

CMS policy regarding Islam and Muslims in Africa

The Church Missionary Society was established on 12 April 1799 by a group of evangelical ministers and laymen within the Anglican Church. Initially named the Society for Missions to Africa and the East, it is best known under its later name (since 1812), Church Missionary Society (CMS). Like the Baptist Missionary Society (1792) and the London Missionary Society (1795), the CMS was a product of the 18th-century evangelical revival in Britain. The founders had noticed that 'next to nothing was done by British Christians to spread the knowledge of the Gospel among the Pagan, Heathen, and Mohammedan nations' (*Centenary volume*, p. 1). While there were already two missionary societies active within the Anglican Church, they saw a niche for a new society:

As it appears from the printed Reports of the Societies for the Propagation of the Gospel and for Promoting Christian Knowledge that those respectable societies confine their labours to the British Plantations and the West Indies, there seems to be still wanting in the Established Church a society for sending missionaries to the Continent of Africa, and other parts of the heathen world. (*Centenary volume*, p. 3)

The society's principle aim was thus to conduct mission work outside the British Isles. However, the rapid expansion of the British Empire during the 19th century soon overturned this plan, with the result that the CMS mainly conducted its work within the empire.

The society's initial ambition had been to send missionaries to Bengal, but the East India Company objected to mission work in 'their' territories. Since not only world evangelism but also the abolition of slavery was a chief concern of the CMS founders, in 1804 the society sent its first two missionaries, German Lutherans trained at a Berlin seminary, to the colony of Freetown in what is present-day Sierra Leone (Keefer, 'First missionaries', pp. 203-5). Soon they were followed by missionaries to New Zealand (1809), India (1813), Ceylon (1814), the West Indies (1818), Canada (1820), Ethiopia (1827), Australia (1830), South Africa (1836), China (1844), East Africa (1844), Palestine (1856), Japan (1868) and Persia (1875), with India becoming one of the CMS's most important mission fields in the 19th century (*Centenary volume*, p. 20).

The CMS sought to achieve its aim of world evangelism by direct as well as indirect missionary work. The so-called 'Mediterranean missions'

that commenced in 1815 aimed to 'revive' Oriental Christianity (churches in the Middle East), assuming that this in turn would kindle missionary zeal in the Eastern churches: 'The hope was entertained that the Eastern Churches, if they could be brought back to the knowledge and love of the Sacred Scriptures, would reflect the Gospel light on the Mohammedans and Heathen around them' (*Centenary volume*, p. 15). Work in Turkey and Egypt, however, suffered from a number of setbacks because of the shifting political circumstances. With time, missionary assessments of Oriental Christianity became increasingly negative; some regarded Oriental Christianity as 'a debased Christianity that had called Mohammedanism into being in the first place' and considered it to be beyond reform, resulting in 'mission work' among Oriental Christians rather than Muslims (Porter, 'Evangelicalism', p. 70).

Over the course of the 19th century, the society employed some 1,500 missionaries, expatriate as well as local; a little under a third of them were women, mostly engaged in the last two decades of the 19th century. From 1825 onwards, all male CMS missionaries received preparation training in the CMS Training College in Islington, North London; the length and content of training varied, depending on the candidate's education. By the late 19th century, the curriculum included the study of religious traditions such as Confucianism, Buddhism and Islam, as well as comparative religion (Hodge, 'Training of CMS missionaries', p. 91). From the late 1880s onwards, women missionaries also received training, some at 'The Willows', a training home connected with the Mildmay Training Institutions, some at a private home known as 'The Olives', but little is known about the content of what they learnt in the late 19th century (*Centenary volume*, p. 6).

Attitudes towards Islam

CMS missionaries engaged with Muslims and Islam in a wide variety of localities in Africa, Asia and the Middle East, and attitudes were diverse, depending on variables such as a missionary's background, locality, context, and moment in time. In the first half of the 19th century, CMS missionaries were optimistic about the prospects of converting Muslims, assuming that Muslims would embrace Christianity with fervour once the Gospel was explained to them in clear terms. By the final quarter of the 19th century, when several decades of futile attempts had taken their toll, this optimism had begun to waver. The rise of militant Islam, the British debacle in the Sudan and the rapid growth of Islam in Africa all began to

cast doubt on the effectiveness of evangelisation via English education, rational argument and translation work. Christianity seemed to be losing out against Islam, especially in Africa.

Therefore, in October 1875, the CMS organised a two-day conference to reflect on the challenges of 'Missions to the Mohammedans'. Held at Church Missionary House in Salisbury Square, London, experts and representatives from a variety of mission fields shared their experiences, thoughts and best practices. The overall tone of the conference was optimistic and confident, anticipating the fall of the Ottoman Empire and stating that while 'Mohammedanism will probably continue for a season as an Asiatic and an African religion [...] it will cease to be European' (CMS, *Conference*, p. 7). The delegates attributed the lack of conversions chiefly to the fact that missionaries in Asia, the Middle East and Africa had been so preoccupied with other matters that 'no special effort had been made to deal with Mohammedanism'; 'to all intents and purposes the proclamation of the Gospel to the hearts and consciences of the Mohammedan is a thing yet of the future – a work not yet entered upon' (CMS, *Conference*, pp. 8-9).

The conference participants also considered the 'corruption of the fallen Churches of Greece and Rome [...] a great hindrance to Christianity among the followers of Islam', but were sufficiently meek to concede that 'our own want of faith, of deeper personal holiness, and of more earnest zeal' also hampered effective witness, as did the 'Christian doctrines of the Trinity and the Sonship of Christ' (CMS, *Conference*, p. 11). But whereas the delegates were in unison in identifying the main obstacles to mission among Muslims, there was 'a good deal of diversity of opinion' about 'the most effective mode of dealing with Mohammedanism', possibly due to the wide variety of contexts in which the delegates worked (CMS, *Conference*, pp. 11-12). As a result, the conference did not issue generic recommendations on how to evangelise Muslims.

The Africa reports at the conference were presented by veteran missionary James Frederick Schön, who served in West Africa from 1832-45, Metcalfe Sunter, principal of Fourah Bay College between 1870 and 1882, and Carl Anders Gollmer, who had extensive missionary experience in both Sierra Leone (1835-45) and Nigeria (1845-62). Their presentations oscillated between optimism and realism. Schön, drawing on experiences from earlier in the century, was optimistic. He maintained that relations with Muslims in Sierra Leone were cordial and that the majority of Liberated African Muslims in Sierra Leone were recent converts to Islam

who had been pressurized into becoming Muslims by the Fulani militias. The fact that several among them had converted to Christianity suggested to Schön that their allegiance to Islam was superficial. He was confident that many more would become Christians provided that 'both European and Native missionaries should be set apart for Missionary enterprise, and especially among the Mohammedans'. Schön was also hopeful about the outcomes of evangelising the wider West African Muslim community, who, in his opinion, were ignorant about their faith and who would, he thought, therefore be open to Christianity (CMS, *Conference*, pp. 27-8). Sunter, who was still serving in West Africa at the time of the conference, was less optimistic. He agreed with Schön that many West African Muslims were illiterate and uninformed about the Qur'an and Muslim teachings. And while he conceded that 'the wave of Mohammedan progress has been to some extent stopped' and 'that much of the prejudice, which in past times has been shown by the Mohammedans to Christianity in Africa, is now on the wane', he also observed that 'direct converts are few and far between' (CMS, *Conference*, pp. 29, 32). Likewise, Gollmer, who had worked among the Yoruba, concurred with the view that '[a]s a rule, in West Africa, the Mohammedans are entirely uneducated', though he also remarked that this was different in the interior, where some Muslims were highly sophisticated and literate (CMS, *Conference*, p. 37). Nevertheless, the three men maintained, West African Muslims 'cannot be reached through books which contain anything like elaborate arguments or abstract reasonings', but rather 'should be reached through the living Teacher', who could converse with Muslims in their local vernacular, and whose 'aim should be to set up Christian truth – based upon Revelation – rather than destroy Mohammedan error by means of reason' (CMS, *Conference*, p. 39). Sunter also made a case for the inclusion of Arabic in the curriculum at Fourah Bay College, for both missionary and commercial purposes (CMS, *Conference*, p. 33); James Johnson, a 'native clergyman' who was later appointed assistant bishop in Western Equatorial Africa, in a letter to the CMS written in 1875, also emphasised the importance of training in Arabic and Islam for local CMS staff (Cole, *Krio*, p. 137).

The discussion on Africa led to the overall conclusion that rational debates, education and translation work alone were insufficient to engender Muslim conversion; mission among Muslims required missionaries (expatriate as well as native) who would be specifically assigned to work among Muslims and would be well-versed in Islam and versatile in the vernaculars used by West African Muslims (e.g. Mandinka, Hausa and

Fula). The participants also held high hopes of the distribution of Arabic Bibles and *ajami* tracts.

Since the conference took place just as the CMS was beginning to revive work in East Africa with the arrival of William Price, who focused on working with freed slaves, there was no representation from there at the conference.

Subsequent missionary strategies began to favour peripatetic evangelism by specialised staff (indigenous and expatriate) and evangelical preaching. Heather Sharkey notes that, despite earlier experiences of failure,

in the 1880s, CMS missionaries began to discuss Christian rivalry with Islam in terms of a contest for African souls. [...] As the nineteenth century ended, CMS missionaries were nevertheless becoming increasingly committed to, and aggressive about, work in Muslim regions. Emboldened by, and proud of, the spread of the British Empire, they felt confident that work among Muslims was feasible as never before. (Sharkey, 'Christians among Muslims', p. 54)

In 1887, a heated debate on Islam in Africa was sparked off in Anglican circles when Canon Isaac Taylor, perhaps building on ideas by men like Richard Burton and Edward Blyden, stated to a predominantly missionary audience that Islam had done much more than Christianity to civilise Africa and was much more suited to Africans than Christianity, a view that evoked strong emotions in CMS circles (Prasch, 'Which God for Africa', p. 62). While this view gained much support among colonial officers, its impact on missionary engagement with Muslims remained limited (see C. Bennett, 'Isaac Taylor', in *CMR* 17, 307-15).

The rapid expansion of the British Empire over the course of the 19th century had made Britain, to use the words of Andrew Porter, 'the greatest of all rulers of Muslims' (Porter, *Religion versus Empire*, p. 211). The fact that increasing numbers of Muslims had come under 'Christian' (European) rule during the 19th century fuelled millennial sentiments among evangelical Christians in the last decades of the century. Many believed that the political circumstances signalled a specific calling for missionary work among Muslims. Porter quotes a paper read by William Dumerque, vicar of Fareham, at a CMS prayer meeting in 1881, in which Dumerque remarked:

Certainly it is a sign of the times that the Crescent is waning before the Cross, that though Mohammedanism as a religion is not worn out, Mohammedan nations have come under the power or the influence of Christian rulers.

Surely, then, the conversion of the Mohammedans should be a special subject at missionary conferences. (Porter, 'Evangelicalism', p. 62)

Some 25 years later, William St Clair Tisdall (see G. Nickel, 'William St Clair Tisdall', in *CMR* 20), a CMS missionary in India (1884-7) and Iran (1892-1900), in his contribution to the 1907 ecumenical missionary conference on 'Mohammedanism in the world to-day' in Cairo, also flagged the significance of the political climate for mission to Muslims, stating: 'This fact [...] renders it much easier for missionaries to evangelize these great populations than it would be if the Koranic law condemning Christian converts from Islâm to death were still in force' ('Islam and Christian missions', p. 207) History proved him wrong; in various colonial settings (e.g. West Africa) British colonial rule proved a hindrance rather than an aid to mission to Muslims, and the late 19th and early 20th centuries produced few proofs that substantiated Tisdall's confident and somewhat triumphalist claims of a bright future for Christian mission among Muslims, because 'Islam as a religion is doomed to fade away in time for the advance of humanity, civilization, and enlightenment', and that Bible translation 'into all the main languages spoken by Mohammedans has laid the axe to the tree of Islâm' (Tisdall, 'Islam and Christian missions', p. 207). Rather, in numerous settings, colonialism kindled a revitalisation among religious others, including Muslims.

As Porter is careful to point out, 19th-century British Protestant interest in mission among Muslims was not merely the result of Britain's expanding empire, but had multiple origins (Porter, 'Evangelicalism', p. 63). Evangelical commitment to the abolition of slavery was another source of Protestant preoccupation with Islam, including in the CMS. In the minds of many, Muslims were key players in the perpetuation of the African slave trade. The Fulani jihads in West Africa were not considered a threat only because they imposed Islam on non-Muslim Africans but also because they sold large numbers of the conquered populations into slavery, while in East Africa, Muslim traders and the Sultanate of Zanzibar were deemed to be linchpins in the Swahili slave trade and the supply of slaves to the Ottoman Empire. Hence, mission to Muslims was also considered an important strategy in the anti-slavery lobby.

The international conference held in Berlin in 1884-5 led to the 'carving-up' of Africa amongst European powers; it also meant that the preferred missionary groups working in an area would be from the colonial country that ruled it. This meant that the CMS found itself having to relate to German and French colonial officials.

Researching the CMS

The archives of the CMS are held at the Cadbury Research Library Special Collections, University of Birmingham. The collection comprises records of the society's home administration (e.g. annual reports, minutes, ledgers, publications) as well as records from mission stations and missionaries (e.g. correspondence, progress reports, journals, annual letters, etc.). Currently, the materials from 1799-1959 are open for research. A large part of the archival materials has been digitised by Adam Matthew Publications and is available on-line; they can also be consulted at the Crowther Library of the CMS in Oxford, as well as at the Cadbury Research Library. For more details on the archival corpus, see: <https://churchmissionsociety.org/about/our-history/archives/>.

Over the years the CMS has published a large number of periodicals, some general, some focusing on specific target groups, such as women, children or Sunday schools (e.g. *Church Missionary Juvenile Instructor*, *The Quarterly Token*), some focusing on specific forms of mission (e.g. medical mission) or specific regions (e.g. *Ruanda Notes*); some newsletters published by the newly established local churches. A large number of the periodicals have been digitised, including: *Proceedings of the Church Missionary Society for Africa and the East* (1801-1921, continued as *Annual Report*, 1922-61), *The CMS Gleaner* (continued in 1922 as the *CM Outlook*, and from 1973 onwards as *YES Magazine*), *The CMS Intelligencer* (continued in 1907 as the *Church Missionary Review*, in 1928 as *Church Overseas*, and in 1934 as the *East and West Review*), *Ruanda Notes*, *Mid-Africa Ministry News*, *Register of Missionaries*, *Homes of the East*, *Mercy and Truth*, *The Medical Mission Quarterly*, *The Kwangsi Hunan Diocesan Newsletter*, *The Bulletin of the Diocese of Western China*, *CMS Japan Quarterly*, *The Home Gazette of the CMS*, *CMS Historical Record* and *CMS Awake!*

The CMS has also published a large number of linguistic materials, such as grammars, dictionaries, and primers, missionary tracts, Bible translations and children's books.

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WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

The CMS in West Africa

DATE 1804-1914

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE English and other languages

DESCRIPTION

In the 19th century the areas in West Africa where the CMS encountered Muslims on a regular basis were the riverine territory of present-day Guinea Conakry with Sierra Leone and Nigeria.

In the Sierra Leone and Guinea Conakry area, where the CMS had commenced its work in 1804, missionaries interacted with three distinct groups of Muslims. The first comprised Liberated African Muslims (often of Yoruba descent) who had been settled in the colony of Freetown after they were freed when the slave ships transporting them were intercepted by the British navy. According to Schön most of them had only recently, and under coercion, embraced Islam. Samuel Ajayi Crowther (see A. Fitchett-Climenhanga, 'Samuel Crowther', *CMR* 19, 219-28), the CMS's most renowned 19th-century African employee, gained his first experiences of Christian mission to Muslims with these Muslims. Also living in the colony was a small group of Fulani Muslims, often traders who had moved to the colony to exploit the economic opportunities it offered, with whom relations were said to be cordial and who were considered to represent 'a Mission-field which ought to be occupied by labourers set apart for them' (CMS, *Conference*, p. 27). However, there are no indications that a systematic attempt to evangelise this group took place during the 19th century. Rather, Schön saw certain advantages to allowing the resident Fulani and the large number of Muslim visitors to the colony 'to practice their religion without let or hindrance, and enjoy religions toleration to the full extent'. He stated: 'I do not disapprove of this at all; on the contrary, I rejoice in it, because it will be setting an example which we hope they will imitate in future days, and grant to us the same privileges in their own countries' (CMS, *Conference*, p. 27).

The third group of Muslims with whom CMS missionaries interacted were Muslims from the Sierra Leone hinterland (Susu, Mandingo and Fulani). The first CMS missionaries, Peter Hartwig and Melchior Renner, had been instructed to work 'inland' among the Susu and Bullom peoples, following up on work commenced there by the Edinburgh Missionary Society in 1797. On the advice of Henry Brunton (see M.T. Frederiks, 'Henry

Brunton', in *CMR* 19, 59-66), Hartwig and Renner's training had included the study of Arabic, so that they were equipped to engage with these predominantly Muslim groups. Gradually, however, after the Act of Abolition of 1807 CMS staff were increasingly drawn into the pastorate for Liberated Africans. As a result, the Susu mission, which had suffered from the antagonism of resident slavers and rebuff from Muslims ever since its inception, was abandoned until the 1850s, when the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel took over missionary responsibilities for the Rio Pongas region (Gibba, 'West Indian mission'). CMS contacts with the Fula Muslim Empire of Futa Jallon and with the Mandinka Muslim Empire of Wassoulou were limited to exploratory journeys and commercial relations.

CMS interactions with Muslims in Sierra Leone are fairly well documented. Apart from the conventional progress reports and correspondence that mention interactions with Muslims, there is a *Memorial of the agents of the CMS respecting the spread of Mahomedanism among the Liberated Africans* as well as a petition from African lay preachers on the same subject, both from January 1839, and reports by Schön, Sunter and Gullmer presented at the 1875 Conference on missions to the Mohammedans. In addition, there are linguistic materials, developed for the evangelisation of Muslims, as well as material on Ajayi Crowther's interactions with Liberated African Muslims which fashioned his attitude towards Muslims in the Niger mission. However, apart from an article by Andrew Walls ('Africa as theatre') and a number of references in the work of Gibril Cole (*The Krio*), there has been no systematic historical analysis of these interactions in Sierra Leone.

The materials available indicate that attitudes regarding Islam and Muslims in Sierra Leone changed over time. While CMS missionaries working among the Susu and among liberated African Muslims initially assumed that Muslims would be as receptive to the Gospel as other groups, this optimism gradually changed into scepticism, antagonism and a sense of competition with Islam (Walls, 'Africa as theatre', p. 45).

From Sierra Leone, the CMS commenced mission work in Nigeria in 1844. After an exploratory but calamitous expedition undertaken on the Niger in 1841, the society chose Badagry, Abeokuta, and later Lagos, as its missionary centres. Characteristic of CMS mission work in Nigeria in the 19th century was that the majority of its staff were African, many of them Liberated Africans from Sierra Leone, or their descendants. The most prominent among them was the Yoruba clergyman Samuel Ajayi Crowther (c. 1809-91). Because of his cultural and linguistic skills and his extensive missionary experience, Crowther was appointed head of the

all-African Niger mission in 1857, and consecrated bishop in 1864. During the four-and-a-half decades he served the mission, he engaged in translation work, initiated mission stations and schools in his immense diocese (e.g. Bonny and Calabar) and explored missionary opportunities in the middle and northern Niger region, such as Ilorun and the Nupe region. His journals testify to his numerous encounters with Muslim leaders and traditional believers, and underscore the dialogical and non-confrontational approach to the religious 'other' that Crowther himself personified.

In the decades following the colonisation of Lagos in 1861, CMS work in Nigeria suffered a series of setbacks. Resident traders in Lagos opposed missionary work because they felt it interfered with trade interests, while a series of wars between Yoruba polities caused upheaval in large parts of the Niger Diocese. Also, personnel and funds were scarce. By the mid-1880s, when Britain had extended its influence in the Niger Delta, relations between expatriate and indigenous CMS workers became increasingly strained. A group of young university-educated expatriate missionaries imbued with evangelical zeal and imperialist attitudes, began to contest African leadership and effectively undermined Crowther's authority, overruling him in matters of personnel and finance. The tensions came to a head in 1890, when Crowther resigned as bishop. With this, the CMS 'all-African pastorate experiment' came to an end; an expatriate missionary succeeded Crowther as bishop. The conflicts between expats and local missionaries also encompassed missionary strategies; many of the expat missionaries criticised the non-confrontational approach towards Muslims and adherents of traditional religions that Crowther and his African colleagues had favoured. They advocated a more confrontational approach and sought to start mission work in the predominantly Muslim north.

In 1890, the so-called 'Sudan Party', under the leadership of J.A. Robinson and Wilmot Brooke, set out for the northern regions, with the specific aim of reaching out to Muslims in the Hausa states, but the mission failed. In 1900, a new attempt was made to establish a mission in northern Nigeria. However, the party, headed by Bishop Herbert Tugwell (1854-1936), had failed to request permission from the colonial authorities and had to withdraw after they met with fierce resistance from the Emir of Kano. Among the party was the medical missionary Walter Miller (1872-1952), who returned to the area in 1902 and settled in Zaria with the consent of the emir of Zaria. Miller worked in Zaria and its surroundings until his retirement in 1935 (see M.A.B. Gaiya, 'Walter Miller', in *CMR* 19, 462-72), thus effectively starting CMS missionary work in northern Nigeria.

With the establishment of the Northern Nigeria Protectorate in 1900, Christian missionary work in northern Nigeria became increasingly difficult. Colonial officers subjected Christian missionary work to a variety of rules and regulations, which, while not formally prohibiting missionary work, in practice impeded missionary activities. Andrew Barnes observes that '[c]olonial administrators justified these practices by reference to the pledge Lugard made to the Sultan of Sokoto at the moment of British Conquest that "Government will in no way interfere with the Mohammedan religion"' (Barnes, "Great prohibition", p. 442). Administrators took this to mean no proselytisation of Muslims by Christian missionaries, a policy that effectively thwarted all aspirations of missionary work in the Muslim north. C.N. Ubah concludes:

By the first decade of this century the missionaries in Nigeria were increasingly realizing the hopelessness of their position, and in 1909 the Church Missionary Society (C.M.S.) bitterly complained that if, as the British administration insisted, they had to subject their coming to the approval of the emirs, they might as well be excluded forever. (Ubah, 'Problems of Christian missionaries', p. 354)

Hence, the main encounters between CMS missionaries and Muslims in Nigeria in the 19th century took place in Yorubaland. In the mid-1870s, aware of the importance of knowledge of Arabic and Islam for missionary work, Crowther, Johnson and others began to send indigenous ministers to Fourah Bay College and other training institutions to study Arabic and Islam, in order to equip them for debates with Muslim apologists (Akinade, *Christian responses to Islam*). This policy produced indigenous CMS ministers like T.A.J. Ogunbiyi (1866-1952), M.S. Cole (1875-1946) and M.T. Euler-Ajayi (1846-1913), who were well-versed in Arabic and had a considerable knowledge of Islam. These ministers not only engaged with Muslims orally, but also wrote Yoruba tracts specifically for Muslims. Examples include Ogunbiyi's *Aṣaro Kukuru* ('Tracts for Muhammadans'), *Awọn Orọ Olorun* ('The Words of God'), a translation of the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments and some Bible passages, *Awọn Imale* ('The Muslims'), a collection of stories of Muslims who had converted to Christianity, and *Itan Mọmọdu* ('The Story of Muḥammad'), a brief biography of Muḥammad, published in Lagos by CMS, 1911-15 (Shitu, 'Review', pp. 29-30).

Possibly the most extraordinary document was a Yoruba translation of the Qur'an, prepared by Michael Samuel Cole (1906, revised edition 1924). Intended for a Christian audience, this translation aimed to educate and

forearm Christians and traditional believers against Islam. Cole wrote in the introduction that the book was intended to 'help the cause of Christianity, and dispel the darkness of the ignorance that [...] prevailed among Mohammedans in Yorubaland' (Solihu, 'Earliest Yoruba translation'; see A.K.H. Solihu, 'M.S. Cole', in *CMR* 19, 325-31).

SIGNIFICANCE

The missionaries' perception of rivalry between Islam and the message of Christianity had a lasting influence on the ways in which the CMS worked in West Africa. Early on in the work of the mission, the challenges of competition with Islam led to the decision to focus on non-Muslims and recently Islamised groups, such as Liberated Africans (freed slaves) and the Yoruba, whose attachment to Islam was perceived to be superficial, rather than working amongst groups with a long-established Islamic tradition, such as the Hausa and Fulani.

When work amongst Muslims began, it is significant that Liberated Africans were involved in the work together with European missionaries. The Liberated Africans who were educated at Fourah Bay College, Sierra Leone, were ordained as deacons and often returned to work in the communities from which they came.

Literature was produced using local vernaculars written in Arabic script, making them accessible to many more people than material printed using Roman script. The material produced by the CMS included both western and African contributors. Among the latter, Crowther's reflections on Islam and Muslims were influential far beyond the local context, whereas M.S. Cole's version of the Qur'an in Yoruba (1906) was significant as the first Qur'an to be available in an African language, pre-dating Godfrey Dale's Swahili version by 17 years.

During the 19th century, by means of conferences and publications, the CMS stimulated not only work among Muslims but also reflections on Islam and mission to Muslims, which shaped attitudes both in England and in the mission field. In this, they can be viewed as being more progressive in their outlook than some other Protestant mission agencies.

In day to day living, relations between Christians and Muslims were generally cordial and courteous, allowing opportunities for interactions. Canon Isaac Taylor's paper 'Mohammedanism in Africa', given at the Church Congress in 1887, positing the greater suitability of Islam than Christianity for Africans, gave rise to discussion among missionaries not only in West Africa but in East Africa, too. This focused on the question of whether or not Islam should be seen as a step towards the 'civilisation' of Africans and so as an improvement on traditional religion.

Throughout the period, attitudes regarding mission to Muslims varied greatly between locations, often shaped by personal preferences and insights, leading to a gradual collapse of the optimism that Muslims would be converted.

Decisions made by colonial authorities had a lasting effect on the work that the CMS could do among Muslims. This was particularly true in the Northern Nigeria Protectorate, where in 1900 Lord Lugard as High-Commissioner issued a directive of non-interference with the Muslim religion within the protectorate (see J.A. Mbillah, 'Lord Lugard', in *CMR* 19, 436-9). This restricted the CMS and other missions from working in the north until after independence in 1960.

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Martha T. Frederiks