all the other missionaries and missionary agencies of his day. The separation of 'body' and 'spirit' had guided the thinking of the Church in the West for centuries, and the primacy of the latter asserted in both the Catholic and Reformed traditions. McDougall, very much a traditional Churchman, saw his much-loved practise of medicine as a means of preaching the Gospel *in that it would lead from the healing into an avenue in which the Gospel could be clearly and verbally proclaimed*. Neither he nor his contemporaries could recognise that acts of physical healing in themselves were potent expressions of the Gospel, needing no further authentication. In them Christ was

²⁰⁵ Chapter 1, 24.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 25.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 26.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 26.

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

²¹⁰ Above, 108.

²¹¹ Ibid., 102.

²¹² Ibid., 102.

proclaimed, the Word which had been made physical 'enfleshed' in human life. His ignorance of this insight cannot detract from the honour due to Frank McDougall for his many years of sacrificial and compassionate care for people of all races in Sarawak. He may not have known it, but in his person 'civilising' and 'Christianising' were united, were one.

CHAPTER 3

A TRADITIONAL CHURCHMAN WITH AN INCLUSIVIST MISSIOLOGY

CULTURAL INFLUENCES ON FORMATIVE IDEAS

McDougall's antecedents and upbringing

Some mystery surrounds the family background of Francis Thomas McDougall, and there appear to be no written records which might assist research. Bunyon suggested that he was descended from the clan McDougall who lived near Oban on the west coast of Scotland, and in support described his brother-in-law's appearance. 'Frank McDougall was a man of extremely dark complexion, with black hair and eyes, said to be not uncommon in the race on the west coast of Scotland from which he sprang'.¹

A more sinister explanation of McDougall's 'dark complexion' can be found in a family tradition which Bunyon's sensitivity caused him to omit from his biography. It was alleged that Frank's paternal grandfather, General Patrick McDougall, had a sexual relationship with an Armenian lady whilst serving with the army in India, and the offspring of this union was William Adair McDougall, Frank's father.²

W.A. McDougall also served in the army as a captain in an Irish regiment, the Connaught Rangers, and since Frank's married sister Mary chose to settle in Dublin there was an Irish link in the family chain. An interesting conjecture, outlined by a McDougall descendant in an edition of the *Sarawak Museum Journal*, suggests that some of the Scottish McDougalls chose to emigrate to Ireland along with other of their compatriots after fighting on the Jacobite side in 1745. It was from thence that Frank McDougall's immediate ancestors, like

¹ C.J. Bunyon, *Memoirs of Francis Thomas McDougall and of Harriette his Wife*, London, Longmans Green & Co., 1889, 10.

² A.J.M. Saint, *A Flourish for the Bishop and Brooke's friend Grant: Two studies in Sarawak history, 1848-1868*, Braunton, Merlin Books, 1985, 16-17.

many expatriate Scots, enlisted in the army and thereby began to move to England and serve overseas.³

Francis Thomas McDougall was born at Sydenham in south-east London in June 1817, an indication that his father may then have been based at Catford or Woolwich. He had an elder sister Sophia (Sophy), who was to remain unmarried and settle at Sydenham, and a younger sister Mary. Like all army families the McDougalls were moved around, with schooling in consequence interrupted. In 1824 they were in Manchester, where Mary commenced a diary, and the following year they surfaced in Chatham preparing for embarkation to the Mediterranean where Captain W.A. McDougall was to serve on the island of Corfu. The Ionian Islands had become a British possession in 1815.

Frank McDougall was in later life always proud of his family's military traditions, although unwilling himself to follow in the patriarchal footsteps, and it is not too fanciful to detect in him some influence from the army culture. The simple and uncomplicated faith of the soldier allied to the emphasis on discipline and loyalty were to become evident in the priest and bishop who found religious debate distasteful and spiritual questioning a sign of unfaithfulness. The military virtue of obedience was to characterise both Frank's attitude to his own faith and his expectations of the responses of his subordinate colleagues. In a telling phrase Bunyon reveals that Frank 'regarded the Archbishop of Canterbury as his Commander-in-Chief'.⁴

On Corfu Frank McDougall attended a Lord Guildford's college for a time, but in 1828 the family were moved to Malta to await relocation. They were immediately sent back to the Ionian islands, this time to Cephalonia where the young McDougall – as revealed in later life – seems to have been taught in Greek by the local Orthodox priest.⁵ This experience undoubtedly introduced him to the benefits of ecumenism before returning to Malta.

There may at this time have been some religious influences from McDougall's father, who was authorised to baptise Anglican babies and bury the dead on Cephalonia in the absence of an English priest. But his mother's strong Evangelicalism proved more lasting in its effect.

³ Joe Berwick 'Bishop Francis Thomas McDougall' *Sarawak Museum Journal*, Vol. 18, Nos. 36-37, July 1970, 423.

⁴ Bunyon, *op.cit.*, 11.

⁵ McDougall revealed this teaching in a speech at the Southampton Church Congress of 1870. McDougall to Bishop of Durham. 13 November 1872, or 1873? Turner Papers, Rhodes House Library, MSS.Ind.Ocn.s.292.

In her diary Frank's elder sister Mary described how Mrs McDougall locked her 14-year old son in his bedroom on one occasion in Malta in order to prevent him from riding as a jockey at a local race meeting.⁶ Further, 'it seems that the noble Lord [who owned the horses] was not above encouraging Tom [F.T. McDougall] to fight with his Maltese stable-boy, and placing bets on him'.⁷ No doubt it was to this latter aspect that Mrs McDougall really objected. Frank's mother died in Malta in 1834, after her 17-year old son had left for England, and her influence was missing when he came into contact with different religious experiences as a young man (e.g., at Oxford). But he retained all through his life an inner piety which had initially been formed in a home that reflected the effect of the Evangelical Revival on British families during the early decades of the 19th century.

It is important to emphasise the difference during these years between the broad and tolerant Evangelical spirit which affected a large number of Christians in all denominations and the narrower and more partial Evangelical fervour which resulted in divisive sectarian thought and behaviour. This difference has been well summarised by the Swedish theologian and bishop Yngve Brilioth, an acute observer of Anglican church history.

One can speak of an Evangelical party but it had no sharp limits. Rather was it that all who strove for a warmer religious feeling, all who were really spiritually minded, to put it differently, came to be counted that way even if they had little sympathy with the theoretical principles which marked Evangelicalism in the narrower sense.⁸

It was in this broader sense that we find the members of the Clapham Sect, including William Wilberforce, espousing the title of 'Evangelical', and his son Samuel proud to be numbered in this way even after he had become a High Churchman accepting more Catholic principles. Frank McDougall and Samuel Wilberforce were to progress in similar fashion from Evangelical beginnings to a more inclusive maturity which did not deny the validity of their early training, but built upon its foundation a more Catholic outlook rejecting party extremes.

One further incident during the years on Malta, to which the McDougall family had returned from Cephalonia in 1829, was to affect Frank's life in a rather different way. He cut his foot badly on a piece of broken glass and required treatment at the hospital in Valetta. His

⁶ Mary McDougall, *Diary*, *Ibid.*, 19.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ Yngve Brilioth, *The Anglican Revival*, London, Longmans, 1933, 36.

courage under the painful probing of the wound led the doctor to suggest him for a course of medical studies, and he began to walk the wards and enrolled at the local ex-Jesuit college. His dark complexion provoked the supposition among one of his contemporaries that he was really an Italian Jesuit who was engaged in subverting the Church of England.⁹ Whether such an incident rendered McDougall hypersensitive to people of mixed race, as suggested by Saunders,¹⁰ is open to doubt, but he may have felt some guilt about his own ancestry.

Whatever the truth of this matter Frank's interest in medicine was certainly stimulated by his experiences at Valetta, and in 1833 (at the age of 15) he left Malta to continue study at King's College, London, which had been incorporated in 1831 as an Anglican foundation. On departure Mrs Stuart, author of *The Children of the Regiment* (wherein Mary McDougall was mentioned), gave him a cheque for £50, avowing that 'he had a large heart but a shallow pocket'.¹¹

Movement at Oxford

McDougall's medical studies and period of teaching in London, together with his engagement as resident doctor to a wealthy patron and accompanying his employer to Oxford, have already been described in Chapter 2.¹² In 1841 he was enrolled as a commoner at Magdalen Hall, a small establishment which would in 1874 be absorbed by the newly-founded Hertford College. The two years at Oxford were to influence him strongly, not so much in stirring up any academic interest but in shaping a firm and loyal attachment to the Catholic inheritance of the Church of England.

Oxford was an exciting place in which to study at this time. The Tractarian Revival had been gathering momentum since exploding onto the Anglican scene in 1833, and in 1841 (McDougall's first year at Magdalen Hall) Newman had published the controversial Tract 90 in which he argued that the 39 Articles did not condemn Catholic practices as had hitherto been thought – to James Brooke's disgust.

⁹ Bunyon, *op.cit.*, 10.

¹⁰ G. Saunders, *Bishops and Brookes: the Anglican Mission and the Brooke Raj in Sarawak 1848-1941*, Singapore, OUP, 1992, 13.

¹¹ Mary McDougall, *op.cit.*

¹² pp. 96-7.

The effect of the Oxford Movement, and in particular of Newman's peculiar genius, on many of the young men who were studying at the University during these years was profound. Newman's sermons to packed congregations in St Mary's church 'touched into life old truths'.¹³ On the side of the pulpit steps in that church to this day there is a plaque recording Matthew Arnold's reaction.

Who could resist the charm of that spiritual apparition, gliding in the dim afternoon light through the aisles of St Mary's, rising into the pulpit, and then in the most entrancing of voices breaking the silence with words and thoughts which were a religious movement, subtle, sweet, mournful?¹⁴

Another contemporary revealed that some undergraduates even imitated Newman's walk and his way of kneeling in church, and suggested that 'there was not a reading man in Oxford' who was not 'indirectly influenced' by the 'mysterious veneration' which had gathered around the Vicar of the University Church.¹⁵

It would therefore have been surprising if Frank McDougall had proved resistant to Newman's 'charm', and there is direct evidence that he, together with Harriette Bunyon and her family, was deeply affected by encounters with the leaders of the religious revival of the time. The evidence is contained in the letter of 1842 in which Harriette had revealed to Sophia McDougall the story of Frank's discussion of ordination with the Bishop of London.¹⁶

McDougall had gone up to Oxford from London at the beginning of term in one of the 'dangerous' new trains which were linking the main towns. Harriette regarded the early railways as 'a kind of infernal mode of conveyance' and the engines as 'fearful',¹⁷ and she had been reassured to hear of his safe arrival. A week later he had written a letter to her 'full of the praises of Newman and Pusey' and lamenting that he would miss 'the weekly instruction of the former more than anything else when he leaves Oxford'.¹⁸

¹³ A.R. Vidler, *The Church in an Age of Revolution*, Pelican History of the Church, London, Penguin, 1961, 51.

¹⁴ As observed by D.A. Edwards, July 1996.

¹⁵ Principal Shairp, quoted in S.C. Carpenter, *Church and People 1789-1889*, London, SPCK, 1933, 155.

¹⁶ Chapter 2, 97.

¹⁷ H. Bunyon to S. McDougall, 1842, Turner Papers, MSS.Ind.Ocn.s.292/3.

¹⁸ Ibid.

Harriette did 'not wonder' that Frank had fallen under Newman's spell, for she herself found the latter's sermons 'most beautiful' [her underlining]. The Evangelical Mr Robert Bunyon had rejoiced the hearts of his family by purchasing five volumes of Newman's sermons. Had Sophia 'seen them?', Harriette inquired.

If not I shall be almost tempted to copy out one or two or some beautiful parts for your perusal . . . this charming penny post enables one to send such bulky letters to the far ends of the Kingdom.¹⁹

It seems clear from this correspondence that Frank McDougall and the family into which he was to marry were strongly influenced by Newman's teaching during these formative years, although they would have been deeply shocked by his secession to Rome in 1845. For McDougall the Oxford years grafted Catholic principles onto the stem of his filial Evangelical piety, but without driving him into a narrow partisan dogmatism. This was to prove important in that the most creative element in the Oxford Movement – what Vidler has described as its 'austere holiness, unlike that of the Evangelicals, combined with a warm and refined appreciation of all human culture'²⁰ – was to assist McDougall in Sarawak to approach more sympathetically the Dayak religions than would have been likely if he had not experienced the forces of renewal in Oxford.

The marriage of Frank McDougall and Harriette Bunyon in July 1843, a year after he had come down from Oxford, must have been a union of kindred spirits. Harriette, like her husband, came from a devout Evangelical Anglican family and experienced a strict but loving childhood which she vividly described in one of her first letters from Sarawak to the friend who was looking after her eldest son Charles in England.

We can scarcely appreciate the great strength of our earliest impressions, the hallowing influence of a Christian Sabbath, the music of church bells, the venerable building sacred to God's service which has an awfulness to a child, giving him his best and truest idea of God Himself; then the constant outflowings of love, neighbourly kindness, and Christian charity with which a child is surrounded in a Christian home²¹

The marriage also brought McDougall links to one of the influential Anglican families of the 19th century. In a letter to her unmarried sister, also named Ellen, in 1849 Harriette referred

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Vidler, *op.cit.*, 52.

²¹ H. McDougall to Ellen Robson, 21 September 1848. Quoted in Bunyon, *op.cit.*, 55.

to 'Uncle Bick'.²² He was the Revd Edward Bickersteth, one of the early secretaries of the CMS, whose wife was the sister of Harriette's mother Frances Bignold. Bickersteth's son Edward Henry (author of the pietistic hymn 'Peace, perfect peace') was a supporter of the CMS who became Bishop of Exeter, and his grandson (also Edward) was to serve as the first head of the Cambridge Mission to Delhi and then go under SPG auspices to Japan as the first Anglican bishop. Such a mixture of churchmanship brought a congenial family link for McDougall to balance that of a less orthodox nature.

This latter arrived in the person of John W. Colenso who, because of his engagement to Harriette's elder sister Frances, was invited to solemnise McDougall's marriage. Both Bunyon girls were admirers of F.D. Maurice and the publication of *The Kingdom of Christ* in 1836 had impressed Colenso with its 'glorious missionary principles'.²³ Had it not been for shortage of money the Colensos, who were married by Maurice in 1846, might have accompanied the McDougalls to Borneo in 1847-48.²⁴ How different would subsequent Anglican church history have been if that had happened!

McDougall's ordination and first curacy in the diocese of Norwich in 1845-46 would have introduced him to the Revd C.D. Brereton, who was then in the process of forming the Borneo Church Mission Institution. When McDougall left Norfolk and came to London for a curacy at Christ Church, Bloomsbury, combined with a research post at the British Museum, Brereton was not slow in inviting him to become the first missionary of the BCMI. He hesitated, and only accepted with Harriette's encouragement.

It is a measure of McDougall's more open outlook that he proposed the Egyptologist C.W. Goodwin as his successor at the Museum. Goodwin's contribution to *Essays and Reviews* in 1860 was to be as critical as the others.

When McDougall was introduced to the meeting in the Hanover Square Rooms organised by the BCMI to launch their Mission on 22 November 1847 it was his more orthodox combination of Evangelical sentiment and Catholic principles which was most clearly on view. Called to speak at the end of proceedings which had seen the Rajah pleading for a gradualist approach to the Dayaks with education and medicine as the mode of entry to

²² H. McDougall to Ellen Bunyon, After 5 November 1849, MSS.Pac.s.104 (1), 15.

²³ P.W. Hinchliff, *John William Colenso, Bishop of Natal*, London and Edinburgh, Thomas Nelson, 1964, 34.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 50.

native hearts,²⁵ and a counter-cry from the Rector of Christ Church, Bloomsbury to the effect that 'Mr Brooke would die to civilise but Christ died to redeem,'²⁶ McDougall adopted what he thought would be a moderate and conciliatory tone.

In words from which James Brooke would probably not have dissented he declared that the Mission was going to Borneo 'to proclaim the truths of the Gospel of Christ to those yet sitting in darkness'.²⁷ He continued however with a peroration about the duties of English churchmen, bearing in mind the position 'in which God has placed this country', 'to plant a Church in this newly-opened region of the Eastern world'. But what kind of Church would that be? Why has God

... given us a Church founded upon Apostolic principles – ministry, permanence, pure in principle and Apostolic in discipline – but that that Church may be planted throughout the heathen world, and our Zion become a glory to all lands.²⁸

Phrases which clearly reflected the beliefs of one who had sat at the feet of Newman, Keble and Pusey, but hardly likely to impress the sceptical and open-minded Rajah – who, it will be remembered, had strongly criticised Tract 90 in a private letter to his mother in 1842.²⁹

Remarks which would have sounded unexceptional to McDougall and most of the audience appear to have caused the Rajah some agitation. More than 30 years later the Rajah's secretary at the time of Hanover Square, Spenser St John, would record that 'the tone of his [McDougall's] speech made Mr Brooke sigh, but it was hoped that his actions would be more sensible than his words'.³⁰ It may even have been that the more 'Catholic' tone of the chief missionary's sentiments provoked the Rajah to question the wisdom of McDougall's appointment, for a reference to that effect was struck out of the draft of St John's biography of Sir James Brooke when it was vetted by a more sympathetic friend, Charles Grant, before publication.³¹ St John may not have been an entirely reliable witness because of his later hostility to McDougall,³² but there seems no doubt that Sarawak was to

²⁵ Chapter 2, 61.

²⁶ BCMI, *Proceedings at a Public Meeting of the Friends of the BCMI, Held at the Hanover Square Rooms, Monday Nov. 22nd 1847*, SPG Bound Pamphlets, 15008, 19, 12-13.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ Chapter 2, 62.

³⁰ Spenser St John, *The Life of Sir James Brooke, Rajah of Sarawak, from his Personal Papers & Correspondence*, Edinburgh and London, Blackwood, 1879, 129.

³¹ Nicholas Tarling, *St John's Biography of Sir James Brooke*, Sarawak Museum Journal, Vol. XLI, No. 62, December 1990, 264.

³² See Chapter 5, 249.

receive a more committed churchman than James Brooke had envisaged when he penned his words about the 'ideal missionary' five years earlier.³³

One final indication of McDougall's churchmanship may be deduced from the books contained in the library which he took out to Sarawak in 1847. Clues can be found in a letter written by the Evangelical Bishop of Calcutta to McDougall shortly after his visit to Kuching to consecrate the church of St Thomas on 22 January 1851. Daniel Wilson clearly disapproved of some of the books which he discovered in the Mission House and, after administering a gentle rebuke, suggested some more 'sound' literature for the chief missionary's library.

He assumed that McDougall's taste of Newman, Manning and Samuel Wilberforce – some of whose books had gone out to Kuching – had been 'bitter', and revealed that lay people in Singapore and Penang had discovered some 'sentiments' of Manning and Wilberforce in McDougall's sermons.³⁴ Far better that the leader of the Borneo Mission should consult Scott's Commentary and the works of Calvin, and send home for some good Evangelical sermons and volumes of the Religious Tract Society. But 'the Bible itself' with marginal references was the best commentary and one sermon each week should be 'out of your own heart', with family devotions unrestricted by any book of prayers.³⁵

These were the pleas of a deeply pious Evangelical church leader, concerned no doubt over the probable imminent secession of Manning to the Roman Catholic Church and worried that the priest-missionary in Sarawak might be heading in the same direction. There was never any possibility that McDougall would follow Newman and Manning that far, and he remained firmly anti-Roman Catholic all through his life. He accepted Wilson's advice with grace and good humour, although with no intention of acceding to the old man's suggestions. Writing home a month after the Bishop's departure from Kuching he reported to the BCMI and to Bunyon,

I have just received a very kind and paternal letter from the good Bishop of Calcutta, in which he gives me much good advice, and cautions me very strongly against using the Bishop of Oxford's [Wilberforce] and Archdeacon Manning's writings; indeed he gave me a sharp rap over the knuckles for having them in my

³³ Introduction, 9-10.

³⁴ Wilson to McDougall, 27 January 1851. Quoted in Bunyon, *op.cit.*, 74.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

library . . . dear good old Bishop, he has some very strong opinions on some points in which I cannot follow him.³⁶

Bunyon commented in his biography of his brother-in-law and sister that the writings of Wilberforce and Manning described by Daniel Wilson were 'relics cherished, doubtless, of old Oxford days', and went on to claim that McDougall had emerged from Oxford as 'an Evangelical High Churchman'.³⁷ It was a fair judgement on one who had breathed from childhood the atmosphere of an Evangelical home and married into an Evangelical family, who had absorbed at Oxford the influence of the Catholic Revival, and yet was to strike a balance between the ecclesiastical extremes and avoid partisan controversy all through his life. Such caution no doubt made him 'a dull man in argument' and caused him to discourage religious inquiry amongst the British in Kuching³⁸ but more positively it rendered him less likely to pass adverse judgements on the primal religions he met in Sarawak and more open to consider judiciously their beliefs and practices.

Early encounters with primal religions

There was a general view shared by the Europeans in Sarawak at this time, both residents and visitors, that the indigenous Dayak inhabitants had no religion worthy of the name. James Brooke's initial conclusion on his first landfall in Borneo in 1839-40 that the Dayaks 'had no religious beliefs of their own' has already been noted.³⁹ As late as 1851 the Bishop of Calcutta, after spending only a few days in Kuching, proclaimed confidently that 'the millions of poor Dyaks have no religion of their own – scarcely a notion of a Diety [sic] – no Mohammedan obstinacy – no Hindoo castes – no Priesthood – no written books – no Koran – no Veda . . .'.⁴⁰

What J.C. Platvoet calls the 'low visibility' of primal religions,⁴¹ the fact that there are no obvious signs that a religion exists, clearly led Westerners like Brooke and Wilson to make superficial judgements. McDougall was to prove more understanding, although he could still indulge in condemnatory generalities – describing the Dayaks in 1850 for instance as

³⁶ McDougall to Stooks, 24 February 1851, MSS.Pac.s.104 (2), 76.

³⁷ Bunyon, *op.cit.*, 76.

³⁸ Tarling, *op.cit.*, 264.

³⁹ See Introduction, 7.

⁴⁰ Bishop of Calcutta to Brereton, 24 January 1851, CLR 72, 117.

⁴¹ J.C. Platvoet, *African Traditional Religions in the Religious History of Humankind*, *Journal for the Study of Religion*, 6 (2), September 1993, 39.

'misguided and deluded tribes' who desperately needed missionaries 'to teach them those principles of truth, virtue and religion which can alone effectually wean them from their evil habits'.⁴²

McDougall's first encounters with Dayaks took place, as with the Malays, in his dispensary and – as already noted – he was impressed by 'these simple, unsophisticated woodmen'.⁴³ The arrival of the Rajah in Kuching a month after the dispensary was opened brought an influx of Dayaks anxious to pay their respects, and McDougall in consequence received an invasion of prospective patients. Again he was favourably affected, but not – as with the Malays – by their religious zeal, more by the fact that they did not wear trousers! He confided to the committee in London that he was

overwhelmed with patients and native *breakless* [my italics] visitors, inquisitive, good-natured, honest, though very troublesome Dyaks.⁴⁴

Realising quickly that, although his duty was to remain in Kuching exercising a supervisory role, he would only gain insights into Dayak culture by visiting them in their own villages, McDougall determined on an early expedition upriver into the jungle

As to the extent and frequency of his trips into Dayak areas there seems to be some doubt. Harriette, the ever-supportive wife, recollected in later years that 'from our first arrival in Kuching my husband had taken every opportunity of visiting the Dyak tribes'.⁴⁵ But her memory was not always correct, and during the early years of the Mission opportunities to travel inland were few and far between in so far as McDougall would not have been allowed into the more remote and unpacified areas without a government escort. There was also much to occupy his attention in Kuching itself. In fact he seems to have managed only four documented visits, a fact which was to cause the home committee in 1852 to accuse him of 'theorising' and 'lack of experience' in his evaluation of Dayak religions.⁴⁶

He started with the best of intentions. In September 1848 he informed the committee that he was 'now engaged in investigating the state, numbers etc of the Dyaks in preparation for an early visit'.⁴⁷ He feared that if Christian contact was not speedily made with Dayak groups

⁴² McDougall to C.D. Bethune, 8 April 1850, MSS.Pac.s.104 (2), 54.

⁴³ Chapter I, 35.

⁴⁴ McDougall to Brereton, 18 September 1848, MSS.Pac.s.104 (2), 12.

⁴⁵ H. McDougall, *Sketches of our Life at Sarawak*, London, SPCK, 1882, 70.

⁴⁶ See below, 138.

⁴⁷ McDougall to Brereton, 18 September 1848, MSS.Pac.s.104 (2), 11.

many of them would be won over to Islam. This was to be a constant refrain to home supporters, but there was not much evidence to show that Muslim belief and practices were such as to appeal to the Dayak nature.

At the end of November 1848 McDougall hoped to go with Arthur Crookshank, the government secretary, to visit some Sea Dayaks on the Skrang river. Although Peter Varney suggests that this trip was actually made early in 1849⁴⁸ it is not mentioned in letters, and such a visit seems unlikely in view of the turbulent nature of an area which was to be pacified by the Rajah with some bloodshed a few months later. More likely, on McDougall's own admission, is that by the beginning of 1849 he had managed to spend a few days among a group of more peaceful Land Dayaks not far from Kuching. He described this visit to a village of 'Singhe Dyaks, our largest hill tribe' in a letter to the committee sent at the same time as the first annual report in which he expanded his impressions.

Affirming in traditional terms that these Dayaks were 'very superstitious' and still clinging fondly 'to the customs of their forefathers' McDougall considers that 'it will be no easy or speedy work to dispel the dark clouds which tradition and superstition have thrown around them'.⁴⁹ Some of this language may also have been for the benefit of home supporters, as he went on to explain that the Dayaks definitely did have a religion with a divinity akin to the God of the Christians.

When I spoke to them on religious matters, trying to show them how Dewata, whom they worship, was the God of all power and might whom we worshipped too, that he was their and our Father etc, they listened attentively . . .⁵⁰

Here was clearly a sympathetic reaction to that which the Dayaks were telling him. A willingness to consider the identification of 'our Father' with the chief Dayak deity and to admit that the God of the Christians was the same supreme being who was being worshipped among the indigenous peoples of Sarawak was an important step for this traditional churchman to take. It was the first step along a road which was to lead to a tolerant understanding of Borneo's main primal religion.

⁴⁸ Peter D. Varney, *The Anglican Church in Sarawak from 1848-1852*, Sarawak Museum Journal, Vol. XVI, Nos. 32-33, July-December 1968, 393-394.

⁴⁹ McDougall to Stooks, 24 February 1849, MSS.Pac.s.104 (2), 22.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

In the first annual report enclosed with this letter McDougall amplified his thoughts and prophesied 'vast openings for the propagation of the Gospel presenting themselves on every side'. There *was* a religion among the Dayaks, a religion of revelation, on which the Mission could base its appeal.

. . . it is evident that even amongst the most debased of our hill Dayaks, their unknown God has not left Himself without a witness; they all acknowledge a Supreme power, who made all things.⁵¹

These allusions to St Paul's 'sermons' at Lystra (Acts, 14:17) and Athens (Acts, 17:23) were not unique in the thinking of 19th century Anglican missionaries, and McDougall may have been recalling some remarks of the Bishop of Norwich at the Hanover Square meeting in 1847. The bishop alluded to a story about Reginald Heber, Bishop of Calcutta from 1822-1826, who was heard to remark at an Indian holy place that he hoped he might be instrumental in teaching Hindus 'the nature of that true God whom there and then they ignorantly worshipped'.⁵²

McDougall further outlined in his 1849 report that he was beginning to appreciate another aspect of Dayak primal religion, the close links between human affairs and the guidance of spirits who may be revealed in the guise of birds and at the limits of the universe. Their supreme deity was believed to declare His will

in the songs and flights of birds, in the appearance of the stars and the face of the sky, though they think that he allows the more immediate control of their affairs to various inferior good or evil spirits whom they dread and worship.⁵³

Increasing contact between the indigenous peoples, Muslim Malays and Christian Europeans was already beginning to dilute the practice of Dayak religion, and in the spiritual vacuum opening up the Mission and Islam were bound to compete for the souls of the rural peoples. The question which bothered McDougall 'daily' was, he wrote, 'who shall declare to them [the Dayaks] the unknown God they have been so long yearning and feeling after . . . ?'⁵⁴ Was this 'unknown God' to be revealed as 'the awful and irresistible Creator and King . . . served at a distance. . . feared without being loved' of Islam, or as the Christian 'Father' and Redeemer?

⁵¹ Report of the BCMI 1849, CLR 72, 34-35.

⁵² BCMI, *Proceedings at a Public Meeting etc*, SPG Bound Pamphlets No. 15008, item 19.

⁵³ Report of BCMI 1849, *Ibid*.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*.

... as One in whom they not only live, and move, and have their being, but with whom they have an intimate relation, whose mercies towards them fail not, because He is their Father who has sent His Son to reconcile them to Himself, to raise them from their present state of doubt and fear, and to make them children of God and heirs of eternal life.⁵⁵

The further allusions to Acts 17 together with the Greek poetical view of the relation between Humankind and Creator, combined with a Gospel-centred soteriology, was in the post-CMS Anglican tradition and reveals the Catholic-Evangelical balance which has been noted in McDougall during his formative years. That this was now being applied in his encounter with Dayak culture marked an important stage in his development only six months after arriving in Sarawak.

During the remainder of 1849 his initiatives were restricted by the pressure of work at Kuching, by the failure of the BCMI to augment the Mission, and by the unsettled state of the Sea Dayak areas which provoked the Rajah's severe pacification expeditions between March and August of that year. But at least the comparative peace brought to the Skrang and Saribas river areas meant that these Sea Dayak strongholds could be opened up to the Mission when it was ready and sufficiently staffed to move forward. In the meantime McDougall would have to be patient, exercising a virtue which was not natural to him. In September 1849, although excited by the accession of the Mission's first baptised Dayak Mary Nelson,⁵⁶ he recorded his frustration.

One evening after his return from imposing order in the remote river areas James Brooke was conversing at his bungalow with the headman of the Singhe Land Dayaks, the group which had earlier so fascinated McDougall. The headman informed the Rajah 'that he and his people would think seriously of embracing the white people's religion and would learn from the Tuan Padre [McDougall]' if he would visit them or send somebody to teach them.⁵⁷ The Rajah apparently, according to McDougall, told the Dayaks that they must come to the Mission rather than wait for any missionaries to go to them. The chief missionary knew that they would never do this – it was not in the Dayak psyche – and, stuck as he was in Kuching with no clerical colleagues, lamented the missed chances. 'Alas! that such a golden opportunity should be lost ...'.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ See Chapter 1, 36.

⁵⁷ McDougall to Stooks, 24 September 1849, MSS.Pac.s.104 (2), 45.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

Another factor which inhibited progress towards a Dayak mission in 1849 was the ill-health which affected the leaders of church and state as the year wore on, resulting in their shared holiday at Penang for several months.⁵⁹ Not until the final months of 1850 was McDougall able to pay a second visit to a Land Dayak area at Merdang, this time as the Rajah's guest.

During this excursion he wrote a journal recording his experiences and impressions and, as early in 1849, his sympathetic responses to the culture whose hospitality he was enjoying for a few days. But the 'threat' of Islam was still in the forefront of his mind, for 'nothing but the prohibition of pork' had prevented the Merdang people from embracing the Muslim faith.⁶⁰ On such non-theological factors has rested the conversion of multitudes throughout history!

On their arrival at the longhouse the party from Kuching received a traditional Dayak welcome, with a live chicken waved over the heads of the visitors whilst the headman uttered some charms and blood from a sacrificed pig was smeared on the doors of the family rooms. A woman whom McDougall called an 'enchantress' danced during the night, making 'mesmeric passes over our bodies, rubbing our hands and arms till daylight . . . hoping to derive some benefit from my touch'.⁶¹

There is little doubt that many of McDougall's friends and contemporaries would have been horrified at such proceedings. Ever since St Paul wrestled with the queries of the Corinthian Christians as to whether they were permitted to attend pagan ceremonies at which food had been offered to idols (1 Corinthians, 8) the Church has agonised over the propriety of allowing her members to be present on such occasions. The issue is still hotly debated in Sarawak at the end of the 20th century. McDougall seems to have been in no doubt, and to his credit felt instinctively that Christian courtesy demanded that he respect his Dayak hosts as they practised their traditional ceremonies even though he may have been uneasy at what was taking place.

Besides, no Christian need be entirely passive in such circumstances. McDougall recorded that he silently prayed to God all the time to 'open the eyes' of his hosts whilst doing what they asked him 'lest I should offend them'.⁶² In the process, surely a humbling process, he

⁵⁹ See Chapter 1, 20 and 37.

⁶⁰ Varney, *op.cit.*, 394.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² *Ibid.*

was also learning that there were some aspects of Dayak culture which could not simply be dismissed as dark and ungodly.

At the end of February 1851 McDougall paid a visit to the small Sea Dayak community at Lundu about 50 miles to the west of Kuching, somewhat isolated in that they were surrounded by different Land Dayak groups. He had received good reports of them, and they were to prove receptive to the endeavours of the Mission. But it was an expedition to the pacified areas east of Kuching, on the Skrang and Saribas rivers and as far as Kanowit on the larger Rejang river, which excited him most of all. Although severely afflicted by a painful knee joint he set out in the middle of April 1851, able to be away for nearly two months as the priest Walter Chambers had arrived in the March to be his assistant. The privations of the trip made his knee worse, but he was pleased to find confirmation of his hopes that these remoter Sea Dayak communities would prove the most promising for the inauguration of a Dayak mission. The people he met appeared very willing to be taught 'the customs and wisdom of the white man and to worship his Allah'⁶³ (had Islam already infiltrated these areas?). He wrote enthusiastically to a naval member of the BCMI committee – Rear Admiral Sir Francis Beaufort, hydrographer to the Navy – that he had 'never heard of a more promising field of labour for a Christian Mission than this'.⁶⁴ It only remained for the proposed first 'Dyak apostle' Walter Chambers to complete his acclimatisation and master the rudiments of medicine and the Malay language before he could be commissioned as the first Anglican missionary specifically appointed to the Dayak peoples.

Some principles of Dayak religion

Before proceeding to examine McDougall's important sermon at the commissioning of Chambers on 7 September 1851 it will be useful to look briefly at the core religious beliefs of the Dayaks as they had evolved over many centuries. Caution must be exercised, as there is no homogeneous set of principles accepted by all Dayaks, who have traditionally been divided into two main groups – the Sea Dayaks (a European term for the communities along the rivers, properly known today as the Iban) and the Land Dayaks (settled on the higher, drier ground and recognised today as the Bidayuh, Bukar etc). Even within these definitions there are important variations of culture.

⁶³ McDougall to Sir F. Beaufort, 26 April 1851. Quoted in Varney, *op.cit.*, 395.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

It was noted at the beginning of this thesis⁶⁵ that the ancestors of these indigenous peoples had arrived on Borneo during the 17th and 18th centuries. Influenced in the distant past by both Buddhism and Hinduism their primal religion had common origins but had diffused into different beliefs and practices by the time they migrated from the southern half of the island into Sarawak. It will be sufficient here to outline the essential faith of the Iban, the largest group, bearing in mind that there are differences – for instance in the names of the deities – with the Bidayuh and Bukar. These are three of the most Anglicanised Dayak communities

Dr Peter Kedit, until recently sub-curator of the Sarawak museum and co-editor of their journal, an Iban by birth and culture, has written a neat summary of Iban spirituality.

The Iban conceive the world as a place where all objects have souls of their own, and that in daily activities the soul of man and that of the gods or spirits often impinge on one another. It is from this conception of the world that Iban cultural values and social sanctions derived. The Iban Pantheon is complex with many highly anthropomorphic deities who have specialised functions and powers. The two most important gods are *Simpulang Gana*, the god of the rice cult and tutelary deity of the soil, and *Singalang Burong*, the god of war and of general surveillance for Iban welfare.⁶⁶

Prior to the genesis of these two gods and others like them there were in Iban mythology several accounts of the creation of the world. One, of which McDougall was aware, told of creation from earth mixed with water, whilst others suggested creation from a tree with red sap or by two birds. Some Iban gave the creator a name – *Selempandai* – and imaged him as the brother of the other gods, but since the creation is not seminal to Iban belief little interest is shown in the subject. Of far greater importance are *Simpulang Gana*, who lives in the earth and governs all the growth (e.g., of rice) in the soil, and *Singalang Burong*, who lives in the sky (appearing in bird form as a kite) and gives success in war as well as being the source of the Iban customary law and codes of social behaviour known as *adat*. There are also numerous other gods or spirits – the distinction is not always clear – and they all communicate with man in his daily life.⁶⁷

The gods communicate by means of dreams, omens and auguries. The omens may be conveyed through the appearance of animals, but more commonly through certain birds – in

⁶⁵ See Introduction, 6.

⁶⁶ Peter M. Kedit, *Iban Cultural Heritage, an overview*, Sarawak Museum Journal, Vol. XL, No. 61 (New Series) December 1989, 5.

⁶⁷ Summarised from Erik Jensen, *The Iban World*, Sarawak Museum Journal, Vol. XIII, No. 27, November 1966, 6-31.

their presence and in bird calls – in which soul meets soul. The auguries must be propitious before embarking on any significant move in personal or social life, such as planting padi [rice], going on a journey, building a new longhouse, engaging in war or getting married. Sacrifice is important in propitiating the uncooperative spirits. Ceremonies are integral to the start and conclusion of many human activities, and great festivals [Gawai] are promoted for such times as the harvesting of the rice crop or the celebratory remembrance of ancestors.⁶⁸

The Iban have no priesthood but shamanism forms a part of their cultural ethos, and certain individuals are trained as *manangs* to fulfil a role which is often concerned with healing. By his esoteric knowledge of the ritual processes the *manang* can, for instance, recover the missing soul of a sick Iban which may have become lost or entrapped by evil spirits after wandering away from the human body. There is also a complex cult of the dead associated with belief in an afterworld to which all souls go after death, and an elaborate mourning ritual to accompany the journey of the deceased into afterlife.⁶⁹

McDougall delivered a speech while on leave in 1861 at the Royal Geographical Society in London in which he noted some Hindu influences on the cultures of Sarawak and also mentioned that the Dayaks had spoken to him of a Flood tradition.⁷⁰ In one Iban myth the various races of humankind were once overcome by a great deluge after a period in which they had all learned to write and make records of what they had written. The European swam to safety with his book in his hat so that his writing was preserved on reaching dry land. The Malay tucked his book into the collar of his blouse, so that reached posterity relatively unscathed. The Chinese put his book into his shirt, with the result that his writing got wet and ran – hence the curious nature of Chinese symbols. The Iban placed his writing into his only garment, his loin cloth, which meant that when he had swum to land the book was completely soaked and the secret of writing lost. He tried to dry it in the sun but, when it was nearly dry, the birds came down and carried it away. Hence the Iban have no written Scriptures or historical records, and as the birds now possess the information it can only be recovered by listening to them.⁷¹

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Kedit, op.cit., 6.

⁷⁰ F.T. McDougall, *The Wild Tribes of the North West coast of Borneo*, London, Royal Geographical Society, 1861. Rhodes House, Borneo Collection 1, 1-14, 916.18s, 2 (3).

⁷¹ Jensen, op.cit., 16. See also A. Richards, *Iban Augury*, Sarawak Museum Journal, Vol. XX, Nos. 40-41, 66.

It will be appreciated from this brief analysis that Dayak/Iban religion was (and is) a complex and sophisticated system of beliefs and practices. It produced highly-organised social arrangements and a rule of law which ensured co-operative communal growth and a measure of modest economic self-sufficiency. There were however negative aspects to put alongside the positive. Because of soil exhaustion caused by over-intensive farming on one spot the Dayak village groups were constantly on the move to more fertile virgin areas, leaving waste land behind them. More seriously, associated with crop failures and the apparent inability of the gods to help when their aid was sought, was the one custom which was universally condemned in Sarawak by church and state alike – the practice of headhunting.

Many explanations of the custom of headhunting – or head-taking as Westerners sometimes called it – have been adduced by its critics. The chief motive agreed by 20th century scholars seems to lie in ideas about the magical power of human heads which were prevalent throughout the Indonesian archipelago. Suppose ‘a Borneo settlement’ to have been ‘suffering from epidemics, crop failure and infertility of women’ . . .

Casting about for a reason to explain their ill-fortune, they arrive at the characteristically Indonesian notion that their group lacks magical power. Their spiritual ‘juice’ is running low. What they need is a fresh influx of supernatural vigour . . .

One of the most direct means of getting the magical power they need is to capture a new batch of heads from some other group. The spiritual energy of the other settlement is most richly concentrated in their heads, and by getting some of these the home village will divert a part of the current vitality into their own community.⁷²

A serious disadvantage of this system was that the attacked group would be provoked to retaliate. This led to what was called ‘the balance of heads’, from which one of the groups would become so disenchanted that they switched their attentions to one of the weaker communities – like the Land Dayaks, who did not practise headhunting. Their land could then be appropriated.

Other motives may have accrued to the custom as years went by, in particular the accession of prestige to the successful headhunter. This last reason would apply particularly to young

⁷² Andrew P. Vayda, *Headhunting Near and Far*, Sarawak Museum Journal, Vol. XXIII, No. 44, July-December 1975, 112. Quoted from Raymond Kennedy, *The Ageless Indies*, New York, John Day, 1942, 101.

men who wished to court the favours of young women with a view to marriage, an aspect which appeared to disturb the McDougalls.

In October 1851, following Chambers who had already gone up to the Skrang river, McDougall accompanied the Rajah on a visit to the same area. He was introduced to the local Sea-Dayak chief Gassin, who explained that the practice of headhunting was all the fault of the young women. 'They put their sweethearts into a boat and leave them to get a head or nearly starve . . .'.⁷³

Gassin proceeded to tell McDougall an elaborate myth about a female ancestor who would not be propitiated by animal sacrifices, but would only accept a human head 'as a suitable love-token'.⁷⁴ Hence the origin of the custom.

To the sceptical observer it sounds like a fit of male self-justification. It was easy to blame the females for a practice which disturbed their European allies. But Harriette also accepted this explanation, writing later that 'Christianity had strong opponents in the women of all the Dyak tribes' – it was the women 'who encouraged head-taking by preferring to marry the man who had some of those ghastly tokens of his prowess'.⁷⁵

Since the custom was clear evidence to the Europeans of the 'uncivilised' nature of Dayak culture the Rajah's government had from the beginning attempted its gradual prohibition. In the event its total elimination was to take a long time, and periodic outbreaks of unrest – like the Chinese insurrection in 1857 – only served to revive it. Westerners would in future years turn a blind eye to headhunting when the practice was to their advantage, even as late as during the years of the Second World War when the Japanese invaders of Borneo between 1941 and 1945 were the objects of its 'revival'.

McDougall naturally supported the Rajah's efforts to suppress headhunting, but felt with his usual optimism that only the Gospel would eliminate it altogether. After his encounter with Gassin he wrote that 'I am convinced that nothing but the effectual and well-sustained working of the Mission among the Tribes will eradicate it; their hearts must be changed . . .'.⁷⁶ But his traditional upbringing produced a qualification in his total opposition to the custom.

⁷³ McDougall to Stooks, 11 November 1851, MSS.Pac.s.104 (2), 117.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ H. McDougall, *op.cit.*, 73-75.

⁷⁶ McDougall to Brereton, 6 December 1851, MSS.Pac.s.104 (2), 120.

In the immediate aftermath of the privation caused by the Chinese attack on Kuching in February 1857 he told the SPG in a private letter, 'the old head-hunting spirit of the Dyaks is again kindled, and though this time in legitimate warfare one hardly knows when it will be appeased'.⁷⁷

So in 'legitimate warfare' was headhunting permissible and not to be condemned by the missionary? There is the suspicion of a double standard here. Harriette too at that difficult time showed a similar tendency. Whilst recovering at Lingga from the chaos at Kuching she and her young daughter Mab had been taken by Chambers to a longhouse feast. Just as she was going to eat she noticed three human heads on a large dish, 'freshly killed and slightly smoked'. 'But I dared say nothing. These Dyaks had killed our enemies, and were only following their own customs . . .'.⁷⁸ The kindly Dayaks had brought the children of their victims to be looked after in the longhouse, and seemed surprised when these children cried all day when looking up at the heads of their parents hanging from the longhouse ceiling!⁷⁹

The apparent inconsistencies in the Dayak character are surely a reflection of those in all races? This would account for certain ambiguities in the reactions of Frank and Harriette McDougall to them, notably an unwillingness to be over-judgemental on meeting a culture which surprised them by its sophistication whilst repelling them by its crudities. It was to be in this spirit that, after three years of 'brief encounters' with various Dayak groups, Frank McDougall preached his important and revealing sermon at the commissioning service for the first of his 'Dyak apostles'.

EVOLUTION OF A HESITANT MISSIONOLOGY

A significant inclusivist sermon

The weekend of 6-7 September 1851 was a stressful time for the McDougalls. On the Saturday their fifth child was born in the Mission House and, like his two brothers in 1848 and 1849, died within a few hours early on the Sunday morning. His tiny body lay awaiting

⁷⁷ McDougall to Hawkins, March 1857, MSS.Pac.s.104 (3), 110.

⁷⁸ H. McDougall, *op.cit.*, 150-151.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

burial as his father prepared for the morning service in St Thomas's church and the congregation of mission staff (Chambers, Fox and Nicholls), European residents, catechumens and interested Asian observers assembled on Church Hill. They were to hear a sermon which must have bored them by its length and surprised them by its vision, and the one to whom it was primarily addressed – Walter Chambers, due to depart the same afternoon for the remote Sea Dayak longhouses – given plenty to think about on his long journey by sea and up the Lupar and Skrang rivers. No doubt, mused its author, a successful Dayak mission would fill the gaps created by the deaths of his boys, 'sons and daughters in Christ' to replace 'children after the flesh'.⁸⁰

McDougall's sermon on 7 September derived, as has already been noted, from his observations during a few visits to Dayak areas rather than from any period of continuous residence in Dayak villages. Nevertheless, the sympathetic approach to a new and strange (and alien?) culture and the width of its outlook seem extraordinary when consideration is given to the traditional background and attitudes of the preacher. The original manuscript text as delivered by McDougall is still extant,⁸¹ written in a spidery scrawl with frequent emendations (some in pencil) to render the sermon suitable for other locations and occasions. It is the sermon of a 'conscientious preacher' made 'heavy' by the 'total exclusion of anecdote and personal references' and thereby requiring 'sustained and concentrated attention'.⁸² It is also a sermon when, to borrow the words of Harriette when she first heard her husband preaching in 1845, 'the words occasionally bolted out instead of running smoothly, or when the end of the sentence did not match the beginning'.⁸³ Untidy and difficult to decipher it may be, but the reward of patient effort is a fascinating insight into McDougall's early 'missiology'.

The text chosen for the beginning of the sermon was significant – Acts, 17:23 – 'Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship Him I declare unto you'.⁸⁴ It has been noted above⁸⁵ that St Paul's address in Athens had early assumed a central place in McDougall's approach to the Dayak cultures, and now it was to be extensively applied. McDougall commenced by justifying his selection of a text from Acts, and later references from the same book of

⁸⁰ McDougall to Stooks, 13 September 1851, MSS.Pac.s.104 (2), 105.

⁸¹ Photocopy attached as Appendix 1.

⁸² Comments in the Turner Papers, collected by McDougall's two married daughters. MSS.Ind.Ocn.s.292, Introduction.

⁸³ H. McDougall to Fanny Sawyer, Before June 1845, *Ibid.*, 3, 1.

⁸⁴ Rhodes House Library, 25 sermons presented by the Revd A.J.M. Saint, unclassified, sermon no. 2. All subsequent quotations are from the same source and will not be acknowledged in footnotes.

⁸⁵ pp. 124-5.

Scripture. Acts was 'the Missionary's guide book', in that it portrayed the life 'of St Paul the mighty leader of the Missionary host' and the words of that apostle 'should be the watchword of every Missionary institution and give the right direction to every Missionary work'.

As McDougall interpreted the account of St Paul's missionary journeys in Acts he concluded that the great apostle discerned in all men 'the proofs of a religious nature which was not altogether effaced, however much it might be warped, corrupted and decayed'. There were in all men moral perceptions, kindly feelings and warm affections, evidence of humanity's strivings to be renewed in God's likeness upon which the Creator could work and to which he could appeal. St Paul had discovered these attributes not only in the Athenian philosophers but also in the 'barbarians of Lycaonia' and the Roman Felix and the Jewish Agrippa. McDougall had found similar evidence in the generosity of his Dayak hosts and the fidelity of their family life. In either case the truths acknowledged in a limited way could be used as a base for the higher truths which the missionary came to declare.

St Paul therefore, whose 'great object was to lay hold of and quicken into a healthy growth whatever seeds of good he saw struggling for life in the hearts of his hearers' was the true model missionary for all time. The Borneo Mission must not simply condemn what it considered heathen religious systems – rather should it discover the truths which lay at the bottom of such systems and search for the scattered seeds of goodness and truth which were mixed up in them. For McDougall the conclusion was inescapable. Since the Dayak cultures contained elements of 'truth' and 'goodness', signs that God's image was discernible in their followers, the task of his missionaries was to build on that foundation, not to belittle or destroy it. Once the 'scattered seeds' were found 'we can base our teaching upon them, unfold and expound them, and show their relation and necessary connection with whatever else God has revealed of good and true in His word and works'.

Some specific moral feelings which McDougall had picked up from his contact with Dayaks indicated 'the voice of conscience beneath the mouldering garb of superstition' and seemed common to Christians as well. Some examples were the removal of guilt, the longing for better things, the forebodings of a life beyond the grave and dim notions of a future state of reward and punishment. Let the missionary dwell on these common feelings and gradually draw them out until 'the mystery of godliness' can be revealed. The Rajah would have heartily agreed.

The example of Jesus, who commanded his disciples to be 'as harmless as doves', is invoked to suggest that the missionary must not try to compel men to 'embrace the truth' but draw them with gentle words and kindly deeds, the bonds of love. And here a note of Western superiority crept in – what better example to show the Dayaks than that of their British friends? The missionary must demonstrate that the truths which he proclaimed 'have only made us better and more loving men than they, and have brought to us those blessings of wisdom, knowledge, peace and freedom of soul which they are searching for and long have yearned in vain'.

In some respects however Dayak culture may be superior to the Western way of life. McDougall had been intrigued by the way he saw most of the important undertakings of Dayak daily life accompanied by some ritual action. It followed that the missionary, having exposed the limitations of such ceremonial, must substitute some suitable Christian rite in its place – otherwise the converts will 'feel a spiritual void'. These were wise words, which have not always been heeded by the Church in Sarawak or in other mission areas.

It is interesting to note the specific events of Dayak life which McDougall listed for the substitution of Christian ritual. They included

the time of the beginning and completion of houses, at sowing and reaping his paddy [rice], at going out and returning home, on the day of birth, at the invasion of sickness and the hour of death . . .

On all these occasions the Dayak 'has his fast and his feast', and on such 'solemn occasions', both national and private, 'it will be most expedient to institute some Christian service consistent with the Church's teaching'.

So far as is possible then it will be wise to invest all lawful outward things and occasions which they have been accustomed to regard in a sacred light with a – so to speak – sacramental halo to remind them of God the Father and Christ the Saviour.

In prophetic words McDougall revealed that he was persuaded that no religious system would appeal to Dayak hearts and benefit their lives which 'does not thus enter into almost every action of their daily lives'. Such insights are more commonplace at the end of the 20th century, but McDougall had been brought up in the prevailing ethos of Anglican thinking in the first half of the 19th century, in which the spiritual and the material were envisaged as separated and often mutually hostile elements in human life. He had moved far.

An important insight followed his suggestion that Dayak customs must be invested with a 'sacramental halo'. Earlier in the sermon, when considering the accounts of St Paul's missionary contacts, McDougall had concluded that the apostle made himself 'all things to all men'— picking up the confession in 1 Corinthians, 9:22. He now applied this idea more widely. 'Christianity is meant for all men, so in one sense or other it can hopefully become all things to all men'. How does it do that?

It must and can meet with and *adapt* [my italics] itself to their various tempers, customs, habits, and while it does so it exalts and purifies them from all that degrades and makes them inconsistent with itself.

A few paragraphs later a more cautious note was sounded. Although he had suggested 'the necessity of *adapting* [my italics] ourselves and our teaching to the various peoples we have to do with', McDougall was sensitive to the dangers of syncretism. 'We should scrupulously beware of adopting or complying with any idolatrous rites – or think that the proposition of Christianity may render them lawful'. St Paul would not have condoned that, nor would such 'adoption' guarantee a successful mission – as, in McDougall's judgement, the Roman Catholic missionaries in Asia had discovered to their cost.

It would be an exaggeration unsupported by the facts to claim that McDougall here clearly anticipated later theories of *adaptation*. His remarks are much too general to justify that. He did not, for instance, specify what he considered to be the 'failures' of Roman Catholic missions, nor did he bring beliefs into his arguments. Such 'adaptations' as he did permit in Sarawak concerned the comparatively trivial matters of allowing the Chinese children in the Home School to continue wearing their customary dress and observe those Chinese practices which were not incompatible with Christianity. But there was some daring thinking in this 1851 sermon, and he was clearly at that time – three years after arriving in Sarawak – moving away from the accepted view of his generation of churchmen which he had brought with him in 1848, the view that non-Christians on conversion must accept totally the Western Christian 'package' of religious life.

The sermon ended with a number of practical concerns – the need for Chambers to celebrate the sacraments frequently and establish schools as a first priority, the importance of his example in encouraging other missionaries to share the Dayak experience in remote jungle villages, and a challenge to the congregation to give generously in their offerings to support the SPG in its 150th year. But the conclusion was not without spiritual challenge to the

departing missionary – to cultivate a fervent love for Christ, to contemplate not only St Paul’s missiology but also his sufferings, to endure in the manner of all the saints and martyrs (including the likes of Henry Martyn and Reginald Heber), to ‘go with good cheer’ and not expect ‘speedy results’. ‘Having received this Ministry let us see that we faint not, and if we are faithful God Himself will be with us as with His servants of old and prove our shield and exceeding great reward’.

It is not easy to estimate the effect of this sermon on Chambers, but he was to prove a most dedicated, enduring and (in many ways) successful missionary among the Sea Dayaks. The congregation were more obviously moved – so impressed in fact that they wanted the sermon printed.

Reaction in England to McDougall’s ideas

A week after delivering the sermon McDougall reported on its immediate effects to the home committee of the BCMI. After mentioning with pride the admission of five new Chinese converts to Holy Communion (without previous Confirmation!) he continued,

... and I preached a sermon for Chambers’ benefit, giving my ideas of missionary work among the Dyaks and he expressed his thanks for it warmly, and as people here wish it to be printed I shall if I have time before this vessel leaves copy it and forward it, for you [Stooks] or Mr Brereton to decide whether it will be worthwhile doing so.⁸⁶

Whilst being prepared to defer to the committee’s judgement McDougall must have hoped that the sermon would be published and thereby encourage supporters at home. He does not appear to have considered the possibility that his ‘ideas’ might provoke controversy in England. Was he unaware of the progress in his thinking, of how fast he had moved since leaving England at the end of 1847, or was he out of touch with the English scene? Since 1847 the majority in the Church of England had been greatly disturbed by such challenges to orthodoxy as the Hampden case and the Gorham judgement, as well as by the trickle of defections to Rome which culminated in that of Manning in 1851. McDougall had been somewhat insulated from this turmoil during his early years in Sarawak, and the absence of comment on these matters in his letters suggests that he was happy to steer clear of them. No

⁸⁶ McDougall to Stooks, 13 September 1851. MSS.Pac.s.104 (2), 105.

doubt the Rajah and his circle strenuously debated them at their gatherings, but McDougall avoided such contentious discussions. That such a man could entertain the progressive ideas which were expressed in his sermon was paradoxical.⁸⁷

The BCMI committee however had to consider the risk of controversy, and could not be expected to alienate a large number of supporters, especially as income had already reduced in reaction to the Rajah's suppression of piracy in 1849. In retrospect the sermon could not have arrived in England at a worse time.

A sub-committee of three members was deputed to consider it, and they first of all had to decipher what they called McDougall's 'hieroglyphics' before they were able to circulate clear copies'.⁸⁸ Two members, Stooks and Humphreys, finally met on 7 January 1852 and, after comparing notes, communicated their findings to Brereton. After damning the author of the sermon with faint praise – it was 'decidedly an able' address and faithfully represented a sincere attempt to 'extract from the darkness of heathenism the yet lingering sparks of primaeval truth'⁸⁹ – the two men got down to the criticisms in candid terminology.

It was, they suggested, the sermon of a theorist, a missionary without successful experience of evangelistic practice. It contained a vision which would offend many supporters and, outside the BCMI, upset the CMS and the Evangelical newspaper *The Record*. The sensitivity to this wing of the Church is interesting and demonstrates its increasing influence. The particular 'offensiveness' of the sermon was dismissed in one sentence. Supporters would consider McDougall's ideas 'as a system of reserve and say that it was not clearly a preaching of Christ'.⁹⁰ This presumably meant that they judged McDougall to have some 'reservations' about vital aspects of the Christian Gospel – an unfair criticism.

'Not clearly a preaching of Christ' was, by Evangelical criteria, a telling point. St Paul was the hero of the sermon and Jesus appeared only incidentally, as an example of gentleness for instance. There was no proclamation of the Cross and Resurrection, no linking of Acts, 17:23-28 with what followed on Mars Hill as recorded in verses 29-31. If taxed with such criticisms McDougall would no doubt have replied that his address was delivered to an already committed Christian missionary, and that its contents were in the nature of a

⁸⁷ For other paradoxes see Chapter 5.

⁸⁸ Stooks to Brereton, 7 January 1852, CLS 54, 110.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

'praeparatio evangelica', suggesting how the ground must first be sympathetically prepared before the full preaching of the Gospel followed. Such an approach would have seemed novel at that time to most supporters even though it is now a commonplace in missionary circles.

The criticisms outlined above, although predictable in themselves, were in fact a smokescreen covering the real reason for reluctance to publish the sermon. This emerged at the end of the letter to Brereton. By the early months of 1852 the idea for a Borneo bishopric was receiving serious consideration, having been proposed to the committee by the Rajah the previous summer.⁹¹ The name of McDougall was at the top of the list of candidates for the post, so he must be sheltered from spoiling his chances of being appointed. Stooks wrote

This sermon if printed would, we fear, arouse controversy . . . and by possibility throw obstacles in the way of McDougall's appointment to the Bishopric, is it worth the risk? We must remember that the Archbishop [J.B. Sumner, an Evangelical] is much influenced by the very men who would probably dislike McDougall's theory . . .'.⁹²

So the somewhat cynical conclusion was reached. The sermon should not be printed by the BCMI. 'It is a simple question of expediency at the present time, and does not touch the correctness or incorrectness of McDougall's theory'.⁹³

Brereton replied three days later, acknowledging with sincerity that the sermon did 'credit to the head and heart of the writer', expressing sentiments which 'appear to me to be those of St Paul, and of a humane and Christian mind'.⁹⁴ Nevertheless he too detected defects – some sentences were 'not sufficiently guarded', and 'the work of the Spirit accompanying the word preached is not sufficiently recognised'. He agreed that publication would arouse opposition, so it should not be done 'at the moment',⁹⁵ an interesting qualification.

A fascinating postscript appeared at the end of Brereton's letter. McDougall had requested him to read the sermon to his brother-in-law John Colenso. He complied, and Colenso 'approved' the sermon. This was not surprising in view of the development of his own theology whilst he was an incumbent in Norfolk between 1846 and 1853. One quotation

⁹¹ See Chapter 4, 186-8.

⁹² Stooks to Brereton, 7 January 1852, CLS 54, 110.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Brereton to BCMI Committee, 10 January 1852, C/ASI/SIN/1., Rhodes House Library.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

from his pen during these years will identify how close Colenso and McDougall were in their thinking at this time, and it is possible that one might have influenced the other. Colenso wrote in familiar terms of the 'benighted far-off heathen', but who still had 'tokens around and voices within, which are speaking to them of a Father in Heaven' and – anticipating his own and McDougall's later thinking – speaking 'to us of their connection . . . with Him who is the Head of the whole race, the Son of Man, the Saviour of the World'.⁹⁶ If anyone could have been accused of being 'a theorist' at this time it was surely Colenso who, unlike McDougall, was basing his conclusions not on first-hand experience of 'the far-off heathen' but on his reading of the favourite theologian of himself and his wife, F.D. Maurice.

The committee received the report of its 'three wise men' on 22 January 1852 and not surprisingly accepted their recommendation that the sermon 'be not published'. The sermon was 'very creditable to Mr McDougall', but 'calculated *perhaps* [my italics] to raise questions of controversy which had better be avoided'.⁹⁷ Did the inclusion of the word 'perhaps' suggest a lingering doubt somewhere that to avoid dissent and embrace expediency might not have been the right Christian policy? Whatever the facts might have been the committee maintained a united front, its decision was communicated to Sarawak – and McDougall within three years had obtained his bishopric.

How deeply Frank McDougall was disappointed and hurt by this negative reaction from home is difficult to determine. As a loyal churchman who had been schooled in obedience he accepted with good grace the decision of his employers, writing back to them privately on 1 April,

I quite agree with the decision of the Committee about my Sermon – indeed, I have myself a great dislike to appearing in print before the public, but at the time I sent it I thought it might do good and call attention to the Mission.⁹⁸

His admission of 'dislike to appearing in print before the public' seems a little disingenuous. Why then did he send the sermon home for publication in the first place? When he felt that his integrity was under question, as in the action over the Illanun pirates ten years later,⁹⁹ he showed no hesitation in running to the newspapers. He must have thought in 1852 that

⁹⁶ P. Hinchliff, *John William Colenso, Bishop of Natal*, London and Edinburgh, Thomas Nelson, 1964, 30.

⁹⁷ Minutes of BCMI Committee, 22 January 1852, C/ASI/SIN/1.

⁹⁸ McDougall to Stooks, 1 April 1852, MSS.Pac.s.104 (2), 132.

⁹⁹ See Chapter 5, 246.

revealing his tentative ideas about Dayak religion to home supporters was not a matter of life and death, certainly not as important as to risk a bishopric. But he would have been somewhat deflated, and it is sad to record that never again during the 15 further years he was to spend in Sarawak did McDougall return to the themes of his 1851 sermon or show any desire to put them into practice. Having had his knuckles rapped once he was not prepared to risk a repetition. It was not until many years later, after his return to work in England and towards the end of his life, that he elected to develop the ideas expressed with such conviction and excitement in 1851. That sermon also, prepared for a CMS rally in 1884, was to be received in negative fashion.¹⁰⁰

Reasons for reservation over McDougall's ideas

Considering general religious attitudes in Britain during the middle years of the 19th century, and the perceived threat from the growing scepticism in, for instance, literary and scientific circles, it is easy to see why McDougall's conclusions were greeted with such reserve at home. Against this background it seems likely that influential BCMI supporters in particular, and the majority of Anglicans in general, would have expressed at least three objections to the sentiments contained in the 1851 sermon – had they been permitted to read it.

Firstly, McDougall's contention that he found in St Paul as recorded in Acts the understanding of a common religious nature among all men which had not been totally effaced by the Fall would have appeared to challenge a basic Christian belief. Though Erasmian in origin such a conclusion would have shocked most churchmen because it suggested that the grace of God as revealed uniquely in Christ was not totally necessary in restoring the image of God to humankind. Unredeemed human nature was generally considered to be completely dark, without even the 'one little drop of light' discovered by McDougall in his Dayak acquaintances.

Early 19th century missionaries on the whole would have been in no doubt as to the corruption endemic in the religious systems they encountered in Africa and Asia. Robert Moffat for instance wrote that missionaries who followed him out to Africa would have to get used to the local people's 'ignorance, their degradation and their wallowing in

¹⁰⁰ See below, 147-8.

wickedness'.¹⁰¹ David Livingstone at first agreed with his future father-in-law, denouncing in 1842 a population 'sunk into the very lowest state of mental and moral degradation', with a 'grossness' shrouding their minds'.¹⁰² After two years' experience he started to revise his earlier judgements, concluding with regard to African initiation rites that 'missionaries had failed in the past by too readily condemning what they did not understand'.¹⁰³ Where Moffat and others had claimed that the Bechuanas had no idea of God or a supreme being Livingstone soon felt convinced that 'ancestor worship did not preclude the idea of an overall deity, nor belief in a future existence'.¹⁰⁴ Livingstone never produced any systematic missiology, but it is reasonable to assume that he would have empathised with McDougall.

Such views however were those of a minority in the 1840s and 1850s, represented in England by men like Jowett who believed that 'God has never left himself anywhere without witnesses'.¹⁰⁵ The majority would have endorsed the action of the council of King's College, London who in 1853 requested F.D. Maurice to retire from his post as Professor of English literature after he had argued in his *Theological Essays* that the Bible did not consign non-Christians to eternal punishment.¹⁰⁶ If the pleas of such an orthodox churchman as Samuel Wilberforce, who insisted that the Church of England permitted the latitude expressed by Maurice, fell on deaf ears what hope was there for McDougall's judgements?

The second objection to McDougall's sermon would have concentrated on his assertion that 'the voice of conscience' could be found in feelings which the Dayaks had 'in common with ourselves'. He shared in his compatriot's notions of Western moral superiority,¹⁰⁷ as indeed did Livingstone who affirmed in the same decade that Africans would only become civilised 'by a long-continued discipline and contact with superior races'.¹⁰⁸ But in his limited contacts with Dayak communities McDougall had been impressed by certain moral attitudes which he found embedded in many of their customs.

¹⁰¹ Ed. J.P.R. Wallis, *The Matabele Journals of Robert Moffat 1829-1860*, London, Chatto & Windus, 1945, 2 Vols., Vol. 1, 29.

¹⁰² D. Livingstone to the LMS, 3 July 1842, Ed. I. Schapera, *Livingstone's Missionary Correspondence 1841-1856*, London, Chatto & Windus, 1961, 18.

¹⁰³ Tim Jeal, *Livingstone*, London, Pimlico, 1993, reprint 1996, 54.

¹⁰⁴ D. Livingstone, *Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa*, London, John Murray, 1857, 158-159. Jeal, *op.cit.*, 55.

¹⁰⁵ V.F. Storr, *The Development of English Theology in the 19th century*, London, Longmans, Green & Co., 1913, 400.

¹⁰⁶ Vidler, *op.cit.*, 87.

¹⁰⁷ See above, 135.

¹⁰⁸ Ed. I. Schapera, *Livingstone's African Journal 1853-1856*, London, Chatto & Windus, 1963, 2 volumes, Vol. 2, 243.

He could not deny the evidence of his eyes, that there seemed to coexist in humankind a common stock of moral judgements which pointed to a common origin in the spirit of a common God. For the majority of British Christians at that time the most they were prepared to admit could be summed up in Stooks's estimate that the Dayak moral feelings described by McDougall were merely 'lingering sparks of primaeval truth'.¹⁰⁹

The third area of disagreement with McDougall's ideas would surface over his suggestion, vague though it was, that Christianity could become 'all things to all men' and adapt itself to the customs of the various peoples it encounters in mission. This would have been construed in mid-19th century Britain as casting doubt on the 'truths' of Scripture as final and binding for all time. The distinction between these 'truths' and their cultural embodiment had still to be drawn in 1852. It would be a few more years before men like A.P. Stanley and Benjamin Jowett demonstrated

a desire to understand the Bible in its historical growth, and a determination to study each Biblical writer in the circumstances under which he lived and wrote.¹¹⁰

For Jowett, in Storr's words, revelation was 'world-wide and continuous' and 'the accidents' of Christianity must be separated from its 'essence', 'its local type from its abiding spirit'.¹¹¹ Stanley was later to become Colenso's champion, denying the use of Westminster Abbey (where he once invited Robert Moffat to lecture) to the first Lambeth Conference in 1867 because it had been called into being to condemn Colenso.¹¹² Both men were prophetic figures, but in the 1850s voices crying in the wilderness. For the majority of Anglicans at the time the 'truths' of Scripture were sacred and eternally valid, and any talk of adapting them to different cultures would have seemed heretical. The year 1852 was too early for McDougall to have received a fair hearing.

It is regrettable that McDougall did not outline more clearly how 'adaptation' might be applied, apart from the rather general suggestion that a 'sacramental halo' could be cast over certain Dayak customs. Perhaps he had not thought through his proposals? What can be said with certainty is that, although in many ways he was held captive by the terminology and outlook of his own day, he could occasionally escape from these chains and rise higher than

¹⁰⁹ See above, 138.

¹¹⁰ Storr, *op.cit.*, 398.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 400.

¹¹² Carpenter, *op.cit.*, 299.

most of his contemporaries in understanding the meaning of mission in non-Western contexts.

The evidence of subsequent actions and sermons

Subdued by disappointment and plagued by ill-health McDougall and his wife came back to England at the end of 1852 for their long leave. In the years following his return to Sarawak in 1855 he avoided any further expression of the ideas contained in the 1851 sermon, and resisted any bold experiments which the tone and content of that sermon might otherwise have presaged. He contented himself with fairly uncontroversial changes in church practice and language, of which two examples may be given with an interval of ten years between them.

Whilst waiting at Kuching in early June 1855 before returning to Calcutta for his consecration McDougall took Gomes with some newly-baptised Dayak converts from Lundu to meet Chambers and his fellow-Dayaks at Banting. In what was clearly a 'staff meeting', which could also be described as a 'synod' – since 'the most intelligent of the Dyak Christians were present'¹¹³ – McDougall initiated a discussion on the translation of religious names and terms into the local dialects. In his journal for 5 June he recorded,

We spent the day in consultation as to the most appropriate words for religious terms in our translation, in order as far as possible to secure uniformity in our theological teaching, notwithstanding the difference of dialect. We settled on thirty six words, consulting the natives who were with us.¹¹⁴

The most important of the 36 words to translate was the name of 'Jesus', which McDougall wanted rendered by the Arabic *Isa* which he felt would be more familiar to potential converts. Chambers objected on the grounds that *Isa* was the name of a 'bad Malay man' at Banting¹¹⁵ and he felt his people would be confused. McDougall won the argument, suggesting that 'it would be just moral cowardice to have avoided the name of Isa because it

¹¹³ H. McDougall, *op.cit.*, 78.

¹¹⁴ Bunyon, *op.cit.*, 112.

¹¹⁵ H. McDougall, *op.cit.*, 77.

is derived from the Mahometans',¹¹⁶ which implies that there was more to Chambers' opposition than Harriette allowed.

It is interesting to note that, by the end of the 20th century when the Church in Sarawak has come completely under indigenous leadership, the word *Jesus* has been preferred to *Isa*! Such is the magic of the name – in English!

At the same consultation in June 1855 there was an interesting conflict over hymn tunes, where uniformity was less in evidence than with teaching. McDougall recorded in his journal that on the first night Chambers' Lingga Dayaks 'sang their hymn to one of their own wild airs', as Chambers – who was not very musical – had written some hymns and 'left them to their native music'.¹¹⁷ In the morning the Lundu Christians 'sang the first hymn in service to the sweet chant which Gomes had taught them'. Gomes, in contrast to Chambers, 'had set his hymns to Church chants and tunes, giving them for the first time both rhythm and melody'.¹¹⁸

Sadly – at least from the perspective of 20th century liturgiologists – the Lingga Dayaks would not sing after hearing their visitors, feeling 'ashamed not to sing as well as the Lundus' Western tunes instead of their own airs. It may be that McDougall privately regretted this, for he had recorded that he 'was struck by the energy and earnestness with which the Lingga people sang their hymn' to one of their own indigenous chants.¹¹⁹ But he did not make an issue of it, and Western Anglican music became the norm in the Sarawak church.

Ten years later Chambers was again to be in a minority of one over a linguistic matter, this time over the correct Romanised version of Arabic characters. But he would be united with his colleagues in producing some 'elementary and devotional works in the Dyak dialects', working with government officials in reducing these 'tongues into writing'.¹²⁰ This went on at the same time as McDougall was preparing a Romanised version of his Malay (Jawi script) Prayer Book which would cover all the Dayak groups whatever dialect they spoke.

¹¹⁶ McDougall to Bullock and Hawkins, 15 June 1855, Copy Letter Book.

¹¹⁷ Bunyon, op.cit., 111.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Bunyon, op.cit., 265.

Bunyon records that on his return to Sarawak from his second furlough in 1862 McDougall informed him,

I am revising the Liturgy and rewriting my Malay Prayer Book, which is now wanted in the Roman character, as our missionaries, with one exception [Chambers?], have come to the conclusion of instructing their converts in it. I have always advocated the Arabic myself, but I begin to see that while we can do nothing with the Malays, it is better to instruct the Dyaks in a character which the Malays cannot read or ridicule [the Roman].¹²¹

This abandonment of the Jawi script and the reasons alleged for it provides interesting confirmation of the fact that McDougall had by then finally given up any possibility of evangelism among the Malay population.

With the distractions of 1862-63¹²² taking his attentions elsewhere it was to be another three years before McDougall commenced his rewriting. In January 1865 he sent some copies of the first sheet of the Malay liturgy in Roman characters to the SPG, and asked the secretary Bullock 'to check with learned experts in England on his form of spelling' (i.e., with or without extra or accented letters).¹²³ He then prepared a Catechism for submission to his second Diocesan Synod which was due to meet later in the year, printed with the Malay in the Roman character on the one side and the English translation on the opposite page. It was based on the Prayer Book Catechism but, showing some initiative from McDougall, 'enlarged by explanations taken from the 39 Articles and references from Scripture'.¹²⁴

This second synod met in June 1865 and, as he had done ten years earlier, Chambers argued for alterations – this time mainly in odd letters – against the wishes of the rest of his colleagues. Mrs Chambers – the former Miss Elizabeth Wooley¹²⁵ – came to the defence of her husband, and there ensued what Harriette called 'some disagreeable heart-burning and squabbling'.¹²⁶

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² See Chapter 5, 245-9.

¹²³ McDougall to Bullock, 15 January 1865, OLR D23b.

¹²⁴ Bunyon, *op.cit.*, 266.

¹²⁵ See Chapter 5, 259.

¹²⁶ H. McDougall to Eliza Bunyon, 22 June 1865, MSS.Pac.s.104 (1), 217.

However passionately Chambers expressed his point of view he did not lose his sense of humour. Harriette confessed that she 'could only wonder at so much discomfort on behalf of a wretched *u*, which Mr Chambers called "his little pet ewe" . . .'.¹²⁷

Again – as in 1855 – McDougall's view prevailed and the synod approved his version of the Catechism, but it was not published until 1868, after he had finally left Sarawak. It was the only portion of the Prayer Book to be 'Romanized' during his episcopacy, in spite of his hopes and good intentions. But some progress was made at the 1865 synod towards producing a common hymnal, McDougall informing Bunyon that they had

put together a hymnal with uniform tunes to the hymns selected. Although the languages must be different, the tunes may be the same, so that when Christians of different tribes meet they may the more easily join together in praising God.¹²⁸

In view of the events at Banting in 1855¹²⁹ it must be presumed that the 'uniform tunes' adopted for the hymns in different dialects were from English Anglican hymnals, and were not from the local music. McDougall justified this by using the same defence with which over the centuries the Roman Catholic Church has argued for retaining Latin as the universal language of the mass. Thus far had 'adaptation' advanced by the final years of McDougall's period of mission on the island of Borneo! His cautious policy may have pleased the Lingga and Lundu Dayaks, and by the time he left in 1867 the whole Dayak mission was showing signs of success. But his unwillingness or inability to embody in practice the prophetic themes of the 1851 sermon had a negative effect on Anglican mission in Sarawak, preventing any effective dialogue with primal religions thereafter.

It was to be more than 30 years after preaching his 1851 sermon (and 17 years after his final return from Sarawak to England) before McDougall returned to its major themes and presented them afresh. The occasion was afforded by an invitation to preach on behalf of the CMS in May 1884, when he was incumbent of Milford-on-Sea in the Diocese of Winchester and an Archdeacon.

A note on the cover of this sermon, however, recorded that it was not in fact preached for the CMS but adapted for the cathedral and for a later SPG festival at Milford. It can be assumed

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Bunyon, *op.cit.*, 264.

¹²⁹ Above, 145.

that the sentiments expressed would have proved uncongenial to CMS supporters, comparatively unaffected in the 1880s by two decades of Biblical criticism and still as suspicious as BCMI supporters in the 1850s. Moreover, McDougall's thinking had moved in the intervening years to a slightly more daring position.

For his text in 1884 McDougall abandoned the Acts of the Apostles and turned to St John's Gospel – John, 3:16.¹³⁰ Beginning with a denial that 'the world' which 'God so loved' meant only 'the Christian world', he explained that Jesus was 'the Saviour of all men' and went on to develop this theme in language more explicit than in 1851. Christians may be in a special 'Covenant of grace' and 'assured of a higher and closer relationship with God', 'blessed with a special gift' of the Spirit, but

in some way or other we may well believe that all peoples are sharing even now, though in a different manner, in the benefits of the coming of Christ . . . the Heavenly Father has left no human hearts without some witness of His love – the heathen have in various ways and degrees the word of the law written within them . . .

All humankind had been given by their Creator 'light in some measure whereby they can and do read that law'. By 'law' McDougall presumably meant 'natural law', and there would have been many who would have agreed with him. But he went on in more controversial fashion, calling in support both St Peter and St John, to equate the 'light' of nature with the 'light' that was Christ. 'God is no respecter of persons but in every nation he that feareth God and worships righteousness is accepted by Him'.

there is One looking upon us all, Christian and Heathen alike, who is the life and light of men and who lighteneth every man that cometh into the world.

Here McDougall drew inspiration from his own experience long ago. The perceptive missionary 'sees that there are movements in the poor heathen's heart which can come from no other source' – certainly not any 'effort of man's unaided nature' – 'none other but the gracious working of the Spirit of Christ'. What therefore was to be the missionary's message to 'the poor heathen'? He should not speak 'with words of terror on his lips' about 'the dreadful hell' which their sins have deserved' but 'whisper to them of *Him who has been*

¹³⁰ Sermon no. 14, unclassified sermons of McDougall, Rhodes House Library. Unless otherwise indicated all subsequent quotations from this sermon are from the same source.

with them all along [my italics] – who has not left them alone . . . whose voice they have heard already, though they knew it not’.

The allusion here was to God the Creator, the ‘unknown God’, whose voice ‘of power’ resonated through storms and thunder. But there was ‘another and softer voice too’ who, in McDougall’s experience had spoken to the Dayaks

in the inner movements of their being – in every thought which stirred them to brave and manly and righteous deeds – or to fulfil the duties of family affection, or to acts of compassion and tenderness for the sick and suffering, the stranger and the orphan.

The morality of Dayak culture had obviously made a deep impression on McDougall, and the longer he thought about it the more convinced he became that such cultural norms could come from no other source but the God ‘who had been with them all along’.

He ended this 1884 sermon by lamenting that earlier missionaries had not gained similar insights, but had attempted ‘to uproot entirely’ the faith of indigenous peoples and deride their ‘spiritual world’. By such ignorance the mission of the church had been ‘much delayed’. The outlook in the 1880s was, to McDougall, more hopeful because missionaries were learning ‘to meet the heathen to whom they go halfway as it were upon the ground of our common humanity’. This common humanity moreover had been ‘blessed and redeemed in Christ’ so that ‘we are all redeemed . . . in Christ the Second Adam’. There are echoes of Colenso here which perhaps explains why McDougall’s optimism was misplaced.

With only one or two tentative allusions to the Prologue of the Fourth Gospel it would be an exaggeration to claim for McDougall any serious exploration of a Logos Christology. Unveiling of that would have to wait until the 20th century. But McDougall anticipated future trends. Traditional he might have been, but in missiology as well as terminology he rose above the limits of the Anglican thinking of his day and pointed the way to a future where inclusivism would be respectable.

More than one hundred years later a kindred spirit in Kuching suggested that ‘the missionaries did not take Christ to Borneo, as he had been there all along’.¹³¹

¹³¹ Archbishop Peter Cheung, in an address to *The second Christian Conference of the Association of Churches in Sarawak*, Kuching, 1-3 August 1989, as observed by D.A. Edwards.

That this was said by a Roman Catholic archbishop shows how far that Communion has advanced since Vatican 2, but also (by omission) how static the outlook of the Anglican Church in Sarawak had remained during the century which has elapsed since McDougall attempted to share his insights. As a bitter critic of the Roman Catholic Church in his day he would not have been flattered by the allegiance of his 20th century disciple, but he would have assuredly praised the message.

Borneo Mission or indigenous Church?

Although some of Roland Allen's criticisms of 19th century missionaries delivered early in the 20th century may have been oversimplified¹³² there is no doubt that he identified a weakness when he suggested that later Christians established 'Missions' whereas St Paul founded 'Churches'. It was certainly a 'Mission' which was established in Sarawak in 1848, and as late as the end of the 20th century the local Anglican presence in some of the remoter areas of the country was still being referred to as 'the SPG'. McDougall had gone to Kuching as head of the 'Borneo Mission', and he was happy to work under that banner. But he would have dissented from Allen's judgement that 'Missions have not proved themselves in practice to be very convenient or effective instruments for creating indigenous Churches'.¹³³ Had McDougall not declared at the Hanover Square meeting in 1847 that he was going to Borneo to plant 'a Church founded upon apostolic principles'?¹³⁴ His Home School from the beginning had been envisaged as an embryo college for eventual indigenous ministry.¹³⁵

It is true that the 1851 sermon contained no references to the importance of church-planting, but that address had a limited aim, concerned with the initial encounter of a Christian mission with Dayak religion plus a few words about the sacraments included where necessary. There is plenty of evidence in later sermons and letters to show that McDougall was well aware of his duty to proceed from the stage of mission to that of a truly indigenous Church.

¹³² T.E. Yates, *Christian Mission in the 20th Century*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1994, 62.

¹³³ R. Allen, *Missionary Methods; St Paul's or Ours?*, London, Robert Scott, 1912, 112.

¹³⁴ See above, 119.

¹³⁵ See Chapter 1, 40-6.

A few days after his consecration as bishop in Calcutta in October 1855 he was invited to preach in the Anglican cathedral. Again he looked to St Paul for inspiration, but this time he chose as a text Acts, 16:4-5. Paul and Timothy were in Lycaonia to deliver the decisions of the Council of Jerusalem and 'strengthen the churches in faith'. This was to be a church-centred sermon.¹³⁶

McDougall reminded the congregation that he had been commissioned as a bishop so that he might 'set in order the infant Church now springing up in Borneo and ordain elders where they are wanting'. This was clearly for him in accordance with the example of St Paul and the Apostles from whom later generations could learn the methods employed 'for the extension of Christ's Church'.

The development of this body [the Church] took place not only by the increase of its members in those places where it already existed but also by the formation of new branches in places where as yet there were none [McDougall's underlining] – that is to say in every new place visited . . .

The pattern was clear – mission/evangelism leading to church planting – and it was in accordance with such principles that McDougall felt he had been sent to Borneo and, in due time, consecrated bishop.

When he returned to Sarawak as bishop at the end of 1855 it was to assume episcopal/apostolic oversight of an infant Church with three established branches in Kuching, Banting and Lundu, and with a determination to fulfil his dream of creating the Home School as a college for ministry. Even on the way back to Kuching, breaking his journey at Singapore, the urgency of the task was such as to cause him to write to the SPG pleading for a 'good, English Vice-Principal' who might become the 'working Head of our School (or rather College as I shall call it)' and assist him 'in training up my boys and young men for holy orders'.¹³⁷

McDougall wanted a man like A.W. Street, the former Principal of Bishop's College, Calcutta, whom he had much admired as the teacher of the catechists Fox and Nicholls who so impressed him when they arrived in Sarawak in 1851. In the event he was to be

¹³⁶ McDougall, sermon, St Paul's Cathedral, Calcutta. October 1855. Unclassified sermon no. 4, Rhodes House. Unless otherwise stated all quotations are from this source.

¹³⁷ McDougall to Hawkins, 6 December 1855, MSS.Pac.s.104 (3), 45.

disappointed and the first year of his episcopate (1856) was to hear constant pleas 'for a sensible Oxford man' to be sent out to assist him remaining unanswered.

When McDougall spoke of a 'working Head' it is clear that he meant a Vice-Principal who would take the 'work' off his shoulders and free him for his wider duties. He intended to remain Principal and retain overall control. 'Our School is becoming daily more and more important – College it should be – and though I consider myself Head I want an efficient Vice to help me'.¹³⁸ The following day after that letter he described his institution as 'a College of Missionaries as well as a Missionary College' – providing facilities for rest and refreshment for three months each year to exhausted missionaries from rural areas as well as initial training for ministry.¹³⁹

A month later McDougall's vision was channelled into practical expression. He reported an evangelistic visit to the Chinese gold-miners at Bau, 30 miles south-west of Kuching, on which he had taken 15 pupils from the Home School as well as the schoolmaster Owen (who had come out with him from England in 1855) and the Chinese catechist Foo Ngyen Khoon, an adult refugee from Dutch Borneo in 1850. The visit achieved limited success, with the singing of the Te Deum attracting a large crowd of onlookers, and it was agreed that the catechist should take some of the older schoolboys on monthly trips to hold services and give religious instruction.¹⁴⁰ With the work expanding in this way it occurred to McDougall that he really needed a Principal rather than a deputy, so that he could be completely released for duties elsewhere. But only if he could secure 'a good university man' – he had heard that an old Oxford friend named Bayne, who coincidentally was engaged to the Rajah's niece, was about to offer himself to the SPG.

Bayne did not go to Sarawak, and 1857 opened with renewed pleas to the SPG more urgently expressed than before. Several of the 'first class lads' in the school were of an age and sufficiently advanced 'to form a class of students to be prepared for Missionary labour'.¹⁴¹ But without more English staff the burden would become impossible to bear – 'I really cannot go on this way much longer . . . I wish most earnestly to impress upon the Society the great importance of making this school into an efficient Training Missionary Institution'.¹⁴²

¹³⁸ McDougall to Bullock, 7 April 1856, *Ibid.*, 66.

¹³⁹ McDougall to Hawkins, 8 April 1856, *Ibid.*, 68.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 19 May 1856, *Ibid.*, 74.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 5 January 1857, *Ibid.*, 108.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

In spite of the inability of the SPG to find the type of men he wanted McDougall's optimism led him to contemplate breaking all links with Asian colleges such as Bishop's College, with which he had become rather disillusioned, and concentrating all his hopes on the Kuching institution – 'properly led' of course. 'We must train up our own natives and have a few good Englishmen [McDougall's underlining] to superintend them'.¹⁴³ However, the Chinese insurrection in February 1857¹⁴⁴ – orchestrated from Bau – set his plans back by over a year, and it was not until March 1858 that three new English recruits (Hackett, Glover and Chalmers) arrived from St Augustine's College, Canterbury. They were not the Oxbridge graduates of McDougall's dreams, but they were in his eyes infinitely preferable to his last Bishop's College catechist, Cameron, who ironically had reached Sarawak in the same month. He employed all his best invective in describing Cameron as a 'truly converted, holy-minded, zealous evangelical' young man – 'so irascible, disputatious, conceited and impertinent a young fellow I never met'.¹⁴⁵ Not surprisingly Cameron did not stay long.

The three St Augustine's men, augmented by C.A. Koch who had arrived from Calcutta in 1856, proved more promising and McDougall even contemplated making one of them (Hackett) 'sub-Warden of this our Missionary school'.¹⁴⁶ Chalmers was sent to begin work among the Land Dayaks at Quop, 20 miles south-east of Kuching, where McDougall had caught an early glimpse of Dayak religion in 1850. There were now three local mission churches in the rural areas as well as Kuching, so an indigenous Church was growing.

Unfortunately these were the years of alarms about Malay plots,¹⁴⁷ and the work of the Mission was again disrupted. The three Canterbury men were in different ways unsettled and within three years all had left Sarawak for quieter climes. McDougall himself proceeded on his second long furlough at the end of 1859, and his hopes for the 'college' had to be put on hold until his return to Kuching in March 1862. By then the country was in a more peaceful state, and with four new missionaries arriving in the same month the future for shifting the emphasis from 'Mission' to 'indigenous Church' appeared much brighter.

At the end of March 1862 McDougall reported to Bunyon 'that his native schoolmaster and catechist [Foo Ngyen Khoon] was asking for ordination, and that four of his elder pupils in

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ See Chapter 5, 238-42.

¹⁴⁵ McDougall to Bullock, 3 May 1858, MSS.Pac.s.104 (3), 164.

¹⁴⁶ McDougall to Hawkins, 11 October 1858, Ibid. 168.

¹⁴⁷ See above, Chapter 2, 90-3.

the school were apparently ready for appointments as native catechists'.¹⁴⁸ In July he mentioned these four again, requesting the SPG to approve their appointment at least as assistant catechists.

They are, so to speak, the first-fruits of our school, and I trust that we shall be able to keep up a supply of well instructed youths from year to year as they are needed.¹⁴⁹

As a result of such an augmentation of staff, both clergy and catechists, two new mission stations were opened at Merdang near Quop [Land Dayak] and at Sabu on the Undup river [Sea Dayak], and in spite of his sensitivity about criticisms of the Mission's slow progress¹⁵⁰ McDougall was able to formulate for the first time a vision of a Sarawak church free of European control. In August 1862 he sent in a return requested by Hawkins, reminding him

of our Missionary Institution here, in which we are educating those young natives to whom the Mission must look hereafter for that supply of native clergy and teachers who must at first assist, and we hope in due time take the place of, European Missionaries. To this work I have steadily given myself from the beginning, and endeavoured gradually to build our school up into a College.¹⁵¹

The Sarawak Christian community was still a 'Mission', but an 'indigenous Church' was on the horizon. It was however to be a long time coming. During his last five years as bishop and chief missionary McDougall continued 'gradually' to extend the foundations,¹⁵² but his European successors were reluctant to relinquish control – and the indigenous Anglicans of Sarawak were not encouraged to desire it. There was but a trickle of Dayak and Chinese clergy ordained as the years – and the century – went by, and the continued failure of the SPG to provide a sufficient number of European missionaries meant that the Anglican Church in Sarawak remained seriously understaffed. It had to wait for one hundred years after McDougall's creative sermon of 1851 before, after several abortive attempts, a theological college was finally established in 1951 with any prospect of permanency to fulfil the first missionary's vision. That may have signalled the end of 'the European era', and the first Dayak bishop was to be consecrated in 1967, but it was not until 1992 that the last English missionary appointed by the SPG departed from Kuching, leaving the college in the

¹⁴⁸ Bunyon, *op.cit.*, 221.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ Chapter 2, 94.

¹⁵¹ McDougall to Hawkins, 6 August 1862, MSS.Pac.s.104 (4), 25.

¹⁵² See Chapter 5, 269-72.

hands of a completely indigenous staff and the Anglican Church in Sarawak totally self-governing if not one hundred per cent self-supporting.

During the last years of his life, as he had done with relation to his thoughts on Dayak religion which culminated in the 1884 sermon, McDougall was able to reflect on the opportunities for indigenous churches. By this time the imperial consciousness in Britain was manifesting itself in a manner which had not been so marked in the middle years of the 19th century when McDougall had inaugurated the Borneo Mission. Social Darwinism had arrived to reinforce and expand the feelings of Western superiority which had been present in the younger McDougall, but not overtly so. His later addresses reflected this sea-change.

In a sermon dated simply 1880 he rejoiced over what he saw as the divine summons to the British nation to lead the cultural progress of the human race, in language which recalled the vision of England's destiny revealed in the charters of the imperial first Elizabethan age.¹⁵³ The last quarter of the 19th century was another 'colonial age', and the accession of so many new territories to the British Crown provided a great opportunity for agencies like the SPG to plant and nurture infant churches in the colonies which one day might grow into a world-wide Anglican Communion.

It is the object of the SPG to gather up these new colonies one by one as they are planted into the bosom of our Mother Church, and to set up in every land where our tongue is spoken daughter churches which shall become in due time independent of aid from home, and able to plant and support other branches of our pure Reformed Church among the heathen elsewhere.¹⁵⁴

There are echoes here of Henry Venn's vision of independent self-supporting, self-governing and self-propagating churches spread across the world, and it is no surprise that McDougall was invited to preach that sermon to CMS supporters. In another undated address at about the same time he became even more explicit.

It seems likely from analysing the text that this undated sermon may have been preached in Canterbury Cathedral on some special occasion in the life of St Augustine's College. The Anglican Church in Sarawak had received a number of missionaries from this source during McDougall's episcopate and afterwards, and it is interesting to speculate that among the

¹⁵³ See Chapter 2, 69.

¹⁵⁴ McDougall, SPG sermon, 1880. Sermon no. 12, unclassified sermons, Rhodes House.

congregation who heard him there could have been a young 'ordinand' from Borneo and product of the Home School, William Howell.

Howell was the son of an English coal-mine manager at Labuan and a Malay woman. Having begun his Christian education in Kuching during McDougall's final year 1866 he was brought to England by Bishop Chambers and trained at St Augustine's from 1875 to 1878. In the latter year he returned to Sarawak and served a long and dedicated ministry of 50 years before retiring in 1928.¹⁵⁵ A great deal of what was spoken in the undated sermon seemed to apply to him.

McDougall began by examining the limitations of a Mission sent out from England which, staffed by missionaries who were in a sense 'aliens', often appeared satisfied when it had carried out the primary task of establishing simply 'the complete framework and organisation of Christ's Church.'¹⁵⁶ That was only half the task which needed to be completed.

. . . having set that up we must endeavour from the very first to prepare the native material to take the place of the foreign scaffolding and by degrees rear with it the walls, the pillars, the buttresses of the building until at last we complete the work firmly compacted and bound together by setting in as the keystone of the chancel arch a native Episcopate which, after we have withdrawn our aid, shall perpetuate and expand the Church in the lands where we have planted it.

In even contemplating the prospect of indigenous bishops McDougall had moved a long way from those days in the 1850s when he had sighed for 'a few good Englishmen to superintend our own natives'.¹⁵⁷ However, final 'oversight' of students training for ministry would remain in European hands. The college in places like Kuching should recognise potential future church leaders, 'the best and most capable pupils', and 'send them home [sic] to this country to complete their education for the Ministry'. In that way had William Howell been brought to England.

McDougall's reason for supporting this idea was bound up with the milieu in which ministerial training took place. He suggested that the Dayaks generally were not interested in

¹⁵⁵ W. Howell, *Sarawak Historical Notes*, ed. Brian Taylor, Guildford, St Thomas' Trust, 1993, introduction, vii.

¹⁵⁶ McDougall, unclassified sermon no. 18, Rhodes House. Unless otherwise stated all quotations are from this source.

¹⁵⁷ McDougall to Hawkins, 5 January 1857, MSS.Pac.s.104 (3), 108.

education, believing that 'higher knowledge was meant for the white man', and that there was little incentive for the student to learn in his own country. The 'promising young men' should be trained 'here amongst us, far away from all the debasing influences of their own people'. They would then understand that advanced Christian knowledge was not intended only for 'the white man', and recognise that 'God has indeed made no inseparable distinction between man and man, but that of a truth he has made of one blood all the races of the earth'. Acts 17 was never far from McDougall's mind!

If William Howell be taken as an example of the practice of removing ordinands from their own cultural environment for advanced training in the West there is little doubt that it was successful. Howell was to prove constant in his devotion to the Dayak people over a ministry of 50 years during a period when the Anglican Church in Sarawak suffered from a succession of unsuitable English missionaries. Though originally from Labuan he made an intensive study of Iban religion and culture and helped to compose *A Sea Dyak Dictionary*. He lived close to the people, and his body lies buried among them in the little churchyard at Sabu on the Undup.

But one swallow does not make a summer. Although the custom of training men and women from the non-Western world in European and American colleges gained acceptance and has been widespread in the 20th century it has brought mixed blessings. It can result in cultural alienation and slow up the process of inculturation. It may mean that theological control remains in Western hands, and for the Church that the norms of such matters as worship and church architecture continue to be Western-orientated. McDougall gave the game away towards the end of his Canterbury sermon when he suggested that a college like St Augustine's could bring to bear upon its students from overseas

all the purifying, elevating and strengthening influences of our Holy Religion . . . which cannot fail to inspire them with those feelings of reverence and awe and harmony and love which shall best fit them for teaching their own people to worship God in the beauty of holiness.

His congregation surrounded by the formal liturgy and atmosphere of Canterbury Cathedral would have appreciated what he meant. Whether it is right for St Thomas's Cathedral in Kuching in the heart of south-east Asia to be chanting solemn Evensong with a surpliced choir on Sundays at the end of the 20th century is another matter.

ENTERPRISE UNMATCHED BY ENDEAVOUR

The limitations of McDougall's thinking

With the benefit of hindsight, and profiting from the advances in Biblical interpretation which have occurred since the middle years of the 19th century, it is easy to be critical of McDougall's rather simplistic understanding of the scriptural evidence which he felt was compelling him towards a particular view of the meaning of mission. He was no scholar, and was not equipped – or minded – to venture into the kind of analysis of St Paul's 'sermons' which was to result for instance in Roland Allen's conclusions that the speeches at Lystra and Athens were not typical and were not to be used as the basis for a theory 'that St Paul approached his Gentile hearers with great caution and economy, leading them gradually on from heathenism by a semi-pagan philosophy to Christianity'.¹⁵⁸

As the 20th century progressed the kind of conclusions deduced by McDougall have appeared more feasible. Yates, when suggesting that Allen might have been guilty of over-simplification and idealism,¹⁵⁹ quotes with approval Hendrik Kraemer and Max Warren in support of the position towards which McDougall was feeling his way. Kraemer was convinced of the centrality of the Incarnation and Atonement for Christian mission, yet extolled the missionary who adopted 'the style of Paul and Barnabas at Lystra and Athens', and linked with them Peter's response to the Roman Cornelius.¹⁶⁰ Warren urges humility in approaching other cultures lest we forget that 'God was here before our arrival'.¹⁶¹ Yates has a good commentary on Warren's insight, suggesting that the missionary task is rather

to unveil the Lord who is already there – not to take Christ to some place from which he is absent but to go into all the world and discover Christ there . . . to uncover the unknown Christ.¹⁶²

In support of Warren's views Lesslie Newbigin, who speaks from a similar background, writes of the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel committing him to the belief 'that every part of the created world and every human being are already related to Jesus'. Christians are not to imagine that loyalty to Christ requires them 'to belittle the manifest presence of the light in

¹⁵⁸ Allen, *op.cit.*, 91-2.

¹⁵⁹ Yates, *op.cit.*, 62.

¹⁶⁰ H. Kraemer, *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World*, London, International Missionary Council, Edinburgh House Press, 1938, 138.

¹⁶¹ Kenneth Cragg, *Sandals at the Mosque*, London, SCM Press, 1959, Introduction, 10.

¹⁶² Yates, *op.cit.*, 142.

the lives of men and women who do not acknowledge him'.¹⁶³ Newbigin does not use the Pauline incidents in Acts to support his argument, but makes much of Peter and Cornelius.

Towards the end of the 20th century an influential missiologist like David Bosch was to prove rather more cautious. He accepts that Paul was the first great Christian missionary and that his example is important for later Church practice, but he insists that Paul was in many ways unique and that therefore his methods and preaching cannot simply be applied throughout the centuries to cultures markedly different to that of the 1st century CE. 'The profound dissimilarities between then and now imply that it will not do to appeal in a direct manner to the words of the biblical authors and apply what they said on a one-to-one basis to our own situation'.¹⁶⁴ A.P. Stanley could have accepted such an argument if posed in his day, but not McDougall.

Bosch does not use the Pauline texts from Acts as he understands that the book of Acts is a 'secondary source' for judging the thoughts and words of Paul compared with the Epistles, and in no way will he 'fuse' primary and secondary sources.¹⁶⁵ This kind of distinction, common-place today, was of course not to hand in the 1850s when McDougall, like his contemporaries, would have respected all the words of Scripture as in equal measure 'the word of God'.

It is fair to point out that Bosch's refusal to mix his sources is not shared by all scholars. Senior and Stuhlmüller, for instance, accept that the book of Acts is a reliable part of the tradition and, together with Luke's Gospel, 'provides a theological basis for the community's mission, and wise instruction for those involved in witnessing to it'.¹⁶⁶ In an interesting passage these authors link John 1, Acts 14 and Acts 17 to bind together a section which views the created world as the arena of revelation and salvation.

In a limited but still significant number of texts the capacity of the material universe to reveal God is confidently asserted . . . The prologue of John utilizes Wisdom motifs to affirm that creation is made in the pattern of God's Word. Luke in Acts has Paul, in his speech at Lystra, presenting a strong apology for the revealing of God through creation. The motif returns in his speech to the Athenians. The unknown God acknowledged by the Athenians was, in fact, "the God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth".¹⁶⁷

¹⁶³ Lesslie Newbigin, *The Open Secret*, Grand Rapids, Michigan, W.B. Eerdmans, 1978, 197-198.

¹⁶⁴ D.J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, New York, Orbis, 1991, 181.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 123.

¹⁶⁶ D. Senior and C. Stuhlmüller, *The Biblical Foundations for Mission*, London, SCM Press Ltd., 1983, 277.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 327.

They go on to emphasise that the Pauline tradition in the Epistles (Bosch's 'primary' source), especially Colossians and Ephesians, 'reaffirms that the material universe itself is under the sway of God's rule in and through Christ' – the Cosmic Christ. Here they are at one with Bosch who, in discussing the six major paradigm epochs in Church history identified by Kung, suggests that the application of the prologue of John 1 to missiology belongs mainly in the early centuries, whereas the emerging ecumenical paradigm at the end of the 20th century is centering on the Cosmic Christ of the Epistles.¹⁶⁸ Does a choice have to be made – surely Christ is both the Alpha and the Omega?

This brief examination of trends in 20th century missiological thinking supports the conclusion that McDougall was, if not a major, at least a minor prophet. The Biblical foundations for mission in his day were not yet systematised, and Biblical criticism was in its infancy. If his thinking had limitations they were of the head rather than the heart. To his eternal credit he did at least show great integrity in preferring to trust the evidence of his eyes and ears over against the ideological dogmatism which characterised so many of his contemporaries in the Church of England.

If one accepts the paradigm theory of Church history there is one more useful insight to be gained from Bosch. He recognises that there is never a clear and complete break between one epoch and the next. The old does not disappear immediately – much of its vision lingers on in the new, and people can be committed to more than one paradigm at the same time. Some who have to operate within the old may already embody significant elements of the new. Bosch quotes with approval the example of Erasmus, 'who remained within the medieval Roman Catholic paradigm yet at the same time heralded a new era'.¹⁶⁹ Bosch himself may be a good modern example of the same tendency, and this could be one reason why Andrew Walls described him as 'Erasmian'.¹⁷⁰ It is surely not immodest to claim a similar place for McDougall? Securely fixed as he was within the 19th century paradigm of 'Mission in the wake of the Enlightenment', he nevertheless heralded the dawn of a new era which was to rise long after his death.

¹⁶⁸ Bosch, *op.cit.*, 481-482.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 186.

¹⁷⁰ A. Walls, obituary of David Bosch, *British & Irish Association for Mission Studies Newsletter*, March 1994.

McDougall's faith – a final analysis

The 'new era' was, however, on the horizon in England during the 1850s, signalled by the theological and ecclesiastical controversies which have already been noted.¹⁷¹ McDougall was absent in Sarawak for most of this decade, and his correspondence is notably silent on these matters. But there can be no doubt that the arguments raging in England penetrated to Kuching and were hotly debated by the Rajah and his sceptical circle, and McDougall's traditional orthodoxy could not escape challenge.

Bunyon recorded an episode early in the life of the Borneo Mission when, after a dinner party at the Rajah's house, some of the more agnostic elements in the European community decided to test the new missionary's mettle. 'Words were spoken which it was impossible that a clergyman who was loyal to his faith could tolerate'.¹⁷² An indignant McDougall immediately left the room, followed by an apologetic Rajah. For Bunyon, his brother-in-law was right to leave without debate, for he could not have been expected 'to treat as open questions the doctrines that he had been commissioned to teach'.¹⁷³ That may have been strictly correct, but with the spirit of free enquiry beginning to affect the Church and popular among the small European community in Sarawak, a McDougall who was prepared to engage in apologetic would surely have increased the effectiveness of the Mission. As it was he avoided the debates which flowed around government house, allowing Chambers to deputise for him and losing the respect of the lively and intelligent young men and women who occupied it after 1857. It is not surprising that in the end he was to be valued for his medical ability and pastoral care rather than for his priestly and prophetic role. Perhaps this is one reason why he remained merely 'a minor prophet'?

The controversies of the 1850s were to be the prelude to the deeper and more serious challenges to traditional belief which erupted at the end of the decade with the publication of Darwin's *Origin of Species* in 1859 and that of *Essays and Reviews* the following year. The former had been anticipated in Sarawak by the presence and researches from 1854 to 1856 of the naturalist A.R. Wallace – the latter by the presence in Sarawak of the bishop who was brother-in-law to one of the fiercest controversialists of the 1860s, J.W. Colenso.

¹⁷¹ Above, 142-3.

¹⁷² Bunyon, *op.cit.*, 123.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*

McDougall was absent for most of the period of Wallace's residence but, although the letters are silent, there is a possibility that the two men met during the few months between April and August 1855 when they were both in the country. The Rajah certainly entertained Wallace at his country cottage and the two men engaged in hours of friendly debate.¹⁷⁴ It is fascinating to wonder what effect was made on James Brooke by the early theory of evolution by natural selection which was then crystallising in Wallace through his Bornean research.

In 1857 Wallace sent his conclusions to Darwin, who was also at that time reaching a similar understanding of the origins and progress of life on earth. The two men published a joint paper, which was followed in 1859 by the *Origin of Species*. McDougall was back in England on furlough soon after its publication, but again we have no evidence from his correspondence of any immediate reaction by him to Darwin as to Wallace. This is a pity in view, for instance, of Harriette's rejoicing in the Oxford days over Frank's 'medical knowledge' and 'scientific acquirements' in her letter in 1842 to his sister. She lamented then how she thought the Roman Catholic Church 'locked up all the treasures of knowledge and gave the key to her priests to keep'.¹⁷⁵ The implication was that the Church of England allowed her laity a greater freedom, but Harriette's husband seemed unwilling to test this in practice.

The only recorded comment by McDougall which may have had Darwin in mind came late in his Sarawak ministry, in the opening address to his 3rd synod in 1866. He urged caution in so far as 'the conclusions drawn from recent discoveries in the physical sciences . . . are themselves not final'.¹⁷⁶ There followed a classic summary of his own attitudes to the controversies of these years.

You will all know that the early part of my life was passed in scientific pursuits, and that I am far from under-valuing or passing over lightly the discoveries of science, so that while I would have all men receive reverently and gratefully the real discoveries of science in these days, I would at the same time warn all from drawing hasty conclusions from them.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁴ A.R. Wallace, *The Malay Archipelago*, reprint of the 1922 edition, Singapore, Graham Brash, 1983, 63-64. See also St John, *op.cit.*, 274-5.

¹⁷⁵ H. Bunyon to S. McDougall, Hornsey Lane, 1842, Turner Papers, MSS.Ind.Ocn.s.292.

¹⁷⁶ Proceedings of 3rd Sarawak Diocesan Synod, 18 October 1866, MSS.916.18.s.3 (12), 15.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

It would have been good to know exactly what he regarded as ‘the real discoveries of science’ in the ferment of the 1860s, but sadly he did not reveal any details. It was safer – and more congenial – to sit on the fence. It was also less stressful, at the time when the furore over Colenso had reached its height and the McDougalls were more personally involved than they were with the *Origin of Species* or *Essays and Reviews*. Harriette thought that if Frank was in England during ‘all the heartburnings and controversies of these days . . . perhaps it would kill him . . .’.¹⁷⁸

To be fair to Frank McDougall the years 1862 and 1863 saw him preoccupied with troubles of his own, with the highly personal controversies aroused by the action against the Illanun pirates and St John’s criticisms of the Mission¹⁷⁹ – in the face of which he was to prove tough and resilient. Not until those excitements had died down did he have time to consider Colenso’s predicament, and that was to prove a real test to his own – and Harriette’s – faith.

It is not the purpose of this chapter to discuss John Colenso’s views except in so far as the controversy over their expression affected his brother-in-law. But some convergence in attitudes to primal religions between the two men has already been noted,¹⁸⁰ and it is interesting to see that Colenso’s reactions after his first tour of Natal in 1854 were very similar to McDougall’s feelings after his initial visits to Dayak longhouses.¹⁸¹ The Zulus spoke to Colenso of ‘Him who is the Maker of all things’, and listened to his explanation ‘that “the Great-Great-One” of whom their fathers had told them, but of Whom they knew so little, was yet in very truth their “Father in Heaven”. . .’.¹⁸² Colenso’s excitement over ‘the possibility of using African religious customs as a foothold for Christianity’ – like converting the Zulu feast of the first-fruits into a kind of harvest festival¹⁸³ – was akin to McDougall’s suggestion of throwing a ‘sacramental halo’ over Dayak farming customs. His agreeing to the use of the Zulu word for ‘high god’¹⁸⁴ was similar to McDougall’s insistence on the Malay ‘Isa’ for Jesus. Yet these two men came to opposite conclusions on matters of faith, with McDougall hesitant to accept anything which might challenge the traditions of the

¹⁷⁸ H. McDougall to E. Bunyon, 30 December 1865, MSS.Pac.s.104 (1), 233.

¹⁷⁹ Chapter 5, 245-9.

¹⁸⁰ See above, 140.

¹⁸¹ See above, 123.

¹⁸² J.W. Colenso, *Bringing forth Light*, 5 tracts, ed. Ruth Edgcombe, Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1982, 1854 pamphlet, 2.

¹⁸³ Hinchliff, *op.cit.*, 63. The Scottish missionary Donald Fraser did this among the Ngoni people of Malawi at the end of the century. See T. Jack Thompson, *Christianity in Northern Malawi*, Leiden, New York, Kohn, E.J. Brill, 1995, 88-95.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

Church whilst Colenso was prepared to follow his tentative findings to their critical end. In 1864 McDougall was moved to comment on this curious fact

It seems so strange that John's missionary work should, as he says, have brought out his own doubts and disbelief. I feel that such has the contrary effect on me.¹⁸⁵

Was it so strange? The brothers-in-law were very different in character and temperament. There were also two theological matters on which they may have profoundly disagreed – the nature of salvation by the Cross of Christ, and the inerrancy of Scripture.

The former was discussed by Colenso in his first work published in 1861 (while the McDougalls were on leave in England), his *Commentary on Romans* which had the significant sub-title, *explained from a missionary point of view*. In this he proclaimed that 'Christ's death on the Cross redeems all men everywhere', so that 'all men share already in Christ's death and resurrection'.¹⁸⁶

The only difference with the Christian was that 'he knows this' – the missionary task is therefore to share this knowledge, but not to convert one who is 'already redeemed'. Frank McDougall, although silent on the issue, would have insisted on the traditional Christian position that the Cross was not only an objective event 'for all' but also subjective in that its effects have to be accepted afresh in every human life. Harriette was not so sure – she confessed to liking *Romans*, having read it in England in 1861, and not being aware of anything in it 'which could involve public ecclesiastical censure'. Though, she added, there was plenty in it 'to set up the prickles of individuals and parties'.¹⁸⁷

Harriette was however apprehensive about Colenso's forthcoming publication of the first part of his commentary on *The Pentateuch and Joshua*, which happened later in 1862 after her return with Frank to Sarawak. She was right. Inspired also by his missionary experiences, and by requests from Africans as to whether the Bible was 'true', Colenso now cast doubts on the historical accuracy of the Scriptures. The storm broke in England, and Samuel Wilberforce, Bishop of Oxford, led the attack in the Convocation of Canterbury.

¹⁸⁵ McDougall to Bullock, 4 May, 1864, USPG, OLR D23b.

¹⁸⁶ Hinchliff, *op.cit.*, 79.

¹⁸⁷ H. McDougall to Bunyon, 20 March 1862. Quoted in Bunyon, *op.cit.*, 218.

McDougall reacted this time by suggesting that Natal had obviously generated 'fogs' in Colenso's mind,¹⁸⁸ and by persuading his first synod in 1864 to adopt a clear statement that the Church in Sarawak 'recognised the true Canon of Holy Scripture . . . as the rule and standard of Faith'.¹⁸⁹ Harriette again was equivocal.

By mid-1865 she had read the first three parts of the *Pentateuch* and confessed that she 'would only go a little way' with Colenso's conclusions.¹⁹⁰ 'But I condemn no one for their opinions and I love and respect John with all my heart'. By the end of 1865 the fifth part of the *Pentateuch* had come her way and she told a friend that she could not 'leap' to its conclusions.¹⁹¹ 'A little way'? Could not 'leap', but perhaps 'incline'? Harriette was always conscious of her theological inadequacy and humble about expressing dogmatic ideas, which made her reluctant to take sides in disputes and more concerned about the practical 'troubles' arising from the controversies besetting her sister's husband. The climax of these 'troubles' was Colenso's excommunication by the Bishop of Capetown (as Metropolitan) which even outraged the more traditional Frank. 'Frank is perfectly orthodox but thinks John unfairly treated' – Harriette considered it 'horribly unjust'.¹⁹² But when towards the end of 1866 news came that Colenso had been convicted of heresy even Harriette drew back. 'Frank has always found and foreseen this tendency in John's writings . . . I am glad now that I never went far in agreeing with him [John] if his opinions lead to Unitarianism, for it is a dreary creed . . .'.¹⁹³ It was a sour judgement from one who was to write three weeks later, in her last letter from Sarawak, that she and her sister Frances Colenso were 'learning the great lesson of tolerance', and 'the time will come when we shall know the truth, meanwhile may God give us Grace to be humble and not to trust to our own private judgements . . .'.¹⁹⁴

In her letter of 11 May 1866 Harriette had expressed the 'private judgement' that she thought John Colenso 'much more right than the extreme high churchmen'. It was an attitude shared by her husband, although he would not have allowed Colenso the benefit of being 'right'. In his address to the 3rd Sarawak synod in October 1866, during which he had alluded to the scientific controversies of the day,¹⁹⁵ McDougall steered the infant Church in Sarawak along

¹⁸⁸ McDougall to Bishop of London, 1863. Quoted in Hinchliff, *op.cit.*, 106.

¹⁸⁹ McDougall to Bullock, 8 July 1864, OLR, D23b.

¹⁹⁰ H. McDougall to Mrs Bunyon, 11 July 1865, MSS.Pac.s.104 (1), 223.

¹⁹¹ H. McDougall to Fanny Sawyer, 10 November 1865, *Ibid.*, 230.

¹⁹² H. McDougall to Eliza Bunyon, 11 May 1866, *Ibid.*, 251.

¹⁹³ H. McDougall to Eliza Bunyon, 6 October 1866, *Ibid.*, 262.

¹⁹⁴ H. McDougall to Mrs Bunyon, 28 October 1866, *Ibid.*, 269.

¹⁹⁵ See above, 162.

the course he believed had always been followed by the mother Church of England, the middle way between the extremes. The synod must attempt to withstand on the one hand

the assaults of those detractors and gainsayers of the Holy Scriptures who would remorselessly overthrow the foundations of our faith; and on the other hand guard against the errors of those, who by an exaggerated ritualism obscure and pervert the very truths they profess to teach.¹⁹⁶

The synod of clergy agreed with him and adopted a final motion which confirmed its loyalty to the historic doctrine and discipline 'of the United Church of England and Ireland'. One slight concession of practical importance permitted the authorisation of additional services and teaching manuals 'which might be useful and desirable for our Native Churches'.¹⁹⁷ That this was no radical move, but strictly in accordance with Article 34 of the 39 Articles which allowed particular or National Churches to alter rites and ceremonies 'according to the diversities of countries, times and men's manners', was totally in accord with McDougall's loyal conservatism. He left the Church in Sarawak on returning to England in 1867 a mirror image of himself.

He was faced soon after his arrival with an opportunity to declare his hand in relation to Colenso, and to prove Harriette wrong in her fears that ecclesiastical controversy in England might 'kill' him. The first Lambeth Conference was called in the summer of 1867 in part to condemn Colenso and tighten up Anglican formularies so as to avoid future controversy. A total of 144 bishops were summoned, an indication of how widely the Anglican Communion had grown since the 1840s, but only 76 came – a sign either of financial stringency or a distaste for getting involved in potentially divisive argument. McDougall attended, and to his credit was numbered among the minority of 20 bishops out of the 76 who refused to sign an unofficial motion condemning Colenso'.¹⁹⁸

This modest expression of sympathy encouraged Colenso the following year to attempt to enlist McDougall in support of his retaining the see of Natal by counteracting 'some of the gross misrepresentations which had been made' of his doings 'all over England during the past year'.¹⁹⁹ In an interesting postscript Colenso revealed that if the Bishop of Oxford and other detractors had initially approached him in a spirit of 'brotherly love' instead of

¹⁹⁶ Proceedings of 3rd Sarawak Synod, 18-22 October 1866. MSS.916 18.5.3 (12).

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ A.M.G. Stephenson, *The First Lambeth Conference 1867*, London, SPCK, 1967, 277.

¹⁹⁹ Bunyon, *op.cit.*, 295.

denouncing him in pastoral letters and inhibiting him 'they might in all probability have gained their wishes long ago' so far as his resignation from Natal was concerned'.²⁰⁰ He also suggested that he had originally decided not to publish the *Pentateuch*, and only did so 'after the storm had arisen'. On such human obtuseness and awkwardness do the crises of Church history depend. Had the bishops who then controlled the destiny of the Church of England possessed half of McDougall's unexciting moderation the 1860s would have been a less contentious decade.

During the remainder of his life in England until his death in 1886 McDougall was able to steer clear of ecclesiastical controversy in the comparatively safe role of an Archdeacon, first in the 'Diocese of Ely and then in Winchester. But he was still able to demonstrate a surprising vision, not only in the sermons which have been analysed above, but also in the linking of Church unity with mission. A charitable sympathy with Baptists for instance in his parish of Godmanchester, where he opposed his High Church young curate over the internment in the churchyard of a 'Particular Baptist old lady, a great ally of the Bishop's',²⁰¹ could be translated into a remarkable ecumenical insight.

McDougall made a speech at the Southampton Church Congress of 1870 which was not fully recorded in the published minutes, but which appeared to have annoyed sections of the audience. He alluded to its effect – some delegates shouting 'No! No!' and he himself reacting by looking 'ferocious' – in a letter to the Bishop of Durham, dated probably in 1872. His 'long missionary life', isolated in some measure from the fierce controversies which had broken out in England, had meant that he was 'not a party man' and had 'never been brought into contact with violent expressions of party feeling'.²⁰² In consequence he had been upset at Southampton when 'Brother Churchmen'

repudiated ideas of charitable intercourse and unity of action among Christians of different Communion in the East and West which my experience has made me feel that there must be if the Church of Christ can do her blessed appointed work of gathering the heathen into her fold.²⁰³

How far McDougall actually went in 1870 to suggest that effective mission required Church unity is not clear, but since this was an idea which took many generations to bear fruit it is

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

²⁰¹ Bunyon, *op.cit.*, 290.

²⁰² McDougall to Bishop of Durham, Ely, 13 November ?1872, Rough draft in Turner Papers, MSS.Ind.Ocn.s.292. (2), (4).

²⁰³ Ibid.

obvious that he was speaking with a prophetic voice. The 'repudiation' of his ideas by main-stream Anglicans then showed how unprepared the Established Church was to consider such novel suggestions, as it had been 20 years earlier in relation to the more daring aspects of the 1851 sermon. That McDougall could venture even to formulate such hesitant conclusions revealed a man of adventurous faith hidden behind a cautious exterior. At times he may not have shown the courage of his convictions, and a strong sense of loyalty prevented him from rocking the boat when a more determined propagation of his opinions might have served the Church better. Lacking a keen intellect and the confident mind of the scholar made him unsure of the wisdom of pressing his views upon unwilling or hostile listeners. But in spite of these negative attributes, his anticipation in an era of theological reactionaries of a number of creative strands in later 20th century missiological thinking cannot be denied. His was a credible witness though unacknowledged in his life.

A neglected legacy in Sarawak

Christianity cannot address men and ignore their gods: it may not act in the present and disown the past or wisely hold forth salvation and withhold salutation. In seeking men for Christ's sake, it is committed to the significance of all they are in their birth and their tradition, both for good or ill.²⁰⁴

The words are those of Kenneth Cragg, but the sentiments had been recognised by Frank McDougall in Sarawak in 1851. Sadly, as the Church in England refused to listen, so also the Anglican Church in Sarawak during the 150 years which have elapsed since McDougall's first landing has neglected or ignored his teaching. That he himself chose not to press his insights whilst he had the occasion was to be the melancholy prelude to many wasted years of spiritual and ecclesiastical stagnation.

If there was a sentence in the 1851 sermon that summed up the essence of what McDougall had discovered it was the one in which he felt persuaded that 'no system of religion will be able to keep a hold and act beneficially upon [the Dayaks] that does not enter into almost every action of their daily lives'.²⁰⁵ He had recognised by observation that this particular primal religion was societal, pragmatically concerned with the day-to-day, tangible events of

²⁰⁴ K. Cragg, *Christianity in World Perspective*, London, Lutterworth Press, 1968, 65.

²⁰⁵ McDougall, sermon, St Thomas Church, Kuching, 7 September 1851, unclassified sermon no. 2, Rhodes House.

human life, through which 'salvation' came to the group.²⁰⁶ Controlled as it was to be by Western leadership during the 100 years after McDougall's departure the Anglican Church in Sarawak forgot these insights and emphasised instead the centrality of personal religion as developed in the West. Christianity was proclaimed as a religion of the individual soul rather than a relational faith which affected all aspects of the life of that person in community. Such a Christianity could not convert Dayaks.

Peter Howes, the most experienced Anglican missionary in Sarawak during the second half of the 20th century who eventually became an assistant bishop in the Diocese of Kuching, wrote an illuminating article in 1960 for the Sarawak Museum Journal. It was entitled *Why some of the best people aren't Christians*, and focused on some remarks by an Iban (Sea Dayak) farmer.

After describing the various stages in the farming programme from the beginning to the end of the crop year and outlining the different ritual activities associated with each stage, the farmer concluded,

I have not become a Christian because I can't. You see for yourself that our *adat* [law] is bound up with our work. We don't worship unless it has something to do with our work. We don't work unless it has something to do with our worship. You Christians are different. Your worship has to do with the heart, and it does not touch your work as ours does.²⁰⁷

These sentiments underline the failure of the Anglican missionaries to effect the conversion of any but a small number of the Dayak people during the century which followed the inauguration of the Borneo Mission. In stark contrast should be noted the success enjoyed by Rhenish missionaries in creating and building up a truly indigenous Church among the ethnic cousins of the Dayaks, the Bataks of Sumatra – the island adjacent to Borneo in the Indonesian archipelago.

Yates commends the decision of the Danish missionary Nommensen in the last quarter of the 19th century 'to use non-Christian social institutions within a Christian structure in the form

²⁰⁶ J.C. Platvoet, *op.cit.*, 39-40.

²⁰⁷ P. Howes, *Why some of the best people aren't Christians*, Sarawak Museum Journal, Vol. VII, Nos. 15-16, July-December 1960.

of Batak *adat* or customary law'.²⁰⁸ It was this experiment that, in Yates's judgement, ensured the success of the Batak Mission.

It is ironic that the origin of this Mission lay in Borneo at the very moment when McDougall also was working on the island – and the hostility which made him rather lose his nerve provided the creative spark to light the fires in Sumatra. In 1859, with Malay unrest troubling the Brooke government on the north-west coast of Borneo, an uprising in the Dutch-controlled south forced the Rhenish missionaries to transfer their work to the neighbouring island. Nommensen arrived in Sumatra in 1862 and stayed for over 50 years (another contrast with McDougall), and although the early years proved difficult the conversion of a number of local leaders enabled the Mission to prosper – and quickly become a Church. Within 20 years there were over 2,000 Batak Christians and a truly 'people's church' was emerging which, although linked to the European HQ at Barmen, was characterised by all that was best in the local culture. By 1911 it had over 100,000 members.²⁰⁹ The Anglican Church in Sarawak did not reach that number until the middle of the 1980s.

Of course numbers are not the only criterion of success. McDougall's dream of a truly indigenous Church has been realised by the end of the 20th century. But the impetus came not so much from inner religious conviction among the Dayak, Chinese and Indian Christians, as from the political pressures aroused by the achievement of Malaysian independence in 1963. The Sarawak Church enjoys the freedom to be herself by courtesy of the Malays. McDougall would have been intrigued by that! One of those freedoms is the ability to roam at will among the people, blessing their new homes and saying prayers over their rice fields. McDougall would have rejoiced at that. The 'adaptation' that he envisaged is slowly being realised. Gradualism was right after all.

²⁰⁸ Yates, *op.cit.*, 121.

²⁰⁹ Stephen Neill, *A History of Christian Missions*, London, Penguin Books, 1964, revised edition 1986, 296.

CHAPTER 4

A BISHOP FOR THE MISSION – OR A MISSIONARY BISHOP

PERHAPS THE FIRST MISSIONARY BISHOP

This chapter will be concerned with the factors surrounding McDougall's appointment as Bishop of Labuan and Sarawak, negotiations for which had dragged on during his first furlough in 1853 and 1854, and the climax of which was his consecration in Calcutta on 18 October 1855. It was appropriate that the Bishop of Calcutta should preside at this service. Daniel Wilson had visited Sarawak in January 1851 in order to consecrate St Thomas's church, and had an opportunity to observe McDougall in action. His conclusion was that the latter was 'the sort of person adapted to the first rough-work of this most interesting but difficult Mission – a Mission the most extraordinary on the face of the earth'.¹ It must have given Wilson, nearing the end of his long life, much satisfaction to have been chosen as the agent to bestow episcopal authority on his protégé.

His excitement was reflected in the letter which he sent to the SPG four days later. After describing the details of the service he ended his letter by emphasising the unique nature of the occasion in that it marked two notable 'firsts'. These will form the substance of this chapter, together with a third 'first' which would not have been obvious to Wilson at the time.

The Bishop of Calcutta enthused in these terms.

Thus has this great occasion passed off – the first consecration, I believe, that has ever taken place out of England since the glorious Reformation *and perhaps the first missionary Bishop sent out by our Church* [my italics], unless the Bishop of Mauritius may be considered as having preceded him.²

¹ Bishop of Calcutta, Report, 18-23 January 1851, MSS.Pac.s.104 (2), 68.

² H. McDougall, *Sketches of our Life at Sarawak*, SPCK, London, 1882, 112.

By the time these words were written the term 'Missionary Bishop' was becoming popular in Anglican circles but its precise meaning was by no means clear. Daniel Wilson did not define his understanding of the term, but given the context he was quite justified in using it. His use of the qualifying word 'perhaps' however suggested an uncertainty which needs exploring.

Bishops for missionary churches

The pioneer of the suggestion that bishops should be sent to areas of Anglican mission was the same Thomas Bray who had inspired the foundation of the SPCK in 1698/99 and that of the SPG in 1701.³ Prior to those creative years the Bishop of London was regarded as responsible for episcopal oversight in the colonies, and from the 1630s abortive efforts had been made to appoint suffragans overseas, but commissaries were retained.

On his commissarial visit to Maryland in 1700 Bray had been shocked at the lack of discipline among the Anglicans who had emigrated to the colony and the clergy who had gone out to minister to them. He became convinced that the church in North America required not only religious societies for the reformation of manners but also leaders of authority in residence.⁴ His proposal for constituting a colonial episcopate, contained in a *Memorial* dated, probably, in 1700 was therefore initially based on the practical needs of the overseas church, including confirmation and ordination.⁵

This practical argument, though of prior importance, was not however alone in governing Bray's convictions. As a High Church (in 17th century terms) Anglican priest he would have been taught that episcopacy was one of the essential hallmarks of the Church and a sign of her presence in the world, so that wherever that Church was founded by mission bishops would eventually be needed to complete the fullness of that establishment. In another *Memorial* outlining the need for four suffragan bishops (under London) to be sent to the colonies Bray argued from what he called 'the *Jus Divinum* of Episcopacy', 'the necessity of bishops (where possibly they may be had) to constitute any National and Regular part of the Catholic Church'.⁶ Moreover, to neglect consecrating bishops for overseas territories under

³ See Chapter 2, 71-2

⁴ H.P. Thompson, *Thomas Bray*, London, SPCK, 1954, 58.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*, 71.

the Crown would cause faithful Anglicans at home to doubt 'the necessity of bishops'.⁷ And, it may be added, the teaching of Hooker and Saravia.

Bray's pleas were echoed by the first SPG missionaries in the North American colonies, one of whom reported from Philadelphia in 1703,

We have great need of a Bishop here, to visit all the Churches, to ordain some, to confirm others, and bless all. Several are willing for ordination . . . but they fall back into the herd of Dissenters rather than hazard to go to England for orders.⁸

In 1704 the SPG noted this request and suggested reviving English suffragan sees for overseas churches, but legal difficulties blocked the way. In the 1720s non-juring bishops in England consecrated two American missionaries but the candidates were forced to withdraw after provoking division and difficulties with the Crown. Nothing further was attempted and a golden opportunity was lost for, in the estimation of critics like Van den Berg, the absence of an episcopate in the early stages of the growth of the Anglican Church in the North American colonies was at least partly responsible for the fact that this Church was not so deeply-rooted in the American soil as others.⁹ The expansion of the Anglican Communion which began in the 1840s would have started a century earlier had Bray's vision of colonial bishops been realised like his hopes for SPCK and SPG.

Another mid-19th century movement, arising from the dreams of Henry Venn for self-governing, self-supporting indigenous churches overseas, might also have surfaced earlier if the Church of England in the 18th century had listened to her prophets. In preaching the 1767 SPG annual sermon the Bishop of Llandaff noted Bray's contention that the possession of bishops made 'a complete Church', and urged this for the colonies.

This point [bishops] obtained, the American Church will soon go out of its infant state, be able to stand upon its own legs and, without foreign help, support and spread itself. Then the business of this Society [the SPG] will have been brought to the happy issue intended.¹⁰

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ H.P. Thompson, *Into all lands*, History of the SPG, London, SPCK, 1951, 30.

⁹ J. Van den Berg, *Constrained by Jesus' love*, NV, Kampen, J.H. Kok, 1956, 49.

¹⁰ H. Cnatingius, *Bishops & Societies: a study of Anglican colonial & missionary expansion 1698-1850*, London, SPCK, 1952, 23.

This anticipation of Venn's concept of 'the euthanasia of a mission' outlined in a paper of 1851¹¹ was remarkable, and demonstrates what a wealth of creative ideas existed in the 18th century Church. A period often judged to have been rather barren was in fact much more fertile in planting seeds for an embryonic missiology. At the end of the century the secretary of the SPCK, George Gaskin, commented in 1791 on their work in India.

If we wish to establish the Gospel in India . . . we ought in time to give the natives a Church of their own, independent of our support; we ought to have suffragan Bishops in the country, who might ordain Deacons and Priests, and secure a regular succession of truly apostolical Pastors, even if all communication with their parent Church should be annihilated.¹²

Where the Church of England had been content to ignore her prophets American Anglicans were to prove much bolder. Immediately after the end of the War of Independence the desire to have their own bishop led to the consecration in 1784 of Samuel Seabury as Bishop of Connecticut by the bishops of the Episcopal Church of Scotland. Catholic order was respected and, whilst the domestic rules of the Church of England were circumvented, the practice of that Church was changed for the better. Challenged by the willingness of the Scottish bishops to accept Seabury's rights the Parliament at Westminster passed acts in 1784 and 1786 which permitted the Established Church to ordain and consecrate men who were not subjects of the Crown.

With the authority of the English Church no longer recognised in the former North American colonies the SPG in 1783 had no option but to withdraw its resources and transfer them to the nearest available colonial territory, Canada. The example of Seabury soon overcame opposition to a colonial episcopate in England and in 1787 an SPG missionary in New York, Charles Inglis, was consecrated as Bishop of Nova Scotia. As the first colonial bishop appointed by the Church of England he was given only ecclesiastical powers, and even then his diocese was so large (the whole of the area then known as Canada) as to be unwieldy.

Within six years Inglis was relieved of part of his unmanageable jurisdiction with the consecration, also in the chapel at Lambeth Palace, of Jacob Mountain as Bishop of Quebec. Only 10 years after the Treaty of Versailles there were two Anglican bishops at work in missionary areas, and although their powers were at first somewhat restricted – missionaries

¹¹ See T.E. Yates, *Venn and Victorian Bishops Abroad*, London, SPCK, 1978, 16-17.

¹² Cnatingius, *op.cit.*, 52.

still for a time were sent out with licences issued by the Bishop of London – the die had been cast. A colonial episcopate had been established which was to prove the first step in the eventual creation of a world-wide Anglican Communion of self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating churches.

Events moved a little slower in India, resourced in the 18th century by SPCK support of Danish missionaries and a few East India Company Anglican chaplains. The most visionary of these chaplains – Brown, Buchanan and Henry Martyn – shared Gaskin’s attitudes, so that when the charter of the Company was revised in 1813 to facilitate missionary enterprise an episcopate was included in the proposals. In 1814 T.F. Middleton (not a missionary) was appointed as the first Bishop of Calcutta, to be succeeded from England in 1822 by the hymn-writer Reginald Heber. Proposals to divide the large Indian diocese – which also included Australia – found support in the energetic Daniel Wilson, with the result that Madras became a separate jurisdiction in 1835, Australia in 1836 and Bombay in 1837. With the creation of sees in Jamaica and Barbados in 1824, and the further addition of Newfoundland and Toronto in Canada, there were by 1840 ten colonial bishops in office covering all the areas under the Crown where British missionaries were working.¹³ But – were they missionary bishops?

In no sense. The majority of the ten colonial bishops appointed before 1840 were English clergymen who were sent to missionary churches to fulfil the same roles as their counterparts in the home country. They represented what was regarded as the continuing catholicity of the Church of England by exercising authority and maintaining unity, and performing the functions associated with the practical side of the bishop’s office. Cnattingius even wonders whether Middleton ‘really wanted to engage in missionary work at all’,¹⁴ and justifies this conclusion by reference to the Bishop of Calcutta’s first visitation charge in 1815.

Missionary work should radiate from the activities of the ordinary clergy by the spreading of knowledge and the faithful fulfilment of their clerical duties, and from the living of a really Christian life among those who call themselves Christians. In this way the natives round about would be first influenced and then converted, as had happened in the early Church.¹⁵

¹³ For details of this expansion see Cnattingius, *op.cit.*, 28f.

¹⁴ Cnattingius, *op.cit.*, 75.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 76.

Here is 'civilising before Christianising' in the traditional Anglican manner, but not adopted as a considered missionary strategy. Mission was seen as the natural result of Christians living faithful and pure lives, but in no sense the direct concern of the bishop. There is a clear but distinctive understanding of the missionary calling, but very far removed from the idea of the 'missionary bishop' which was soon to emerge.

A missionary bishop in Europe

The first Anglican historical reference using the term 'missionary bishop' to describe a particular person may be found in a letter from three Scottish bishops who consecrated Matthew Luscombe on 20 March 1825 to be a Bishop on the continent of Europe. Luscombe had been the first headmaster of the East India Company's school at Haileybury from 1805 until he resigned in 1819 and moved to France in order to exercise a private teaching ministry among Anglicans who had settled in Caen and the surrounding areas after the peace of 1815. With one exception the situation was not unlike that in the American colonies which had so disturbed Bray, with an undisciplined freelance group of clergy failing to meet the spiritual needs of Anglicans cut off from the roots of their mother church. The exception of course was that France was not a British colony.

Luscombe, on moving to Paris in 1821, became concerned by the neglect of numbers of young baptised Anglicans who were being denied confirmation and the sacrament of holy communion, and approached the Bishop of London (Howley) in his capacity as the prelate responsible for Anglicans who lived overseas. In response to Luscombe's suggestion of a suffragan bishop who could share in the Bishop of London's oversight of Anglicans resident in Europe Howley replied correctly that the formularies of the Church of England did not allow for the consecration of a bishop to exercise jurisdiction in a country which was not under the British Crown. With the precedent of Seabury in mind Luscombe and his friends turned to the Scottish Episcopal Church, and a long letter was sent to the Primus, George Gleig, Bishop of Brechin, on 27 November 1824, in which Luscombe outlined his ideas.¹⁶ After describing the spiritual plight of the increasing number of English Anglicans moving to France and suggesting that any official interference by the Established Church would not be tolerated Luscombe opined that the quiet and unostentatious arrival of a pastoral bishop

¹⁶ For details of Matthew Luscombe's life see L.E. Luscombe, *Matthew Luscombe: Missionary Bishop in Europe*, Edinburgh, Scottish General Synod, 1992, 1-4.

would hardly be noticed. If there was no more suitable person available for the post, he enquired, would the Scottish bishops consider consecrating him?¹⁷

Gleig made extensive enquiries among the English hierarchy and government ministers to assure himself that a Scottish consecration would not cause offence, and also canvassed his fellow Scottish bishops. David Low, Bishop of Ross and Argyll, sent a supportive letter in January 1825 suggesting to Gleig that Luscombe might be accounted ‘a Bishop in partibus Infidelium et Hereticorum’,¹⁸ and then assisted the Primus and the Bishop of Edinburgh, Glasgow and Fife to consecrate Luscombe in Stirling on Palm Sunday, 20 March 1825.¹⁹

In a letter signed by these three bishops and attached to Luscombe’s orders they picked up Low’s Latin phrase and stated that the new bishop was prepared ‘to go as a *Missionary Bishop* [my italics] among his countrymen abroad’. Therefore ‘he is sent by us not as a Diocesan Bishop in the modern or limited sense of the word’, but rather like Titus in Crete, ‘to set in order things that are wanting’ among British residents in Europe who were members of Episcopal Churches. Like the Twelve he ‘would be sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel’, and was not to disturb the peace of any of the national continental Churches, Roman Catholic or Protestant.²⁰

Bishop L.E. Luscombe today understands the term ‘Missionary Bishop’ in the letter of the three bishops to derive mainly from their insistence that Matthew Luscombe was ‘sent by us’.²¹ What the expression originally meant to them is unclear, and if it is to be connected with the phrase about ‘infidel and heretical parts’ that should not be construed as involving any mission to non-Anglicans. Their repeated emphasis was that he should confine his attentions to episcopalians, either unconfirmed or lapsed, and not disturb the peace of other Christians. He may have been regarded as a ‘missionary bishop’, but he was not to turn to the Gentiles. In this way Luscombe served a useful and rewarding episcopate of more than 20 years before his death in 1846, and his ministry resulted in the establishment of a number of Anglican congregations across the continent of Europe.²²

¹⁷ M. Luscombe to Bishop of Brechin, 27 November 1824. For a copy of this letter, and of the other letters associated with this case, I am indebted to Bishop L.E. Luscombe – a descendant of the first Anglican bishop in Europe – who has greatly assisted me at this stage.

¹⁸ D. Low to G. Gleig, *Ibid.* For the Latin phrase see appendix 2.

¹⁹ Letter of three bishops, *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ L.E. Luscombe to D.A. Edwards, 1 December 1995.

²² L.E. Luscombe, *Matthew Luscombe*, *op.cit.*, 8-13.

It will be noted later²³ that McDougall contemplated application to the Scottish bishops in 1851 and 1853 when difficulties were arising over the consecration of a bishop for Borneo. In fact the device was not used then, and there were to be only two more examples of Scottish consecrations for overseas missionary areas in the 19th century, of Callaway for Kaffraria (South Africa) in 1873 and Cornish for Madagascar in 1874. They were certainly 'missionary bishops' in the sense of 'bishops to missionary churches'. It is difficult to see 19th century Europe in the same light.

America offers a precise definition

As in the 17th century the moral and spiritual crisis perceived by many to afflict the Church of England had turned their eyes to America for light,²⁴ so a beleaguered Church of England during the years spanned by Luscombe's episcopate (1825-1846) was to receive enlightenment from America. These were years of great change in British life, not least in the religious sector, epitomised by the great Reform Bill of 1832 and the subsequent reforms in church administration and practice. The reaction of the Established Church to this exercise of state control lay partly in mute acceptance and partly in aggressive protest, channelled through the Oxford Movement and its pleas for a spiritual revival. A different kind of spiritual infusion into the life of the nation emanated at the same time from thinkers like Coleridge and critics like Carlyle, whilst Lyell's work in geology heralded the coming scientific revolution.

To many the Church of England appeared to be a church under siege, a condition summed up in the hymn by E.B. Pusey's elder brother Philip.

See round thine ark the hungry billows curling;
See how thy foes their banners are unfurling;
Lord, while their darts envenomed they are hurling,
Thou canst preserve us.²⁵

The reaction of the majority of Anglicans as exemplified by such a hymn 'tended towards introversion',²⁶ a concern for domestic and liturgical matters which was to continue for the

²³ See below, 187 and 191.

²⁴ Chapter 2, 69-70.

²⁵ Hymn No 253, *Hymns Ancient & Modern Revised*.

²⁶ ed. Anthony Symondson, *The Victorian Crisis of Faith*, London, SPCK, 1970. Chapter by Max Warren, 58.

rest of the century. But a significant minority in the 1830s were being encouraged to look outwards to mission, with the SPG doubling its income in the decade and the CMS producing a pioneer thinker in the person of Henry Venn. The scene was being set for a period 'of epoch-making importance in the evolution of Anglicanism into a World Church'.²⁷

The signs of this coming new dawn were not obvious to the church in England. Across the Atlantic however, in a church which had been founded through the efforts of the early SPG missionaries and then found itself independent of English control, an original vision was emerging.

American Christians, from whom some of the impetus for the 18th century Evangelical revival had come, were not far behind their British cousins in establishing a profusion of missionary societies to channel the energy aroused at that time. In 1810 a Congregational Board for foreign missions was created in America, with the Baptists following suit in 1814, and in 1820 a specialist missionary society was set up within the American Episcopal Church. More official than its English equivalents in that it was created by the General Convention of the church and not through voluntary initiative, this society moved rapidly into a new direction of mission thinking altogether.

In 1835 a committee of the board of directors of the episcopalian society under the chairmanship of the Bishop of New Jersey, George Washington Doane, carried through a reorganisation which made all members of the Episcopal Church automatically members. The whole church was committed – if only by a committee – to missionary endeavour. The church was seen in essence as a missionary church.²⁸

Doane, like Heber whom he greatly admired, was also an episcopal hymn-writer. The tone of his hymns however was very different from the defensive sentiments of Pusey. The banners to be unfurled were not the emblems of the foes of the Church but the flags of the Lamb of God.

Fling out the banner! heathen lands –
Shall see from far the glorious sight,
And nations crowding to be born,
Baptize their spirits in its light.²⁹

²⁷ Cnatingius, op.cit., 204.

²⁸ Ibid., 200.

²⁹ Hymn No 268, *Hymns Ancient & Modern Revised*.

This confident passion for mission was to be theologically expressed in a notable sermon which Doane preached on 25 September 1835 in St Peter's church, Philadelphia. The occasion was not unlike that which inspired McDougall's sermon for Chambers in 1851 – Jackson Kemper was being sent forth as the first bishop into the still barely known territories of Missouri and Indiana. He would be a bishop – and a missionary.

Taking as his text Romans, 10:15 – 'How shall they preach except they be sent?' – Doane suggested that circumstances demanded the church to set a precedent, the creation of what he called 'a missionary bishop'.³⁰ Although 'every minister of Jesus is a missionary, sent out as a messenger', the bishops as 'chief ministers' are pre-eminently so. But different times and places suggested a different application of this general truth. 'In places where the church has long been settled there will be a settled ministry – a diocesan episcopacy and a parochial clergy'. But that could not be applied in areas 'where the church has not been introduced' – or 'has but partial and precarious lodgement'.

In such areas 'ministers to baptize, to preach, to break the bread, to train up children, must be Missionaries'. 'If they have bishops, to oversee, to lay on hands, to ordain and set in order, they must be Missionary Bishops'. Here followed the crucial passage.

And this is what is meant by a Missionary Bishop – a Bishop sent forth by the Church, not sought for of the Church – going before to organise the Church, not waiting till the Church has partially been organised – a leader, not a follower . . . sent by the Church as the Church is sent by Christ [all underlining by Doane].

Doane justified his argument by reference to Scripture, to particular passages in the Gospels in which Jesus sent out his disciples and, interestingly in view of McDougall's exegesis, pointed to St Paul 'the Apostle of the Gentiles' as 'a noble model of a Missionary Bishop'. The present moment in world history, both in Asia and Africa and with the American 'unbounded West' opening up, calls for such a provision as he has found in the apostolic writings. The Church of England needs to devote all her resources for internal defence 'against the impious combination that attempts her overthrow'. It falls to the American Church to take the lead in mission, 'to offer to others the same privileges given to us,

³⁰ The full text of Doane's sermon may be found in the *Proceedings of the Board of Missions of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the USA, 2nd annual meeting 1835*, Lambeth Palace Library, H5937, 13, 8; source of all quotes.

including the Office of a Bishop . . . The field is the whole world. Without Bishops there can be no Church’.

It is obvious that Doane shared many of the prejudices of the Tractarian movement then beginning to emerge in England, and his uncritical application of Biblical texts mirrored McDougall’s later exposition, but by any standards this was an impressive and original sermon. Its central thesis was clearly and cogently argued. For Anglicans the bishop must be the first missionary to any new territory open for evangelism, leading the initial party to establish the Church in all its fullness from the beginning of the endeavour, not following behind years later when the first missionaries had already secured converts and created church structures. An ingenious conclusion from an innovative mind, and one which was to challenge traditional English practice.

The debate in England

If there was one man more than any other who could claim the credit for promoting Doane’s views in England it was Samuel Wilberforce, at that time Rector of Brightstone on the Isle of Wight (the parish next to Shorwell where Frank and Harriette McDougall were to end their lives). Son of William Wilberforce and brought up according to Evangelical ‘tendencies’,³¹ Samuel met Newman, Pusey and Keble whilst at Oriel College, Oxford between 1823 and 1826. Although Keble’s assize sermon and the start of the Oxford Movement were still in the future the young Wilberforce was deeply influenced by his encounters with its erstwhile leaders, and although never to become a partisan Tractarian some kind of break with his Evangelical roots was inevitable. It came in connection with his relations to the Church Missionary Society, an organisation which Wilberforce by reason of his upbringing early regarded as ‘my favourite society, so thoroughly Church of England, so eminently active and spiritual’.³² He also however, in the kind of balancing act which was to characterise most of his life, managed to support the SPG with equal enthusiasm, and undertook preaching tours on behalf of both societies – during one of which in Cornwall he was instrumental in

³¹ See Chapter 3, 114. For the use of the word ‘tendencies’ to describe the different parties in the Church of England in the 19th century see Roy Jenkins, *Gladstone*, London, Papermac, Macmillan, 1995, p.30.

³² S. Wilberforce to C. Anderson, 12 September 1833. Quoted in S. Meacham, *Lord Bishop*, Harvard University Press, 1970, 62.

awakening in the soul of one member of his audience, the young John Colenso, ‘a lively concern for the spiritual distresses of our colonies’.³³

By the time he had been selected for the SPG’s west country tour in 1839 Wilberforce had virtually parted company with the CMS. In 1837 he had demonstrated an interest in mission by publishing *The Journals of Henry Martyn*, and in the same year he began to research the history of the American Episcopal Church with a view to writing another book. This inevitably introduced him to Doane’s vision and he was immediately impressed, so much so that in May 1837 he wrote to Newman to share his enthusiasm. Newman had already written in Tract 33 on *Primitive Episcopacy* suggesting that missionary work in the early church was done by ‘a Pastor, i.e. (generally) a Bishop’ going to a city and waiting until the church developed around him.³⁴ His reply to Wilberforce was prophetic, in the light of future developments in Borneo. ‘Is there any precedent’ he asked,

in the English Church of a Bishop being sent among the heathen? Could not the difficulty be met by getting Daniel Wilson and his colleagues to consecrate . . . [O]ne should like to try the powers of at least Colonial Bishops to do without the State.³⁵

There was a clear Tractarian anti-erastian edge to this suggestion which did not deter Wilberforce from introducing the idea to the general public in the annual sermon he preached for the SPG and SPCK at Southampton in November 1837.³⁶ Clearly to those inspired by the Oxford Movement Doane’s vision of the pioneer bishop-evangelist was an attractive one, but it was unlikely that the CMS would accept it. Wilberforce attempted to persuade them, by means of a memorial in August 1838, that the idea of ‘missionary bishops’ was not a new invention of High Church ecclesiology but was of the very essence of the traditional beliefs of the Church of England.

‘The great object, I am sure, which we ought now to aim at in our missionary exertions’ Wilberforce told the CMS,

is to give them much more distinct Church character than we have done – to send out the Church and not merely instructions about religion [Wilberforce’s underlining]. If episcopacy, a native clergy [already in Venn’s sights], visible communion, the due administration of the Sacraments, Confirmation, etc, etc – if these things be really important, then how can we expect full success till we send out missionary bishops, i.e., bishops and a missionary clergy as a visible Church?³⁷

³³ Ashwell and Wilberforce, *Life of Samuel Wilberforce*, London, 1880-1883, three volumes, Vol. 3, 118.

³⁴ Yates, *op.cit.*, 100.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ Cnatingius, *op.cit.*, 202.

³⁷ Meacham, *op.cit.*, 84.

As the argument developed in England over the next few years it was obvious that the CMS under Venn's leadership would proclaim the opposite point of view. Their considered conclusion was to be well expressed by Hugh Stowell in preaching the annual CMS sermon in 1841. In Evangelical ecclesiology the apostles were not, as maintained by Doane, the first missionary bishops, but a distinct order who preached the Word and set up local churches with a local ministry – and only then, when 'about to enter into their rest', 'instituted Diocesan Episcopacy'.³⁸ The society, Stowell reminded his congregation, did not wait in New Zealand until a bishop was appointed but set about evangelising the people and then called in the episcopate 'to give order and perpetuity to the work'. 'Episcopacy ought not to anticipate but to follow evangelisation . . . [it] comes in to crown and consummate the work of evangelism'.³⁹

There could be no clearer division of opinion (and of biblical interpretation) than that between Doane and Wilberforce on the one hand and the CMS on the other. Was it bridgeable? A voice from the Antipodes suggested that it might have been, had more reason prevailed. Stowell's mention of CMS work in New Zealand is a reminder that the society had been working in that country since 1814, and within 20 years a church had been planted which was ready for the exercise of such episcopal functions as confirmation. The problem caused by the fact that New Zealand was not in the 1830s under the British Crown will be discussed later.⁴⁰

In 1837 the nearest Anglican bishop, Broughton of Australia (who had only been consecrated the previous year), was invited to cross the Tasman Sea for a pastoral visit, and although he hesitated at first it was not long before he agreed to go. This and subsequent visits soon convinced him that a resident bishop was needed in New Zealand and in 1839 he urged that the Church of England should be planted there 'in the full integrity of her system'.⁴¹ It was a phrase redolent of Thomas Bray's insistence on 'the necessity of bishops',⁴² and it was to be supported by the CMS as a loyal Anglican society. Henry Venn demonstrated this on Selwyn's appointment in 1841 as the first Bishop of New Zealand by describing the church in that land as one 'which has been formed, and for so many years administered, *in an incomplete form*' [my italics].⁴³ In an ironical twist Doane visited

³⁸ Yates, op.cit., 104.

³⁹ Ibid., 105.

⁴⁰ See below, 212.

⁴¹ Yates, op.cit., 49.

⁴² See above, 172.

⁴³ Yates, op.cit., 53.

England in 1841 and established a strong friendship with Selwyn! This was one reason why Venn was initially suspicious of Selwyn, but were they – together with Wilberforce – really so far apart in their thinking? There appeared to be general agreement that, for all Anglicans, episcopacy was essential ‘to constitute any regular part of the Catholic Church’ (Bray’s words), with disagreement confined to the precise moment when it should be introduced into the missionary church.

In 1844 Doane published some of the letters which he had received from Selwyn during the previous three years, and in a brief introduction proudly claimed for the Americans the initiative for promoting missionary bishops.

It may be said with justice that, under God, the scheme for the Colonial Bishops [from the Church of England] received its impulse from the Missionary action of this Church [the American Episcopal Church] in 1835. The Daughter then provoked the Mother to good works.⁴⁴

The ‘scheme’ to which Doane was referring originated with the man traditionally responsible for the spiritual welfare of Anglicans in the colonies, the Bishop of London. Charles Blomfield was an innovative figure, who had once tried to persuade George IV to sanction the disuse of the episcopal wig, and in April 1840 he wrote to the Archbishop of Canterbury on a more urgent matter. Since the population of the colonies was at that time being rapidly augmented by immigration from Britain the time was ripe, suggested Blomfield, for providing overseas territories with a full episcopal ministry. Such a ministry, bearing in mind the new reforming attitude to the Church in the 1830s, would need to be financed not by Parliament but by the Established Church herself.⁴⁵

Doane’s influence seems clear. Recalling that in previous years it had been the practice to send out a few individual missionaries who worked independently of each other, and then after a time place them ‘under the guidance and control of Bishops’, Blomfield now argued

that we should, after having supplied the wants of those older colonies which are still destitute of the benefit of episcopal government, take care to let every new colony enjoy that blessing from the very first. Let every band of settlers which goes forth from Christian England, with authority to occupy a distinct territory, and to form a separate community, take with it not only its civil rulers and functionaries, but its Bishop and clergy.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Cnatingius, *op.cit.*, 203.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 198-9.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

Here, to those churchmen unacquainted with the views of Doane, was a novel suggestion, but it was taken up with considerable enthusiasm. Blomfield, with Archbishop William Howley's support, convened a public meeting in the hope of persuading leading city bankers and merchants to contribute to his 'scheme'. The main speaker, fresh from his successful tour of Devon and Cornwall on behalf of the SPG, was Samuel Wilberforce – and although he considered his address to be far below his best it had the desired effect.⁴⁷ The Archbishop was sufficiently encouraged by promises of support to call a meeting in London on 27 April 1841 at which the Colonial Bishops Fund was created.

It was a highly significant moment in Anglican mission history, and immediately effective. Inspired by speakers of the calibre of Howley, Blomfield, Gladstone and Ernest Hawkins (who was to become the first secretary, and also of the SPG) and encouraged by generous contributions from the missionary societies, the appeal was guaranteed a good voluntary income from wealthy churchmen and women. Within a few months it became possible to specify the names of the first six dioceses to be established under the aegis of the fund – New Zealand, Antigua, Guiana, Tasmania, Colombo and Fredericton (Canada). By 1850 fourteen new colonial sees had been created compared with only ten between Inglis in 1787 and the setting up of the Fund in 1841. By the end of the century a sum of £840,000 had been collected for the financing of fifty-five new bishoprics.⁴⁸

In so far as all the bishops appointed in the first years of the Fund were sent to colonial areas which had already been partially evangelised they could not be accounted 'missionary bishops' according to Doane's definition. As might have been expected, the 'daughter' was again to set an example to her 'mother'. As a result of the Treaty of Nanking which ended the so-called 'Opium War' with China in 1842 the American Episcopal Church in 1844 consecrated W.J. Boone as 'missionary bishop' for one of the five treaty ports, Amoy.⁴⁹ Doane's vision had been fulfilled within America by Kemper's appointment in 1835 – nine years later it was extended to make Boone the first 'Anglican' missionary bishop in an overseas territory. How long would it take the Anglican 'mother', the Church of England, to follow suit?

⁴⁷ Meacham, *op.cit.*, 37.

⁴⁸ S.C. Carpenter, *Church and People 1789-1889*, London, SPCK, 1933, 431.

⁴⁹ Yates, *op.cit.*, 90.

A missionary bishop for Borneo

Whilst James Brooke was in England in 1847, feted by the general public as a hero and received by the Queen, he was granted an honorary degree by the University of Oxford. He would surely there have encountered Samuel Wilberforce, who had been appointed as Bishop of Oxford in 1845, for during his visit the idea surfaced among some senior members of the university that the Anglican mission to Borneo, then in the process of establishment by the BCMI, ought to be led by a bishop. A committee was formed which quickly raised £500 for the project, but without wider support the idea was shelved and the money invested to await some future opportunity. When McDougall led out the initial mission party at the end of 1847 it was as a priest only, with consequences for the exercise of authority already noted.⁵⁰

When the Rajah reached England on his next visit in the spring of 1851 it was in the wake of his suggestions that McDougall be given increased powers (made in April 1850) and then his more specific query as to whether the chief missionary might be made 'Bishop of Sarawak' (in January 1851, on his way home).⁵¹ In July Brooke was invited to meet the BCMI committee, where his January letter – forwarded by McDougall – had already been sympathetically considered.

Short of money as it then was the committee requested its secretary Stooks to confer with Hawkins of the Colonial Bishopricks Fund (and by now secretary of the SPG) on the possibility of that fund financing the formation of a Borneo see. By October Stooks recorded that the two men had concluded that the act which had established the fund in 1841 did not allow for the consecration of a bishop to a territory which was not under the British Crown.⁵² If Borneo required a bishop money would have to be raised voluntarily and a special act of Parliament passed to legalise the proceedings, a prospect which both secretaries viewed with foreboding. With the different views of the Tractarians and the CMS dividing the Church a Parliamentary debate would be bound to generate hostility and division.⁵³

⁵⁰ See Chapter 1, 47-52.

⁵¹ See Chapter 1, 53-5.

⁵² Stooks to the Revd E.C. Woolcombe, 11 October 1851, SPG, CLS 54, 99.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

The Archbishop of Canterbury (now J.B. Sumner) and the Bishop of London (still Blomfield) approved a public appeal, and another Oxford meeting was organised with the support of Wilberforce. It was agreed that the money raised in Oxford in 1847 could go towards the £10,000 needed to endow the new bishopric, and that an annual income of £500 would suffice for the bishop.

This was not a princely sum when compared with the amounts allowed for English prelates, but the Rajah and the committee were agreed that any future bishop in Borneo should be discouraged from indulging in too ostentatious a lifestyle. McDougall concurred. By September 1851 he had heard from Bunyon of the progress towards raising an endowment fund. In the letter to the SPG accompanying the collection taken on 7 September he hoped the plan would succeed and insisted,

This Mission peculiarly needs *the full organisation of the Church* [my italics], and I only hope that they will not let the matter drop or delay it overlong in order to procure a large sum where a very moderate one will suffice.⁵⁴

The italicised phrase was interesting, echoing the ideas of Bray, Broughton and Venn, and seeming to place McDougall more in the CMS camp than that of Doane. But too much should not be read into one expression, as Gladstone used similar phrases.

A month later McDougall elaborated on the reason why only 'a very moderate sum' would be sufficient for a Sarawak bishopric. 'The best plan would have been'

to make it merely a Missionary Bishopric untrammelled by Queen's Patents and Lordly dignity. I think a plain Right Reverend Missionary Father would be much more suitable for us, and more consonant with the independent position of Sarawak.⁵⁵

He considered that a bishop for the Mission would have 'quite enough to do here without being a Colonial Bishop besides'. And if the Rajah agreed 'consecration might be sought at the hands of the Scotch or American Bishops'.⁵⁶ There were, he had heard, some difficulties with the Colonial Secretary, so why not circumvent them?

⁵⁴ McDougall to Hawkins, 17 September 1851, MSS.Pac.s.104 (3), 5.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 13 October 1851, *ibid.*, 7.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

It is interesting that McDougall appeared to consider that a 'missionary bishop' was different in degree to a 'colonial bishop', adopting a more simple lifestyle, free from the trappings of a church leader tied to the Crown. The difficulties with the Colonial Secretary no doubt concerned the impossibility of appointing a bishop in a territory over which the Queen had no jurisdiction, so consecration could instead be according to the precedents set in the case of Seabury (and Luscombe). Introducing the American episcopate into the process, however, was quite a radical suggestion, and may be an indication that McDougall was aware of Doane's ideas even if he did not publicly espouse them. His definition of a 'missionary bishop' seemed different to Doane's.

The report on progress towards a bishopric which the BCMI committee issued to supporters in 1851 seemed to confirm McDougall's understanding of Sarawak's requirements. 'It will be simply in office, and in spiritual authority, that the bishop will differ from the present chief missionary of the Mission'.⁵⁷ One suspects that for Doane simply adding episcopal authority and functions to a missionary already *in situ* would not have been what he had in mind when he thought of 'missionary bishops'. Evangelistic initiative *as a bishop* was critical for the American.

The appeal to raise the funds required for a Borneo see was launched in Oxford in January 1852 at a meeting addressed by the Rajah, Stooks of the BCMI and Hawkins. The public response was good, with generous contributions from the likes of Gladstone and Wilberforce, and added to donations from the SPCK and the SPG's 150th jubilee appeal and the Oxford investment from 1847 meant that by May 1852 over £9,000 had been received. The parliamentary process could begin, and the first bishop chosen. McDougall had read a report in a Singapore newspaper suggesting a CMS man named Childe for the post,⁵⁸ but he was the obvious choice and he was not to be disappointed. In the letter he wrote to the Archbishop of Canterbury reporting the success of the appeal for funds the secretary of the BCMI noted that the Archbishop had already informed the Bishop of London of his approval of McDougall's candidature.⁵⁹ It was clearly desirable that McDougall should return to England at the earliest opportunity so that he would be on hand whilst the negotiations proceeded – and entered their most delicate phase. At the end of October 1852 Frank and Harriette sailed from Singapore.

⁵⁷ Quoted in Peter D. Varney, *The Anglican Church in Sarawak from 1848 to 1852*, Sarawak Museum Journal, Vol. XVI, Nos. 32-33, July-December 1968, 400.

⁵⁸ McDougall to Hawkins, 13 October 1851, MSS.Pac.s.104 (3), 7.

⁵⁹ Stooks to Archbishop of Canterbury, 7 May 1852, SPG, CLS 54, 124.

They arrived in England a month before the takeover of the BCMI by the SPG. This had been suggested as far back as April 1850, when the BCMI were already experiencing financial shortages and having to restrict their search for missionaries to single men. Fortified by its jubilee appeal the SPG was by 1852 able to do what had been impossible in 1846, assume responsibility for the Borneo Mission alongside its other world-wide work, and an application by the BCMI in September 1852 was received cautiously but sympathetically. Having made it clear that the larger, more professional and experienced society would not be responsible for the liabilities of the smaller and more amateurish committee the merger went ahead and was formalised on 1 January 1853.⁶⁰ It meant that during his furlough McDougall was able to reassure supporters at home that a financial crisis had been averted and, hopefully, a better supply of missionaries guaranteed. He endeavoured to recruit new colleagues with the result that, when he and Harriette embarked for Sarawak in October 1854, they were able to take four other missionaries with them. McDougall also sailed in the knowledge that he had been chosen as bishop, but not according to the procedures which he had suggested or anticipated.

Bunyon in his 1889 biography alluded to 'the many technical difficulties' which in 1853 threatened to thwart efforts to establish a Borneo see. 'The erection of a missionary bishopric beyond the dominions of the Crown was then thought impossible'.⁶¹ He must have been aware of the conclusions of Stooks and Hawkins when they first examined the proposals in 1851 that the Colonial Bishops Fund did not permit this.⁶² The two secretaries had also been apprehensive of the divisions which would be created by introducing a bill publicly exposing the different views held by those on the Catholic and Evangelical wings of the Church of England. If the matter were debated in Parliament, they surmised, 'it would give rise to most painful discussions and a too probable desecration of subjects which we feel to be holy'.⁶³ Anticipating trouble ahead the secretaries of the CMS and the SPG, Venn and Hawkins, had met in March 1852 and agreed a general statement that 'the Bishop was the crown of the infant Church'.⁶⁴ This was however to prove too vague to satisfy the main protagonists.

⁶⁰ For details see Varney, *op.cit.*, 399.

⁶¹ Bunyon, *op.cit.*, 97.

⁶² See above, 186.

⁶³ Stooks to the Revd E.C. Woolcombe, 11 October 1851, SPG CLS 54, 99

⁶⁴ Yates, *op.cit.*, 105

The promoters of a Borneo bishopric, undaunted by the possible repercussions, went ahead in the summer of 1853. The introduction of the Missionary Bishops Bill in the House of Lords was entrusted – inevitably – to Samuel Wilberforce, Bishop of Oxford, who had already that year at the AGM of the Colonial Bishops Fund declared unequivocally that ‘a mission should always be led by a Bishop’.⁶⁵ With his persuasive advocacy the bill passed through the House of Lords. But it failed in the Commons under an onslaught led by prominent Evangelicals like Sir James Stephen, a distant relative of Wilberforce whose father had also ironically been a member of the ‘Clapham Sect’. Having also been an under-secretary at the Colonial Office Stephen spoke with some authority.

He was suspicious that there was a ‘hidden agenda’ in the bill. Its professed object was ‘to enable English prelates to consecrate British subjects to act as Bishops in any foreign or heathen country’.⁶⁶ But that was not its true object, and in any case the Jerusalem Act of 1841⁶⁷ already granted that power. The bill was, in Stephen’s judgement, really intended to facilitate the establishment of an English episcopate ‘which would not acknowledge the Queen’s supremacy’. Here was the crucial Evangelical objection, that the bill would enshrine in law the anti-erastian reviews of the Tractarians and set up an autocratic and uncontrolled episcopate in areas of mission which would check and stifle the kind of missionary initiatives which had characterised the work of Venn and the CMS.⁶⁸

Try as Wilberforce might to undermine Stephen’s credibility by suggesting that he was really frightened of missionary bishops superseding CMS local committees he could not save the bill from defeat in the Commons.

‘Missionary bishops’ as envisaged by Doane would have to wait a little longer to emerge from the Church of England, and if there was to be a new bishop appointed for Borneo he would have to be consecrated in the traditional way, by Royal letters patent. But what authority would they possess in an independent country?

McDougall was on leave at the time and followed the debate with keen interest. Early in July 1853 he was optimistic that the bill would become law, with only such technical issues as the name of the new see to be resolved. Eagerly he anticipated duty as ‘a colonial chaplain’ in

⁶⁵ Ibid., 101.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 102.

⁶⁷ See below, 213.

⁶⁸ Yates, *op.cit.*, 108-109.

Labuan, which was of course a British colony, for half the year and ‘a missionary bishop’ in Sarawak for the other half. That would make him very busy – ‘a really Missionary Bishop will find plenty to do in Sarawak and Labuan’.⁶⁹

Five weeks later, on hearing that the bill had been rejected, he was still sanguine that all was not lost. In communicating the news to the Rajah he suggested that the bill ‘was thrown out by the Commons entirely through the active hostility of the Church Missionary Society party . . .’.⁷⁰ But Lord John Manners [a rising Tory MP and friend of Disraeli] had told Hawkins that he and other good judges were persuaded that Sarawak’s wants might be met by the Jerusalem Act, and Gladstone [then Chancellor of the Exchequer] had promised to see to this in the next Parliamentary session. ‘If all else fails, which I hardly think, we must go to the Scotch or American Church for what we want’.⁷¹ In the event Gladstone was to be preoccupied with more urgent matters, his first two budgets and reforms of Oxford University and the Civil Service, and was also unwell for much of the year. Even then McDougall’s optimism was not dented. Early in 1854 he informed Horsburgh, his deputy in Sarawak, that his return to Borneo had been postponed for a month or two in order to sort out the bishopric. ‘The only opposition to be feared’ he warned,

is that of the Church Missionary Society who are jealous of the creation of a Missionary Bishopric – they are a formidable and active party and may again thwart us, although I feel convinced that the measure will be carried in the long run.⁷²

The outbreak of the War in the Crimea in March diverted attention in Parliament, caused people to hold onto their money instead of giving it to the SPG and further delayed McDougall’s embarkation by the government requisitioning all steamers for the war effort.⁷³ But the Borneo bishopric was not forgotten, and McDougall introduced another unusual possibility into the debate.

The opposition of the Rajah’s and the Church’s enemies have for a time delayed the Bishopric, but I believe it will be only for a time, and then the arrangements will be made for me to be consecrated at Sydney or Calcutta.⁷⁴

⁶⁹ McDougall to Hawkins, 8 July 1853, MSS.Pac.s.104 (3), 14.

⁷⁰ McDougall to J. Brooke, 15 August 1853, MSS.Ind.Ocn.s.292 (1), 2.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² McDougall to Horsburgh, 4 January 1854, Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid., 18 March 1854. Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

The admission that he had been chosen as the new bishop occasions no surprise, but the suggestion of an overseas consecration was novel and will be discussed later.⁷⁵

From March to September 1854 McDougall's copy letter book is empty, so there is no recorded personal comment on the death of his and Harriette's eldest son Charlie after being hit on the head by a cricket ball whilst at school in Ipswich. On 24 September he wrote one final letter to Horsburgh with news of their October sailing.

After mentioning that they would be bringing four new missionaries out with them – two men and, for the first time in the history of the SPG, two women – McDougall revealed that he was writing the letter on the train to Oxford, where he had been summoned to Cuddesdon to discuss the bishopric with Wilberforce.⁷⁶ No doubt at this meeting both men concluded that McDougall would not be a 'missionary bishop' under the definition of Doane and his adherents. McDougall admitted as much when he confessed that there was no possibility of his being consecrated before leaving England, although Oxford had already bestowed on him the customary honorary degree of DCL. A 'commission to consecrate' would be sent to the East by the Archbishop of Canterbury,⁷⁷ which meant that he would be a 'colonial bishop' appointed by letters patent from the Crown. The only remaining question concerned which colony would give its name to his title.

The Bishop of Calcutta's appraisal after consecrating McDougall on 18 October 1855 that he was 'perhaps the first missionary bishop sent out by our Church' has already been noted.⁷⁸ Perhaps? It can now be appreciated that Daniel Wilson was using an expression which was at the time gaining popularity in the Church of England. But he was not using the title 'missionary bishop' with the more technical meaning associated with Doane, Newman, Wilberforce and those who thought like them. He saw McDougall as a missionary who had become a bishop, who had episcopal authority added to his missionary vocation. In that limited sense McDougall was the first, since before 1855 none of the colonial bishops in the 19th century had been missionaries at the time. Six more years were to pass before Doane's ideal was realised with the consecration of Mackenzie, who was to become bishop to the tribes dwelling in the neighbourhood of Lake Nyassa and the River Shire.

⁷⁵ See below, 207-9.

⁷⁶ McDougall to Horsburgh, 24 September 1854, MSS.Ind.Ocn.s.292 (1), 2.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ See above, 171-2.

Bishop McDougall – not less a missionary?

At the height of the controversy in 1853 over the Missionary Bishops bill, and no doubt contributing to the unease felt in some quarters, was a fear among supporters of the Borneo Mission that making McDougall a bishop would dilute its purity and weaken his dedication. Hawkins attempted to reassure the objectors by pointing out that the creation of a new see in the area covered by the Mission

was not intended to alter the character of the undertaking. The main point was to add to the existing missionary the spiritual powers belonging to a bishop, and not to make him less a missionary than before, or much to add to the state or expense of his living.⁷⁹

This idea that episcopal authority was simply being added to an existing missionary, though a long way from the vision of Doane, appeared to answer the pleas of McDougall and James Brooke after 1849 that more power to control his staff might be granted to the head of the Mission.⁸⁰ The denial that elevation to the episcopate would lead to ostentatious living was also in accord with McDougall's preference for a moderate bishopric devoid of 'Lordly dignity'.⁸¹

Harriette McDougall shared these sentiments. On the day before her husband's consecration in October 1855 she expressed her conviction that this significant moment in his life would not result in making him 'less a missionary than before'. Far away from Calcutta in Sarawak she could not work up much enthusiasm for the occasion, but she had no doubt that it would be very 'wholesome' for Frank to be consecrated. 'He will be more than ever devoted to his missionary work'.⁸²

In fact these hopes, expressed in different ways by his employer and his wife, that McDougall would be a better missionary as a result of his consecration and not be seduced by the trappings of prelacy, were not completely to be realised. In some respects he affected an unconventional attitude to the bishop's office, to matters of dress and deportment, but in other ways the acquisition of wider authority and increased status were to complicate his relationships with the other British residents in Sarawak. The early simplicities were to be

⁷⁹ Bunyon, *op.cit.*, 97.

⁸⁰ See Chapter 1, 52-5.

⁸¹ See above, 187.

⁸² Bunyon, *op.cit.*, 113.

replaced by a more complex web of tangled threads which damaged the Mission, stunting its progress and reducing the effectiveness of the chief missionary.

During the few months spent in Sarawak between his arrival from leave in April 1855 and departure for Calcutta in September McDougall enjoyed a slightly more exalted status as the Bishop of London's 'Commissary for Labuan and Borneo'.⁸³ He also found time to worry about his episcopal salary, since he appeared to be in some financial debt to his family, and the back-dating of his salary to the date of his appointment in 1854 would help him to settle this. There was a precedent for such a procedure in the person of his brother-in-law Colenso. McDougall, who in May 1855 was still living on his SPG salary of £300 per annum, understood that 'John drew his £800 as Bishop from the time of his first receiving his appointment some months before his consecration'.⁸⁴

It seems odd that this question of salary had not been settled before McDougall left England, apart from a verbal promise from the Bishop of London that he would be receiving an increase to £600 a year, but it is possible that part of the confusion arose from the ambiguity of his appointment as Bishop of *Labuan* and the undefined boundaries of his work there compared with Sarawak. He begged Hawkins to clarify what 'was expected' of him with regard to Labuan – a paid chaplain, a house? – and wondered whether he could receive 'the usual allowance for outfit etc to Colonial Bishops. . . What is my pay to be?'⁸⁵ Colenso had been appointed under the terms of the Colonial Bishops act, which would account for his higher salary, whereas McDougall's consecration was the result of an appeal for voluntary subscriptions. Hearing from Bunyon that the fund would probably not cover his 'outfit and expenses' only made him more disgruntled.⁸⁶ However, on his way to Calcutta in September, he was able to acknowledge receipt of £150 from the fund to cover his return fare from Sarawak.⁸⁷

On arrival at Calcutta he was received 'most kindly and hospitably' by Daniel Wilson, who warned him that he must 'support the dignity of a Bishop properly'.⁸⁸ No doubt by 'dignity' the old Evangelical bishop meant general demeanour rather than 'Lordly dignity', the pomp and ceremony abhorred by his protégé. McDougall was appreciated in Sarawak as a jolly

⁸³ McDougall to Horsburgh, 24 September 1854, MSS.Ind.Ocn.s.292 (1), 2.

⁸⁴ McDougall to Bunyon, 4 May 1855, *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ McDougall to Hawkins, 15 June 1855, *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 16 July 1855, MSS.Pac.s.104 (3), 32.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 13 September 1855, *Ibid.*, 36.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 5 October 1855, *Ibid.*, 40.

man, good company on social occasions, who could let his ebullience run over into coarse invective when provoked. The Bishop of Calcutta urged him to exercise more moderation to suit his newly-acquired episcopal status, writing in November to caution him, now that he was 'a chief pastor and a father in God, against excessive hilarity of spirits. There is a mild gravity, with occasional tokens of delight and pleasure, becoming your sacred character, not noisy mirth'.⁸⁹ No doubt McDougall took this advice, as he had earlier about his library,⁹⁰ with a pinch of salt.

On the way back to Sarawak after his consecration McDougall sent one final complaint to Hawkins about his salary – or lack of it – only this time he felt the need to justify his constant harking on the subject.

You must not think I am mercenary or covetous . . . all I desire is to be able to do my work efficiently . . . to be able to offer that hospitality and assistance to my fellow-labourers which every Missionary Bishop ought to be able to afford his Missionary brethren.⁹¹

Perhaps with St Nicholas in mind, for it was 6 December, McDougall emphasised that any money he had by reason of being a 'missionary bishop' was to be used not for his own gratification but generously for the benefit of his missionary colleagues. It was an interesting comment, surely genuine, and in accord with his earlier statements in 1851 and 1852 that a missionary bishop should not need the kind of material outlay expected of a colonial bishop – or an English diocesan. He expected to receive a salary sufficient to meet the obligations laid upon him as the episcopal leader of the Mission, but not to lead him into practising a higher lifestyle than his colleagues. They were all equally 'missionary brethren'.

This attitude was summed up in more spiritual fashion outside the context of money in a sermon preached by McDougall at Kuching on 30 March 1856. The occasion was the ordination of Gomes to the priesthood, the first such ceremony that McDougall was able to perform, and he took the opportunity to explain his views on the nature of episcopal authority. He did not want his colleagues who were listening to gain the impression that he was intent on exalting his newly-acquired office. He urged them to regard him 'not as a ruling Father desiring to act independently of you in any matter – but as an elder Brother',

⁸⁹ Quoted in H. McDougall, *op.cit.*, 113.

⁹⁰ See Chapter 3, 120-1.

⁹¹ McDougall to Hawkins, 6 December 1855, MSS.Pac.s.104 (3), 45.

the desire of whose heart is to spend and be spent in our *common work* [my italics] – to lead where any will follow – to follow where any will lead . . .

I am sure it is not my inclination – and I trust no one will ever have occasion to say of me – that I seek to lord it over my brethren or to exercise my office among you in a despotic or arbitrary manner.⁹²

He went on to suggest that decision-making in the Mission would be made in future by bishop and clergy at annual meetings (synods?) which would afford him and Harriette the opportunity to show ‘hospitality’. Like all McDougall’s good intentions this one too was to be frustrated (e.g. by the Chinese insurrection, Malay plots, illness and furloughs), and his first synod did not meet until 1864,⁹³ but there is no doubt that he viewed the Mission after his consecration as ‘our common work’ and did not see his vocation as a missionary diminished by that event.

One other area in which McDougall felt a ‘missionary bishop’ should be distinguished from his peers was in the matter of episcopal vesture. From the moment of his arrival in Sarawak in 1848 he had relaxed his style, finding the climate inhibiting to the wearing of his traditional Church of England robes and English suits. Visits to jungle areas caused even more havoc with dress. After taking Gomes to visit Chambers and Horsburgh at Banting in June 1855 (before his consecration) he recorded that ‘not one of us possessed a shirt, and I alone had shoes’.⁹⁴ There is no doubt that his long absence on furlough in 1853 and 1854 had enabled his colleagues to lapse into an undisciplined lifestyle. They look ‘more like pirates than clergymen’ he recorded in 1856.⁹⁵

After his consecration McDougall chose for himself a dignified mode of dress without feeling bound too much by convention. He confessed that the ‘dreadful Bishop’s gown’ was a trial in the humid Sarawak climate, but stuck to it on Sundays and festivals in church worship, preferring his ‘surplice and old Master’s hood’ on other days.⁹⁶ ‘Fact is, my dear B[ullock],

I am a bad dignitary as regards dress – aprons, tights etc bore me. A white muslin cassock with black belt and silk trowsers [sic] and pith hat compose my daily attire. It is quite an ecclesiastical dress and very comfortable. I am trying to persuade the

⁹² McDougall, sermon in St Thomas’s church, Kuching, 30 March 1856, Rhodes House, unclassified sermons, no. 5. All quotations are from this source.

⁹³ Chapter 3, 165.

⁹⁴ Bunyon, *op.cit.*, 110.

⁹⁵ McDougall to Hawkins, 8 April 1856, MSS.Pac.s.104 (3), 68.

⁹⁶ McDougall to Bullock, June 1856, *Ibid.*, 81.

others to wear it – instead of shooting jackets and all manner of unclerical garments . . . these Dyak missionaries do certainly get most irregular and slovenly in habits and attire and want drilling.⁹⁷

McDougall was fighting a losing battle with regard to his colleagues, Chambers for instance continuing to wear ‘Malay clothes’,⁹⁸ but for himself he accepted that a ‘missionary bishop’ need not be as inflexible as tradition demanded but could be sensible in suiting his clothes to the climate and conditions of his see.

One small example however indicated that, in spite of affecting a disdain for the customary outward appearance expected of a bishop, McDougall was still conscious of the distinctions his new rank afforded him. In July 1856 he ordered a second-hand basket pony carriage and equipment for Harriette to go out riding, and insisted that there should be ‘a mitre on the saddle and blinkers, with the initials FTL underneath’⁹⁹ to indicate his episcopal title, F.T.Labuan. In spite of turning his back on some aspects of ‘Lordly dignity’ Frank McDougall was still proud of being a bishop and prepared to exercise the authority which his new position gave to him. He may not have considered himself ‘less of a missionary’, but Sarawak was to know that a new and potentially rival authority had arrived on the scene when he came back from Calcutta at New Year 1856.

For Doane and Wilberforce a ‘missionary bishop’ sent out by the church who was not also an appointed servant of the state would be able to concentrate on spiritual and evangelical matters without being diverted into civic concerns. In spite of being a bishop in a diocese which was not part of an established church McDougall could never quite forget the English pattern of episcopacy where the bishop was also a public figure. Here again he differed from the Tractarian ideal.

Saunders has perceptively observed that,

McDougall’s elevation [to the episcopate] subtly altered his relations with the Rajah. To be a bishop carried a cachet that head of the mission did not.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ H. McDougall to Eliza Bunyon, September 1857, MSS.Pac.s.104 (1), 58.

⁹⁹ McDougall to Bunyon, July 1856, MSS.Pac.s.104 (1), 30.

¹⁰⁰ G. Saunders, *Bishops and Brookes: the Anglican Mission and the Brooke Raj in Sarawak 1848-1941*, Singapore, OUP, 1992, 60.

That a new power had arrived in the land was not immediately obvious, but events were soon to open up wounds and exacerbate relationships between bishop and Rajah which would reduce the effectiveness of the missionary and blunt the impact of the mission. A detailed examination of these events is not the purpose of this thesis, and in any case Saunders has already dealt exhaustively with them. But a brief mention of some of the points of dissension is necessary to indicate the reasons for the complete breakdown of trust between Frank McDougall and James Brooke which followed the former's consecration as Bishop of Labuan in 1855.

The Chinese insurrection in February 1857 was to prove (in Saunders' judgement) 'the watershed',¹⁰¹ and it will be discussed later.¹⁰² At the height of the action McDougall's assumption of leadership in Kuching after Brooke had escaped downriver demonstrated clearly an alternative authority, which was to be resented by the Rajah. Conversely, Brooke's apparent indifference to McDougall's languishing at Lingga whilst he published his version of the rebellion outraged the Bishop.

Malay unrest and plotting between 1857 and 1859 combined with the Rajah's failure to secure British recognition or protection, and his suggestion that another power might assume responsibility for Sarawak, infuriated the patriotic Bishop. McDougall's consequent fears and his proposal to transfer the headquarters of the see to Singapore¹⁰³ caused the Brooke raj to accuse him of cowardice and disloyalty.

The Bishop's suspicion that the Rajah was going mad, expressed privately at first – he was 'cracked' – was deepened by James Brooke's revelation early in 1858 that he acknowledged an illegitimate son named Reuben Walker.¹⁰⁴ McDougall's indignation exploded in a bitter private letter to his family in England.

For a long time now you know that my faith in the Rajah as a ruler and as a man compos mentis has been shaken . . . I cannot tell you how the Rajah has disappointed us, he cares nothing about Christianity and would only use us politically and kick us overboard if we did not suit his views.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 67.

¹⁰² In Chapter 5, 238-42.

¹⁰³ See Chapter 2, 90-3.

¹⁰⁴ McDougall to Bunyon, 20 March 1858, MSS.Pac.s.104 (1), 89.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

That the bishop could be as hostile and critical as this, even in a private letter, demonstrates not only how wide the gulf between the two leaders had become but also how McDougall with his new authority had assumed the freedom of an equal with his Rajah. To the state authorities his presumption was a sign that the bishop was indeed 'lording it' in a manner quite contrary to the expectations aroused by the appointment of a formerly humble, obedient missionary to the episcopate. The Rajah's nephew and prospective heir, John Brooke Brooke, informed his father-in-law of the Sarawak government's disenchantment with their bishop.

Also we do not like at all that Sarawak, a free state, is incorporated in the See of Labuan. We want *a Sarawak Missionary Bishop* [my italics] whose time and energies shall be given to Sarawak and its 200,000 people. Do what we may to suppress it, there is a constant irritation in the Rajah's mind and in mine too, at having a foreign Bishop Lord it in Sarawak, and that touch of latent jealousy is, you may be sure, very prejudicial to the Mission.¹⁰⁶

What the Sarawak establishment wanted, ironically, was a missionary bishop in accord with the vision of Doane. What they thought they had received was a colonial bishop out of the mould of the English Establishment. McDougall would not in 1858 have seen the matter in this light, for he was still exploring the nature of the authority which had been conferred on him three years earlier, but the time was not far off when he was to be constrained to admit the logic and force of the Sarawak raj's argument.

After returning to Kuching in 1862 from his second long leave McDougall wrote an interesting letter to the influential Hawkins in which he compared his 'colonial' occupancy of the see of Labuan – which he admitted was largely 'nominal' – with his appointment as a 'missionary bishop' in Sarawak.

As Bishop of Sarawak my position here is important and a difficult one and *purely missionary* [my italics]. It is the carrying out the Mission of our Church sent out here in 1847 . . .¹⁰⁷

'Purely missionary'? It had taken him a long time to realise and accept it, and the succeeding year was to witness further bitter controversy with his critics¹⁰⁸ which temporarily diverted his energies from pursuing this ambition. By the end of 1863 however a period of relative

¹⁰⁶ J.B. Brooke to J. Grant, 19 February 1858, MSS.Pac.s.90, Vol. 6, 343-55.

¹⁰⁷ McDougall to Hawkins, 6 August 1862, MSS.Pac.s.104 (4), 24.

¹⁰⁸ See Chapter 5, 245-9.

calm settled over the Sarawak mission field, and the last four years of his episcopate were to see the fulfilment of McDougall's hopes in conditions which made it possible to proceed with more obvious success in the 'carrying out the Mission of our Church' for which he had been sent out as a missionary in 1847. His being a bishop no longer frustrated the work of the Mission – instead his pastoral leadership was employed creatively to enhance the effectiveness of his missionaries.¹⁰⁹

Missionary bishops – from ideality to actuality

McDougall's consecration in Calcutta in October 1855 divided his ministry in Sarawak into two parts. In the early years up to that moment, in spite of delays and setbacks, he was a creative, dedicated and optimistic missionary. In the years after that day he was a disappointing – and disappointed – bishop. He had enjoyed being a missionary, but elevation to the episcopate, although giving him the authority which he craved and which was necessary in an Anglican mission, exposed the difficulties of his situation and the inadequacies of his character.

In no sense could McDougall be accounted a 'missionary bishop' according to the strict criteria enunciated by Doane and endorsed by Wilberforce. By the very nature of his appointment in the traditional Anglican way he could not fit the pattern envisioned in republican America. He did not go to Borneo as a bishop in the beginning, leading the Mission in episcopal orders from the outset. Through 'civilising' and primary evangelism in union with a few colleagues he first of all planted the church, incomplete though it may have been according to Anglican ecclesiology, and then after seven years of mission was able to lead as a bishop. As forecast by Hawkins in 1853 episcopal orders were added to a missionary calling already being exercised.¹¹⁰

McDougall's position was far more in accord with the thinking of Venn and the CMS than with that of the Tractarian wing of the Anglican spectrum, and it was this fact which caused Daniel Wilson (a strong supporter of the CMS) to describe him as 'perhaps the first missionary bishop' sent out by the Church of England. As a loyal Anglican Venn would not have dissented from Doane's insistence on the essentiality of the bishop in a Church mission,

¹⁰⁹ See Chapter 5, 269-72.

¹¹⁰ See above, 193.

and he recognised the need for eventual episcopal oversight and pastoral care in missionary churches. But he was wary of Doane's view because he feared that a centralised episcopal control at the dawn of a new mission would stifle the initiative of the first missionaries, prevent the emergence of indigenous leaders and interfere with the rights of the voluntary sending society. For Venn the evangelist must precede the bishop, as he understood the New Testament apostle to precede a more settled ministry. This was the order realised in Frank McDougall, and in this sense Wilson was correct in his judgement – McDougall was the first missionary bishop from England.

'Perhaps' the first, to quote the Bishop of Calcutta correctly.¹¹¹ He qualified his claim by mentioning the Bishop of Mauritius, but he need not have done so. Vincent W. Ryan, consecrated Bishop of Mauritius a year before McDougall (1854) had not been a missionary nor had he established a mission. A graduate like McDougall of Magdalen Hall, Ryan entered on his episcopate after a period as principal of the CMS training college at Highbury and could not have challenged the Bishop of Labuan as a missionary who became a bishop. A more serious competitor for the accolade was Inglis in 1787. Of the other bishops consecrated before McDougall, including Gray (Capetown 1847), Vidal (Sierra Leone 1852) and Colenso (Natal 1853), none possessed previous missionary experience. McDougall was clearly the first working missionary made a bishop, and was to be followed by Patteson in Melanesia in 1861, Crowther in Eastern Nigeria in 1864 and Hannington in Equatorial Africa in 1884. All had previously worked as missionaries. But note must be taken of one further case, and here Doane's dream was to be realised – albeit with tragic consequences.

After an abortive attempt by Wilberforce in 1858 to secure 'a missionary bishop' for Tinnevely in the Diocese of Madras had failed,¹¹² Gray in the same year suggested a 'missionary diocese' for Zululand. Clearly a disciple of Doane, Gray believed that 'the Anglican Province of South Africa ought to be sponsoring missions outside its borders, and that such missions ought to be headed by a bishop leading a team of missionaries'.¹¹³ Thwarted because Zululand was not then under the British Crown Gray received guarded permission to consecrate a bishop 'for the Zulu people', a much vaguer constituency than a specific territory.

¹¹¹ See above, 171-2.

¹¹² Yates, *op.cit.*, 104.

¹¹³ P.W. Hinchliff, *John William Colenso, Bishop of Natal*, London and Edinburgh, Thomas Nelson, 1964, 75.

A suitable candidate to fulfil Gray's ambitions emerged in the person of Charles F. Mackenzie, who had become Colenso's archdeacon in Natal in 1855 after being inspired to overseas mission by Selwyn's visit to Cambridge the previous year. A similar Cambridge occasion addressed by Livingstone in 1857 had resulted in the foundation of the Universities' Mission to Central Africa, and Mackenzie was chosen as its first head. He appeared to be the ideal candidate when the UMCA responded to Livingstone's promotion of the largely unexplored Shire Highlands between the mouth of the Zambesi river and Lake Nyasa as an ideal location for a Christian mission. Livingstone even appeared to support the Doane vision when he wrote to Wilberforce in April 1860 that he was 'fully convinced'

that your way of sending a bishop with your mission is an admirable one. I avoid saying so publicly, as I do not wish to give pain to those with whom I have acted, but I have no doubt that our Bechuana mission would have been more efficient had we possessed an energetic head endowed with authority.¹¹⁴

Clearly the autocratic tendency was not confined to a particular section of the Church of England! Although Livingstone was to modify his initial enthusiasm towards the end of 1860 by warning Wilberforce of 'difficulties' which might be encountered with the people of the Shire Highlands, aware perhaps that an Anglican mission might end up in trouble, he was still hopeful that 'university men' possessed sufficient 'English pluck' to survive.¹¹⁵

With much encouragement the mission went ahead. Without the need for letters patent from the Crown, as the area to be evangelised was not a British colony, Gray with his two fellow bishops in South Africa was permitted to consecrate Mackenzie in Capetown on New Year's day 1861. Within a month the missionary party had arrived at the mouth of the Zambesi. In the event more than 'English pluck' was needed for survival. One year later, on 31 January 1862, Mackenzie was dead from fever before the mission had even been properly established.

In spite of a tragically short episcopate Mackenzie has been generally accepted by major commentators on this episode in church history as having been the first 'missionary bishop' in the strictest sense as defined by Doane to be sent out by the Church of England.¹¹⁶ Such an

¹¹⁴ George Seaver, *David Livingstone: His life and letters*, London, Lutterworth Press, 1957, 363.

¹¹⁵ Tim Jeal, *Livingstone*, London, Pimlico, reprint 1996, 234.

¹¹⁶ See for instance Cnattingius, *op.cit.*, 202; Yates, *op.cit.*, 103, 108; S. Neill, *A History of Christian Missions*, London, Penguin Books, 1964, 1987 reprint, 323; O. Chadwick, *Mackenzie's Grave*, London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1959, 20-21.

inauspicious beginning however dealt a heavy blow to those like Wilberforce who had espoused Doane's ideas, and appeared to justify the scepticism of Venn and the CMS. Yates suggests that 'to Venn the idea of the missionary bishop was a "speculative" notion, and he could be severe on what he judged as romantic ideas' in the promotion of missions.¹¹⁷ Such notions and ideas were in Venn's judgement the root cause of the Mackenzie disaster.¹¹⁸ In fact the issue was more complex. Doane's theory did have its merits and was pursued more successfully in other areas. When combined however with inadequate preparation, human fallibility and error, the onslaught of unknown diseases, the difficulties of unexplored terrain and the dominating pressure of a presence like Livingstone, it was found wanting.

The American Episcopal Church, where Doane's ideas first found expression in 1835, did not seem to encounter such problems – or if it did, solved them with considerably more success. Reference has already been made to the appointment of Boone in China in 1844.¹¹⁹ During the rest of the 19th century missionary bishops and dioceses were to become an integral part of the evangelistic strategy of American episcopalians, and the practice was to continue well into the 20th century.

The Church of England by contrast was to be less adventurous. Tozer, Mackenzie's successor, withdrew the UMCA mission to Zanzibar before it later returned to the shores of Lake Nyasa. Gray in 1862 suggested a 'missionary bishop' for Madagascar, but when Cornish was eventually consecrated by the Scottish bishops in 1874 he inherited several years of work by SPG and CMS missionaries, so he was hardly the pioneer.

An attempt to follow the American example in China did not in fact accord with the vision of PECUSA. When George Smith, who had been appointed as the first Bishop of Victoria [Hong Kong] in 1849, resigned in 1866 it was proposed to divide his vast diocese and make a new see on the Chinese mainland. The response of the CMS, with missionaries in the five treaty ports after the end of the so-called Opium War in 1842, was mixed. According to Yates 'a suffragan "colonial bishop" did not' to the CMS

represent the half-way house to the native episcopate that a "missionary bishop" (using the term here to describe an overseer of native Christians outside the

¹¹⁷ Yates, *op.cit.*, 108.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ See above, 185.

jurisdiction of the Crown, as distinct from the sense of pioneer evangelist of Bishop Wilberforce) provided.¹²⁰

‘An overseer of native Christians’ was certainly not the ‘missionary bishop’ of Doane’s sermon. When W.A. Russell, a CMS missionary at Ningpo, was eventually consecrated as a bishop for North China in 1872 it was with the intention that he should ‘oversee both the missionary and indigenous clergy beyond the limits of the treaty ports and Hong Kong, with the consular chaplains remaining under the jurisdiction of the latter bishop’.¹²¹ He was a missionary bishop in the McDougall model, and this was the pattern generally to be followed by the Church of England. The Established Church lost an opportunity to examine the apostolic, missionary, nature of the ordained ministry and was thus ill-prepared for the ecumenical challenges of the 20th century.

THE FIRST OVERSEAS CONSECRATION

Since the glorious Reformation

Whatever hesitations may have been entertained about the idea of missionary bishops there can be no doubt that McDougall’s consecration in Calcutta on 18 October 1855 marked a significant – if at first only symbolic – moment in the development of the Church of England into a world-wide Anglican Communion. But like other important occasions in this process it demonstrated only a tentative advance on previous practice, accepted initially as a pragmatic necessity rather than a radical change in Anglican ecclesiology. However, that is in the nature of the Church of England, which has often been proud that her theological foundations have invariably been laid as a response to practical challenges.

Daniel Wilson’s letter to the SPG in which he claimed McDougall as the first missionary bishop¹²² affirmed in the same sentence that the occasion in Calcutta was also ‘the first consecration, I believe, that has ever taken place out of England since the glorious Reformation’.¹²³ This last phrase obviously referred to the practice of the Church of England,

¹²⁰ Yates, *op.cit.*, 178.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 187.

¹²² See above, 171.

¹²³ H. McDougall, *op.cit.*, 112.

and not to the Church in the centuries before that great 16th century convulsion in which consecrations would have taken place in Europe, North Africa and parts of Asia. In the Church of England after the Reformation all consecrations were held in *England*, even after the beginnings of the colonial episcopate with Inglis in 1787.

Wilson ended his letter with the acclamation, 'God be praised for this completion of episcopal functions in India'.¹²⁴ Hitherto the colonial bishops appointed since 1787 had been able to perform all the duties traditionally associated with their office including confirmation and ordination, but the privilege of consecration had been reserved for the Archbishop of Canterbury and his fellow bishops in England. In 1855 that final privilege was granted to overseas bishops, and the episcopacy sent by the Church of England to the colonies was – in Wilson's judgement – 'complete'.

It is not difficult to see why this final 'power' had been jealously guarded by Canterbury and exercised only in the palace at Lambeth. Colonial churches were extensions of the Church established by law in England and their leaders must be seen to have been commissioned in England, sent out from the centre of authority, so that unity would not be broken and the line of apostolic succession clearly maintained. The chapel at Lambeth, the domestic residence of the Archbishop, was homely enough for 'private' functions – consecration being seen as a personal matter for the new bishop and the immediate hierarchy representing the wider church rather than as a matter of public concern requiring a larger presence.

Therefore all the new colonial bishops for Canada, India and the West Indies from 1787 onwards were consecrated according to custom at Lambeth. Since most of them were English clergy such a venue would also have been the most convenient. Even in 1841, the year in which the Colonial Bishops Act presaged an increase in the number of overseas prelates, Selwyn for New Zealand and Alexander for Jerusalem were still solemnly given their orders in the chapel of Lambeth Palace in London.

One final and important consideration argued for the retention of the right of consecration in England. As all bishops were appointed by the monarch with the authority of letters patent

¹²⁴ Ibid.

from 'the supreme governor' of the Church of England it was logical that the link between Crown and subject should be symbolised by consecration in the capital city and seat of government of the kingdom. Rejection of the authority of the Crown would cause a break in the system and necessitate consecration elsewhere, as happened in the case of the American colonies. But, although McDougall clutched at such straws, this was hardly a convincing argument for his consecration in Scotland or America.

However, there were other straws in the wind. With the Colonial Bishops Fund established in 1841 that decade was to see a rapid expansion in the number of overseas bishops from ten to twenty five, and with radical ideas filtering in from across the Atlantic suggesting that all members of the Church were responsible for her mission¹²⁵ probing questions were being asked. Could the consecration of a new 'father in God' – particularly a 'missionary father' – be accepted any longer as a purely *private* affair? Was such an occasion not the concern also of the wider body of the church outside the narrow confines of the immediate participants?

In 1847 the mould was broken. The four new bishops for Capetown, Melbourne, Adelaide and Newcastle NSW were given their orders in Westminster Abbey in the presence of a large and representative congregation.¹²⁶ True, it was a 'one-off' occasion due to the extra number of bishops to be consecrated (usually it had been only one) and the increased congregation expected but London was still host city.

Consecration in subsequent years was still for a time restricted to England, with St Paul's cathedral used on one occasion. But the principle had been established that the making of a bishop was not a private ceremony confined to the few but a public affair of interest to the many. Within a decade the dominance of London was to be challenged, and a beginning made in the process of shifting the centre of power in Anglicanism away from a single fount towards a more shared concept of authority.

¹²⁵ See above, 179.

¹²⁶ Cnatingius, *op.cit.*, 204.

The venue for McDougall's consecration

The delays caused by the difficulties in establishing the Borneo bishopric have already been noted.¹²⁷ McDougall was on furlough whilst the debates dragged on in 1853 and 1854, and he viewed the uncertainty with mounting frustration. Had the way been cleared for confirming his appointment as bishop before he returned to Sarawak he would no doubt have been consecrated in England. But in the spring of 1854 the matter had still not been settled and that is why, hoping to embark in April, he had warned Horsburgh in Kuching that he might be consecrated 'at Sydney or Calcutta'.¹²⁸

Whether these names were the product of McDougall's imagination or whether they had already been canvassed as possible venues by the English hierarchy was not clear. At the end of September 1854, a week before eventually sailing, he had accepted that he could not be consecrated before leaving – but 'they talk of sending a Commission out after me'.¹²⁹ It was all rather vague. Not until he reached Calcutta early in February 1855 did he receive confirmation from Hawkins that final approval had been given for the establishment of the Diocese of Labuan and his appointment as its first bishop. He wrote back on 5 February rejoicing at the news and conveying the wishes of Daniel Wilson.

The Bishop [of Calcutta] is anxious to have me consecrated here. He says that if the East India Company object to allowing the Bishops of Madras and Bombay to come here, there cannot be the same difficulty with the Bishop of Colombo.¹³⁰

It appeared that the precise venue for the consecration was still in doubt, with Daniel Wilson 'anxious' to have it in Calcutta but not certain, particularly as the EIC – still a power in the land – were creating difficulties. If legal objections could not be overcome the optimistic McDougall had an answer, pointing to a clause in the Indian Bishoprics Act of 1833 which allowed the Bishop of Calcutta and one other suffragan 'to consecrate in the event of a presbyter out here being appointed to an Indian bishopric'.¹³¹ It was surely stretching a point to consider that applying to McDougall?

¹²⁷ See above, 189-92.

¹²⁸ McDougall to Horsburgh, 18 March 1854, Copy Letter Book, MSS.Ind.Ocn.s.292 (1), 2.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 24 September 1854, Ibid.

¹³⁰ McDougall to Hawkins, 6 February 1855, MSS.Pac.s.104 (3), 17.

¹³¹ Ibid.

With no clear arrangements having been made for the consecration, and the probability that months would pass before the position was clarified, McDougall decided to continue to Sarawak rather than hang around in Calcutta. Before leaving at the end of February he reported again on Daniel Wilson's assumption of the initiative.

The Bishop [of Calcutta] said that he would at once write to his brother bishops to find out when two of them at least might most conveniently come to Calcutta . . . he desires to have the consecration if possible before October . . .¹³²

A postscript to this letter suggested that the venue for the consecration was still an open question. Although not relishing the prospect of returning to Calcutta 'in the hot and stormy weather' McDougall thought that 'it would be a proper and useful thing to break through the old rule and have a consecration out here'. If that were however to prove impossible he felt it would be better for him personally and maybe less expensive for him to come to England 'with a return ticket'.¹³³

By 'less expensive' he meant in relation to the purchase of his new robes, having heard a rumour that the Colonial Bishops Fund would not allow him anything towards his new outfit if he were to be consecrated in India rather than in England.¹³⁴ In the event Daniel Wilson was not to be denied his great moment, and in June 1855 McDougall reported from Sarawak that his consecration had been fixed for St Paul's cathedral, Calcutta, on St Luke's day, 18 October. Sharing with the Bishop of Calcutta in the rite were to be the Bishops of Madras and Victoria, Hong Kong.¹³⁵

Having been appointed officially as Bishop of *Labuan*, which was a British colony,¹³⁶ McDougall was consecrated in the traditional way by letters patent from the Crown. When issued on 6 August they recited that 'it was not desirable that Dr McDougall should be recalled home for consecration',¹³⁷ which presumably meant on grounds of convenience rather than any new ecclesiological thinking. The Archbishop of Canterbury however retained his rights, issuing a commission for Wilson 'as Metropolitan of India' to preside on his behalf. The letter that the Bishop of Calcutta sent to the SPG after the ceremony on

¹³² Ibid., 20 February 1855, Ibid., 19.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ See above, 194.

¹³⁵ McDougall to Hawkins, 13 June 1855, MSS.Pac.s.104 (3), 25.

¹³⁶ See below, 215-6.

¹³⁷ Bunyon, op.cit., 112.

18 October thus recorded that 'the words of the consecration' were 'pronounced by myself as presiding metropolitan'.¹³⁸

Wilson had been appointed as metropolitan of India in 1833 when the huge diocese of Calcutta was divided and the new sees of Madras and Bombay created. Colombo was to follow in 1845. The title implied a position of leadership over his brother bishops, and gave him authority to call them together for consultation, but did not at first convey any extra legal powers. In similar fashion Broughton was made metropolitan of Australasia until Selwyn secured a Province in New Zealand in 1858, Gray granted a similar position in South Africa when two new bishops were consecrated for the area in 1853, and Canada gained provincial status in 1860.¹³⁹ McDougall's consecration in 1855 was to be the first occasion on which a metropolitan was given the opportunity to consecrate a bishop for his province in his own cathedral, but only by a mandate from the Archbishop of Canterbury – who thereby retained his own all-embracing central authority. The mould had been broken, but only on pragmatic grounds.

The situation could not last much longer for the colonial churches, fast developing a system of government by synod, were pressing for greater autonomy. The decisive break with tradition came in Canada, where the new bishop for Huron had already in 1857 been elected instead of chosen by the Crown. In 1862 a bishop was elected for Ottawa, and the Queen issued letters patent for his consecration to the Archbishop of Canterbury, who transmitted them to the Canadian metropolitan to perform the ceremony in Kingston, Ontario.¹⁴⁰ The following year, letters patent having been deemed to have no force in a self-governing colony, a royal mandate for the consecration of the new bishop of Quebec was issued directly to the metropolitan, and in 1866 that fiction itself was finally abolished when the Crown law officers judged that such a mandate also had no authority in a colony with its own administration. In 1874 the confusions were finally resolved by the British Parliament in the Colonial Clergy Act, whereby the metropolitans were absolved from swearing canonical obedience to the Archbishop of Canterbury.¹⁴¹ Less than 20 years after McDougall's consecration in Calcutta the colonial churches had achieved an independence which would probably not have been thought possible in 1855. It was a significant time in

¹³⁸ H. McDougall, *op.cit.*, 110.

¹³⁹ For these early developments see W.M. Jacob. *The making of the Anglican Church Worldwide*, London, SPCK, 1997, 95, 123, 126, 141, 154.

¹⁴⁰ Williams in 1859, Patteson and Mackenzie in 1861, had by then all been consecrated overseas.

¹⁴¹ Jacob, *op.cit.*, 182.

the history of the development of the Anglican Communion into a federation of autonomous provinces each with its own Archbishop, and recognising only the moral authority and spiritual leadership of Canterbury. It seems a shame that McDougall's contribution has never been recognised in Anglican writings on the subject.

Ironically, and because south-east Asia had to wait until 1996 before becoming a province, all McDougall's successors as bishop in Sarawak during the century following his episcopate were consecrated in England! All until 1968 were British, and most were resident in the United Kingdom, so that because the Archbishop of Canterbury was their metropolitan it seemed sensible to retain the rite in England. That the Archbishop might travel to Asia seems not then to have been considered.

THE FIRST EXTRA-COLONIAL ENGLISH BISHOP

The importance of sovereignty

One claim not made by Daniel Wilson in 1855, strangely in view of his own early experiences in India, was that McDougall was the first bishop from the Church of England to be appointed to an area most of which was not under the British Crown. Jerusalem was a special case.

The ground had been prepared as far back as 1787 when, faced with the *fait accompli* over Seabury and the need for friendly relations with an independent nation in America, Parliament authorised the Archbishop of Canterbury to consecrate a second and third bishop for the American Episcopalians without demanding from them the oath of allegiance to the Crown.¹⁴² Later, India then being nominally under the control of the East India Company, the first Indian bishoprics had to be established by acts of Parliament in 1813 and 1833.

In the 1820s questions arose in relation to the appointment of Luscombe as a bishop in Europe. One reason adduced by the Scottish bishops to support their decision to consecrate Luscombe in 1825 was the fear that a bishop sent from 'the United Church of England and

¹⁴² Ibid., 69-70.

Ireland would be much more likely to give offence to a foreign government' than from a church which was not established.¹⁴³ At the same time the right of the Church of England to exist in all her fullness 'under any form of government, either severed from the state or connected with it' was upheld in a sermon by one of Luscombe's old pupils at Haileybury, W.F. Hook.¹⁴⁴

Even after Luscombe had begun his episcopate in France doubts arose as to how far and in what manner he could exercise authority. The Bishop of London tried to resolve any anomalies by making Luscombe his commissary, although confessing at the same time that his traditional role in caring for British citizens overseas might be 'convenient' but was also rather 'doubtful' in countries which were not under the British Crown.¹⁴⁵

More serious was a problem inherited by Daniel Wilson on his appointment as Bishop of Calcutta in 1832. He received a request to license two CMS missionaries for work in Travancore, an area which was under the influence of the East India Company but not subject to British sovereignty and therefore not in his diocese. Wilson responded by affirming to the CMS a principle which – interestingly for an evangelical – would not have seemed strange to Hook and the Tractarians.

If a missionary proceeded beyond the technical limits of a Diocese like Calcutta, every Bishop was a Bishop of the whole Church, and the Bishop's universal authority and the presbyter's promise of acting under the license of his Bishop in performing spiritual functions come in and supply the technical defect.¹⁴⁶

Travancore was soon to be removed from Wilson's influence by the creation of the see of Madras in 1835, and the first bishop of the new diocese, Corrie, disclaimed any jurisdiction in the territory. His successor in 1838, the High Church Spencer, requested a specific statement from the CMS that 'Travancore lay within the Diocese of Madras' but had to be content with a more ambiguous expression.¹⁴⁷ By this time another influence had begun to work on the CMS home committee.

¹⁴³ See above, 176-7.

¹⁴⁴ L.E. Luscombe, *op.cit.*, 5.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 10.

¹⁴⁶ Cnattingius, *op.cit.*, 167.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 209-210.

CMS missionaries had been active in New Zealand since 1814 and it was natural that after Broughton was consecrated as the first bishop in Australia in 1836 he should have been invited to pay a pastoral visit to the neighbouring territory. He justified his trip to a country which was not yet a colony by drawing a distinction between a bishop's episcopal 'jurisdiction' which could only be exercised in a Crown colony and a bishop's episcopal 'office' which must be fulfilled wherever 'he shall find a portion of the Church of Christ unprovided with its own proper superior'.¹⁴⁸

Encouraged by the principles enunciated by Wilson and Broughton proclaiming the universality of the bishop's authority in the Church the CMS in 1837 issued an important statement of intent. The society insisted that 'such functions as ordination, confirmation and pastoral care are inherent in the Episcopal office, independently of the prerogatives attached to it by the law of England'.¹⁴⁹ When Broughton urged in 1839 that the Church of England should be planted in New Zealand 'in the full integrity of her system'¹⁵⁰ the CMS home committee requested the appointment of a bishop. The Colonial Secretary, Russell, replied correctly that such a move was impossible until New Zealand came under the sovereignty of the Crown. This was not long delayed, the treaty of Waitangi being signed in 1840, and the Colonial Bishops Act of 1841 authorised the consecration of G.A. Selwyn as the first Bishop of New Zealand at the end of the same year.

By a careless mistake in his letters patent Selwyn's new diocese was defined as extending from latitude 50 south to latitude 34 *north* [my italics] – as far as Japan. At least this allowed him legally to undertake evangelism in Melanesia,¹⁵¹ but since this part of his jurisdiction was not a British colony the suggestion was later made – in jest, surely – that when he wanted to consecrate Patteson as bishop for Melanesia he must 'sail out beyond territorial waters and consecrate him on the ocean'.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁸ Yates, *op.cit.*, 48.

¹⁴⁹ Cnattingius, *op.cit.*, 187.

¹⁵⁰ See above, 183.

¹⁵¹ Carpenter, *op.cit.*, 435.

¹⁵² Chadwick, *op.cit.*, 21.

Two experiments during the 1840s

Notice may here be briefly taken of two attempts in the 1840s to implement in practice the principle enunciated by Wilson, Broughton and the CMS that – by reason of his episcopal office – a bishop could exercise spiritual authority wherever the church was in existence.

The first arose from a suggestion in 1841 by the King of Prussia, motivated in part by the need to secure support from the Lutherans in his own country, to establish a bishopric in Jerusalem which would care for the spiritual needs of all Protestant Christians in the Middle East. Appointments to the new see were to be made alternately by the Crowns of Britain and Prussia, with the Archbishop of Canterbury given the power to veto the Prussian nominee if he were to prove unacceptable.

The Tractarians – with the exception of Newman, who was opposed to all deals with Protestant churches – were satisfied by this last proviso, and the Evangelicals of CMS were content that their missionaries, who had been working in Egypt and beyond since 1825, would henceforth be afforded the pastoral care of a ‘spiritual’ bishop. An easy passage was therefore guaranteed the Foreigners Consecration Act Amendment Bill when it was presented to Parliament in the autumn of 1841. Popularly known as the Jerusalem Bishopric Act, it permitted the consecration by the Church of England of either British or foreign citizens to be bishops ‘in any foreign country’ and ‘to exercise spiritual jurisdiction’ over ministers and congregations of the United Church of England and Ireland.¹⁵³ M.S. Alexander, a converted German Jew who was Professor of Hebrew at King’s College, London, was appointed as the first Bishop in Jerusalem, and when he died after less than three years in office the King of Prussia tactfully chose as his successor one of the original CMS missionaries in the region, the Swiss Lutheran Samuel Gobat. He occupied the see until 1879.

In retrospect the Jerusalem bishopric may be seen as an exceptional case, a unique arrangement to cater for a special need rather than a radical departure from the Anglican practice of only consecrating bishops for territories under the Crown. The second concession in the 1840s was more tentative. It was promoted in China, where the American missionary bishop Boone had been working in Amoy since 1844.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵³ E. Stock, *History of the Church Missionary Society*, London, CMS, 1899, 3 volumes, Vol. 1, 420.

¹⁵⁴ See above, 185.

Boone's presence caused some embarrassment to CMS missionaries who had begun work in Shanghai shortly before his arrival, as his authority over them was suspect. In consequence, when the diocese of Victoria, Hong Kong was created in 1849 the letters patent of the first bishop George Smith laid down that he was given jurisdiction over all clergy 'of the United Church of England and Ireland being within the dominions of the Empire of China . . . in the same manner as if they were resident within the said island of Hong Kong'.¹⁵⁵ It needs to be remembered that the British clergy working in mainland China at that time were at first resident only in the five 'treaty ports' where the laws of the 'Empire of China' were circumvented, so the extent of Smith's jurisdiction in a foreign country was by no means clearly defined. But as the 1840s ended it was obvious that concessions were being made to the old strict Anglican boundaries, breaches in the walls which were soon to enable McDougall to exercise the authority of an Anglican bishop in an independent country without any question or challenge as to its legality

Labuan in Sarawak – or Labuan and Sarawak?

In his letter of 28 January 1851 suggesting that McDougall might be given episcopal authority¹⁵⁶ the Rajah recorded that he would have no objection to the title 'Bishop of Sarawak'.¹⁵⁷ In choosing such a title James Brooke showed a surprising ignorance of, or disregard for, the Anglican system of attaching sees to colonies, but he may have been attempting to pre-empt the danger of McDougall acquiring a rival authority to his own by confining the boundaries of the bishopric to his kingdom. He might have hoped that a bishop in 'Sarawak' would be bound to be subservient to its rajah.

Bunyon was later to emphasise Brooke's sensitivities on the subject. In proposing McDougall as bishop the Rajah 'had not contemplated the creation of a colonial bishopric' and would have judged any such appointment by the British Crown as a 'usurpation' of his authority in his own country.¹⁵⁸ This fear did not actually surface in 1851 as Brooke proceeded to England and raised the question of establishing a Borneo see with the BCMI committee. Events moved quickly,¹⁵⁹ but the negotiations were to be complicated partly by

¹⁵⁵ Yates, *op.cit.*, 90.

¹⁵⁶ See Chapter 1, 54.

¹⁵⁷ J. Brooke to McDougall, 28 January 1851. CLR 72, 132.

¹⁵⁸ Bunyon, *op.cit.*, 115.

¹⁵⁹ See above, 186-7.

the debate over the Missionary Bishops bill in 1853 and partly by confusion over the title of the proposed bishopric.

In their preliminary discussion in the autumn of 1851 the secretaries of the BCMI and the SPG saw clearly that the Colonial Bishops Act did not provide for the consecration of a bishop for a non-colonial territory.¹⁶⁰ They also concluded that the Jerusalem Act was 'special' and did 'not affect any other case'. The only solution therefore that appeared possible to them was 'to propose a Bishopric of Labuan, an English dependency under the Colonial Bishops Act and to let the Rajah give the Bishop of Labuan jurisdiction over Sarawak'.¹⁶¹ In the light of subsequent events this was to prove a sensible proposal.

As the process dragged on and became bogged down through the debate in Parliament the question of the title of the new see was sidelined pending the outcome of the exchange of arguments. McDougall, on furlough in 1853, aligned himself with the conclusions of the secretaries. In a letter to the SPG in July of that year he clearly favoured 'Labuan' for the title, seeing it as 'a Queen's colony . . . analogous to Hong Kong',¹⁶² and hoping perhaps that his authority could be extended to Sarawak as Smith's had been to the Chinese mainland. But when he embarked for Kuching at the beginning of October 1854 the title had still not been settled, and he did not receive confirmation that 'Labuan' had been chosen until he reached Calcutta in February 1855. But how would the Rajah react to this selection of a colonial title? It should occasion no surprise that he did not like it.

Disguising his initial hostility James Brooke wrote to Harriette in facetious mood on her arrival with Frank at Calcutta. He urged them to return to Sarawak whilst waiting for the consecration to be organised, after which Frank could go back to Calcutta for the ceremony, 'and directly that he is made bishop we will begin about getting him made Archbishop of Borneo'.¹⁶³ Harriette, with her usual perception, sensed that beneath the apparent good humour Brooke was disturbed by the title. She recorded to her brother 'that the Rajah is very disgusted at the Labuan [her underlining] Bishopric, he says it is "farewell to Sarawak"'.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶⁰ Above, 186.

¹⁶¹ Stooks to Woolcombe, 11 October 1851, CLS 54, 99.

¹⁶² McDougall to Hawkins, 8 July 1853, MSS.Pac.s.104 (3), 14.

¹⁶³ Bunyon, *op.cit.*, 103.

¹⁶⁴ H. McDougall to Bunyon, 2 February 1855, MSS.Pac.s.104 (1), 21.

There is evidence that the Rajah strongly wished McDougall to reject the Labuan title. Searching later for reasons to explain Brooke's hostility when disagreements erupted in 1862-1863¹⁶⁵ Bunyon concluded that 'the Rajah's jealousy had been excited by the appointment of the Bishop to a colonial bishopric which he had, in two letters still remaining, vehemently urged him to decline, desiring that he should be Bishop of Sarawak alone'.¹⁶⁶ He was no doubt very sensitive about any suggestion that the British Crown appeared to be claiming some sort of jurisdiction in his own kingdom and fearful that Labuan might claim too much of the bishop's time at the expense of the more extensive work in Sarawak. In the event he need not have worried.

The Rajah could not have his way for the simple reason that McDougall had to have at least the fiction of a colonial title, and at his consecration on 18 October 1855 the letters patent from the Crown were read confirming him as Bishop of Labuan with all the usual spiritual and ecclesiastical powers – but not their temporal counterparts. Tactfully, nothing was said about the geographical boundaries of his jurisdiction, but McDougall would have assumed that these would be extended to include Sarawak. But – by whom?

Early in 1856, after McDougall had returned to Kuching from Calcutta, that question was answered. He reported to the SPG that the Rajah wished to make him 'Bishop of Sarawak', and counselled discretion at home in case church opinion in England should be scandalised at the claim of an independent ruler to create an Anglican bishopric. It was to be done simply 'to satisfy the Rajah's scruples'.¹⁶⁷ In any case it might only be a temporary arrangement, for James Brooke was at the time seeking some form of British protection or recognition, which might eventually lead to a colonial bishopric in Sarawak itself.¹⁶⁸

Within two days of writing that letter McDougall had received from the Rajah his official appointment as 'bishop of Sarawak with powers to exercise all the Ecclesiastical functions pertaining to the Episcopal Office, as recognised by the order of the Church of England'. That 'the Right Reverend Francis Thomas McDougall is accordingly Bishop of Sarawak' was attested and signed by J. Brooke and dated 1 January 1856.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁵ See Chapter 5, 248-9.

¹⁶⁶ Bunyon, *op.cit.*, 243.

¹⁶⁷ McDougall to Bullock, 2 February 1856, MSS.Pac.s.104 (3), 57.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁹ A copy of the Rajah's document was sent by McDougall to Hawkins, 4 February 1856, *Ibid.*, 59.

On the day after he had forwarded a copy of his appointment by Brooke McDougall neatly expressed in a private letter to Hawkins the cause of the Rajah's unease. The ruler was 'strong upon his independence'

and does not like my being Bishop of Labuan *in Sarawak* [my italics] but has no objection to Bishop of Labuan *and Sarawak* [my italics] – so I have nothing to do but to accept his appointment – seeing there is nothing in the wording prejudicial to my allegiance etc as a Col. Bishop. I suppose there can be no objection to my doing this.¹⁷⁰

'Bishop of Labuan *in Sarawak*' was unacceptable because it might have been seen as implying that McDougall could exercise some prerogatives of the British Crown in an independent state. 'Bishop of Labuan *and Sarawak*' could be construed as placing the two appointees, the Queen in Parliament and the Rajah, on an equal footing. James Brooke could have 'no objection' to that. But it seems curious that 'no objection' was raised in England to such an interpretation, and to a foreign ruler granting episcopal authority to an Anglican bishop. The more fastidious of Anglican legalists could have interpreted this as a usurpation of the rights of the Crown.

Clearly the situation in Sarawak was unprecedented, and a speedy solution had to be found which would extend the bishop's territorial authority without threatening the Rajah's sovereignty. Again the Church of England opted for the pragmatic solution to an unusual problem. The Rajah for his part had asserted his power over the church in his country but, as Saunders has observed, the 'situation was not so clear-cut as Brooke might have wished.'¹⁷¹ McDougall derived his primary authority from sources external to Sarawak; his first allegiance lay outside the country, and in Sarawak itself he represented a foreign power. The seeds of possible future conflict between church and state – both in Sarawak and elsewhere – were sown by the manner of McDougall's appointment as a bishop. In Sarawak, where jurisdiction over the clergy was henceforth 'consensual' (the word is Bunyon's)¹⁷² between bishop and Rajah, the system worked reasonably enough and only broke down after relations had soured when, for instance, in 1863 James Brooke wanted to make the missionary Gomes an official government agent and McDougall objected.¹⁷³ Elsewhere potential conflict between church and state was reduced by the gradual elimination during the 1860s of letters

¹⁷⁰ McDougall to Hawkins, 5 February 1856, *Ibid.*, 60.

¹⁷¹ Saunders, *op.cit.*, 60.

¹⁷² Bunyon, *op.cit.*, 115.

¹⁷³ McDougall to Bullock, 23 September 1863, SPG, OLR, D23b.

patent altogether in the appointment of colonial and missionary bishops. Times and situations were changing and the Church of England had the sense to accept this.

For McDougall there remained in 1856 one immediate and very practical problem. How was he to sign his name in official correspondence? In the early months, commencing with a letter to Hawkins on 5 February, he signed himself 'F.T.Labuan and Sarawak'. From September 1856 onwards the signature was always 'F.T.Labuan', in recognition that this really was his official title, and in England he was always to be known as the 'Bishop of Labuan'. What the Rajah thought of this is unrecorded. As for McDougall himself, the signature he really began to covet was 'F.T.Singapore'.

Removal of the bishopric to Singapore

The growing political unrest in Sarawak which began with the Chinese insurrection in February 1857 and escalated into the Malay plotting of 1858 and 1859 caused McDougall to contemplate the transference of his headquarters to the mainland.¹⁷⁴ It was however only one element in his shift of mind. The refusal of the British government to accept Sarawak as a protectorate or grant James Brooke official recognition rendered the possibility of a colonial see in Sarawak remote. Rumours that Labuan's dwindling coal reserves were to give Britain the excuse to abandon the small island colony surfaced in 1857.¹⁷⁵ At the same time, and after assuming sovereignty over India, the British were in the process of gaining control over the Straits Settlements and the Malay peninsula. In addition to all these political shifts the death of Daniel Wilson in January 1858 removed the main obstacle to the division of his unwieldy diocese and the creation of a new see based on Singapore. It would have been unnatural for McDougall not to have become restless during these years.

He first outlined his new ideas in a letter to Bunyon in September 1857. 'Late events have brought these views into my mind', he claimed, the kind of 'late changes' which had 'much diminished the value and importance of this place [Kuching] as the position of a bishop's see to act on Borneo and the Archipelago'.¹⁷⁶ (There is a significant widening here of a 'Borneo Mission' to embrace a much wider area of mission.) Much as he preferred 'Sarawak as a

¹⁷⁴ See Chapter 2, 90-3.

¹⁷⁵ McDougall to Bunyon, 29 September 1857, MSS.Pac.s.104 (1), 61.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

place of residence' – was he serious? – he was feeling more and more 'that Singapore ought to be the centre of the Church's missions for these parts'.¹⁷⁷ A noble new church was being erected at Singapore (St Andrew's) which would make a good cathedral, and the large number of schools in the Straits would feed more students into a Singapore missionary college, greatly enhancing the Church's ministry.

Throughout 1858 and 1859 the threats emanating from some of the more restive Malay leaders, both real and imaginary, moved McDougall in his letters to one long catalogue of pleas that the headquarters of the Mission be moved to 'a safer place under proper English protection'.¹⁷⁸ The murder of government officials – and ex-mission personnel Fox and Steele – at the Kanowit fort in June 1859 put pressure on McDougall to plan a return to England, where he could argue the case for removal to Singapore in person. At the same time he was incensed by a rumour that a separate Singapore bishopric might be created, leaving him with Labuan and Sarawak.¹⁷⁹

The precise motives behind McDougall's obsession with a transference to the mainland are not difficult to determine. Neither he nor Harriette were enjoying good health at this time and a move to the healthier climate and better medical care of Singapore would have been obviously advantageous. Outbreaks of cholera in Kuching in both 1858 and 1859 reinforced that view, and were in reality a greater threat to McDougall than any Malay plotting. Also, the attractions of a higher salary should he be preferred to Singapore, which would come under the Colonial Bishops Fund, must have affected his judgement – despite his claim that he was 'one unclouded by personal interests'.¹⁸⁰ Crucially among his motives, however, was a growing disenchantment with the Rajah and disillusion with the deterioration in church-state relationships during those years.

Whilst in England in May 1861 McDougall confessed to the SPG how much of a burden the state connection had become for the Mission, so different to the blessing with which it had been regarded in the early years after 1848.

In the present political future of Sarawak it is most desirable that our Missions should not appear to be connected with the local Government in any way, but

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ McDougall to Bunyon, 11 October 1858, *Ibid.*, 103. McDougall to Hawkins, January 1859, MSS.Pac.s.104 (3), 173.

¹⁷⁹ McDougall to Bunyon, 29 June 1859, MSS.Pac.s.104 (1), 117.

¹⁸⁰ McDougall to Hawkins, August 1859, MSS.Pac.s.104 (3), 182.

should really appear to the Natives to be purely what they are, Missions of the English Church, connected with the chief English station in Singapore, and wholly independent of Sir J. Brooke and his officials.¹⁸¹

Although it is implied rather than stated as a fact, the Rajah seems to have been as weary of the Bishop as McDougall was of him, for Brooke also now 'thought it expedient and desirable that Singapore should be the centre of the Diocese'.¹⁸² Disenchantment spread to the Rajah's elder nephew and designated successor, John Brooke Brooke, which was regrettable in view of the close friendship between him and the McDougalls since Frank's loving care for his wife Annie during her fatal illness in 1858. Exasperated by reports of the bishop's constant complaining about the lack of security in Sarawak during his furlough in England in 1860 Brooke warned his parents not to listen, for McDougall was 'tired of the place and wants to persuade people at home that it is necessary to move the Bishopric to Singapore'.¹⁸³ To his sister Emma Brooke Brooke was even more candid.

The real true secret of the Bishop's proceedings is that he finds Sarawak dull and thirsts after the Flesh Pots of Singapore and his object is to get that busy place made the seat of the Bishopric instead of poor Sarawak . . .¹⁸⁴

In Brooke Brooke's view such a move would be welcome. He felt that McDougall had become unpopular, both with his own clergy and with other residents who disliked 'mitres and fine vestments' and sighed for 'a little more missionary spirit and earnestness in the work'.¹⁸⁵ Either Brooke Brooke's churchmanship was on the low side, or McDougall had departed from his earlier intention of eschewing pomp and circumstance.¹⁸⁶

McDougall returned to Sarawak in March 1862, with the future of the Straits Settlements still uncertain, to face a growing feeling in government circles that he should move to Singapore. His strongest critic, Spenser St John, was even suggesting that they could orchestrate such a transfer.¹⁸⁷ Brooke Brooke reported to his uncle within a month that

The Bishop is here; I do hope you will do your best to get him promoted to a larger sphere, his energies are too great for this small place.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸¹ McDougall to Hawkins, 23 May 1861, MSS.Pac.s.104 (4), 9.

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ J.B. Brooke to the Revd and Mrs F.C. Johnson, 28 May 1860, MSS.Pac.s.90, vol. 6, 98.

¹⁸⁴ J.B. Brooke to E. Johnson, 28 May 1860, Ibid., 100.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ See above, 195-6.

¹⁸⁷ St John to J.B. Brooke, 24 September 1860, MSS.Pac.s.90, Vol. 15, 246.

¹⁸⁸ J.B. Brooke to J. Brooke, 15 April 1862, Ibid., Vol. 5, 426.

Negotiations over the Straits dragged on for five more years, with McDougall continuing to hope that they would be completed in time for him to inherit a new sphere of work in south-east Asia before his energy drained away. But time was against him, and prominent supporters in England were beginning to express doubts. Angela Burdett Coutts, the Rajah's wealthy patroness, thought that to transfer the Labuan bishopric to Singapore would be unfair to those who had subscribed to its endowment, 'particularly Sir J. Brooke', whereas the Bishop of Oxford (Wilberforce) proposed the creation of Singapore as an extra see alongside Labuan.¹⁸⁹ By 1865 even McDougall's closest relatives were growing sceptical of his fitness to take on more responsibility over a larger area. When Bunyon apparently suggested that it would be better if he did not get the Singapore post when it was created McDougall disagreed with him, claiming that Singapore would have given him 'fresh power both as to means of health' and better savings.¹⁹⁰ Harriette as usual was more realistic, not caring at the delays over the transfer of the Straits because 'Frank's health is so precarious that I should not wonder at our having to go home any day'.¹⁹¹

Ironically, the passing of the Straits Transfer Bill through Parliament in September 1866, although too late to be of any use in promoting McDougall's episcopal ambitions, did at least afford him a taste of what it might have been like to be Bishop of Singapore. In anticipation of the handover of the Straits to British rule McDougall, as a bishop, was requested in January 1867 to carry out an episcopal visitation of the churches in the area. Whilst in Singapore in February his hopes were raised for the last time by a letter urging him to return to England for consultations at the Colonial Office. He needed no further prompting and, without returning to Sarawak, left for home.

A year in England convinced McDougall at last that his health would not permit a return to south-east Asia, and in the summer of 1868 he resigned from the bishopric of Labuan – and Sarawak. By a strange coincidence the Rajah died at the same time, in June 1868, at his home in Devon. Although it was not a private family ceremony McDougall was not invited to the funeral. The separation of church and state in Sarawak could not have been more final.

With the removal of the two main protagonists from the Sarawak scene – and of John Brooke Brooke who died in December 1868 – the way was open for a new beginning. The

¹⁸⁹ Bunyon to McDougall, 25 July 1862, MSS.Pac.s.104 (1), 153.

¹⁹⁰ McDougall to Bunyon, February 1865, *Ibid.*, 200.

¹⁹¹ H. McDougall to Bunyon, 21 August 1865, *Ibid.*, 224.

second Rajah, Charles Johnson Brooke, and the second bishop, Walter Chambers, knew and respected each other, and when the Act was passed separating the Straits from India in 1869 letters patent were issued attaching the Settlements (including of course Singapore) to the see of Labuan. Chambers was to visit Singapore every year and adopted St Andrew's church as his cathedral.

Not until 1907, after the resignation of Chambers' successor G.F. Hose, were proposals put into effect to divide the unwieldy diocese with its two parts separated by 400 miles of sea. In 1909 two new bishops were consecrated, W.R. Mounsey for Labuan & Sarawak and C.F. Davie for Singapore and the Malay peninsula. This arrangement worked well during the first half of the 20th century, but pressures brought on by the Japanese occupation of the region in the Second World War and the movement for Malaysian independence in the post-war years inevitably affected Anglican diocesan boundaries. One casualty of this process was the title of 'Labuan'.

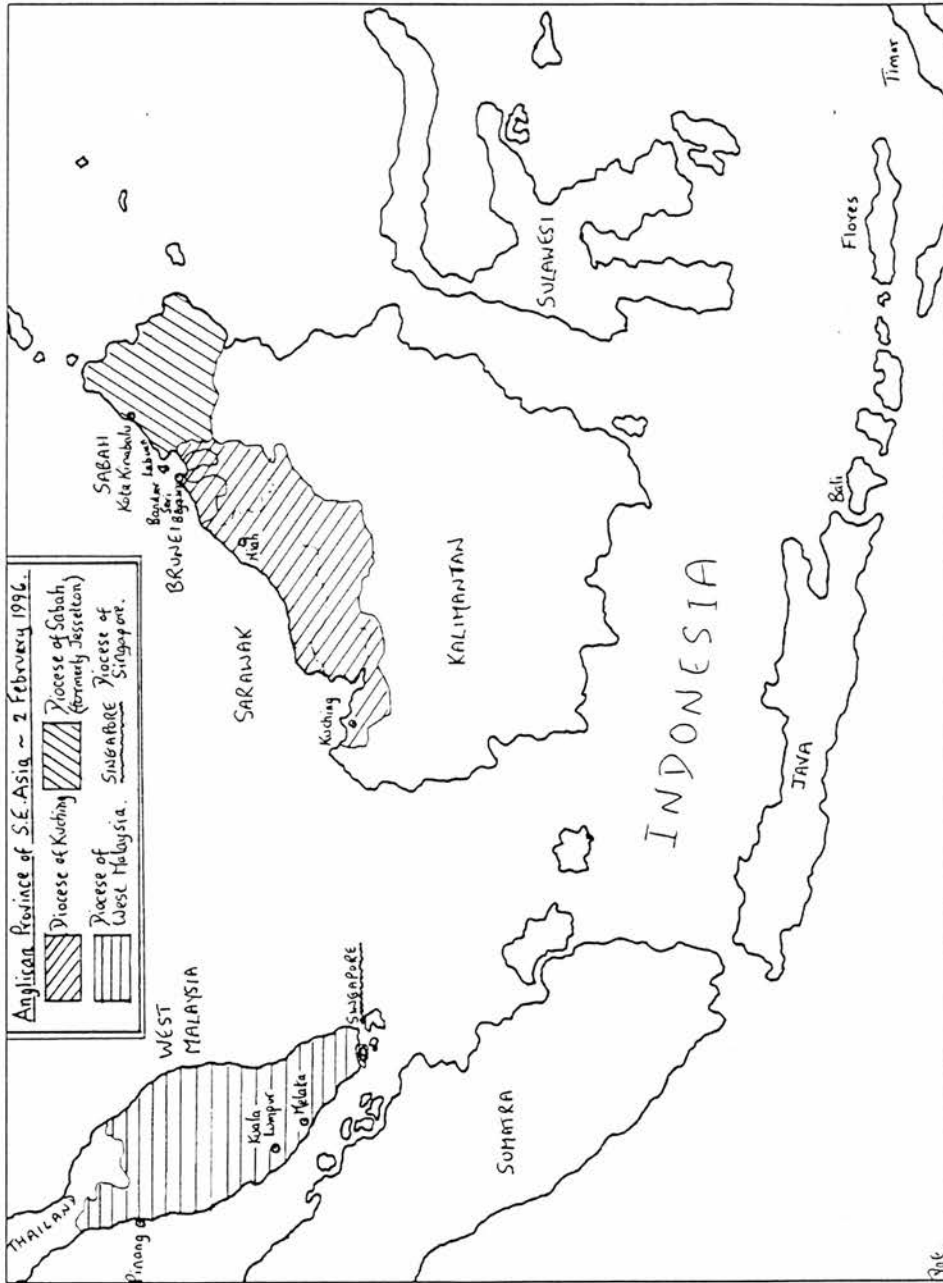
In 1962 Malaysia became an independent nation, as a federation comprising the Malay states, the island of Singapore and the two Borneo states of Sarawak and Sabah (previously British North Borneo). The Diocese of Labuan was divided into two sees, 'Kuching' to cover the work in Sarawak and the British protectorate of Brunei, and 'Jesselton' to cover Sabah and include the island of Labuan. The title of 'Labuan' disappeared from Anglican mission history, perhaps not surprisingly in view of the opinion of its first bishop Frank McDougall that it had only ever been of 'nominal' importance.¹⁹² He really had been primarily Bishop of Sarawak, but was consecrated slightly too early to merit that title from his Church.

When the island of Singapore opted out of the Malaysian federation in 1965 it was clear that the diocese of this now independent state could no longer include the Malay peninsula. In 1970 the new diocese of 'West Malaysia' was created, and with Jesselton renamed as the diocese of 'Sabah' the reorganisation of Anglican structures in south-east Asia was almost complete. Still under the remote authority of the Archbishop of Canterbury, it only remained to group the four dioceses into an autonomous Province of the Anglican Communion, and this was duly effected on 2 February 1996 [see Map 5]. Heir to the initial Borneo Mission of 1848 the Bishop of Kuching had some claim to be the first Archbishop of the new Province. Instead the Bishop of Singapore was elected as metropolitan. McDougall, who had so

¹⁹² McDougall to Hawkins, 6 August 1862, MSS.Pac.s.104 (4), 23.

yearned to exchange his see on Borneo for one in Singapore, would have appreciated the irony of the situation – and approved the choice. Daniel Wilson would also have been pleased, for the creation of a Province with its own Archbishop finally realised the ‘completion of episcopal functions’ in south-east Asia which he had somewhat prematurely claimed for McDougall’s consecration at Calcutta in 1855.¹⁹³

MAP 5



¹⁹³ H. McDougall, *op.cit.*, 112.

CHAPTER 5

McDOUGALL – AN EMBODIED PARADOX

A BUNDLE OF CONTRADICTIONS

The title of this chapter and also of this paragraph comes from the pen of an eccentric early 19th century Anglican clergyman, Charles Caleb Colton.¹ In the first volume of his collection of aphorisms entitled *Lacon* there appears the following saying –

Man is an embodied paradox, a bundle of contradictions.²

It is an aphorism which seems to encapsulate both the character of Francis T. McDougall and the missionary attitudes of the Anglican Church in the 19th century. In this final chapter it will be applied to four aspects of McDougall's life and work in Borneo between 1848 and 1867. He will be examined as:

1. A physician who could not heal himself.
2. A timorous bishop or a fighting apostle?
3. A man more sinned against than sinning?
4. The worst missionary – but a capital fellow.

In the end it should be possible, by looking at the 'progress' of the Anglican Mission in Borneo during the 20 years under his leadership, to estimate how far the aphorism explains, justifies or excuses the attitudes of the man, the Mission and the Church.

¹ Charles Caleb Colton was rector of Kew between 1818 and 1823, before getting into debt through gambling, retreating first to America and then to France, and finally committing suicide in 1832. Source: DNB.

² Colton, *Lacon*, Vol. 1., 408. Source: *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*, Oxford University Press, 1979, 159 (II). Hereafter the abbr. OUP will be used.

A PHYSICIAN WHO COULD NOT HEAL HIMSELF

One of the greatest fascinations and unresolved questions surrounding McDougall's 20 years in Sarawak concerns the inability of a man who was honoured above all else for his medical skills³ to control the debilitating effects of his own almost constant sickness. It is a question to which hitherto little attention has been given, and it is important not only for the insights it affords in analysing McDougall's behaviour but also for the understanding of a common problem among missionaries in other generations, how the unsettling effect of illness provokes a yearning for 'home' and a crisis in mission.

Early complacency about tropical climates

In spite of the reputation of tropical areas such as West Africa being 'the white man's grave', which must have been known in Britain during the 1840s, there was a remarkable complacency about the dangers posed when establishing colonies in similar regions. The *Illustrated London News* for April 1847 reported sickness among British seamen on the ships sent to negotiate the transfer of power of coal-rich Labuan from Brunei, and concluded that the death of one of the commanders was due to over-exertion rather than fever. It was alleged that the experiences of James Brooke had proved that Borneo was not a dangerous place for Europeans, and Labuan therefore 'had no peculiarities inherently unfavourable to health'.⁴

Ten years later the McDougalls were to describe the fever suffered after visits to Labuan as being of a particularly virulent nature.⁵

On arriving in Borneo in June 1848 however McDougall seemed initially impressed by the climate, reporting that although his wife had suffered in the first month the inevitable attack of diarrhoea the rest of the party were 'in excellent health'. 'It is a most pleasant climate', he wrote, 'and I think a most healthy one to people who live moderately and take the

³ See Chapter 2, 107.

⁴ *Illustrated London News*, 3 April 1847, 212.

⁵ McDougall to Bullock, 13 January 1858, MSS.Pac.s.104 (3), 147.

commonest care of themselves'.⁶ Only the insalubrious court house on the river bank (where the party were temporarily accommodated) posed a threat to good health.⁷

Poor health brings greater realism

With the tact expected of a close relative Bunyon described McDougall's initial complacency about the climate of Sarawak as due to 'his sanguine temperament', but 'he was not long' in coming to more realistic conclusions.⁸ Within four months of arrival he reported 'a sharp attack of fever',⁹ and with Harriette facing her first confinement in the tropics the unhealthy court house was to witness a domestic tragedy.

The month of November 1848 proved a time 'of sickness and trial'. 'Weak and shaken' by his fever McDougall retreated to the mouth of the river for a few days to reap the benefit of the sea breezes, leaving his wife on her own with two-year-old Harry to cope with a difficult confinement. Whilst he was away she gave birth to a baby son Edward, who died within 24 hours, and not surprisingly on his return Frank recorded that he had never seen her 'so weak and ill'.¹⁰ That her skilled doctor husband could leave Harriette at such a critical time in order to recuperate from his own sickness revealed a selfish and insensitive streak which was to recur on subsequent occasions, when he was to appear more concerned for his own welfare than for her health.

One example occurred a year later. Most of 1849 was to see the McDougalls free from sickness, a condition no doubt assisted by their removal from the court house to the new mission house on the hill away from the river. Frank could cheerfully report in August that, as their new home was 'several degrees cooler' they were all now 'in good health . . . and quite acclimatised'.¹¹ On 5 November 1849 however Harriette gave birth to another son Thomas, who died five days later of convulsions, leaving her so seriously ill that the Rajah thought she was dying. Although he was in the main a caring husband McDougall again

⁶ McDougall to Brereton, 31 July 1848, MSS.Pac.s.104 (2), 6.

⁷ McDougall to Stooks, 1 August 1848, *Ibid.*, 9.

⁸ C.J. Bunyon, *Memoirs of Francis Thomas McDougall and of Harriette his Wife*, London, Longmans Green & Co, 1889, 34.

⁹ McDougall to Stooks, 26 October 1848, MSS.Pac.s.104 (2), 15.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 30 November 1848, *Ibid.*, 16.

¹¹ McDougall to Stooks, 25 August 1849, *Ibid.*, 41.

seemed more worried about the effects of her illness on his equilibrium than on her condition. He complained to the committee that,

The mere fatigue of watching and nursing, and still more, the terrible responsibility of having those you most dearly love and esteem, placed as it were by God in one's hands, is a trial which shakes the strongest man in mind and body.¹²

Without wishing to minimise his distress one might venture to think that the trial was more severe for Harriette, who seemed to bear her troubles in a more robust way. Both of them felt the benefit of a few months away from Sarawak in the first half of 1850, when they shared two bungalows at Penang with the Rajah, St John and Charles Grant, although the death of three-year-old Harry at Singapore en route must have been a bitter blow. For a time after their return to Kuching in June 1850, with Harriette free from pregnancy for twelve months, they were able to work without the pressures of illness. The first month of 1851 however brought a recurrence of fever, revealing a possibility which was to become increasingly clear as the years went by – that there was a strong psychological element in Frank McDougall's more frequent bouts of sickness.

Psychological explanations or excuses

In January 1851 the new church of St Thomas in Kuching was ready for consecration, and bishop Daniel Wilson came from Calcutta to perform the ceremony. In his own mind he found McDougall fit and well, and reported that 'the Chaplain' demonstrated a 'surprising measure of athletic health'.¹³ McDougall on the other hand was aware of feeling rather unwell and ended his report on the consecration by confessing, 'I feel quite down . . . I am writing under the unpleasant excitement of fever'.¹⁴

The word 'excitement' offered a clue to Frank's condition, a fact perceptively observed by Harriette in a letter to her sister describing the bishop's visit. She recorded that 'the consecration day . . . was a very exciting day for us', and that 'my dear Frank . . . looked as pale as you know he always does when much excited'.¹⁵ Whereas Daniel Wilson thought her

¹² Ibid., 21 December 1849, *Ibid.*, 47.

¹³ Bishop of Calcutta, Report, 18-23 January 1851, *Ibid.*, 68.

¹⁴ McDougall to Stooks, after 22 January 1851, *Ibid.*, 73.

¹⁵ H. McDougall to E. Bunyon, 6 February 1851, MSS.Pac.s.104 (1), 18.

husband 'a Hercules of strength . . . he was no sooner gone than Frank fell ill of the fever'. In Harriette's eyes 'the tiresome old Bishop' was to blame. 'Frank works under excitement to any extent, but feels it the more afterwards'.¹⁶

During the remaining months of 1851 McDougall's letters revealed almost continuous poor health, and an increasing concern to escape from his condition not so much by healing as by fleeing from the climate. Harriette's acute observation that her husband could only work well when faced by an exciting challenge, succumbing to sickness at more routine times, became more self-evident.

In April he was laid on his back with an inflamed knee joint, caused by walking on uneven jungle paths,¹⁷ but with the help of crutches and his leg in splints was able to embark with the Rajah on a month's trip to the Skrang and Rejang rivers. For McDougall it was a time of discovery, enlivened by such incidents as falling overboard from the deck of the gunboat,¹⁸ but not calculated to improve his health. A quick visit to the Singapore doctors provided temporary relief, but fresh aches and pains in September were diagnosed as the result of longstanding rheumatism.¹⁹ The excitements of Chambers' departure on his Dayak mission and the challenge of preaching his notable sermon stimulated McDougall over the weekend of 6/7 September,²⁰ but Harriette's third loss of a new-born baby (Robert) diverted his mind in another direction. She was 'very weak and delicate', he wrote, and needed 'a change of climate',²¹ as also, no doubt, did he. By October his yearning to escape from the Sarawak environment was clear. Again confined to bed with a damaged knee, and having tried in vain all possible remedies, he considered that he would never 'get well here' [i.e. in Sarawak] and would soon be obliged 'to go elsewhere for medical treatment, entire rest and change of climate'.²² A tendency is emerging here which has not been uncommon in the history of missions, of a missionary who may be rather a hypochondriac using illness as a means of escaping from what has become a disturbing environment. The sickness is not feigned. It is real enough, but the sign of a deeper and often unconfessed malaise.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ McDougall to Stooks, 15 April 1851, MSS.Pac.s.104 (2), 83.

¹⁸ Bunyon, *op.cit.*, 82.

¹⁹ McDougall to Stooks, 13 September 1851, MSS.Pac.s.104 (2), 105.

²⁰ See Chapter 3, 132-3.

²¹ McDougall to Stooks, 13 September 1851, MSS.Pac.s.104 (2), 106.

²² McDougall to Stooks, 11 October 1851, *Ibid.*, 109.

More frequent letters in October and November 1851 betrayed McDougall's increasing agitation, and culminated in his first specific request to the committee, supported by some special pleading, that he might be allowed to return to England to recover.

I often wish now that the Committee would find it expedient to call me home to make crusade for the Mission, for I verily believe that the voyage and the change would do more to set me up in strength and limb than all the remedies I can apply, and I should be able to be of use in England and after a few months return sound and strong.²³

In case the committee failed to get the hint a pointed warning followed. The continual sickness of the chief missionary was proving a positive hindrance to the expansion of the Mission, for Chinese detractors were hinting that God was punishing McDougall 'for misleading the Chinese converts'.²⁴

On receiving this letter in January 1852 the committee immediately responded. McDougall (with his wife) was given permission to return to England 'should the state of his health still require it'.²⁵ In the meantime, without waiting for a reply, he embarked on a long trip via Singapore and Malacca to Hong Kong to rest and recover.

With the aid of 'some London medical men' who were in Hong Kong, and bolstered by the cool and dry climate and the invigorating sea voyages, McDougall returned to Sarawak in April 1852 feeling much better. Although warned by the doctors in Hong Kong 'to be more patient'²⁶ life back in Kuching brought back all his old doubts, with the 'ruthless rheumatism' rendering both his legs so shaky that he could not stand without support.²⁷ He resolved to accept the committee's invitation to a furlough in England, and with Horsburgh (from Hong Kong) soon available to manage the Mission at Kuching in his absence he and Harriette crossed to Singapore in July. They had to wait until October for a suitable ship, so after supporting his wife in her fourth disappointing confinement on 1 August McDougall returned on his own to Sarawak via Labuan for a final check on Mission affairs.²⁸ Whilst he was away Harriette fractured her humerus when the horse dragging her cart bolted, and she

²³ Ibid., 11 November 1851, Ibid., 116.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Stooks to McDougall, 23 January 1852, CLS 54, 112.

²⁶ McDougall to Stooks, 29 January 1852, MSS.Pac.s.104 (2), 123.

²⁷ Ibid., 31 May 1852, Ibid., 144.

²⁸ Ibid., 7 August 1852, Ibid., 150.

must have been relieved when Frank returned and they were able to leave Singapore at the end of October.²⁹

By this time McDougall had collected another excuse for returning to England. The committee, who had been urging economies on him for over a year, seemed to have accused him of 'reckless outlay and scandalous expenses' [his words] in repairing the mission house. Regarding this accusation more as evidence of the committee's penury than of his profligacy an incensed McDougall replied that 'it is plain that the affairs of the Committee are in such a state that my immediate return to England is necessary'.³⁰ He and Harriette arrived in London at the end of November 1852 five weeks before the SPG takeover of the BCMI helped to ensure greater financial stability for the Borneo Mission. McDougall was thus able to spend the two years of his furlough not only in better health to cope with the strenuous touring but also with more confidence in promoting the Mission to its supporters and searching for new recruits. In a letter to one possible new colleague, the Revd G.W. Cox, he extolled the Sarawak climate 'for its general salubrity . . . particularly suited to those who cannot bear the severity of English winters'.³¹ Such is the disingenuousness required when recruiting missionaries! In the event Cox decided to go out with Colenso to Natal . . . a much more 'salubrious' location.

I can cure others . . . but not myself

With their baby daughter Mab, who had been born at the Colenso's vicarage in Norfolk in June 1853, Frank and Harriette embarked again for the East early in October 1854. Ill health on the section of the voyage from Calcutta to Singapore was blamed on the uncomfortable ship, but once they were back in Sarawak in the middle of 1855 the old troubles began to return, lameness in Frank and dysentery in Harriette.³² The excitements surrounding his consecration in October temporarily diverted his attention, but settlement again in Kuching at the beginning of 1856 saw the melancholy story of constant illness reactivated and continued.

²⁹ Ibid., 2 October 1852, Ibid., 152.

³⁰ Ibid

³¹ McDougall to G.W. Cox, 14 July 1853, Copy Letter Book. MSS.Ind.Ocn.s.292 (1), 2.

³² McDougall to Bullock, 31 July 1855, MSS.Pac.s.104 (3), 34.

In February McDougall reported a 'liver' complaint, with Mab and Harriette 'ailing' and the latter facing another possibly dangerous confinement.³³ Fortunately their second daughter Edith was born safely in April, but by May McDougall was complaining again not only of his liver and rheumatism but also of 'unpleasant attacks of haemorrhoids these last five months',³⁴ and in June Mab was struck by 'convulsions'. His own health was 'very much amiss',³⁵ so that by July – six months after the joy of returning to Sarawak as bishop – he was wishing that he could put the whole family on a ship for England.³⁶

It would be tedious as well as unnecessary to record the constant complaints of illness which litter McDougall's letters during the rest of 1856. By December he was again contemplating 'a complete change of climate'³⁷ and in a family letter by the same post described himself as 'a shaky hulk . . . next to good for nothing'.³⁸

This last reference by McDougall has led a recent sympathetic apologist for the bishop to comment on its psychological implications. The Revd A.J.M. Saint writes,

This description was written just two months before the Chinese insurrection and the privations which followed. His astonishing activity then and his powers of endurance suggest that there was a psychological element in his illness, and that as Harriette once said he could rouse himself to almost any extent in the excitement of crisis.³⁹

McDougall's behaviour during the Chinese attack on Kuching in February 1857 will be described later,⁴⁰ but both Frank and Harriette suffered from that event.

In reporting after the insurrection the need once again for a rest and change of climate McDougall alluded to the mocking words of the chief priests at Calvary which form the headings of these sections of Chapter 5.

³³ McDougall to Bullock, 2 February 1856, *Ibid.*, 57.

³⁴ McDougall to Hawkins, 19 May 1856, *Ibid.*, 74.

³⁵ McDougall to Bullock, 19 June 1856, *Ibid.*, 85.

³⁶ McDougall to Bunyon, July 1856, MSS.Pac.s.104 (1), 29.

³⁷ McDougall to Bullock, 12 December 1856, MSS.Pac.s.104 (3), 99.

³⁸ McDougall to Bunyon, 12 December 1856, MSS.Pac.s.104 (1), 32.

³⁹ A.J.M. Saint, *A Flourish for the Bishop and Brooke's friend Grant*, Braunton, Merlin Books, 1986, 59.

⁴⁰ See below, 238-42.

I am sorry that I am now so much weakened and so reduced that it is absolutely necessary for me to go away for medical care. *I can cure others here but it seems not myself.* [my italics].⁴¹

The prominence of 'I' and 'me' may be noted. Frank and Harriette, who must have been equally traumatised by the Chinese attack, went to Singapore and Penang to convalesce, with the former hinting that a complete cure ought to include 'a good bracing of home air'.⁴² His wife more shrewdly recognised that emotional remedies would do more good. 'My darling husband is very much pulled down with his long illness and likes better to be petted than he used when he was strong'.⁴³

The longing for England became more pronounced on their return to Sarawak in August 1857, with Frank having passed his 40th birthday in June. Harriette was 40 in the October and suffering from a miscarriage, so her 'darling husband' suggested that she and the children went home. She refused to leave him, with the prospect of a holiday bungalow by the sea at Santubong providing some relief. The McDougalls were to spend increasing amounts of time there as the months went by.

A visit to Labuan in December 1857 gave McDougall the inevitable fever and a cholera outbreak in Kuching early in February 1858 caused him more concern. By May an eye inflammation rendered his sight uncertain and made letter writing difficult,⁴⁴ but the arrival of three new missionaries diverted his attention and energies away from himself. Harriette was successfully delivered of a son (Herbert) in October, but Annie Brooke's death in childbirth⁴⁵ took the gloss off the McDougall's joy and renewed longings for England. Walter Chambers and his wife⁴⁶ were due home leave but McDougall grumbled that he and Harriette were more deserving. 'We are now a very cranky and overworked pair, and any medical [man] looking at us and the Chambers would say that we were the party that ought to be going home rather than they'.⁴⁷ The pressures were mounting.

⁴¹ McDougall to Hawkins, 3 April 1857, MSS.Pac.s.104 (3), 117.

⁴² McDougall to Bullock, 24 April 1857, *Ibid.*, 124.

⁴³ H. McDougall to Eliza Bunyon, 21 May 1857, MSS.Pac.s.104 (1), 50.

⁴⁴ McDougall to Bullock, 3 May 1858, MSS.Pac.s.104 (3), 164.

⁴⁵ Chapter 2, 106.

⁴⁶ See below, 259

⁴⁷ McDougall to Bunyon, 14 December 1858, MSS.Pac.s.104 (1), 107.

The year 1859 brought increased fears about Malay plotting, open anxieties among the missionaries and renewed concern for transferring the headquarters of the Mission to Singapore. Mab began to suffer from recurrent headaches and Harriette was having trouble with feeding her baby – she was after all approaching 42. Her confession in July that she was prepared to return to England ‘with or without Frank’⁴⁸ was revealing, but Frank had already made up his mind that he and his family should not remain for another hot season. As in 1852 there were further excuses for coming home, this time to promote the Singapore bishopric, find new recruits and explain his views on the work of the Mission in a way which was not possible in letters.⁴⁹

The expulsion of the chief Malay plotter removed any immediate danger from the Sarawak political scene and enabled the McDougalls to leave Kuching in November at a convenient moment. In his letter to the SPG reporting their departure Frank used a revealing phrase – ‘during the late excitements I felt much better than I had done for some time’.⁵⁰ Saint, who recognises a psychological element in McDougall’s illnesses from early 1857,⁵¹ comments on this latest revelation that ‘he was always at his best in times of crisis’.⁵² That there were also critics in England at this time who were suspicious of McDougall’s poor health was evidenced by the despatch of a medical certificate to the SPG written by the residency surgeon in Singapore which was intended to satisfy ‘those who think Missionaries and Colonial Bishops should never want change of climate . . .’⁵³

Disillusion leads to desperation

The second two-year furlough in England during 1860 and 1861 was something of a watershed in that when the McDougalls returned to Sarawak in March 1862 Harriette at least was able honestly to recognise the collapse of earlier illusions. When they had reached Kuching in 1855 at the end of their first furlough it was still ‘our chosen home’.⁵⁴ Of their return in 1862 she was later to comment that ‘ever after we spoke of going home to our children, for where the treasure is there must the heart be also’.⁵⁵ Back in Sarawak they must

⁴⁸ H. McDougall to Mrs Bunyon, 16 July 1859, *Ibid.*, 118.

⁴⁹ McDougall to Hawkins, August 1859, MSS.Pac.s.104 (3), 182.

⁵⁰ McDougall to Hawkins, 1 November 1859, *Ibid.*, 188.

⁵¹ See above, 231.

⁵² Saint, *op.cit.*, 96.

⁵³ McDougall to Hawkins, 10 January 1860, MSS.Pac.s.104 (4), 3.

⁵⁴ H. McDougall, *op.cit.*, 108.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 189.

soldier on with their work so that time would pass quickly, leading two separate lives – a pleasant one fuelled by the mail from England and a difficult one necessitated by duty.

Ever the loyal wife Harriette concluded that Frank 'was too true a missionary to feel as I did'.⁵⁶ The evidence of McDougall's constant longings for England suggested otherwise. He could however, for a time, use her as an excuse. Thus in 1864 he could record that 'Harry [Harriette] longs more and more to get home again to her children . . . she hates the place [Sarawak]'.⁵⁷ He could not quite admit how far he shared her disillusion.

Although the excitements provoked during the action against the Illanun pirates in May 1862 and the row in August over St John's criticisms of the Mission⁵⁸ temporarily diverted McDougall's attention away from his own health Harriette felt that they aggravated his problems. In October she noted that her husband was 'far from well', with pain in his side and fever.⁵⁹ A short break in Singapore in 1863 helped him to appear brighter, but returning to Sarawak caused afternoon headaches and feverish nights.⁶⁰ The following year 1864 brought several months of wet weather, with McDougall's liver affected, boils on his skin and gout. Harriette was crippled with asthma.⁶¹

Early in 1865 Frank was at last driven to contemplate desperate remedies. Perhaps he could exchange sees with Colenso in Natal? If the Rajah was plotting to drive him out of Sarawak he might accept leaving with a fair government pension or an exchange with a suitable man in England? By 1867 he would have been head of the Mission for 20 years, 'in a climate and under peculiar circumstances of risk and difficulty' such as 'none of our Colonial Bishops have had to encounter, or perhaps few if they had would have stood so long'.⁶² He was proud of his achievements and the Church owed him the reward of an escape to a less demanding sphere of work.

In the same month as that plea was entered Harriette made another attempt to analyse her husband's condition. She had noted that an attack of rheumatism had relieved his heart. Might it not be that his trouble was 'one malady sometimes attacking one part sometimes

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ McDougall to Bunyon, 15 April 1864, MSS.Pac.s.104 (1), 193.

⁵⁸ See below, 245-9.

⁵⁹ H. McDougall to Mrs Bunyon, 23 October 1862, MSS.Pac.s.104 (1), 167.

⁶⁰ H. McDougall to C. and E. Bunyon, 24 May 1863, Ibid., 173.

⁶¹ H. McDougall to H. Robson, 8 July 1864, Ibid., 197.

⁶² McDougall to Bunyon, February 1865, Ibid., 200.

another?'⁶³ Six months later, after noting how stout Frank was getting, she identified this 'one malady'. 'Anything that grieves Frank', she wrote to her brother, 'makes him ill' – the troubles of 1862-63 had 'laid the foundations of this mischief'.⁶⁴ She wished that McDougall was as thick-skinned as John Colenso 'who had much more hard usage to bear'.⁶⁵

Harriette was perceptive in suggesting a psychosomatic element governing her husband's continuous ill-health, but she oversimplified in tracing it to the traumas of 1862-63. His condition was deep-seated, but aggravated by the particular stresses brought on by the challenges presented by the peculiar difficulties of life in Sarawak. Indeed, with such a flaw in his temperament ('the least thing excites Frank') and lacking the robust nature of his brother-in-law McDougall would probably have been just as ill in the England of the 1860s, and possibly more so. Harriette sometimes thought that if they were at home Frank 'would have still more excitements with all the heartburning and controversies of these days, and perhaps it would kill him if he were in the midst of it'.⁶⁶ In fact, by the time they arrived back in England in 1867 some of the worst of the 'excitements' aroused by *Essays and Reviews* and Darwin's and Colenso's writings had abated, and McDougall's ability to survive was demonstrated by the way he coped with the arguments which raged at the first Lambeth Conference which he attended in that year.⁶⁷

McDougall survived because, in spite of an inability to diagnose and therefore treat the basic psychological causes of his ill-health, he knew when to give up the struggle. That became clear in October 1866 at the time he was clinging to the dream of completing 20 years' work in Sarawak, motivated by a combination of conscientious dedication to duty and hopes of moving to Singapore. With the Straits Bill going through Parliament such a move was a distinct possibility. It only remained to satisfy his conscience.

That this had finally been achieved was clear from his address to the 3rd Sarawak synod which met on 18 October 1866. In this he outlined the progress which had been accomplished in the Dayak mission and urged his colleagues to continue the good work – providing their health permitted. He then reminded them that,

⁶³ H. McDougall to Bunyon, 17 February 1865, *Ibid.*, 203.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 21 August 1865, *Ibid.*, 224.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ H. McDougall to E. Bunyon, 30 December 1865, *Ibid.*, 233.

⁶⁷ See Chapter 3, 166.

when health really fails, and when our power of our doing our work as we ought is taken from us in a climate in which we cannot reasonably expect to recover well (if at all), then indeed we may leave our post without misgivings of conscience.⁶⁸

Who could doubt that he was referring to himself and paving the way for his departure from the Mission? The sequence of events which followed – his trip to Labuan a few weeks after the synod and continuation to the visitation at Singapore, his embarkation for England without returning to say farewell to Sarawak, his decision to remain in England and resign the bishopric – would not have surprised his colleagues in the Mission. By October 1866, even if he did not publicly admit it, his intentions were perfectly clear. His leaving the Borneo Mission was a calculated move, but with a hint of desperation about it. No other choices remained.

Postscript

Borrowing his own expression from an 1856 letter,⁶⁹ McDougall began his new ministry in England as rector of Godmanchester ‘a shaky hulk’. When he took Bunyon to visit his new parish in 1868 his brother-in-law was reported as the new incumbent and McDougall – ‘a very old gentleman who seemed to be a bishop’ – regarded as his father, although there was not four years difference in age between them.⁷⁰ In spite of the English climate he never recovered good health, and the old ghosts haunted him for the rest of his life until his death in 1886. That much is clear in a final letter from Harriette recording her alarm one Sunday in 1882 when Frank had almost broken down in the middle of his sermon. ‘I do believe’, she wrote, ‘the ailments he has are a good deal dependent on his nerves; anything that interests him very much overcomes for the time his bodily vexations’.⁷¹ He could not change – the physician could not heal himself, even to the end. When the ‘excitements’ of Mab’s wedding in September 1886 ‘left him his infirmities returned’.⁷² He died in November – six months after Harriette.

⁶⁸ McDougall, ‘Address’ at Sarawak synod, 18 October 1866, MSS.916.18.s.3 (12), 15.

⁶⁹ See above, 231.

⁷⁰ Bunyon, *op.cit.*, 277.

⁷¹ H. McDougall to E. Bunyon, 1882, MSS.Ind.Ocn.s.292, 3 (1).

⁷² Bunyon, *op.cit.*, 346.

TIMOROUS BISHOP OR FIGHTING APOSTLE?

There were three occasions during McDougall's time in Sarawak when excitements banished his 'infirmities' and interesting events overcame his 'bodily vexations'. These were the Chinese insurrection in 1857, the Malay plotting of 1859, and the action against the Illanun pirates in 1862. It is important to examine these events in the light of accusations levelled at the time and in recent years which seem to expose further contradictions in McDougall's nature.

Accusations of cowardice and belligerence

In the recent novel *Borneo Fire*, extracts from which have already been quoted,⁷³ the author introduces a character Philip Blakeney whose family had worked for years in Sarawak under the second and third Rajahs. Resting one day on the verandah of his riverside house in Kuching Blakeney reflects on the events which took place along that same stretch of river during the Chinese insurrection in February 1857. He imagines James Brooke, the resourceful Rajah, escaping by swimming under the rebel boats, whilst the Chinese leader sits on the state throne in the court house 'to hear the oaths of sudden loyalty of, among others, the timorous bishop'.⁷⁴

Later in the novel McDougall's alleged cowardice in 1857 is contrasted with his supposed belligerence during the encounter with the pirates in 1862. Blakeney's son Hugh, meditating in the modern cathedral of St Thomas in Kuching, recalls how his father revelled in the story of how the bishop 'might during the Chinese rebellion have been too careful of his episcopal carcass, a touch too swift to pay homage to the President of the *kongsi*'. There was however a different side to McDougall, for Blakeney then remembers another of his father's stories,

of how at the sea fight between the *Rainbow* and three Illanun pirate *prahus* [in 1862] McDougall had helped to man the guns with conspicuous verve, had only with the most vocal reluctance been obliged before the shooting was finished to go below and tend the wounded.⁷⁵

⁷³ W. Rivière, *Borneo Fire*, Sceptre Paperback, London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1995, See Introduction, 3 and Chapter 2, 86.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 97.

Hugh Blakeney's 'dreamings' end with a cynical comparison between the Church reaction in England in 1862 when, with 'fighting bishops being out fashion', McDougall's 'glowing account of the battle' in *The Times* had caused an outcry, and the silence from the establishment in 1857 when 'in fright McDougall had sworn loyalty to a murderous Buddhist usurper'.⁷⁶

There was nothing new about such accusations. Charges of cowardice had been levelled at McDougall before, although in connection with a different event – his leaving Sarawak for a home leave in 1859.⁷⁷ His belligerence caused even his own relations and friends to rebuke him in 1862.⁷⁸ It is important to examine the events in order to assess the truth of the accusations and untangle some of the complexities of McDougall's nature.

The Chinese insurrection in February 1857

The details of the traumatic days between 18 and 24 February 1857 have been well documented by the major participants and need not be discussed at length. They agree on the salient points if not on interpretation.

The Chinese goldminers at Bau, about 30 miles south-west of Kuching, had resented taxes on opium and the Rajah's attempts to control their leadership for some time, and on the night of 18 February 1857 they attacked Kuching. James Brooke escaped by swimming under the Chinese boats and taking refuge with Malay officials, but other English residents were not so fortunate. Harry Nicholetts, on leave from the residency at Lundu, and a clerk of the Borneo Company named Wellington were killed, along with the four- and five-year old sons of Peter Middleton, the inspector of police. Others were badly wounded.

The party in the mission house on the other side of the river were awakened about midnight by the commotion, and McDougall prudently prepared them for flight into the jungle after concluding that resistance would be in vain.⁷⁹ Early in the morning of 19 February however the Chinese leaders sent a message that 'the teachers' would not be harmed, as their quarrel was with the government, and McDougall agreed to dress the wounds of the Chinese

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ See below, 243-4.

⁷⁸ See below, 246-7.

⁷⁹ McDougall to Hawkins, From Lingga, March 1857, MSS.Pac.s.104 (3), 110.

casualties. This accomplished he was summoned to meet the rebel leaders at the court house, along with L.V. Helms of the Borneo Company, the merchant G. Ruppell and the Malay chief of the town administration. It was at this meeting that there occurred the incident which provoked the accusation of cowardice in *Borneo Fire*.

Runciman outlines the significant details of this confrontation. On arrival at the court house the president of the Chinese business co-operative at Bau was discovered sitting in the Rajah's chair surrounded by his secretaries. Outside the head of Nicholetts was displayed on a pole, the crowd having been assured that it was the Rajah's.⁸⁰ The president opened proceedings by declaring that the Chinese, having made their point, wished to return to Bau and leave the government of Kuching under their authority in the hands of Helms, Ruppell and the Malay chief. Promises were exacted by the Chinese that they would not be pursued to Bau, and agreement was sealed by the Europeans and Malay leader swearing 'oaths of fidelity to the *kongsi* in the proper manner, scattering cock's blood over the documents'.⁸¹ McDougall in his account simply recorded, 'This we were obliged to agree to'.⁸²

There can be no doubt that McDougall and the others did submit to the Chinese ceremony. Harriette was later to record that when her husband returned to the mission house after the meeting his hat was covered with blood. 'It is only fowl's blood', he reassured her, 'don't be frightened: they killed a chicken over my head as a sign of friendship'.⁸³ Given McDougall's willingness to attend indigenous cultural ceremonies without entering into the spirit of the occasion⁸⁴ it should cause no surprise that he was able to accept the Chinese method of sealing the 'agreement' so nonchalantly. Nor were his European colleagues worried about hiding their true feelings for the sake of peace. Helms recorded, according to his secretary Paul Tidman, that after the ceremony 'tea and cigars were produced' and they had to sit for another half hour drinking and smoking before leaving with a handshake 'with the brutes whom with the greatest pleasure we could have shot dead on the spot'.⁸⁵

To accuse McDougall of being 'timorous' on this occasion is surely an exaggeration. A fairer judgement is that he was acting prudently and with common sense, as were the others. He also kept his wits about him, reminding the Chinese in the midst of the confusion that,

⁸⁰ S. Runciman, *The White Rajahs: A History of Sarawak from 1841 to 1946*, Cambridge, CUP, 1960, 129.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² McDougall to Hawkins, Lingga, March 1857, MSS.Pac.s.104 (3), 110.

⁸³ H. McDougall, *op.cit.*, 131.

⁸⁴ See Chapter 3, 126.

⁸⁵ R. Payne, *The White Rajahs of Sarawak*, Singapore, OUP, 1986, 91.

although they imagined they had killed the Rajah, they had forgotten about his younger nephew Charles Johnson 'who would certainly bring his Sea Dayak warriors to avenge his uncle's death'.⁸⁶

For the next three days after returning to the mission house McDougall's actions showed a mixture of resourcefulness, courage and bravado. The insurgent Chinese took his hint, going back to Bau on 21 February after plundering Kuching, and the bishop sent his family downriver to safety. After despatching a message to the Rajah urging him to return quickly to restore his authority he and some of the Mission staff patrolled the town overnight.

The following day, 22 February, McDougall found the Rajah at the mouth of the Quop river and persuaded him to return in the next 24 hours. On his way back to Kuching he learned that the Bau Chinese were mounting a new attack, unspiked the guns of the lower fort, and put the remaining Europeans into three boats ready to flee. As they left early on the 23rd the attack commenced, and with the rebels closing in on the church McDougall swam under fire to a passing Malay boat from whence he could work off some of his aggression in verbal blustering.⁸⁷

'The Chinese were monstrous bad shots', he later wrote,

and I shook my fist at the rascals and wished but for our company of the old 42nd or as many blue-jackets with which I could have paid them in full for the mischief they had done us – however this is very unepiscopal and I am heartily glad I was not obliged to shoot or wound anybody in my own defence . . . but the old Adam will out.⁸⁸

From the safety of the Malay boat McDougall also inveighed against James Brooke and his officials, 'grinding' his 'teeth with rage and shame' when he saw 'everybody from the Rajah downwards flying without making one single good fight for it before these ragamuffin undisciplined Chinese'.⁸⁹

It could of course be argued that the Rajah was also acting prudently in the face of greater numbers, but McDougall was not in the mood for rational thought. Much of his rage was

⁸⁶ Runciman, *op.cit.*, 129.

⁸⁷ All details are taken from McDougall's account of the insurrection, MSS.Pac.s.104 (3), 110f.

⁸⁸ McDougall to Bunyon, from HMS Spartan en route to Singapore, 17 April 1857, MSS.Pac.s.104 (1), 44.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

sheer bravado stirred up by all the danger and excitement around him, as was his remark to Tidman whom he encountered on the river on the 22nd. 'Come on board', he shouted to Tidman, 'if the Rajah deserts his country I must look after my diocese'.⁹⁰ There are echoes of McDougall's military childhood in these aggressive outpourings of defiance.

After having been reunited with his family and the wounded Europeans downriver McDougall took charge of the party and, at Brooke's request, took them to recover at Lingga on the river Lupar. The Rajah assumed control of affairs at Kuching and, reinforced by the sudden arrival of the armed Borneo Company steamer and some Dayak war canoes routed the Chinese forces, forcing them to flee first to Bau and then to Dutch Borneo at the cost of much bloodshed and terrible losses. McDougall and his party waited at Lingga before returning to Kuching.

McDougall's account of the insurrection may inevitably have been biased in his own favour, but the Rajah did not deny the bishop's version of events, simply emphasising his own role to his own advantage. A secondary witness to McDougall's bravery however was Tidman, who recorded that in the lull between the two Chinese attacks, and with Brooke absent, 'there would have been chaos but for the Bishop' who acted as 'commander-in-chief and organised everything'.⁹¹ Tidman further described the night when the Rajah's return was awaited, with

the Bishop about like the rest of us, keeping everyone together, encouraging everyone and directing everything. Like us all he was armed to the teeth with sword, double-barrel and revolver. He recalled the olden times when lord bishops could strike a blow, if need were, in a good cause.⁹²

Tidman was a devout churchman who had a great respect for McDougall, and his somewhat romantic description of events must be treated with caution, but there is no doubt that the bishop acted bravely and with initiative throughout the crisis. He was certainly not a 'timorous bishop'. He could in fact have become quite the opposite, a belligerent bishop of 'the olden times' if the opportunity had arisen, the 'old Adam' been released. Bunyon, who knew McDougall better than anyone apart from Harriette, was glad that the bishop had gone to Lingga.

⁹⁰ Bunyon, *op.cit.*, 152.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 150.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 152.

But there was one great advantage in the absence of the Bishop. Not only was no blow struck or blood shed by his hand except by his surgical instruments, but he was relieved from all concurrence in, or express approval of, the severe measures which followed the first overthrow of the insurgents.⁹³

Prudence, courage, bravado – McDougall could be congratulated for all these, so there was no adverse reaction at home. Fortunately he was not more provoked.

Fighting apostles or frightened sheep?

In spite of sharing the typical 19th century Anglican attitudes of aggressive antipathy towards the Roman Catholic Church, McDougall occasionally spoke of that Communion's missionaries with grudging admiration.⁹⁴ During a visit to Labuan in January 1858 he noted the introduction of a Roman Catholic mission into the colony and clearly envied the thoroughness of their preparations. They had arrived in great force with six missionaries and four ships, at a time when he was begging for one schooner.⁹⁵

Three of the ships were armed, having been old gunboats, and the leader of the RC mission was taking the fourth to Singapore – 'to arm her properly, as he says, as it is necessary to be fighting apostles in these parts'.⁹⁶ There seems no doubt that the pugnacious McDougall hankered also after being a 'fighting apostle', but although he was allowed to purchase his schooner there was no chance that the SPG would permit him to arm it. These were the times, it must be remembered, after the alarms of the Chinese insurrection and just as evidence of Malay plotting was coming to light. Without arms on his boat, and with the British government refusing to send a warship to safeguard the Europeans in Sarawak, all McDougall could rely on was the personal protection of weapons by his bedside.⁹⁷

Photographs taken with a new camera, he felt showed him at the time to be 'a fierce-looking fellow', fiercer in appearance than he used to be, 'pugnacious at times'.⁹⁸ One night he discovered an intruder in his dressing room and proceeded to 'grapple' with the man,

⁹³ Ibid., 147.

⁹⁴ See Chapter 1, 43 and Chapter 2, 78.

⁹⁵ McDougall to Bullock, 13 January 1858, MSS.Pac.s.104 (3), 147.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ See Chapter 2, 90.

⁹⁸ McDougall to Bunyon, 20 May 1858, MSS.Pac.s.104 (1), 97.

'pinioning his arms' and giving him 'a bear bug and a good licking'.⁹⁹ McDougall was clearly not too ill to engage in a good fight when his blood was up.

As the year 1858 wore on the sense of insecurity increased. In October McDougall was contemplating the possibility that the mission staff might have 'all our throats cut', the consciousness of which was 'making an old man' of him.¹⁰⁰ By early 1859 even the normally unflurried Harriette was facing the same possibility, but if their throats were cut she would 'like to be avenged'. Frank, she alleged, was getting 'very waxy', and if he wrote home by the same mail he was likely 'to blaze forth on the subject'.¹⁰¹ The rioting and murder of European missionaries in Dutch Borneo at the same time¹⁰² reinforced McDougall's fears that there was 'a growing spirit of hatred to the white man and Christians in general', and underlined his growing feeling that his family should go home.¹⁰³

How far McDougall's apprehensions during 1858 and 1859 affected his new colleagues is a matter for debate, but weaker men could not fail to have been influenced by the fears of their stronger and more experienced leader. The three new missionaries from St Augustine's College, Canterbury – Chalmers, Glover and Hackett (who was accompanied by his wife) – had arrived in Kuching in March 1858 and were ordained deacon on 4 April. Chalmers was to prove the most resilient and respected, Glover became ill with dysentery and left within two years, whilst the Hacketts succumbed to the general feeling of insecurity. In the event it was the McDougalls who were the first to leave Kuching, embarking for England in November 1859. Strangely, in view of McDougall's attempt to pin the blame for the uncertainty in the Mission on to his colleagues,¹⁰⁴ and Harriette's understanding that Hackett was 'too nervous for so unsettled a country',¹⁰⁵ the Hacketts were left in charge at Kuching on the McDougall's departure. New alarms early in 1860 unnerved them again and in March they fled to the safety of Malacca. In the same month Spenser St John arrived in Kuching for a visit, and was scathing in his criticisms of the departing missionaries.

'What a fine fellow the Bishop is', St John wrote to Charles Johnson, ' – telling Mr Crymble [the government treasurer] not to run away, and bolting himself'. The 'wretched Hackett . . .

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ H. and F. McDougall to Bunyon, 11 October 1858, *Ibid.*, 103.

¹⁰¹ H. McDougall to Bunyon, 2 February 1859, *Ibid.*, 113.

¹⁰² Chapter 2, 91.

¹⁰³ McDougall to Bunyon, 29 June 1859, MSS.Pac.s.104 (1), 115.

¹⁰⁴ See Chapter 2, 92.

¹⁰⁵ H. McDougall, *op.cit.*, 163.

bolted straight to Malacca. The abject flight of the Bishop and Hackett and families has been much talked of¹⁰⁶ was an allegation to be repeated in the Rajah's *Vindication* of St John in 1862.

A little over two months after St John's bitter comments the Rajah's elder nephew and designated heir John Brooke Brooke wrote the letter to his sister in which he accused McDougall of ulterior motives in wishing to move the seat of the bishopric to Singapore.¹⁰⁷ In the same letter he added his own opinions of the missionaries.

The Missionaries I say it openly have covered themselves with ignominy – at the first sign of danger they fled like frightened sheep, leaving flocks, deserting their posts really at a time when a little more pressure would have affected the conversion of whole tribes.

Brooke Brooke blamed McDougall for the missionaries' taking 'the first opportunity of bolting', for the bishop was 'unpopular among those under him, on account of his constantly snubbing and discouraging them'.¹⁰⁸

The criticisms of St John and Brooke Brooke contain some exaggerations, but it is interesting to note that the latter does not actually accuse McDougall of cowardice – rather of insensitivity towards his colleagues. Brooke Brooke in 1860 was still a good friend of the McDougalls, and a fairer critic, whereas St John had by then developed a strong dislike of the bishop.

To accuse McDougall of cowardice in going to England on furlough at a critical time for the state is unjust. He may have been worried about the security of the Mission, but that would not have driven him to desert his post. His strong wish to go home with his family was governed by a desire to recover from poor health and promote his interests in the matter of the Singapore see and the recruitment of new staff.¹⁰⁹ Similarly overstated, it was not the 'missionaries' in the plural who 'fled like frightened sheep'. Only the Hacketts departed in that manner, for Glover left through ill-health and Chalmers remained until 1861 – leaving then not through fright but out of disillusion with the objects of the Mission.

¹⁰⁶ St John to C Johnson, 10 March 1860, MSS.Pac.s.90, Vol. 5, 177.

¹⁰⁷ See Chapter 4, 220.

¹⁰⁸ J. Brooke Brooke to E. Johnson, 28 May 1860, MSS.Pac.s.90, Vol. 6, 100.

¹⁰⁹ See above, 233.

The charge that McDougall had fled through fear would not go away,¹¹⁰ largely because of the publicly stated fears for the security of Sarawak which he continued to express whilst on furlough in 1860. He would need to demonstrate again his courage when faced by danger.

The action against the Illanun pirates in 1862

When the McDougalls returned to Sarawak in March 1862 after more than two years' absence the prospect of a period of stability augured well for the progress of the Mission. The country was more peaceful, the church augmented by the simultaneous arrival of five new missionaries. Within two months however McDougall was to engage in actions which brought a storm of controversy upon his head and damaged his relationships, his prospects and – in Harriette's judgement – his health. That the Mission itself was not also damaged was perhaps a sign that, unlike in the early years, its success by this time was not too bound up with the fortunes of its chief missionary.

In May 1862 John Brooke Brooke's second wife Julia, whom he had married in 1861, died in childbirth like her predecessor Annie. The heir apparent was devastated, and in order to distract him from his sorrow McDougall suggested that the two men might enjoy a sailing trip along the north coast. They set off in the new steamer *Rainbow*, recently provided for the government by the generosity of Angela Burdett-Coutts, and on the voyage picked up the Rajah's old gunboat the *Jolly Bachelor*.

Although the danger from Dayak pirates had all but receded by this time there were still fleets of *Illanuns*¹¹¹ operating in the region. Off Mukah the two government ships encountered a fleet of six Illanun war boats with support vessels which were raiding along the coast and capturing slaves. In the subsequent engagement three of the war boats were at first destroyed and then, after a pursuit out to sea, all the others. It appears to have been a particularly violent and bloody action.

McDougall and Brooke Brooke quickly returned to Kuching with news of the engagement and Harriette immediately reported to her brother. The government ships had run over the

¹¹⁰ See, e.g. Runciman, *op.cit.*, 141.

¹¹¹ The *Illanuns* came from the Philippines, either from Illana Bay on the west coast of Mindanao or from lake Lanao which was inland on the same island.

pirate vessels 'one by one, sustaining and giving a heavy fire all the time'. As for Frank, he 'fought as you may imagine, till he had his hands full of wounded to dress'.¹¹² McDougall had 'fought' – but how? It was an ambiguous expression.

Frank's own account of the action was sent to *The Times* newspaper on 27 May and published in London on 16 July. Its triumphalist tone, as well as its contents, caused consternation in England and much condemnation of the bishop's behaviour, not only from critics like the Rajah but also from his family and friends like Wilberforce.

McDougall amplified, although still ambiguously, his wife's contention that he 'fought'. He mentioned that there were nine Europeans who took part, and 'we all had our own rifles and smooth-bores, and were to do our best to silence the enemy's guns and prevent them boarding'.¹¹³ Presumably in order to achieve these ends 'we' had to kill some Illanuns.

It was clear that the fiery McDougall relished the action, describing 'the chase' as 'most exciting', and this sense of exhilaration led him into a rash and injudicious public confession. He referred to 'our fire' as 'steady and galling' [for the Illanuns] in reducing their ability to respond, and it 'so thinned their men as to put the idea of boarding out of their heads'. 'Our weapons . . . were good and well-served'.¹¹⁴ It was at this point that McDougall made the confession which sparked the most outrage. In justice to the firm who had made it McDougall felt that he had to pay tribute to his

double-barrelled Terry's breach-loader [which] proved itself a most deadly weapon from its true shooting and certainty and rapidity of fire. It never missed fire once in eighty rounds . . .¹¹⁵

Blissfully unaware of how all this would sound at home McDougall ended his letter by thanking God 'who thus ordered things for us, and made us His instruments to punish these bloodthirsty foes of the human race'.¹¹⁶ His friends at home were not so confident of the divine blessing, and his brother-in-law was clearly shocked.

¹¹² H. McDougall to Bunyon, 20 May 1862. Quoted in Bunyon, *op.cit.*, 225.

¹¹³ *The Times*, London, 16 July 1862. The bishop's letter is quoted in full in A.J.M. Saint, *op.cit.*, 106-18.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

Bunyon wrote back a week after the letter was published, when early hostile reactions had come in. He was concerned on three counts. In the first place, 'the martial tone of the letter' and in particular 'the paragraph about the Terry breach-loader' . . . almost took his breath away and 'startled' McDougall's friends. Secondly, and with echoes of the non-publication of the sermon in 1851/52, the offensive paragraph 'did not greatly help' the negotiations for the Singapore bishopric which were then at a delicate stage. And thirdly, by an extraordinary coincidence, the question of 'episcopal warfare' had been debated only five days before McDougall's account was published when bishop Mackenzie's use of guns against the Ajawa [Yao] in Africa had been strongly condemned at the Oxford congress.¹¹⁷ The Church of England appeared to have produced two fighting bishops in the space of one week!

Bunyon had received the impression that McDougall had actually killed 80 pirates, and felt that this was 'not an Episcopal operation'.¹¹⁸ Others must have gained a similar impression, although it was not clearly stated in *The Times* letter, which simply referred to the 'true shooting' of the Terry rifle, 'thinning out' the Illanun. That the bishop had inflicted some fatalities – but hardly so accurately as one per shot – may be presumed from his strenuous efforts to defend his actions.

Shortly after the engagement, and a month before his letter appeared in *The Times*, McDougall confessed that the action had made him feel 'quite sick and guilty' until he saw the ferocity of his opponents. He hoped that he would never have to do 'so unpleasant a duty again, for it is a strangely distracting thing to be fighting pirates one week, and confirming and ordaining the next'.¹¹⁹ He clearly sensed the incongruity of his behaviour, the contradictions inherent in what he had done. After receiving Bunyon's letter and aware of the opposition at home he apologised to the SPG – but for the 'injudicious sentence' about his rifle, not for his actions'.¹²⁰ When forced seriously to argue his case in the face of continual criticism he claimed – as had Mackenzie – that he had acted in self-defence.¹²¹ Bunyon had already conceded that this was relevant.

Asked to arbitrate by an embarrassed and embattled SPG the Archbishop of Canterbury gave his judgement in January 1863 and answered the criticisms of Mackenzie as well as of

¹¹⁷ Bunyon to McDougall, 25 July 1862, MSS.Pac.s.104 (1), 153-156.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ McDougall to Bunyon, 16 June 1862. Quoted in Bunyon, *op.cit.*, 253.

¹²⁰ McDougall to the SPG, 12 September 1862, MSS.Pac.s.104 (4), 40.

¹²¹ For pamphlet see Bunyon, *op.cit.*, 228-233.

McDougall. He regretted the 'just offence' which had been given 'to Christian minds', and admitted that there were disagreements in the Church as to the legality of self-defence. But the question in the two cases was a wider one – 'whether a Christian ought to stand by, and see brother Christians and fellow creatures in peril of suffering . . . and should abstain from all attempts to rescue captives'.¹²² It was the classical Christian dilemma, to which there is no absolute answer, but rendered all the more problematical in 1862 by the active – and unique – involvement of two bishops.

The SPG contented itself and mollified its supporters by issuing in February 1863 a statement of principle which deprecated 'in the strongest manner its missionaries ever *willingly* [my italics] engaging' in the conflicts which might surround them in the mission field.¹²³ The qualification 'willingly' let McDougall off the hook, for against the Illanun he found himself in a situation from which he could not escape whether he had wanted to or not. That he enjoyed the 'excitement' cannot be doubted.

The incident exposed both virtues and flaws in McDougall's nature – his bravery, the fighting spirit bequeathed to him by his upbringing, his rashness and recklessness. Here was no 'timorous bishop' but rather a 'fighting apostle'. But the consequences were serious. He lost the friendship of people like Wilberforce and Maurice. The Rajah was incensed by the damage which the controversy might do to Sarawak.¹²⁴ McDougall himself wrecked his chances of preferment to the vacant see of Gibraltar, and later of Singapore, and was forced to remain in Borneo for a few more years.

A MAN MORE SINNED AGAINST THAN SINNING?¹²⁵

Defects of management – or character?

McDougall was in some ways fortunate that the controversy over his behaviour in 1862 in the action against the pirates was overshadowed by another debate in which his pugnacity received support rather than criticism. In the same week in which the bishop had used his

¹²² Longley to Hawkins, 12 January 1863, MSS.Pac.s.104 (4), 41.

¹²³ SPG Bound Pamphlets, 15011, Item 17, 13.

¹²⁴ J. Brooke to J.B. Brooke, 18 July 1862, MSS.Pac.s.90, Vol. 3, 314.

¹²⁵ William Shakespeare, *King Lear*, Act 3, Scene 2.

'Terry's breach-loader' Spenser St John published a book entitled *Life in the Forests of the Far East*, at the end of which he included some comments about the Borneo Mission.¹²⁶ He concentrated on what he saw as the failures of the Mission, among which was his allegation that, compared with the government officers who had stayed loyally at their remote out-stations, ten out of fourteen missionaries had 'abandoned their duties in Borneo'. Their 'desertion . . . must be ascribed to defects of management rather than to dislike of the country'.¹²⁷

St John had no doubt what these 'defects' were – they related to the deficiencies in the character of the chief missionary, who was 'overbearing and coarse' in his manner 'towards his subordinates', 'ungenerous' to their foibles, and systematically disparaged their work.¹²⁸ These were accusations which McDougall, with his combative nature, found impossible to ignore, and as soon as he had read St John's chapter in August 1862 he sent an aggressive defence to the SPG.¹²⁹ In this he offended both the Rajah, by claiming that the slow progress of the Mission had been affected by the unsettled state of the country necessitating calling out the Dayaks 'to fight and take heads', and St John by accusing him of causing Fox to lose faith and being 'an evil influence' in the Sarawak community.¹³⁰

When the SPG published McDougall's apologia in a pamphlet in November the Rajah retaliated by writing an anonymous *Vindication* in which he supported St John's allegations that the bishop showed contempt for his colleagues, and denied that St John had corrupted Fox.¹³¹ The other missionaries immediately leapt to McDougall's defence.

Harriette McDougall was deeply hurt by the accusations made against her husband, not only by those who by this time had become actively hostile to him but also by her friend John Brooke Brooke.¹³² She wrote to the heir apparent in December 1862 that it was Frank who needed sympathy rather than his colleagues.

I feel very deeply the injustice of saying that Frank's conduct to his missionaries drove any of them away. I have seen how he has borne with

¹²⁶ Spenser St John, *Life in the Forests of the Far East*, 2 volumes, Kuala Lumpur, OUP, reprint 1974, Vol. 2, 365-381.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 375, 380.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 377.

¹²⁹ McDougall to Hawkins, 20 August 1862, MSS.Pac.s.104 (4), 29-39.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 33, 37.

¹³¹ *The Bishop of Labuan: a Vindication of Statements contained in 'Life in the Forests of the Far East'*, London, William Ridgway, 1862.

¹³² See below, 261.

them , and made the most of them, how generous he has been to them – and how very trying they have often been, how disappointing and inefficient, and I think that they have no cause for complaint and that it is he who has need to be pitied.¹³³

It might have been expected that the loyal wife would have supported her beleaguered husband, but Harriette was usually a shrewd judge. It is necessary to test her judgement, and that of those who disagreed with her, by examining McDougall's own words to and conduct towards his colleagues, particularly those who by reason of race or sex might have been expected to be less congenial to him than his fellow male English missionaries.

Attitudes towards colleagues of mixed race

It should occasion no surprise to discover that McDougall shared the general racial prejudices of his time against the Jews¹³⁴ and the French,¹³⁵ and could make derogatory remarks about 'Hibernians',¹³⁶ 'Scotch Presbyterians',¹³⁷ and 'Germans'.¹³⁸ Towards the Dayaks and Malays in Sarawak he was more circumspect if at times a little patronising but the Chinese were treated with marked contempt.¹³⁹ What he thought of his later Chinese catechists is unrecorded, but when the schoolmaster Ayoon had seduced some of the Home School girls in 1853 McDougall wrote indignantly of the 'extreme sensuality' of the Chinese,¹⁴⁰ and Foo Ngyen Khoon's report from Bau in 1856 was sent to Bullock of the SPG with the suggestion that 'it may amuse you'.¹⁴¹

As noted earlier in this thesis¹⁴² McDougall's relationship with his first English colleague W.B. Wright deteriorated soon after they had both arrived in Sarawak and ended with some very sour comments about his 'assistant missionary'. The second Englishman to augment the

¹³³ H. McDougall to J. Brooke Brooke, 3 December (probably) 1862, , MSS.Pac.s.90, Vol. 14, 149.

¹³⁴ McDougall to Bullock, 4 July 1853, , MSS.Pac.s.104 (3), 13.

¹³⁵ McDougall to Bunyon, 20 May 1858, , MSS.Pac.s.104 (1), 97.

¹³⁶ McDougall to Bullock, 4 July 1853, , MSS.Pac.s.104 (3), 13.

¹³⁷ McDougall to Hawkins, 5 January 1857, Ibid., 108.

¹³⁸ McDougall to Bullock, 30 March 1862, , MSS.Pac.s.104 (4), 16.

¹³⁹ See Chapter 1, 32.

¹⁴⁰ McDougall to Horsburgh, 3 October 1853, Copy Letter Book, MSS.Ind.Ocn.s.292 (1), 2.

¹⁴¹ McDougall to Bullock, 12 December 1856, , MSS.Pac.s.104 (3), 99.

¹⁴² See Chapter 1, 48-51.

Mission, Walter Chambers, reached Kuching in March 1851 and soon came in for sustained criticism.¹⁴³

In some ways McDougall liked Chambers and admired his energy, but he soon found his new colleague lacking in common sense and worldly wisdom and full of 'English prejudices'. Working together over many years did not soften McDougall's rather censorious judgements, for even when he began to realise in 1866 that it might be wise to groom a successor he did not consider Chambers a suitable candidate.¹⁴⁴

How then would the third ordained missionary appointed to the staff of the Borneo Mission be appreciated, particularly as he was not an Englishman? William Henry Gomes, a deacon who arrived in Sarawak in June 1852, was of mixed Sinhalese-Portuguese parentage. He had been trained at Bishops College, Calcutta, under Street – so much to McDougall's satisfaction that he was allowed to preach only a week after arrival. Initial reactions were favourable, for the sermon was 'one of the best' that McDougall had heard 'out here' – 'good doctrine, good language, good voice'. But then Gomes spoke 'quite like an Englishman'.¹⁴⁵ To the SPG by the same post McDougall rejoiced that Gomes was of 'purely native blood' who knew his place – 'he was ready to work under direction' – and was 'a most pleasing example of the wondrous power of Christianity to raise men of every clime and tongue and colour to their proper position in the Kingdom of Heaven'.¹⁴⁶ There is a patronising element in such talk which questions how McDougall would have viewed Gomes's 'proper position' in the Kingdom.

In a breathtaking postscript to these remarks McDougall recorded that he hesitated about sending Gomes to work with Chambers among the Dayaks as the Englishman was 'a little prejudiced and would not I fear relish a native colleague'.¹⁴⁷ Clearly a case of the pot calling the kettle black! In fact the two men worked well together after McDougall departed on furlough in October 1852, initiating work among some Dayaks a little downstream from Kuching town before separating for mission in different Dayak areas.

¹⁴³ McDougall to Stooks, 29 March 1851, 10 June 1851, 15 August 1851, 13 September 1851, , MSS.Pac.s.104 (2), 77-105.

¹⁴⁴ McDougall to Bullock, 15 January 1866, OLR. D23b.

¹⁴⁵ McDougall to Stooks, 18 June 1852, , MSS.Pac.s.104 (2), 148.

¹⁴⁶ McDougall to Hawkins, 17 June 1852, , MSS.Pac.s.104 (3), 9.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

The deterioration in McDougall's relationship with Gomes began in 1856, after his consecration and return to Sarawak from Calcutta. The bishop's health was worsening and he was conscious of the slow progress of the Dayak mission. Both Chambers and Gomes had enjoyed a large measure of independence from central authority in McDougall's long absence. It only needed a spark to provoke an inflammatory reaction. The occasion was provided when Gomes visited Singapore in May 1856 to supervise some printing and enjoy a short holiday. The bishop heard indirectly that Gomes was really in Singapore to find a wife and was about to marry 'a low-born half-caste girl' who was 'not a fitting person for a clergyman's . . . or a Missionary's wife'.¹⁴⁸ Gomes should have 'married a Dyak woman' – an interesting comment exposing the finer nuances of McDougall's prejudices.

He felt that Gomes had deceived him and reacted with anger. 'He got leave from me under false pretences I fear – Pshaw! Nigger will out – it is too true that one can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear'.¹⁴⁹ The unfairness of such a judgement is compounded when it is clear that Frank and Harriette half suspected that Gomes was in fact going to Singapore to find a wife.¹⁵⁰

In fact when the couple returned from Singapore and settled at Lundu reports came to McDougall that Mrs Gomes 'may turn out well' and increase her husband's 'usefulness'.¹⁵¹ Early in 1857 this appeared not to have happened, with McDougall reporting that Gomes was 'lazy' and in need of an injection of enthusiasm which might be provided if the eccentric female missionary Sarah Coomes was sent to Lundu to assist him.¹⁵² A month later, just before the Chinese insurrection delayed such a move, invective returned to McDougall's vocabulary. Gomes was 'a regular Nigger and won't hurt himself by work – Bengal fashion'.¹⁵³ In fact, since arriving at Lundu Gomes had opened and maintained a flourishing school, baptised a number of Dayaks, erected a temporary church for both daily and Sunday services, translated a Malay catechism, printed extracts from the Gospels, given weekly lectures on the life of Christ and finally – in October 1856 – presented 12 Dayaks for confirmation. McDougall was not the first (or last) European to undervalue the different Asian work ethic.

¹⁴⁸ McDougall to Bullock, 29 May 1856, *Ibid.*, 78.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ H. McDougall to J. Brooke Brooke, 28 March 1856, , MSS.Pac.s.90, Vol. 14, 136.

¹⁵¹ McDougall to Hawkins, 9 October 1856, , MSS.Pac.s.104 (3), 97.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 5 January 1857, *Ibid.*, 108.

¹⁵³ McDougall to Bunyon, 9 February 1857, , MSS.Pac.s.104 (1), 39.

Whilst recovering at Singapore from the dramatic events of February 1857 McDougall sent Gomes's annual report recording the evidence of his work to the SPG, denigrating it as 'a sadly drivelling affair'. The Lundu missionary's marriage was now adduced as proof that the bishop had been right in his opposition. 'I do not know what has come over the man since he married; he has become fat, lazy and cantankerous'.¹⁵⁴ Miss Coomes had now gone to Lundu where she might be 'of use in infusing life into the of late somewhat laggard operations of Mr Gomes'.¹⁵⁵ This was a mean-spirited act, for by this time McDougall had become disenchanted with Sarah Coomes and unceremoniously dumped her onto his unfortunate colleague – with predictable results.¹⁵⁶ Twelve months later he was to do the same with the 'irascible, disputatious, conceited and impertinent' young catechist Cameron.¹⁵⁷

His second long furlough in 1860 and 1861 mellowed McDougall's prejudices, and on his return to Sarawak in March 1862 he seemed more prepared to admit Gomes's virtues. In forwarding to the SPG his colleague's request for an increase in salary he remarked that Gomes had worked well at Lundu and was entitled to more pay. But that did not mean that 'Native Missionaries and their families [required] the same salaries as Europeans . . .'.¹⁵⁸

The honeymoon did not last for long and in August 1862 three events linked together to cause a further breach in relations between the two men. McDougall learned of St John's attack on his leadership of the Mission.¹⁵⁹ Gomes accepted from the government the post of acting-resident at Lundu. And, because of the sensitivity of his new position, Gomes refused to sign a public letter of support for the bishop written by all the other missionaries. He did, however, graciously send a private letter to McDougall in which he denied St John's claim that missionaries had left because of quarrels with their leader. A generous postscript was added, Gomes affirming that he was personally 'indebted to the Bishop for much kindness over a period of ten years and that his work has never been interfered with'.¹⁶⁰

That the bishop was angered by Gomes's refusal to affirm his public support along with the other missionaries was made clear when he sent a copy of their letter to the SPG in October. In his covering letter to Bunyon McDougall recorded that he and Chambers had visited

¹⁵⁴ McDougall to Hawkins, 4 June 1857, MSS.Pac.s.104 (3), 126.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ See below, 258.

¹⁵⁷ McDougall to Bullock, 3 May 1858, , MSS.Pac.s.104 (3), 164.

¹⁵⁸ McDougall to Hawkins, 18 June 1862, , MSS.Pac.s.104 (4), 21.

¹⁵⁹ See above, 249.

¹⁶⁰ Gomes to McDougall, 27 August 1862, , MSS.Pac.s.104 (4), 45.

Lundu and had been 'much disappointed and grieved' to discover that, in their estimation, 'real missionary work is neglected'.¹⁶¹ Gomes 'considers himself a cut above' McDougall, and 'the missionary work was postponed to the civil' . . . 'the man is resolved to be contumacious, and before long we shall have a row, but in spite of the parson I feel most hopeful about the people'.¹⁶²

An accusation followed which showed how unbalanced McDougall had become in his attitude to Gomes. In the bishop's estimation the reason for the refusal to sign the public letter of support from the missionaries was that 'being now an employee of the government [Gomes] is afraid to offend' the head of state. If Gomes did offend James Brooke it would 'prejudice'

any prospects that hypocritical old Rajah may have held out to him in the event of my being removed – perhaps he has promised to make him Bishop of Sarawak – a cringing, fawning, lying native, his abject slave would just suit the Rajah's views.¹⁶³

Soon after that bitter judgement had been delivered John Brooke confided to a friend that he thought McDougall was jealous of Gomes and wanted to get rid of him.¹⁶⁴ That perception may not have been too wide of the mark. In a perverse way McDougall was jealous, but not because the authorities saw Gomes as a successor – rather because they saw him as a better missionary.

In his report for 1862, sent to the SPG in January 1863, McDougall alleged that 'Gomes and Koch were in a very discontented frame of mind'. They had been 'growly and jealous since the arrival in 1858 of the men from St Augustine's College, as the English missionaries 'worked harder and better' than the two Eurasians.¹⁶⁵

Charles Koch like Gomes was of mixed parentage (Dutch and Sinhalese), and had worked in the Mission since 1856. McDougall at first thought highly of him, ordaining him deacon and priest and leaving him in charge at Kuching when he went on leave in 1859. Koch then married Rosina McKee, the maid left behind by Dr Conroy¹⁶⁶ (to whom Harriette confided

¹⁶¹ McDougall to Bunyon, 22 October 1862, , MSS.Pac.s.104 (1), 163.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ J. Brooke Brooke to R. Hay, 6 November 1862, , MSS.Pac.s.90, Vol. 7, 100.

¹⁶⁵ McDougall to Hawkins, 12 January 1863, MSS.Pac.s.104 (4), 62.

¹⁶⁶ See Chapter 2, 105.

her most intimate thoughts).¹⁶⁷ On McDougall's return from leave in March 1862 Mr and Mrs Koch were praised for their maintenance of the Mission during Frank and Harriette's absence.¹⁶⁸ By October Koch, like Gomes, could do nothing right.

The reason for the discontent of the two men must be found in McDougall's slighting and disdainful remarks about 'natives and Half-Castes'.¹⁶⁹ Harriette was being disingenuous when she blamed the Rajah and St John for setting everybody against her husband 'by relating imaginary things they had heard him say of people here'.¹⁷⁰ McDougall was also deceiving himself when he attributed the unhappiness of Gomes and Koch to those who had 'impressed them with the idea that I was unfavourable to native missionaries and had spoken ill of them both to the Society [the SPG] – which as you [Hawkins] know is not a fact'. A few sentences later in the same letter McDougall was referring to Gomes as 'fat and lazy'.¹⁷¹ Most human beings are blind to their faults, and McDougall shared this condition, but how sad it was that Harriette appeared to condone his obtuseness. She seemed as paranoid as her husband during these years of stress in believing that the Rajah was engaged in recruiting the other missionaries for 'an opposition Mission'.¹⁷² This may explain why she defended Frank so vigorously in the letter to John Brooke Brooke in which she claimed that 'it was he who had need to be pitied' rather than his vilified colleagues.¹⁷³ Her private thoughts were never revealed.

Attitudes towards women missionaries

Like Harriette, the early women missionaries were invariably the wives of the men. When the McDougalls sailed for Sarawak in December 1847 their first companions were Mr and Mrs Wright. That same month the first edition of Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre* had just sold out and a second edition was in preparation. At one point in the story Jane received a proposal of marriage from the Revd St John Rivers, who was feeling the call to be a missionary in the East and needed a wife to be his 'helper'. 'Your assistance', he assured the sceptical Jane, 'will be to me invaluable'.¹⁷⁴

¹⁶⁷ See below, 261.

¹⁶⁸ McDougall to Bullock, 30 March 1862, SPG, OLR, D23b.

¹⁶⁹ J. Brooke Brooke to McDougall, 31 October 1862, MSS.Pac.s.90, Box 2, item 5.

¹⁷⁰ H. McDougall to E. Bunyon, October 1862, MSS.Pac.s.104 (1), 161.

¹⁷¹ McDougall to Hawkins, 12 January 1863, MSS.Pac.s.104 (4), 62.

¹⁷² H. McDougall to C. and E. Bunyon, 24 May 1863, MSS.Pac.s.104 (1), 173.

¹⁷³ See above, 249-50.

¹⁷⁴ C. Bronte, *Jane Eyre*, London and Glasgow, Collins Pocket Classics, undated, 439.

Mrs McDougall and Mrs Wright were certainly valuable assistants and helpers to their husbands, but they were far more than that, women of independence and spirit. During his furlough in 1853 and 1854 McDougall tried to recruit another married couple, G.W. Cox only considered along with 'a sight of Mrs Cox'.¹⁷⁵ When that attempt failed and the Coxes chose to go to Natal McDougall was offered two single ladies by the newly-formed Borneo Female Mission Fund – one of many such groups emerging in the 1850s to harness the spiritual energies and philanthropic zeal of unmarried women who were seeking freedom from the domestic chains which were then binding so many of their sisters. The Borneo Mission was one of the first to employ single women, Miss Brown and Miss Williams sailing with the party that embarked with Frank and Harriette early in October 1854.

This first initiative was not a success. Miss Brown earned McDougall's wrath by desiring to take part in a fancy-dress ball on the boat, a proposal which – he informed her – was 'wholly inconsistent with the office of a religious teacher' which she had chosen to follow.¹⁷⁶ By February 1855, when the party had reached Calcutta, Harriette was recording that when they travelled on to Singapore 'Miss Brown was to be left behind as she had proved herself quite the wrong sort of person for Sarawak'.¹⁷⁷ No reasons were given, but it natural to ask if she was too 'worldly' to be a congenial colleague to Frank and Harriette, bearing in mind their strict evangelical upbringing.

Miss J Williams did manage to reach Sarawak and begin work, but aroused more anxiety for the McDougalls than Miss Brown. Frank, with his low level of tolerance, soon found her 'a stick of the direst [driest?] kind',¹⁷⁸ although that did not prevent him from contemplating her possible marriage to one of his missionaries. It 'is not unlikely in a place like this where men are wanting love so much'.¹⁷⁹ In fact, instead of choosing matrimony, Miss Williams – who had been selected whilst still in shock following the death of her fiancé – made a bungled attempt at suicide when McDougall was in Calcutta for his consecration.¹⁸⁰ On being asked why she was unhappy Miss Williams replied that 'she did not think she should be any use as a missionary', which made Harriette diagnose that 'Sarawak was too monotonous a life for her'. Despondency was a particular hazard for single men and women'.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁵ McDougall to Bullock, 23 July 1853, MSS.Ind.Ocn.s.292 (1), 2.

¹⁷⁶ McDougall to Miss Brown, *The Alfred*, 19 December 1854, Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ H. McDougall to Bunyon, 2 February 1855, MSS.Pac.s.104 (1), 22.

¹⁷⁸ McDougall to Bunyon, 4 May 1855, MSS.Ind.Ocn.s.292 (1), 2.

¹⁷⁹ McDougall to E. Wooley, 11 May 1855, Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ H. McDougall, op.cit., 116-7.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

Much to McDougall's disgust Miss Williams declined all offers of marriage and confined 'herself to her room, where she gets the blues'.¹⁸² In February 1856 she left for Singapore, where she was to work well for a number of years, unlamented by the unsympathetic bishop who described her as 'a sad trial . . . to us all'.¹⁸³

Her successor, Miss Sarah Coomes, was to prove even more of a 'trial'. A middle-aged schoolteacher from Birmingham, she was the first woman missionary to be accepted by the SPG as distinct from the Borneo Female Mission Fund. In December 1855, with Miss Williams refusing proposals of marriage, McDougall welcomed the news of Miss Coomes's posting provided that she was 'not unwilling to marry one of the missionaries – there ought to be a wife at Lingga [Chambers] and Lundu [Gomes] now'.¹⁸⁴ He obviously could not accept that a single woman missionary might have a particular vocation.

Whilst waiting for Sarah Coomes to arrive McDougall's apprehensions about single women surfaced. He confessed to the SPG that he was

rather frightened about maiden ladies now after the troubles we have had with the difficult [word illegible]. A good woman is indeed a treasure, but bad ones are to my mind the most useful emissaries the evil one can find to obstruct a Mission or any other good work.¹⁸⁵

This was an extreme and simplistic judgement from a man who often over-reacted to situations. In fact Miss Coomes turned out to be 'eccentric' rather than 'bad', but that was still sufficient to doom her relationship with the head of the Mission. Within a month of her arrival in August 1856 McDougall became sceptical of her enthusiasm, her anxiety 'to give her testimony to the heathen as she says'.¹⁸⁶ Her gaffe in visiting the Rajah when he was disrobed for his mid-day siesta caused the bishop some unkind amusement.¹⁸⁷ When she dressed for Christmas in bright clothes more appropriate to a sixteen-year-old McDougall concluded that Sarah Coomes was 'a wee bit daft'.¹⁸⁸ The final straw came in the aftermath to the Chinese insurrection, when she sent a rather flamboyant account of the event to the SPG which reached them before the bishop's version. Annoyed by this McDougall had

¹⁸² McDougall to Bullock, 29 December 1855, MSS.Pac.s.104 (3), 50.

¹⁸³ McDougall to Hawkins, 19 May 1856, *Ibid.*, 74.

¹⁸⁴ McDougall to Bullock, 29 December 1855, *Ibid.*, 50.

¹⁸⁵ McDougall to Bullock, 29 May 1856, *Ibid.*, 78.

¹⁸⁶ McDougall to Hawkins, 24 September 1856, *Ibid.*, 90.

¹⁸⁷ McDougall to Bullock, 25 September 1856, *Ibid.*, 92.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 31 December 1856, *Ibid.*, 106.

concluded by April 1857 that the first SPG woman missionary was ‘poor crazy Miss Coomes’.¹⁸⁹ He determined to remove her from further aggravation by sending her to Gomes at Lundu, an act which even the normally sympathetic A.J.M. Saint considers to have had ‘a touch of malice in it’.¹⁹⁰

Instead of infusing life into the allegedly lazy Gomes Sarah Coomes only brought him anxiety. According to Harriette the Lundu missionary revealed that Miss Coomes was ‘dirty and untidy’, kept two pigs in her sitting room, sat down to meals in revealing attire and quarrelled with all the servants.¹⁹¹ Not welcome in either Kuching or Lundu, Sarah Coomes resigned from the Mission in August 1857 after only one year’s work and moved to Singapore to teach in a girls’ school.

McDougall was informed of her resignation on his return from three months convalescence on the mainland – so he had not even supervised her stay at Lundu – and offered all kinds of excuses. Miss Coomes ‘had plainly tired of the work, as I foresaw’ – ‘she was not suited to the patient work of a Dyak missionary’ – ‘she wants excitement and praise’ – ‘she has displeased everybody in the Mission’.¹⁹² All the blame for the breakdown in relationships was put on the woman – and on *women* in general. McDougall reflected on his experiences,

Women, above all English women, seem most difficult to manage in Missionary work; they get so queer and cranky out here, I have got so nervous about them of late . . .¹⁹³

Undoubtedly his three women colleagues so far had been unusual people, but his own intolerance was surely a factor. In addition, the selection process which approved them might have been more discerning, as the fourth lady to serve in the Mission acutely observed when commenting on the unfortunate events at Lundu. ‘I wish people at home knew how much mischief is done by sending out improper, I mean unsuitable people’.¹⁹⁴

The fourth woman missionary to work in Sarawak, Elizabeth Wooley – who reached Kuching in December 1856 – had certain advantages over her predecessors. She was a

¹⁸⁹ McDougall to Hawkins, 3 April 1856, *Ibid.*, 117.

¹⁹⁰ Saint, *op.cit.*, 75.

¹⁹¹ H. McDougall to E. Bunyon, 20 September 1857, MSS.Pac.s.104 (1), 56.

¹⁹² McDougall to Hawkins, 26 August 1857, MSS.Pac.s.104 (3), 141.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁴ Elizabeth Chambers (née Wooley) to E. Bunyon, 3 September 1857, MSS.Pac.s.104 (1), 54.

cousin of McDougall's,¹⁹⁵ was 'gentle, kindly, ladylike, industrious and enterprising' and very practical,¹⁹⁶ and perhaps above all prepared to marry. On 27 August 1857 McDougall solemnised her marriage to Walter Chambers, having previously saluted her as 'a highly accomplished and truly Christian lady' and hoping that the union 'which is a most desirable thing for Chambers, will add to his usefulness and comfort in every way'.¹⁹⁷

One further advantage which Elizabeth Chambers shared with her husband, and which only became obvious with the passage of time, was the inability or disinclination to bear children. Frank and Harriette McDougall had experienced their fair share of grief with the death of four babies and two sons between 1848 and 1854, but they were to have four more children who lived. Leaving them behind in England when they returned to Sarawak in 1862 made Harriette more discontented with life in the Mission in the final years, and caused her to reflect on the disadvantages for missionaries of having children.

If Missionaries' wives would not have babies see how much more use they would be to the Mission. But unfortunately they always do and then they are a great hindrance in many ways.¹⁹⁸

Earlier reflection had also undermined her support for her husband in his obsession for the marriage of his colleagues. During the cholera outbreak early in 1858, with Frank absent in Labuan, Harriette considered that if there had been any Roman Catholic missionaries working in Kuching they would have been among the victims 'day and night, for they would have no consideration of wives and children to keep them at home'.¹⁹⁹ She was more specific during the different kind of dangers associated with the Malay plots in October 1859, when Mr and Mrs Hackett were so nervous. 'Single men are the best missionaries', she wrote to her mother, '– it is a mistake to be hampered with worldly goods in Sarawak'.²⁰⁰ Even on one occasion during her final spell of duty Harriette had 'no doubt that the Roman Catholics with their vows of celibacy are more fitted for Missionary life than our persuasion'.²⁰¹

What McDougall thought of his wife's opinions is not recorded, and it is possible that her conclusions on the blessings of celibacy were transitory, provoked at stressful moments and

¹⁹⁵ H. McDougall, *op.cit.*, 119.

¹⁹⁶ H. McDougall to E. Bunyon, 5 January 1857, MSS.Pac.s.104 (1), 33-4.

¹⁹⁷ McDougall to Hawkins, 4 June 1857, MSS.Pac.s.104 (3), 126.

¹⁹⁸ H. McDougall to E. Robson, 13 February 1866, MSS.Pac.s.104 (1), 238.

¹⁹⁹ Bunyon, *op.cit.*, 171.

²⁰⁰ H. McDougall to Mrs Bunyon, 18 October 1859, MSS.Pac.s.104 (1), 131.

²⁰¹ H. McDougall to C. and E. Bunyon, 24 May 1863, *Ibid.*, 177.

not representative of her considered thoughts. Although she appears only to have favoured, albeit temporarily, single *male* missionaries she was aware of the particular contribution that the *women* could offer. By December 1858, with the married Miss Wooley on her way to England for leave with her husband Chambers, Harriette could record with some regret that there was no room for any more unmarried female missionaries in McDougall's Mission. She informed Bunyon that 'We have not any place now for a single woman's mission, nor since the Chinese outbreak has there been any definite work for one to do, as the Malay ladies are no longer so approachable as they were formerly'.²⁰² Frank McDougall had discovered in the first year of the Mission how useful a woman's presence could be.²⁰³ Sadly, ten years later, the openings were more limited.

McDougall's own limitations with regard to women had also by then been more exposed, even in relation to members of his own family. He and Harriette had received what he termed 'unkind letters' from his wife's mother (a widow) and sister ('that silly Ellen').²⁰⁴ Even the normally tough and resilient Harriette had been reduced to tears. 'Old Ladies and Old Maids', reflected Frank to Bunyon, 'are rum ones . . . I believe your wife [Eliza Bunyon] and mine are the only sensible women I know'.²⁰⁵ If that was McDougall's attitude to those nearest to him, what chance of approval had women in the Mission?

As with his behaviour towards colleagues of mixed race, so in his attitude to women missionaries McDougall's character is riddled with ambiguities. As a doctor he was generous with his time and compassionate in his approach to anyone in need regardless of race or sex. As a missionary responsible for working with and managing other missionaries, however trying they might at times have been, he could appear callous, unsympathetic, censorious and unimaginative. That these contradictions did not tear the Borneo Mission apart and, at least until 1862, wreck relationships between church and state must be attributed primarily to one of the only two 'sensible women' McDougall confessed to knowing – his wife.

Shortly before leaving Sarawak for the last time Harriette McDougall commended Elizabeth Chambers' attempt to persuade her niece Henrietta to abandon her desire of becoming a governess and come out to Borneo and marry a missionary. If Henrietta – unlike Jane Eyre,

²⁰² Bunyon, *op.cit.*, 182.

²⁰³ See Chapter 1, 16.

²⁰⁴ McDougall to Bunyon, 11 October 1858, MSS.Pac.s.104 (1), 106.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

it must be admitted – accepted that alternative ‘she would have a happy home, a good husband and a useful life instead of becoming a drudge’.²⁰⁶

There can be little doubt that Harriette McDougall had ‘a happy home, a good husband and a useful life’ and that, in spite of dedicating herself completely to the welfare of the Mission, she was anything but ‘a drudge’. Her marriage to Frank McDougall may have succeeded because it was ‘in many ways an attraction of opposites’;²⁰⁷ but that there was a deep love based on mutual respect between them is obvious from any reading of their letters. That it contained a strong physical element also seems likely, for Frank was an affectionate and ebullient man who liked ‘to be petted’²⁰⁸ and Harriette was invariably the loyal wife. Only once did her loyalty falter. In 1859 she encouraged Rosina McKee to risk the blame attached to severing her engagement to Chalmers and confessed that ‘I know full well’ the alternative ‘of living in the jungle with a man you don’t love’.²⁰⁹ In 1862 she had no doubts about the rightness of her marriage, denying to Brooke Brooke that a wife cannot see any faults in her husband. A wife

knows better than anyone else his virtues, she sees all the struggles against temptation, the victories over self, the earnest pursuit of duty better than any friend or spectator can do. She therefore feels more keenly any injustice done to him.²¹⁰

A short biography of Harriette was published in 1911. It saluted her as ‘an early Victorian heroine’,²¹¹ a title she would have repudiated. To be called ‘an adventurous woman’, as she was in 1995, would have been far more acceptable. In that role she ‘assured the ultimate success of the Anglican Mission, for it is doubtful whether her husband, remarkable man though he was, would have survived without her’.²¹² Saunders’ analysis is just, for if the establishment and growth of the Borneo Mission had depended solely on the character and talents of Frank McDougall the missionary it would have been set on far shakier foundations and endured a far more troubled history than actually was the case.

²⁰⁶ H. McDougall to Mrs Bunyon, 28 October 1866, *ibid.*, 269.

²⁰⁷ Ed. John Gullick, *Adventurous Women in South-East Asia, Six Lives*, Kuala Lumpur, OUP, 1995, 47.

²⁰⁸ See above, 232.

²⁰⁹ H. McDougall to E. Bunyon, 17 August, 1859, MSS.Pac.s.104 (1), 127.

²¹⁰ H. McDougall to J. Brooke Brooke, 3 December 1862, MSS.Pac.s.90, Vol. 14, 149.

²¹¹ M. Bramston, *An Early Victorian Heroine*, London, SPCK, 1911.

²¹² Gullick, *op.cit.*, 45.

THE WORST MISSIONARY – BUT A CAPITAL FELLOW

Contrasting estimates of McDougall

Charles Bunyon in his 1889 *Memoirs* prefaced his account of the initial journey of the McDougalls to Sarawak with the warning, 'The first teacher might not accomplish much'. It sounds like an obituary rather than a prophecy, with Bunyon continuing that the important thing was to lay a sure foundation and then McDougall would be remembered 'as the Apostle of Borneo'.²¹³

John Brooke Brooke, who was in most cases a shrewd and fair judge, and who was probably the most impartial friend of Frank and Harriette outside of the Mission, agreed in 1860 that little had been accomplished in the early years – and he had no doubt of the reason.

The Bishop is my private friend and I am under obligation to him, so that it is with pain that I have to pronounce him the worst Missionary I ever conceived but a capital good fellow and jolly companion.²¹⁴

It is reasonable to ask what qualifications the heir apparent possessed to enable him to make such a radical judgement, and to query how many missionaries he had intimately known, but he was close to the McDougalls and friendly towards the Mission. Two years later he amplified his criticism, informing the Rajah that he did not 'think this Mission will ever do anything worth speaking of – there is no management'.²¹⁵ That was written before the furore over McDougall's engagement with the Illanun pirates and the publication of St John's attack on the Mission and its leader. After those events Brooke Brooke, anxious not to take sides in the arguments raging, back-tracked a little. 'I don't call this Mission a failure', he wrote again to his uncle, 'it has planted the seed and now only requires good earnest men to cultivate the young plants'.²¹⁶

These comments were made by a well-disposed critic who was closely involved in the events on which he was passing judgement and who was writing in the heat of controversial years. They may be compared with the opinions of one who was more of a spectator and who had

²¹³ Bunyon, *op.cit.*, 25.

²¹⁴ J. Brooke Brooke to his sister Emma Johnson, 28 May 1860, MSS.Pac.s.90, Vol. 6, 100.

²¹⁵ J. Brooke Brooke to J. Brooke, 15 April 1862, *Ibid.*, Vol. 5, 426.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 21 August 1862, *Ibid.*, 470.

the opportunity to reflect years later when passions had subsided and memories were more generous – the naturalist A.R. Wallace. Wallace, as has been noted already,²¹⁷ was in Borneo between 1854 and 1856, and may have attended parties at the Rajah's bungalow with the McDougalls in 1855. His views are quoted by Bunyon, and must therefore be accepted with caution, but he is alleged to have regarded the bishop as 'strong and happy in the exercise of gifts which would have sainted him in bygone ages . . . it is the best people who are the best abused'.²¹⁸

Bunyon also suggests that in later years Wallace conversed with his local incumbent and sighed that 'if there were more bishops like him [McDougall] more people would come to church, and there would be more Christianity'.²¹⁹

Here are two rather extreme views of McDougall, as 'the worst missionary I ever conceived' and as an episcopal evangelist with 'gifts which would have sainted him'! Can a more balanced estimate be reached?

McDougall's own limited analysis

After returning to Sarawak from furlough in 1862 McDougall's earlier optimism had abated and he seemed prepared to admit that the Mission had not so far enjoyed rapid success or demonstrated many visible results. In the letter to the SPG in August of that year in which he had accepted the weakness of 'mere civilising',²²⁰ he attributed the limitations of the Mission to a number of external factors, but nowhere mentioned any possible inadequacies in himself. There is a regrettable tendency to apportion blame to others – even to the Rajah who was criticised for being over-optimistic – and ignore his own deficiencies.

McDougall confessed to the SPG that early hopes had been disappointed, but blamed 'political difficulties', 'want of means', 'risk of life and loss of property' and 'failure of health among the members of the Mission'.²²¹ Under 'political difficulties' would have been grouped the bishop's deteriorating relationship with the Rajah, his exaggerated fears of

²¹⁷ See Chapter 3, 161-2

²¹⁸ Bunyon, *op.cit.*, 133.

²¹⁹ Bunyon, *op.cit.*, 153.

²²⁰ See Chapter 2, 94.

²²¹ McDougall to Hawkins, 6 August 1862, MSS.Pac.s.104 (4), 24.

Malay plotting and insecurity, and the British government's refusal to give protection. When this did happen in 1864 and the Rajah had retired to his Devon home McDougall could report that 'we are all very quiet politically here now and the Mission work goes ahead in consequence'.²²²

'Want of means' could have referred either to shortage of money – or staff. With regard to money, it has already been agreed that the BCMI was an inadequate funding body,²²³ but the takeover by the SPG at the beginning of 1853 guaranteed more financial stability. Limitations of staff will be discussed below. 'Risk of life and loss of property' must relate to the setbacks resulting from the Chinese insurrection, but they were only temporary. 'Failure of health' applied to several of the missionaries, and could have included McDougall himself. Was this the nearest he approached to admitting his own culpability in a catalogue of blaming other factors?

Valued colleagues – or 'muffs, fools and donkeys'?

During the 20 years from 1847 to 1867 when McDougall was head of the Borneo Mission 14 different clergymen were sent out to serve with him, along with eight catechists and teachers, four women and two men who might be termed lay workers. As the years passed a number of indigenous catechists and lay assistants were appointed.

Such a total, in a country where the Anglican Mission was the only Christian presence and operated with state protection and support, might have been expected to have made a significant impact on the Christianising of sections of the population of Sarawak. In fact the effect, although not to be despised, was by the time of McDougall's resignation little more than marginal.

The 'want' of staff is explained by an examination of certain facts. Of the 14 clergy who served with McDougall one half left the Mission within two to three years of arriving, creating thereby an atmosphere of instability. Illness and the need for furloughs meant that the number of clergy actually in post at any one time varied from one (between 1849 and 1851) to ten (in the heady days of 1862-1863), with the average not more than six. European

²²² McDougall to Bunyon, 15 April 1864, MSS.Pac.s.104 (1), 193.

²²³ See Chapter 4, 189 and above, 230.

catechists provided an equally dismal record, for those who were not eventually ordained left within a very short time. The work of the Mission was therefore constantly stretched and progress uneven.

The quality of many of the missionaries also varied and brings into question the effectiveness of the selection procedures.²²⁴ The reasons behind their sense of 'calling' ranged from a genuine awareness of the need and a romantic idealism to the necessity for recovery after an unhappy love affair. Some were obvious eccentrics and others too nervous in disposition to survive, whilst a number were unable to stand the tropical climate. But with more temperate 'management' it surely should have been possible to weld even such a disparate collection of missionaries into a more effective Mission? That this did not happen must be attributed to McDougall's own insensitive nature.

He was his own worst enemy in so far as his treatment of his colleagues alienated many of them, drove some away and created tensions which reduced the Mission's impact. Brooke Brooke was in no doubt that this was the main reason why the Mission had not prospered. Analysing the truth behind St John's criticisms of the Mission in 1862 he felt 'obliged to tell the Bishop plainly'

that his unpopularity with his clergy was at the bottom of it, that he called them Muffs and fools and donkeys to their faces, and that men would not stand such treatment without resentment.²²⁵

That McDougall did disparage his mixed-race and female colleagues has already been noted.²²⁶ His insulting references to his European staff was attested by St John, here a credible witness, who alleged that McDougall called Chambers 'a fool and a milksop', Fox 'a presumptuous school-boy', and Horsburgh was 'as mad as a hatter'.²²⁷ He was clearly often intemperate in his judgements, loose and tactless in his talking, lacking in respect for the feelings of others and jealous of their success. On occasions he could be downright malicious. If any defence can be mounted of such an abrasive character, apart from the plea of illness, it must be that such defects were the outcome of an ebullient, exuberant, quick-tempered and gossipy nature which did not nurse grudges. It was such traits which made McDougall such 'a capital fellow' and 'jolly companion', a judgement of Brooke

²²⁴ See above, 258

²²⁵ J. Brooke Brooke to J. Brooke, 21 August 1862, MSS.Pac.s.90, Vol. 5, 470.

²²⁶ See above, 250-8.

²²⁷ St John to J. Brooke Brooke, 24 November 1862, *Ibid.*, Vol. 15, 286-7.

Brooke's with which even St John agreed. It was also no doubt such qualities that were taken into account by the very colleagues he had abused when they sprang to his defence in the crises of 1862-63.

If they thought that their loyalty would earn their bishop's respect and merit more charitable judgements they were mistaken. In 1862 McDougall had resorted to the most common defence offered by missionaries who are worried by the lack of outward success for their efforts yet certain that progress has been achieved. He claimed that after 15 years' experience he truly believed 'that the foundations of the Church in Borneo have been deeply and firmly laid'.²²⁸ 'The seed had been sown' and would 'bear good fruit in God's good time' so that 'those who succeed us will reap the harvest'.²²⁹

Nearly two years later McDougall returned to this theme. 'The Missions are all promising well', he wrote to Bunyon, 'and *if I had but better staff* [my italics] I should feel that whatever becomes of Sarawak and the Rajah I have at least been able to found our Church here on sound and broad foundations'.²³⁰ The derogatory comment about his staff was ungracious, especially as in 1864 he had what was probably the most able group of colleagues in his whole missionary ministry. Moreover – 'I' have founded our Church here? He must have realised how proud and self-centred that would sound at home, for he added, 'You will say this is an Egotistical Epistle I fear'.²³¹ In spite of the disappointments McDougall was genuinely proud of his achievements. It is time to attempt an assessment and make a balanced judgement.

The Borneo Mission – foundations for survival

One claim which had made McDougall proud in 1862, when he attempted to refute St John's criticisms, was that – compared with the American, German and Dutch, and Roman Catholic Missions in Borneo – the Anglican Mission was not a failure. 'At least' he wrote in his defence, 'this Church of England Mission here is still going on and showing signs of renewed strength'.²³² From its foundation in 1848 the Mission had survived until 1862, and

²²⁸ McDougall to Hawkins, 6 August 1862, MSS.Pac.s.104 (4), 24-5.

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ McDougall to Bunyon, 15 April 1864, MSS.Pac.s.104 (1), 193.

²³¹ Ibid.

²³² McDougall to Hawkins, 20 August 1862, MSS.Pac.s.104 (4), 38-9.

from then on it could anticipate a renewal. These are two modest claims which must now be tested.

In fact the claim of mere 'survival' seems rather an understatement, as more had been achieved than that. A well-built church and mission house had been erected in Kuching which (in 1998) are still standing and in use. Christian congregations had been established not only in Kuching but at three outstations, Banting, Lundu and Quop, and the former had in 1859 a consecrated church. These places are still vigorous centres of Anglican worship and parochial life at the end of the 20th century. [See Map 6.]

'Civilising' had been attempted in liaison with the Brooke government and had borne fruit in the creation of the first schools, a clinic and a hospital. Little conversion had followed, but in spite of the Rajah's warnings, McDougall's caution and the resurgence of Islam provoked by the Mission 19 Malays had been baptised up to 1862. A far greater number of Chinese baptisms – 97 in all – had been recorded in the Kuching registers since the first ceremonies in 1851-1852 had caused Horsburgh (who had worked in Hong Kong) to express astonishment at the progress made among the Chinese in Sarawak compared with those in China. A mission had been established among the Chinese at Bau as well as in Kuching, and although the 1857 insurrection had scattered the flock and reduced numbers to six men the two congregations soon rallied – and attracted women. The Bau mission witnessed the first Chinese catechist.

The three centres of Dayak mission mentioned above had all been well founded by the three most able missionaries on McDougall's staff in these first 15 years, Chambers, Gomes and Chalmers. Despite lean years later in the century due to perennial shortages of clergy they too survived and recovered their strength. Attempts had been tried – and failed – at Banting to set Christian hymns to Dayak rhythms, but a musical tradition was created at Quop which showed greater permanence. Translations, first into Malay and then into some of the indigenous languages, had introduced the Bible, Book of Common Prayer and Catechism to various village communities, and as well as at Kuching schools had been started at Banting and Lundu.

The Home School in Kuching, envisaged from its early stages as 'a school for ministry', had by 1862 sent several of its older boys as lay workers to the outstations, and also produced its

first missionary wife when one of the small girls admitted in 1848 married the schoolmaster Owen. No 'principal' had ever arrived from England to provide concentrated leadership, but under McDougall's general supervision and with a succession of teachers of variable quality the grandly-named 'college' sustained a regular if uneven course into the 1860s.

The one bright promise of the early years which did not bear fruit was, sadly, McDougall's tentative search for an open and sympathetic approach to the indigenous religions. This has been thoroughly examined in an earlier chapter,²³³ and it only remains to mention here that the Anglican Church in Sarawak is still waiting for one of its own members rather than an expatriate missionary to explore and further develop McDougall's hesitant insights. As an evangelist he was too timorous.

A Sarawak Church – renewal and promise

McDougall's claim in August 1862 that 'this Church of England Mission' – no longer simply the 'Borneo Mission' – had not only survived but was showing 'signs of renewed strength' was also to be justified by events. Modest renewal could not however be attributed to his leadership, as four new and able missionaries had come in that year to expand the Dayak outreach and they were to remain in post for many years. Stability had arrived.

In January 1863 McDougall sent to the SPG the annual reports for Kuching and Banting to add to those from Lundu and Quop which had gone by the previous mail. He reported 'encouraging progress', with '73 heathen' baptised in the past two months and '52 had been confirmed' from the four stations in the past year.²³⁴ The mention of confirmation is a reminder that 'McDougall the bishop' had replaced 'McDougall the evangelist' of the early years, a sign that the Mission had in Anglican terms become a Church.

The Kuching report mentioned that the Home School had temporarily declined, due partly to a trade recession which had taken away some Chinese students, but there were still 43 pupils on the register. The school was set to grow into the two church schools of St Thomas (for boys) and St Mary (for girls) which were to play a considerable part in the future of Sarawak

²³³ See Chapter 3, 132-150.

²³⁴ McDougall to Hawkins, 12 January 1863, MSS.Pac.s.104 (4), 59.

by educating many potential leaders. In addition a small school had opened at Quop and another with 14 pupils at Bau.²³⁵

The momentum of building churches accelerated after 1862. In January 1863 the church at Lundu was almost completed and it was consecrated in the September. A spire and stained glass were added in 1865 when there were 50 baptisms to conduct. Not far from Lundu a new schoolmaster Richardson established a Christian community at Sedemak, and by 1866 when a worship centre was opened 103 converts had been claimed. The church at Banting, which had been consecrated in 1859, needed to be enlarged in 1866 when a new nave was built. By this time Quop also had a church building to house its growing congregation.

Developments at Quop under the German F.W. Abé were remarkable. He suffered from poor health and an increasing drink problem, both of which prevented him from travelling far (a blessing in disguise?), and so he was able to concentrate on the village which had been well evangelised by Chalmers. The headman was baptised in 1862 and the aged *shaman* in 1865, so that with the women instructed by Mrs Abé the whole village had become Christian by the latter year. Quop, now reverted to its indigenous name of Kuap, has continued until the end of the 20th century to be a jewel in the Sarawak Anglican crown. Its church – still standing – was consecrated in December 1865 by a rather sick bishop who grumbled about having to walk the 12 miles from Kuching because at 14 stone he was too heavy to be carried.

McDougall had hoped to consecrate a church at Labuan in January 1866 but the non-arrival of a ship meant that this event was postponed until the December when he and Harriette were in fact on their final journey home. Earlier in the year he had confirmed 11 Dayaks who had been baptised by the new missionary Crossland at Sabu on the river Undup and paid his last visit to Chambers at Banting. The Sabu mission was to grow into an active centre of Anglican witness, and increased in strength when it was transferred a few miles downriver to the more populous and important town of Simmangang.²³⁶

There is therefore a great deal of evidence to show that a Sarawak Church was emerging from the Borneo Mission, and that it was witnessing a greater momentum and urgency

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ For details about progress in Sarawak after 1862 see Brian Taylor, *The Anglican Church in Borneo 1848-1962*, Bognor Regis, New Horizon, 1983.

during McDougall's final five years in the country. Progress was never spectacular but it was considerably more promising during these years than in most other similar periods during the 100 years of Brooke rule. With the bishop's health and enthusiasm in decline his able colleagues were left alone without interference to develop their own areas, and so the health of the Mission improved as its leader's deteriorated. However his disposition had mellowed by this time, and a greater sobriety of expectation had replaced the earlier facile optimism, with the result that he managed to keep a settled band of colleagues together, to the greater benefit of the infant Church.

Of more lasting significance was the fact that these final years witnessed the genesis of an indigenous ministry in Sarawak. The initial stirrings in 1862 have already been noted.²³⁷ Already in 1860 Chung Ah Luk, one of the Chinese boys who had arrived as a refugee in 1850, had been sent as a catechist to Quop. He stayed for many years, and in 1874 was ordained deacon by bishop Chambers, but had to wait before being made a priest. Foo Ngyen Khoon had also arrived from Dutch Borneo in 1850, and being a teacher he was employed by McDougall as an interpreter before becoming catechist at Bau. In June 1865 he was ordained deacon, the first Chinese to receive Anglican orders, and was retained as a teacher in Kuching where he worked with two more catechists, Oh Tong and Boon Ahin, and a schoolteacher Ah Jow.

Of even more importance were a group of Dayak catechists who were appointed during the 1860s. Thomas Dyak Webster was sent to assist Zehnder at Merdang in 1862, and by 1864 there were three more Dayak catechists in post, Si Mirum at Quop, and Bulang and Bugai at Lundu. The most exciting newcomer was however Buda, the son of a Dayak chief who had fought against the Raj before becoming reconciled. Buda was 'accidentally' converted, wandering into a school lesson at Banting from a cock-fight, interested enough to request instruction, baptised on Christmas Eve 1862 and sent to his own people as a catechist in 1865. A perfect example of the unstructured way in which conversions often happen, Buda with three friends taught his people to sing hymns translated into the Iban dialect before himself choosing to become a missionary and moving to another river to initiate the conversion and recruitment of his brothers and nephew. When Chambers visited these areas in 1867 he baptised more than 180 people who had been taught by Buda, which almost

²³⁷ Chapter 3, 153-4.

doubled the numbers of Dayak Christians under his pastoral care since his arrival in 1851 as the first 'Dayak apostle'. McDougall had by this time left the country for ever, but the initiatives taken in these areas by an indigenous missionary whilst he was still bishop produced enduring results. By the end of the 20th century Saratok, Debak and Spaoh have joined Betong as centres of strong Anglican witness. McDougall was not directly involved, but the Mission he established needed to have put down roots before advance was possible.

It should be clear by now that to describe Frank McDougall as 'the worst missionary' was grossly unfair, and to judge him simply as 'a capital fellow' was seriously to underestimate his qualities. The saintly dedicated figure of Charles Bunyon's *Memoirs* he most certainly was not, and the misunderstood victim of his wife Harriette's loyal imagination does not stand up to investigation. Full of contradictions himself, he embodied and expressed Anglican missionary attitudes in the mid-19th century rather than initiating any new and original thinking. Essentially a man of action he should be judged not only by his own actions, which could be mean-spirited and thoughtless, but also by the results of his actions which – in Sarawak – have been positive and enduring. Above all, from an age when too many churchmen were over-confident and presumptuous, McDougall should be honoured albeit as a reluctant pioneer, aware both of the strengths and limitations of his own confident faith.

David Bosch has praised a missiology which admits

that we do not have all the answers and are prepared to live within the framework of penultimate knowledge, that we regard our involvement in dialogue and mission as an adventure, are prepared to take risks, and are anticipating surprises as the Spirit guides us into fuller understanding. This is not opting for agnosticism, but for humility. It is, however, a bold humility – or a humble boldness. We know only in part, but we do know.²³⁸

McDougall certainly regarded the Borneo Mission as 'an adventure', was prepared to 'take risks' and accept 'surprises', and when willing to follow the Spirit showed 'a bold humility'. His life and work bore witness to the paradoxes which lie at the heart of the Christian Faith.

²³⁸ D.J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, New York, Orbis, Maryknoll, 1991, 489.

CONCLUSION

Francis T. McDougall's enduring (if belated) memorial – as he surely would have wished – may be found in the existence at the end of the 20th century of a fully indigenous and numerically strong Anglican church in Sarawak. However proud he might have been of his contributions to the early development of the Anglican Communion, and in spite of his restlessness during those final years in Kuching, his heart was in the Borneo Mission and its growth into a Church. The process may have been long and drawn-out, and his legacy neglected for a century after the inauguration of the Mission.¹ But the leadership in the Diocese of Kuching in 1998 of a Bidayuh (Land Dayak) bishop, a Chinese dean at the cathedral and an Iban (Sea Dayak) warden at the theological college represents the culmination of McDougall's hopes and a testimony to his vision. That, in spite of possessing the largest membership of confirmed Anglicans (120,000) of any diocese in south-east Asia, Bishop Made Katib can still lament the existence of a 'dependency mentality' in the Sarawak & Brunei church² – although reliance is now on state hand-outs rather than USPG donations – is a sign of spiritual maturity. It is also a reminder that the church in the Diocese of Kuching may now be self-governing and self-propagating but it is not yet entirely self-supporting.

The ending of USPG support marks another break with the era of McDougall. Borneo has never been of central importance in the SPG scale of priorities, and as has been noted earlier in this thesis financial constraints in the 1840s dissuaded the society from supporting the Mission at its foundation.³ But McDougall's advocacy of an SPG takeover of the struggling BCMI between 1850 and 1852 was crucial for the stability of the Borneo Mission and ensured its future at a time when shortages of staff and money were most acute. Such shortages were to continue to haunt McDougall, and the SPG connection failed to bring the immediate transformation for which he had hoped. But the society was spreading its support for missions ever more widely during these years and income never really matched the growing demands in Asia, India, Africa and the West Indies. In 1860 the SPG found itself

¹ See chapter 3, p. 168.

² Peter M. Kedit and others, *150 years of the Anglican Church in Borneo, 1848-1998*, Diocesan Registry, Kuching, 1998, p. 125.

³ See Introduction, p. 11.

able to respond to a call from the Straits Settlements for aid in establishing a girls school at Melaka⁴ thus beginning an interest in the Malay peninsula.

As well as being a staging-post on his journeys to and from Borneo, and this was true also for missionaries to other lands, the Straits Settlements – which included Singapore, Melaka and Penang – were for McDougall places of refuge at times of crisis and during bouts of ill-health. As an area for mission the Malay peninsula never entered his head until the alarms engendered by the Malay plots in Sarawak in 1858 and 1859 caused him to urge the transference of the headquarters of the Borneo Mission from Kuching to Singapore.⁵ Notice has already been taken of the protracted negotiations for the removal of the government of the Straits from India to the British Crown, and the disappointment of McDougall's hopes that he might one day be bishop in Singapore with responsibilities for Melaka and Penang as well as Labuan and Sarawak.⁶ Had his health been better and this succession actually occurred it is tempting to speculate what the effect on mission work in the peninsula might have been.

Anglican attitudes to Mission in what is now West Malaysia were very different to those which pertained on Borneo. Northcott has written that 'the Anglican Church in Malaya began as an exclusively white concern ministering to the spiritual needs of English communities', and that this concern lasted until after the Second World war.⁷ The historic influence of the East India Company in the Straits meant that the Anglican clergy who went to that area were chaplains rather than missionaries. This is in sharp contrast to Borneo where a Dayak mission was high on the agenda from the very beginning. How McDougall would have reacted to the peninsula, with its far smaller proportion of indigenous peoples who practised a primal religion, is uncertain.

The treaty of Pangkor in 1874, which extended British influence from the Straits into the surrounding Malay states of the peninsula, protected the Muslim religion from the approaches of missionaries in much the same way as the conditions extracted from James Brooke by the Sultan of Brunei in 1841 required him to protect the practice of Islam.⁸

⁴ Robert Hunt, Lee Kam Hing and John Roxborough eds., *Christianity in Malaysia; a Denominational History*, Petaling Jaya, Pelandu, Publications, 1992. Article by Michael S. Northcott, 'Two Hundred Years of Anglican Mission', p. 38.

⁵ See chapter 4, p. 218.

⁶ p. 221.

⁷ Hunt, *op.cit.*, p. 35.

⁸ See chapter 2, p. 58.

McDougall could have lived with that, especially after his disenchantment with attempts to convert the Malays of Kuching through education. His successors as Bishop of Labuan and Sarawak (to which see Singapore, Melaka and Penang were added in 1869) – Chambers and Hose – accepted the inevitable and concentrated on modest attempts to evangelise among the Chinese and Tamils. But one legacy of McDougall was positive in a rather indirect way. W.H. Gomes came to work in Singapore in 1872, and his work there in continuing to complete the translation of a Malay Prayer Book which had begun in Sarawak is commended by Roxborough as ‘Anglican commitment’.⁹ Of little use in the conditions of the 1870s and 1880s, such a Prayer Book later came into its own as Anglicans use the national language in the 1990s.

It may be that, had he remained at work in south-east Asia after 1867, McDougall would have found the authorities on the peninsula more congenial to operate under than those in Sarawak. However disillusioned he became with the first Rajah during the last ten years of his episcopate it can at least be affirmed that James Brooke reined in his heterodoxy under a respectable cloak of Anglican loyalty. In his Devonshire retirement he even became churchwarden at his local village church. His younger nephew Charles, who became Rajah in 1868, was a less traditional thinker with ill-defined beliefs which tolerated a large range of ideas. He commended Darwinism in the 1860s for teaching people ‘to observe, to inquire’, in contrast to Christianity which ‘permits our minds to sleep with a consolatory faith’¹⁰ If bishop Chambers – who in the 1850s had (unlike McDougall) engaged in discussions with the Rajah’s young men in which Charles Johnson was exposed as a ‘pantheist’¹¹ – found it at times difficult to work with the second Rajah, how would McDougall have fared?

When consideration is given to McDougall’s openness in relation to the primal religion of the Dayaks it is sad to note his caution when faced with the host of new ideas bombarding the Church in the 1850s and 1860s. He could have been a far more effective missionary, at least to the Europeans in Sarawak, if he had been as open to these new scientific and critical ideas as he was to the beliefs of the indigenous peoples. No doubt he reflected a general unease among many in the mid-nineteenth century, both with regard to the theological

⁹ W.J. Sheils and Diana Wood, Ed., *The Ministry: Clerical and Lay*, Ecclesiastical History Society, Oxford, Blackwell, 1989. Article by W. John Roxborough, ‘Ministry to ALL the people’, p.425.

¹⁰ Charles Brooke, *Ten Years in Sarawak*, 2 volumes, London, Tinsley Brothers, 1866. Reprinted Singapore, OUP, 1989, vol. 1, p. 53.

revolution then in progress and with the more paranoid reactions to its adherents so manifest among many churchmen. This unease most clearly focused in his own family, in his relationship with his brother-in-law Colenso, and Colenso's wife Frances, Harriette's sister. We can never know the agonies which McDougall personally suffered in the face of the controversies which swirled around his family. He revealed little in his correspondence. No doubt, whatever his achievements in wider fields, with regard to the great challenges brought on by the extension of divine and human knowledge in the middle years of the 19th century, Frank McDougall chose to remain anonymous. With all his faults he surely struggled to manifest the humility commended by David Bosch, in his attitudes to advances in knowledge, his practice of the episcopacy which was added to the missionary, and his encounters with the primal religions of the people he went to serve.

¹¹ Spenser St John, *The Life of Sir James Brooke*, Edinburgh and London, Blackwood, 1879, pp. 275-6.

APPENDIX 1

Photocopy of the original manuscript
of McDougalls sermon
in St Thomas's church, Kuching,
on Sunday, 7 September 1851
(See pages 132-7.)
together with a transcript of the Sermon.

Reproduced by kind permission of Rhodes House Library, Oxford.

of them grow fainter & fainter & their heart & affections become more
disordered, & led them ^{from their simplicity} by degrees from the simplicity of patriarchal
into the sensual, bloody & fantastic rites of idolatrous worship; - but
then St Paul could discern in the feelings at work within ^{that} they
endeavored to express by their diverse & distorted ^{attempts to raise homage} strength towards the worship
of ^{being} ^{to} ^{the} ^{idea} ^{of} ^{his} ^{deity}, or ^{rather} ^{than} ^{the} ^{mere} ^{idea} ^{of} ^{him} ^{as} ^{the} ^{object} ^{of} ^{adoration}
- the proofs of a religious nature which was not altogether effaced however
- ^{found} ⁱⁿ ^{the} ^{image} ^{of} ^{God}
- it might be ^{would} ^{be} ^{corrupted} & decayed - He saw that ^{could} ^{be} ^{done} ^{within}
there was still left to men some moral perceptions, some kindly feelings,
some affections, some ^{desires} ^{of} ^{the} ^{divine} ^{nature}, upon
which he could work, to which he could appeal - & ^{without} ^{which} ^{work} ^{he} ^{could} ^{not} ^{do}
with all his ^{power}, might as well have wasted his efforts, & spent his
- on the trees of their forests or the rocks of their shores as on the hearts
of gentle heathens - But amid all the black clouds of sin & error that
hid them down in the depths of their ^{darkest} ^{and} ^{most} ^{obscure} ^{superstitions}, he could discern
to that name better ^{the} ^{image} ^{of} ^{God} ^{within} ^{was} ^{making} ^{to} ^{break}
a thick veil that darkened it - & to be removed by its Maker's brightness -
effect to these ^{struggling} ^{souls} ^{he} ^{best} ^{of} ^{himself} ^{addressed} ^{himself} - ^{with} ^{the} ^{best} ^{of} ^{his} ^{power}
worned souls & those ⁱⁿ ^{need} ^{of} ^{the} ^{light} ^{of} ^{the} ^{truth} ^{of} ^{the} ^{gospel} ^{of} ^{Christ}
else I restore ^{God's} ^{erring} ^{creatures} that likeness to Him which had been
lost - the friend & savior of the ^{lost} ^{and} ^{perishing} ^{souls} ^{as} ^{by} ^{their} ^{own} ^{corrupt} ^{will} [&] ^{frailty}.
- ^{he} ^{appealed} ^{to} ^{the} ^{barbarians} ^{of} ^{Lyconia} - ^{to} ^{the} ^{strict} [&] ^{thoughtful}
to the self-indulgent Epicurean - to the Roman ruler Felix, or the
- King Agrippa - we see Him ^{shown} ⁱⁿ St ^{Augustine's} ^{works} ^{with} ^{the} ^{best}

It is needless here ^{but} into the details of the plans I thought I should
at this time or that, & of when or staying with them I have seen what I believe
not likely to arouse & impede them - but will content myself only
mention what appears a ^{good} general rule applicable to all those we may
be over to the fact - ^{that} most of the ^{un}understandings of their daily life are
might the ^{Diocese} accompanied with some religious acts, which is most
likely observed by the ^{Diocese} & ^{Diocese} amongst them - & it needs
less, ^{but} when you have shown them ^{the} ^{fact} of these better observances, which
we have been bound up with very religious feelings of their past lives - if you
not substitute some suitable ^{their} ^{rites} in their place, to engage the mind
to meet the ^{beginning} of their new ^{beginning} faith - they will feel an ^{empty} void - which no effort to their understanding
more intellectual, so as a dried ^{system} of ^{observances} ^{errors}, no really
worse of the Sabbath alone. We can fill ^{it} ^{with} ^{the} ^{rites} ^{of} ^{the} ^{Diocese} ^{which} ^{is} ^{meant} ^{for} ^{all}
do in one sense it can become all things to all men - & can meet with
apt itself to their various tempers, customs, habits, & while it does so, it
informs them from that ^{which} ^{is} ^{degraded} & ^{mixes} ^{them} ^{inconsistent} ^{with} ^{the} ^{truth}
of the ^{Diocese} in his own apparently unnecessary ^{rites} is always seeking
the protecting care & favor of God (as he calls ^{supper} ^{prayer} ^{to} ^{ferocious})
can he suppose to be his ministers for good or ill the Keany or ^{Diocese}
in the ^{Diocese} his forms of ^{mis} ^{observance} & ^{prayer}. at the ^{beginning} & ^{completion}
his ^{house} at ^{evening} & ^{reaping} his ^{fruits} - at going out a ^{other} ^{night}
the ^{honors} of ^{kickup} & the ^{hour} of ^{debate} - he has his feet & his feet
the solemn occasions - national & private - & I think that on ^{the} ^{Diocese} there occurs
may institute some ^{Italian} ^{service}, which will prevent him looking back
at regret to his former observances, will stand as guides in his path, with ^{the}

at God's bidding left his own country & his father's house -
in exceeding great reward" Yes B. remember too the promise of
our Master, that they who do God's will, shall be to Him as
father & brother - & that there is no man that hath left house or
father or mother or wife or children or lands for my name
of the gospel. but he shall receive an 100 fold more in this time - & with
them eternal life - do you not see an altered feeling
at the day of your will look back with thankfulness & bless God that He called you to it
of success in our work about gladness on hearts & cheer as on in the
let us ^{always be humble &} call to mind that the calling of the power is of God
- who has truly honored us with fruit with these pupils by
drawing us to distance because of the power & love
of a terrible Rock - your name is in the land
The Minister of religion in our display the unsearchable riches of the
He looks in his own view & realizes that the glory of his Master may
be the whole field of vision - he is to find it himself but it
is himself more devout for Jesus sake" - Go to take good cheer. For the
of our state make full use of your minutes - endeavor to the end
I know I need not ask you any beyond B.
conclusion -
among us in our work carried on with us at your own doors -
that you have been forward & willing to do both by your personal
kindness & your liberal gifts - but on this one occasion I do
express your liberality - favor of L. K. J. which for 150 years
has been proclaiming good truth throughout every quarter of the
world & it is precious to this the anniversary of its 3 1/2 century

TRANSCRIPT OF McDOUGALL'S SERMON OF 7 SEPTEMBER 1851

ACTS, XV11, 23. *Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship Him I declare unto you*

The book of the Acts of the Apostles is emphatically the Missionary's guide book – the example and life and teaching of St Paul – the leader of the Missionary host – a bright and encouraging example to all who follow him in the work of preaching Christ to the Gentiles –

Our text emphasises in a few words the grand principle that lies at the bottom of this great Apostle's teaching – he went forth commissioned to declare to men 'the unknown God they ignorantly worshipped', whom in the night of heathenism they were feeling and groping after if haply they might find Him – and when they searched often instituting strange and dreadful rites and vain observances and imaginings of what they thought shadowed forth some faint resemblance of their Creator – some likeness of His glorious attributes – and gave some exposition to that silent monitor within that was ever witnessing to their inmost hearts of Him in Whom 'they lived and moved and had their being'.

It is true that ever since the Fall God's image in the natural man has been defaced and darkened – and his very soul for want of its light/reflection within him becomes a moral ruin, yet still one 'little drop of light' (as it were) seems left with him in whatever state for him to use, when he seeks to return to God. For St Paul himself declares that 'the invisible things of God from the creation of the world might be clearly seen, being understood by things which were made, even His eternal power and Godhead'.

It is true that the longer men forgot God – the longer they refused to glorify Him as God – their perception of Him grew even fainter and fainter, and their hearts and affections became more and more disordered, and led them further and further by degrees away from the simplicity of patriarchal faith into the senseless, bloody and fantastic rites of pagan, idolatrous worship – but even then St Paul could discern in the feelings at work within them attempts to render homage and worship to the author of their being, the ruler of his destiny

from whatever point of view they may have regarded Him – the proofs of a religious nature which was not altogether effaced however much it might be warped, corrupted and decayed – he saw that notwithstanding the sad ruin within him there was still left to man some moral perceptions, some kindly feelings, some warm affections, some strivings of the inner man to be renewed in God’s likeness upon which he could work and to which he could appeal – and without which even He himself with all his miraculous powers might as well have wasted his efforts, and spent his breath on the trees of their forests or the rocks of their shores as on the heart of His Gentile hearers –

– But amid all the black clouds of sin and error that enshrouded them – down in the depths of their dreariest/darkest superstitions, he could discern the efforts that man’s better nature, the defaced image or images of God within was making to break through the thick veil that darkened it – and be renewed by its Maker’s brightness – to give effect and right direction to their efforts – and by His aiding them He freed their imprisoned souls and imparted as they could bear it that knowledge of the truth which alone could restore in God’s erring creatures that likeness to Him which they had lost as much through the fraud and malice of the devil as by their own carnal will and frailties.

As at Antioch so it was at Lystra. Thus, whether he appealed to the barbarians of Lycaonia, or as at Athens to the strict and thoughtful Stoics and to the self-indulgent Epicureans – to the Roman ruler Felix or the Jewish king Agrippa – we see him whom St Chrysostom well calls ‘the heart of the world’ ever touching the chord that would best vibrate in men’s hearts – making himself all things to all men. He skilfully turned to the truths they each acknowledged and felt, as the proofs and interpreters of the higher truths he came to declare

–

To the men of Lystra proving the power, providence and goodness of the one God they ignorantly worshipped, by the witness which the things He had made and the blessings He showered upon them bore to them of Him whom he called upon them to worship in Spirit and in truth – Before the polished philosophers of Athens he appealed to the altar they had erected to the unknown God as a direct witness of Him whom he came to declare to them not only as the Creator of all things but also as their loving Father of whom even certain of their own poets had witnessed ‘that they were his offspring’ and that being such they had done wrong in likening the Godhead to gold or silver or stone graven by art and man’s device –

for which since they were now to repent, because God would tolerate it no longer – for He had appointed a day in which He would judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He had ordained – of which the proof was that He had already raised Him from the dead – by this mention of the resurrection of the dead he at once drew the attention and gained the sympathies of those Stoics standing by, whose own doctrines he well knew afforded presumption in its favour.

Before Felix a heathen we find him reasoning of righteousness, temperance and judgement to come – until he trembled – Before Agrippa the few well-instructed in the Old Testament Scriptures, and so prepared to receive what they declared, proving the peculiar doctrines of Christianity – so that he was almost persuaded to be a Christian. Time will not allow me to go further into this subject but I think one may plainly see that St Paul's great object was to lay hold of and quicken into a healthy growth whatever seeds of good he saw struggling for life in the hearts of his hearers –

Taking St Paul's example as our model in dealing with heathen systems we must then be careful neither to ignore what truths there may be at the bottom of the systems of error we have to meet, nor to set at nought whatever there may be in them of good and true in the false religions men have grown up in and cherish as their forefather's faith – if we meet men ever well-disposed with a crushing denial and rejection and contempt of all they hold – without seeking for the principles of good there may be at the bottom of their belief and separating them from the drops that covered them – we shall eventually freeze (dry up, dam up) every avenue to their hearts – how shall we then awaken them by bringing forward any naked and abrupt announcement of scripture or with any formula of Christian doctrine – or interest them in the mysteries of the unsearchable riches of Christ? A plan some would in this day hold to be the right one – how can we expect it will be received or think ourselves faithful stewards of that committed to us, giving to each his meat in due season –

But if on the other hand we carefully search out and lay hold of the scattered seeds of truth, fragments of primeval tradition which we shall find more or less mixed up with every system of error we meet – and which are in fact the only foundations of faith and love in the heathen's heart – base our teaching upon them – unfold and expound them – show their relation and necessary connection with whatever else God has revealed of good and true in

His word and works – we shall speak to men’s hearts and by degrees convince them that our message is divine, that alone which can raise them from darkness to light and bring them from the power of Satan to God. If we seek to succeed in our work we must study well and strive to follow the economy of instruction shown to us in our blessed Lord and in St Paul’s teaching, to be as harmless as doves and wise as serpents.

Let us beware then how we raise the antagonism of the natures of those with whom we have to deal at the outset of our teaching – we shall surely rouse the indignation and opposition of the Mahomedan – the fear and obstinacy of the Dyak – the conceit and prejudice of the Chinese – the suspicion and enmity of the Hindoo, Brahmin or Buddhist, if we begin by vilifying and depreciating what they hold, treating [illegible] disdainfully. It is not for us who (not to quench the smoking flax) are followers of Him who came to heal up the broken-hearted – to preach deliverance to the captives – recovery of sight to the blind – to set at liberty them that are bruised – to force and compel men to embrace the truth, but rather like our blessed Master, with gentle words and kindly deeds to draw them with the bonds of love, and gradually as they are able to bear it impart to them the message of reconciliation – shew them that those truths we preach and would have them cherish as their heart’s best treasures, have only made us better and more loving men than they – have really brought to us those blessings of wisdom, knowledge, peace, and freedom of soul which they are searching for and long have yearned in vain.

Oh, who can tell the effect of such loving persuasion on the long-afflicted but simple untaught children of nature on the hills or in the jungles around us? Who can fathom their longings for better things which they are now beginning to express – as kindness touches the cords that give them utterance? Who can tell what cries for help and deliverance from the thralldom of Satan may have ascended from their heart of hearts up to the ear of God? Whatever may be their cries we must believe that God has heard and hears them, and sent us here in answer to them. How deep and awful then is the responsibility imposed upon us in our Missionary work of giving a true answer/expression to the questions of their troubled souls, of directing aright and leading these children of ignorance out of the dark prison house of error and from the slavery of sin into the glorious palace of God’s truth and to the happy freedom of God’s children

Beneath the mouldering garb of superstition that covers them, if we lift carefully its dense folds, we shall discover (beneath the depths of their souls) the voice of conscience. The removal of guilt, the longing for better things, the consciousness of a good almost within reach but not yet grasped, the forebodings of a life beyond the grave – some dim notions of a future state of reward and punishment – let us elicit aright these feelings which they have in common with ourselves – let us draw them out gradually and as the eyes of their reason open put before them all the mystery of godliness – God manifested in the flesh – justified in the Spirit – seen of Angels – preached unto the Gentiles – believed on in the world – received up into glory.

To do this effectually in this Mission we must have men who have themselves drank hugely at the Fount of Redeeming love – trained for the purpose as they are trained here in this type of college – their tongues must be loosed and their intellects stretched as far as education can do it for learning languages from native lips – men who can have the spirit of the old saying ‘Homo sum nihil [illegible]’ – and will be content to dwell among them in their native villages, study their ways and thoughts and habits – enter as it were into their inner world – discover the struggling sparks of good within and fan them into a flame which shall at last enable them to read the truths which shall enlighten their souls. Men who must be content patiently to bring their converts on like children, with line upon line and precept upon precept – that the newly-awakened senses of their souls may be carefully guarded and tended – for on first coming out of darkness into light their sight will be dazzled and they will see men as trees walking – so that every care must be taken to fence their path and make their way straight before them – and the constant sound of daily prayer, the personal example, the friendly advice of their teacher must be to them as an external conviction – if I may use the term – ever reminding them of their religious faith and the duties incumbent upon them – hours of prayer – care of the dead and the like.

It is needless here to enter into the details of the plans I have thought I would adopt with this tribe or that – when on staying with them I have seen what would be most likely to arouse and impress them – but will content myself only to mention what appears a good general rule applicable to all those we may win over to the faith. Thus I have found that most of the important undertakings of their daily life among the heathen are accompanied with some religious act which is most strictly observed by the [illegible] amongst them – and it needs must follow, when you have shown them the futility of those heathen observances which

have been bound up with every religious feeling of their past lives – that if you do not substitute some suitable Christian rites and offices in their place to engage the mind of your converts, to meet the longings of their new-born faith – they will feel a spiritual void – which no appeal to their understanding, no mere intellectualism, no cut and dried routine of school lessons or sermons – no weekly observance of the Sabbath alone – no meagre or scanty allowance of the means of grace – can ever fill.

Christianity is meant for all men, so in one sense or other it can hopefully become all things to all men – it must and can meet with and adapt itself to their various tempers, customs, habits, and while it does so it exalts and purifies them from all that degrades and makes them inconsistent with itself. They among the heathen who, in their many unassuming and simple rites are always seeking either to supplicate for the protecting care and favour, or to deprecate the wrath, of God [illegible] – of those he supposes to be his ministers for good or ill – we find they have constant forms of invocation and prayer – at the time of the beginning and completion of houses, at sowing and reaping his paddy – at going out and returning home – on the day of birth – at the invasion of sickness and the hour of death – he has his fast and his feast. On the solemn occasions – national and private – and I think that on each of these occasions it will be most expedient to institute some Christian service consistent with the Church's teaching which will prevent him looking back with regret to his former observances, and will serve as guides on his path which will practically direct his mind to the object of his faith and lead him to realise the truths you have taught concerning Him –

So far as is possible then it will be wise to invest all lawful outward things and occasions – which they have been accustomed to regard in a sacred light with a – so to speak – sacramental halo – ever reminding them of the Almighty presence – that he indeed is the very light of the great God his Father – that he has ever at hand a loving Saviour, his all-powerful friend and brother – to whom he can always appeal for help and protection, in that true propitiatory sacrifice which can turn away the wrath of God which he dreads.

With the Dyaks whose reasoning powers have hardly been called into play it will naturally be a long time before they can appreciate the truths of religion with the matured and sober faith of the long civilised and well-trained Christian and I feel persuaded that no system of

religion will be able to keep a hold and act beneficially upon them – that does not thus enter into almost every action of their daily lives.

With ourselves indeed it is most difficult, if not impossible, to keep our faith alive and to be ever acting upon and shewing forth the principles of our Divine faith in our daily work with no other aids than those our riper reason and deeper convictions afford – how can we keep our hearts alive and wakeful to God's service without the outward means of grace, without the blessed reminders and strengtheners afforded by the frequent sacramental ordinances of the Church and the oft-recurring acts of public and private worship – and surely they will be tenfold more necessary to fix the wandering mind of the unreflecting savage – or the more educated but worldly, sensual and fickle mind of the more civilised heathen. One principle means of reclaiming this long wandering and neglected people will be now to lay hold of the rising generations and bring them up as intelligent Christians – by establishing schools for the children as speedily as possible in every longhouse or village of the tribes under our care – We shall I apprehend find no difficulty in obtaining permission to baptise and train up as disciples the children of those we make [?schoolmasters] – but the great difficulty at first will be the want of subordinate teachers – In due time I hope this want will in some measure be supplied by our own scholars from our Home School, but whatever other help we may be able to procure for the present, to that we must look for our future supply of native teachers – without a large subordinate agency of this sort our work can never be carried on effectually – and we must look forward to proper establishments being founded here to supply them.

I have already occupied so much time in enforcing the necessity of carrying out this precept in the text among the Dyaks – that I can only briefly notice the other branches of our work among the Chinese and Malays. The same principle (is applicable to all) will hold good in dealing with them. With regard to the Malays I have myself but little hope that any direct efforts at proselytising would succeed – in fact in the present temper of their mind it would I think do more harm than good – like the Jews at Antioch they will not hear us now, so for the present we must turn to the Gentiles. But much, very much, may be done by giving them a judicious course of secular instruction – and at the same time (whenever they will receive it, laying hold of the Divine unity) teaching the due observance of all of God's moral law, the efficacy of faith and prayer, the duties of self-denial, charity and the like, that they hold in common with ourselves. We shall be able by degrees to lessen their overweening

prejudices against us in favour of what they really do not understand – and render it may be the next generation accessible to Christian influences.

Such schools therefore are the legitimate work of the Mission whenever we can establish them, but I object to any school for Mahommedans and others where Christian doctrines are taught as a common lesson to those who are neither baptised nor have any intention of embracing Christianity – it brings our faith into disrepute among the heathen and hardens those who only love to laugh at it – as I have known some sad instances.

The Chinese here offer (with those present this day) a hopeful field, the sensible part of them seems disgusted with the mummeries of their own faith, and are ready to embrace what we offer them – would that we could communicate freely with them – the language is a great difficulty – want of books another – but we must try with God's help to overcome in good time.

Inculcating as I have done the necessity of adapting ourselves and our teaching to the various peoples we have to do with, I must add as an important caution that we should scrupulously beware of adopting or complying with any idolatrous rites – or think that the proposition of Christianity may render them lawful – a practice the most directly opposed to the Apostle's teaching and which alone has in great part caused the most utter failure to many (very promising at first) Roman Catholic efforts in this part of the world.

And indeed our Mission with so much that is hopeful and pleasing about it has its peculiar difficulties – the different races of people and the different languages require numerous agents and men of various acquirements. With the Dyaks who claim our chief attention we shall not find so much difficulty inducing them to consent to listen to us and perhaps to embrace Christianity – as to build them up in the faith when they have received it. This will require the most careful and judicious superintendence – personal influence alone can do this, and owing to their being so split up into small communities separated from each other, many agents will be required to carry on the work. Besides those who do it must be prepared to live apart with them, to follow them about, to court their society at all times – in which they will perhaps encounter a good deal that is disagreeable to men unaccustomed to a native life and suffer small afflictions and petty nuisances – but who does not expect to meet trials, impediments and difficulties in a work which never was nor ever will be carried on without

them – and nothing but a fervent love for Him who sends us a strong faith in the message He gave us to deliver can ever impart the needful constancy and enthusiasm to carry through the work before us – a man of strong faith and earnest loving mind is alone fit for a missionary life.

Many on first entering it, fresh from their peaceful and happy Christian homes, are apt to be appalled and disheartened at the fearful amount of evil and dark ignorance they meet with on first coming into contact with heathenism – and the realities they experience are so different from the romantic pictures they may have formed in their own minds of the engaging simplicity and the extreme docility of the heathen, and the delight of seeing them all come and listen eagerly to the good news of a Saviour's love – that they are apt to be disgusted or discouraged in the outset at not finding things to their mind – and either lose all feelings of sympathy and love for those they came to tend or shrink from the work overwhelmed with the idea that it is too great for them. If such thoughts ever assail any of us let us think of St Paul our great example who so long endured all things, and counted it a matter of rejoicing when he suffered all manner of distresses for Christ and the Gospel's sake – he was firm to the end and obtained a crown of rejoicing that fadeth not away. Think too of the noble army of Saints and Martyrs that have gone before us on the same work. Think too of the zeal, constancy and fortitude displayed by such men as Schwartz and Ziegenbalg, Martin and Heber, who spent their lives and energies in planting the Indian Church – remember that they were men like ourselves, earthen vessels to whom the precious treasure of the ministry of reconciliation was committed that they might convey the grace offered to the Gentiles. Let us bear in mind as they did whenever they were discouraged and their strength seemed to fail that 'the excellency of the power is of God, not of us'. Through Christ who strengthened them they did great things; in His might we may do the same. Having received this Ministry let us see that we faint not, and if we are faithful God Himself will be with us as with His servants of old and prove our shield and exceeding great reward. Let us not look back – to do so especially after the first few years when we are just prepared for labouring effectually would hinder God's work and prove us unworthy of being engaged therein – and who should say that a long and laborious life of toil, trial and exile spent in such a cause as ours will not be as efficacious in sowing and fertilising the seeds of a new Church, and as blessed to ourselves as the blood of martyrdom itself?

To you my brother about to depart from us and cast your lot among the well-disposed but wild and erring men of Sakarran, to till the unbroken soil of heathen hearts – I would say, go with good cheer. You have every need for encouragement – hopeful indeed is the field you are about to occupy in the name of the Lord. The climate for a tropical land is healthful and pleasant – the people willing nay anxious to receive you – and the government both here and at Sakarran able and desirous to give you every needful support and protection – all outward circumstances seem favourable – the rest is with yourself – use well then the gift that is in you, give to them the treasure committed to your charge, to enable you to declare to them the God they ignorantly worship. I know full well your own deep humility, your feeling that you are carrying God’s treasure in an earthen vessel, unworthy of so great an honour – yet be not discouraged thereat but rejoice rather, knowing that the excellency of the power is of God and not of us His humble instruments – that power will in His own due time cause the seed you faithfully sow to spring up and ripen into fruit – but again let not your ardour be dampened if you see no speedy results – with us it is but the seed-time – and it is not for us the foremost labourers of this Mission to look for the ripened harvest here – it is for us rather to pioneer the way as it were, to carefully plant seed which it may be will ripen under the care of others. The work to be sound must necessarily be gradual – we must be content that it should be so – we must countenance no errors, make no compromise with evil, thinking to produce thereby extensive and rapid but hollow results, that spring up like mushroom growths in a night, but wither and vanish before the searching rays of the morning sun.

Though far away from your own kindred and your land – remember that you have always near at hand your B(rothers) in Christ – ready to assist you to the best of their power in every difficulty – who meet at morning and eve in your Heavenly Father’s house and pray that the healthful spirit of God’s grace, the dews of heavenly blessing may be yours – that He will be with you in your work and fetch home to His flock those you go to gather in – and (I use the touching words of one lately called to his rest, in whom the Church Militant has lost a highly-gifted and faithful son, and all engaged in the Missionary work in the East a bright example, a wise counsellor and an affectionate brother) when at times bitter hours of heart-melting longings come over you in your isolated positions – the longings to see once more a parent’s face – the longings to hear once more a sister’s voice – the longings to grasp once more a brother’s hand – the longings once more to hold sweet converse with the comrades and scenes of your early youth – let them be calmed (soothed) in the remembrance of the promise made to Abraham who at God’s bidding left his own country and his father’s

house – ‘I am their exceeding great reward’. Yes B(rother), remember too the promise of our Gracious Master, that they who so do God’s work shall be to Him as Mother and Sister and Brother – and ‘that there is no man that hath left house or brother or sister or father or mother or wife or children or lands for my name’s sake and the Gospel’s – but he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time – with persecutions and in the world to come eternal life’ – do the work to which you are called faithfully and steadfastly and at the day of your death you will look back with thankfulness and bless God that He called you to it.

But if visible success in our work should gladden our hearts and cheer us on in the work – let us always be humble and call to mind that the excellency of the power is of God – who has highly honoured us weak frail earthen vessels by sending us to dispense the treasures of His grace and love [illegible]. For these are the words of the Honourable and Venerable Prelate, my right-reverend Father in Christ’s Church – ‘The minister of religion can only display the unsearchable riches of Christ as he sinks in his own view – and that the glory of his Master may fill the whole field of vision – he is to preach not himself but Christ, and himself men’s servant for Jesus’ sake’. Go now with good cheer – do the work of an evangelist – make full proof of your ministry – endure to the end – you shall receive your everlasting reward.

In conclusion – I know I need not ask you my beloved brothers to encourage us in our work carried on as it were at your own doors – which you have been forward and willing to do both by your personal kindness and your liberal gifts – but on this one occasion I would bespeak your liberality in favour of the SPG, which for 150 years has been proclaiming God’s truth throughout every quarter of the world – and it is desirous on this the anniversary of its 1½ centuries to shew its thankfulness for past mercies increased – to carry out its work – and for this end its directors have appealed through their head the Archbishop of Canterbury to the whole Church for contributions – and surely this infant Church, the youngest Child of our beloved Mother, will not shut its ears to this appeal. The eyes of this Society are upon the whole world – America, Asia and Africa alike have received the benefit of its aid. Through its exertions all our Colonial Bishopricks have been established, and they now number more than the American Church which has now 20 dioceses and was planted by its Missionaries – our own Mission here owes much to the support and encouragement of its present directors – our brother now leaving us is in part supported by them, and his departure is a fitting opportunity for us to show our gratitude to the Society which assisted in sending him to us – I need say no more – I feel that you will give according to your means as the

Lord has prospered you – and now let us draw nigh to the holy table spread for us – and there is the most solemn ordinance of our faith – in communion of heart and soul with each other and with Him who was of old revealed to His disciples at the breaking of the bread – commend our brother to His keeping – whose Spirit can alone strengthen him and support him in the arduous work before him – and pray that He may likewise honour each one of us by giving us grace and opportunity to do something either by encouraging others or by labouring ourselves to make His way known upon earth, His saving health to all generations.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with us all evermore.

APPENDIX 2

A BISHOP 'IN PARTIBUS INFIDELIUM ET HERETICORUM' [see page 177].

This phrase became popular in the Church during the early medieval period, especially after the spread of Islam, as a way of giving a title to bishops who, because of the dominance of 'infidels' [i.e. Muslims] or 'heretics' [i.e. Monophysites, Nestorians], could not actually physically occupy a see.

The bishop was accounted to have a responsibility for the see, especially where it had previously been occupied by a prelate in residence, but he could not visit the territory or hold confirmations, ordinations and synods. The title thus bestowed an episcopal roving commission.

According to the article *Titular See* in the *New Catholic Encyclopedia* the usage of such titles was abandoned by the Roman Catholic Church in 1882.

Dr David Wright of the Faculty of Divinity, the University of Edinburgh, kindly supplied the above information.

It is interesting to note that the origin of Suffragan Bishops in the English Church in the 13th century lay in giving assistant bishops to dioceses titles from former Christian cities then occupied by Islam. In the mid-19th century a suggestion was made that missionary bishops might be granted similar titles, but nothing came of the idea. In the last decade of the 20th century, however, the Church of England has revived the practice in a modified form to provide suffragan bishops with roving commissions to minister to the needs of those clergy and congregations who find themselves unable to accept the priestly ministry of women.

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Handwritten copies of F.T. McDougall's letters from Sarawak, first to the BCMI and then to the SPG, are to be found in two manuscript books labelled CLR 72 for the years 1848-59 and CLR 73 for the years 1859-66. CLR = Copies of Letters Received.

Handwritten copies of letters written by the secretaries of the BCMI and the SPG between 1846 and 1866 are in a manuscript book labelled CLS 54. Most of these were sent to McDougall in Sarawak, hence CLS = Copies of Letters Sent.

A few miscellaneous letters from McDougall are listed under the heading OLR D6b. (OLR = Original Letters Received) and X series 1273, the minutes of the BCMI committee under X series 82, and McDougall's 1861 lecture together with his report on the 1866 synod may be found under the title 916.18.s.2 (3).

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104 (2) – Letters to the secretaries of the BCMI (C. D. Brereton and T. F. Stooks) 1848-52.

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Brooke Sarawak Manuscripts

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McDougall's Sermons

The original manuscripts of 26 of McDougall's sermons, some consisting only of short extracts, and extracts from the sermon preached at McDougall's funeral in Winchester Cathedral, have been presented to the Rhodes House Library by the Revd A. J. M. Saint. They are at present uncatalogued, but available for inspection.

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