

1965

A history of the Congregational and Methodist churches in Bulgaria and Yugoslavia

<https://hdl.handle.net/2144/36885>

Downloaded from DSpace Repository, DSpace Institution's institutional repository

BOSTON UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL

Dissertation

A HISTORY OF THE CONGREGATIONAL AND
METHODIST CHURCHES IN BULGARIA AND YUGOSLAVIA

by

Paul Benjamin Mojzes
(B.A., Florida Southern College, 1959)

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
1965

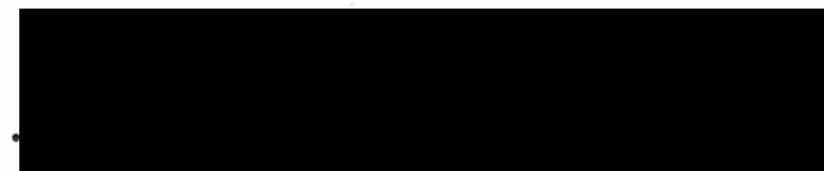
PhD
1965
m
v. 1

PHD
1965
m
2 cop.
Cop. of
microfilm
Hojze, Paul Benjamin.
A History of the Congregational and
Methodist Churches in Bulgaria and Yugoslavia.
Boston, 1965.
Thesis (Ph. D.) - Boston University
Bibliography?
Vita

APPROVED

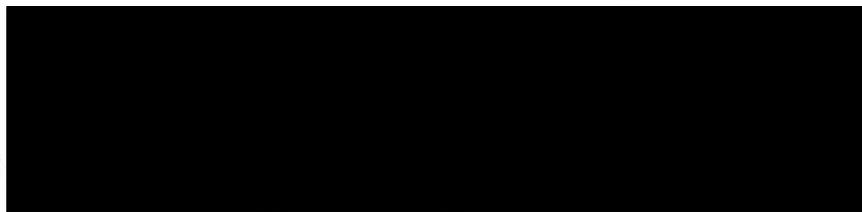
by

First Reader



Professor of Church History

Second Reader



Associate Professor of World Christian Missions

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
TABLE OF ABBREVIATIONS	xiii
TABLE OF PRONUNCIATION	xv
I. INTRODUCTION	
A. The Problem of the Dissertation	1
B. The Nature of the Churches Studied	3
C. The Scope and Limitations	6
D. Previous Research in the Field	7
E. Primary Sources	9
F. The Method of the Dissertation	11
II. THE SCENE: A DESCRIPTION OF THE COUNTRIES UNDER CONSIDERATION	
A. The Geographical Setting and the Climatic Conditions	14
B. Recent Political History	17
1. From 1850 to 1919	18
a. The Austria-Hungary Empire	18
b. The Ottoman Turkish Empire	20
c. Bulgaria	23
2. From 1919 to 1941	26
a. Yugoslavia	27
b. Bulgaria	29

Chapter	Page
3. From 1941 to 1945	30
4. Since 1945	32
a. Bulgaria	32
b. Yugoslavia	35
C. The Socio-Economic Conditions	37
D. Education and Culture	40
E. The Religious History	41
1. The Eastern Orthodox Churches	43
2. The Roman Catholic Church	44
3. The Moslems	44
4. The Protestants	46
5. Religious Liberty	47
 III. THE CONGREGATIONAL MISSION TO EUROPEAN TURKEY FROM 1850 TO 1878	
A. The Purpose and the Beginning of the Mission	50
1. The Purpose and the Motives of the Mission	50
2. The Precursors of the European Turkey Mission	55
3. The Missionaries "Discover" Bulgaria	58
4. The Partition of Bulgaria between Methodists and Congregationalists	60
B. The Work of the Mission from 1858 to 1870 Within the Scope of the Western Turkey Mission	62
1. The Establishment of the First Stations	62

Chapter	Page
2. The Earliest Activities and Impressions of the Missionaries	65
a. The First Impressions	66
b. The Bulgarian Orthodox Church Question	70
3. Encountering the First Difficulties	74
a. The Murder of Meriam	75
b. The Missionary Message and the Bulgarians	76
c. The Riot at Eski Zagra	79
d. Persecutions in Yambol and Bansko	82
4. The First Bulgarian Evangelicals	84
C. The Formation of Evangelical Churches from 1870 to 1878	87
1. The Establishment of a Separate European Turkey Mission	87
2. The Organization of the First Native Church	92
3. Other Evangelical Efforts of the European Turkey Mission from 1871 to 1878 in Southern Bulgaria	96
4. The Foundation of the Bulgarian Evangelical Society	100
IV. THE CONGREGATIONAL MISSION TO MACEDONIA FROM 1873 TO 1918	
A. The Time of Aspirations: The Establishment and Progress of the Mission in Macedonia Until 1895	104
1. Evangelization in Macedonia up to 1873	104

Chapter	Page
2. The Opening of the First Station in Macedonia	106
3. Missionary Work in Revolutionary Fermentation	109
4. The Monastir School	113
5. The Spread of the Mission	115
6. Monospitovo and Murtino: Samples of the Work of Outstations	117
7. The Progress of Other Macedonian Congregations	120
8. The Foundation of the Salonica Station	125
B. The Time of Troubles: 1895 to 1912	127
1. The Environment	127
2. Touring and Revivals	129
3. The Capture of Ellen Stone and Katherine Tsilka	133
4. The Disturbances of 1903	139
5. The Work in the Outstations	141
6. The Koleshino Church	143
7. Missionary Work in Albania	146
C. The Time of Wars: 1912 to 1918	148
1. The Balkan Wars	148
2. World War I	151
V. THE CONGREGATIONAL MISSION TO SOUTHERN BULGARIA FROM 1878 TO 1918	
A. Evangelization in the Principality of Bulgaria and Eastern Rumelia from 1878 to 1887	155

Chapter	Page
1. The Political Liberation and the Mission	155
2. A Survey of the Work	158
a. The Native Pastors	158
b. Bible Women	163
B. Bulgarian Congregationalism between 1887 and 1912	165
1. The Native Protagonists	165
2. The Transformation of the Mission	173
3. The Congregationalist Co-operation with the Methodists	176
4. The Bulgarian Evangelical Society	179
5. The Existence of the Mission Questioned	183
6. Theological Controversy	184
C. The Work During the Wars of 1912 to 1918	190
1. The Balkan Wars	190
2. World War I	192
 VI. THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL MISSION TO NORTHERN BULGARIA, 1857-1919	
A. From 1857 to 1871	196
1. Preparatory Steps	196
2. The Appointment and Location of the First Missionaries	201
3. The First Native Workers and Early Struggles	204
4. Brighter Days	209

Chapter	Page
5. Albert L. Long, The Bulgarian Bible, and <u>Zornitsa</u>	213
B. From 1872 to 1892	218
1. The Abandonment and Resumption of the Mission	218
2. Episcopöal Visits and the Annual Mission Meetings	221
3. Temporary Withdrawal in 1877-1878	223
4. The Aftermath of the War-Persecution and Apathy	225
5. The Schools	231
a. The Girls' School	231
b. The Boys' School	236
6. The War of 1885-86 and the Aftermath	240
C. From 1892 to 1919	244
1. The Organization of the Mission Conference	244
2. The Work of the Churches Up to the Time of the Balkan Wars	247
3. Relations with the Congregational Mission	255
4. Work in a War Atmosphere	260
VII. THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL MISSION TO SOUTH-EASTERN AUSTRO-HUNGARY FROM 1898 TO 1918	
A. From 1898 to 1911	265
1. The Antecedents of the Mission	265
a. German Methodism	266
b. The Blue Cross Societies	268

Chapter	Page
2. The Invitation of Methodists to Bachka	271
3. The Pioneer Pastors	277
4. Stabilization of the Mission from 1904 to 1907	282
5. The Flourishing of Methodism in Bachka	285
B. From 1911 to 1918	287
1. The Austro-Hungarian Methodist Mission Conference	287
2. The War Confusion and Disorder, 1914-1918	292
VIII. CONGREGATIONALISM IN BULGARIA FROM 1919 TO 1945	
A. From 1919 to 1933	301
1. Overall Functioning	301
2. Evangelistic Work	305
3. Theological Position and Relations With Other Churches	318
4. The Plan for Withdrawal of the American Board	324
B. The Churches from 1933 to 1945	328
C. Educational and Social Work	339
1. The Samokov Schools	339
2. American College in Sofia	343
3. The Pordim Folk School	346
4. The Social Center, Kindergarten, and Primary School	351

Chapter	Page
IX. THE BULGARIAN METHODISTS FROM 1919 TO 1945	
A. The Evangelistic Work of the Mission Conference from 1919 to 1930	357
1. The Advance During the Early Post-War Period	359
2. The Threat to Continued Progress	370
B. The Attempted Union with the Congregationalists	377
1. The Initiation of Union Procedures	377
2. The Development of Plans for Merger	381
3. The Failure of the Proposed Union	384
C. The Social and Educational Work	395
X. METHODISM IN YUGOSLAVIA FROM 1919 TO 1944	
A. The Period of Reconstruction: 1919-1922	401
1. The Post-War Conditions in a New Political Entity	401
2. The Development of Social Work	407
3. The Churchly Activities of the Methodists	411
4. The Practical Steps Toward Success	415
5. The Incorporation of the ABCFM Mission in Macedonia	420
B. The Period of Expansion: 1923-1928	426
1. The Evangelistic Work	426
2. The State-Church Problem	434
3. Relations with Other Churches	440
4. Social and Educational Work	444

Chapter	Page
C. The Period of Reduced Growth: 1930-1940	448
1. The Difficult Years	448
2. Evangelizing Activities	453
a. Characteristics of the Work	453
b. The Ministers	454
c. Work in Macedonia	461
d. The Work in Voyvodina	470
3. Social and Literary Work	479
D. The Period of War: 1941-1945	482
1. The Work During the Occupation	482
2. The Disruption of the Work at the End of the War	487
 XI. THE BULGARIAN CONGREGATIONAL AND METHODIST CHURCHES SINCE WORLD WAR II	
A. Evangelistic and Ecumenical Work	491
B. The New State-Church Relations	503
C. The Trial of the Fifteen Protestant Pastors	513
1. The Events Leading to the Trial	513
2. The Conditioning of the Accused	523
3. The Trial	541
4. The Outcome of the Trial	550
D. The Situation in the Churches Since 1949	554
 XII. METHODISM IN YUGOSLAVIA SINCE WORLD WAR II	
A. From 1945 to 1953	565
1. The Position of the Church Immediately After the War	565

Chapter	Page
2. The New Relations with the State .	571
3. The Gradual Renewal in Church Work	578
B. From 1953 to 1963	582
1. Relaxation of State Control . . .	582
2. The Slovak Blue Cross Societies and the Church	585
3. Ecclesiastical Organization and Work	592
a. The Leadership of the Church .	593
b. The Work in Individual Churches	596
4. Ecumenical Relations	604
5. Theological Education	608
6. Theological Beliefs	611
XIII. CONCLUSIONS	616
APPENDIX I	636
APPENDIX II	646
BIBLIOGRAPHY	656
ABSTRACT	669
AUTOBIOGRAPHY	673

TABLE OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABAr - American Board Archives

A.B.C.F.M. - American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. Also abbreviated as American Board.

ABLib - American Board Library

ABMB - "The American Board Mission in Bulgaria, 1878-1918."
Doctoral dissertation by William Webster Hall, Jr.

Ann. Rep. ABCFM - Annual Report of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions.

Ann. Rep. BFM - Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

Ann. Rep. MSMEC - Annual Report of the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

Ann. Rep. RES - Annual Report of the Executive Secretary of the Division of World Missions of the Methodist Church.

Ann. Rep. WFMS - Annual Report of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

BOT - The Balkans in Our Times by Robert Lee Wolff.

Festschrift - Festschrift: zur Feier des fünfundzwanzigjährigen Bestehens der Bischöflichen Methodistenkirche im Kgr. S. H. S.

HWANE - History of the Works of the ABCFM in the Near East and More Especially in Turkey by Charles Trowbridge Riggs.

MEMAr - Board of Missions of the Methodist Church Archive

MBMLib - Board of Missions of the Methodist Church Library

Ofitsiyalen Protokol - Ofitsiyalen Protokol na Bulgarskata
Misiyska Konferentsiya na Metodistkata Episkopalna
Tserkva.

Trial - The Trial of the Fifteen Protestant Pastors-Spies.

U.C.B.W.M. - United Church Board of World Ministries

Verhandlungen - Verhandlungen der Missions-Konferenz der
Prediger der Bischöflichen Methodistenkirche in
Oesterreich-Ungarn oder im Königreiche S. H. S.

W.F.M.S. - Woman's Foreign Missionary Society of the Meth-
odist Episcopal Church

TABLE OF PRONUNCIATION

Bulgarian, Macedonian, and Serbo-Croatian words are transcribed in this dissertation according to their approximate pronunciation in the Latinic alphabet. Letters which exist in the alphabets of the above mentioned languages but are not found in the English alphabet have been transliterated by means of combining consonants which would, if read together approximate the native sounds. The vowels, a, e, i, o, and u are pronounced in the continental manner, i.e. similar to the way in which the Germans pronounce them. Most of the consonants are pronounced the way they are in English with the following exceptions:

- ж (cyrillic) or ž (latinic) is transcribed as zh and pronounced as s in measure.
- ј (in both cyrillic and latinic) is transcribed as y and pronounced as y in yellow.
- љ (cyrillic) or lj (latinic) is transcribed as lj which approximates the soft English l as in million.
- њ (cyrillic) or nj (latinic) is transcribed as nj which approximates the soft English n as in numerous or new.
- р (cyrillic) or r (latinic) is transcribed as r but is trilled in pronunciation.

- т (cyrillic) or ć (latinic) is transcribed as ć and is pronounced as palatalized t or soft ch.
- х (cyrillic) or h (latinic) is transcribed as h but is pronounced like the German guttural ch, like in ich.
- ч (cyrillic) or c (latinic) is transcribed as ts.
- щ (cyrillic) is transcribed as sht.
- ч (cyrillic) or č (latinic) is transcribed as ch as in chart.
- ѣ (cyrillic) or dž (latinic) is transcribed as dzh as j in John.
- ѣ (cyrillic) or dj (latinic) is transcribed dj as g in merger.
- ш (cyrillic) or š (latinic) is transcribed sh as sh in show.
- ѣ (cyrillic) is transcribed sometimes as u like in but, and sometimes or o like in often.
- я (cyrillic) is transcribed as ya as in yard.
- ю (cyrillic) is transcribed as yu as in yule.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. The Problem of the Dissertation

The purpose of this dissertation is to examine the history of the Congregational and Methodist Churches in Bulgaria and Yugoslavia. As such this work is a historical study of a part of the Christian Church which a noted German Church historian defined as:

the religious fellowship of those who acknowledge Jesus, which for the purposes of its legal existence in the world, as well as for its religious self-attestation, expression, self-assertion, and the achievement of its end in the same, develops forms of constitution and government, clearly defined forms of the religious life, and the forms for the confirmation of morality, and for the regulation of doctrine and education, and thus produces institutions, assumes the character of institutional.¹

The task of the historian is to describe the origin, rise, and development of certain phenomena of human experience. The development of the Christian Church has had a vast influence on world history. Although it could not of course be said that every group of Christians and in every land has

¹Wilhelm Moeller, History of the Christian Church: A.D. 1-600, trans. Andrew Rutherford (London: George Allen & Co., Ltd., 1912), p. 1.

left a significant imprint, the effort and influences of any branch of the Church deserves the attention of the historian.

If it is not to be distorted, the history of Christianity must include all the varieties of the faith. It must embrace not only those forms which have had a wide following, but also minority groups. It must mention not merely the numerous churches and movements which are features of the current scene in whatever part of the world they are found, but in addition those offshoots of Christianity which have disappeared.¹

The purpose of this dissertation is to describe the course of missionary endeavors of two Anglo-Saxon Protestant denominations, the Congregationalist and Methodist Churches in two South Slavic Balkan countries, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia. An attempt will be made to present an intelligible account of the origin, development and present conditions of these movements against the background of the general history of these regions. A certain amount of interpretation is inevitable but will be minimized. Fitting this subject into larger historical perspective is the task of other historians farther removed than the writer of this dissertation from the events described in it. The most useful contribution of this dissertation may be presumed to lie in the collection and selection of relevant data and the formation of a factual historical narrative. This in itself inevitably involves interpretation, but at its unavoidable minimum.

¹Kenneth Scott Latourette, A History of Christianity, (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1953), p. xvi.

The mission and transplantation of Congregational and Methodist church polities and teachings on the part of missionaries are viewed here primarily in terms of the reciprocal process of assimilation. These efforts toward indigenization were met by adverse conditions. The work of the Methodist and Congregational missions, their successes and failures, their adjustments to the national, political, economic, social, cultural, and religious circumstances in Bulgaria and Yugoslavia, their developments as units of their respective denominations and their participation in the ecumenical quest will be the main concern of the dissertation, but because of its scope some of these aspects will be rather hinted at than fully developed. The major concerns of this dissertation are to present a fairly complete narrative of the evangelistic activities of these two denominations in Bulgaria and Yugoslavia from the beginning to the present and to relate them to the environmental and historical factors of greatest influence on their development.

B. The Nature of the Churches Studied

In order to make the historical narrative intelligible and illuminating the basic terms must be defined. The words Protestant and evangelical are usually being used as synonyms to designate all those who adhere to the basic teachings of the sixteenth and seventeenth century reformers belonging to any denomination which is not a part of the Roman Catholic

or Eastern Orthodox Communion. The term Evangelical has been used in three ways. Whenever applied in connection with Bulgaria it may refer to the churches founded by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions which were of a Congregational type. The Bulgarians also often referred to the Congregational (Evangelical), Methodist, Baptist, and Pentecostal denominations as Evangelical Churches. Whenever the term is used in conjunction with Austria-Hungary and Yugoslavia, the term Evangelical designates the Lutheran Church and the two terms are often coupled together for greater clarity.

Congregationalism denotes an Anglo-American Protestant denomination which vests the ecclesiastical power in the local churches. Theologically the Congregationalists were traditionally Calvinists, but had produced a number of outstanding liberal theologians and churches by the end of the nineteenth century. "Congregationalism took an acknowledged leadership in the promotion of Foreign missions."¹ The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions in Boston was the major Congregational agency, sending out missionaries of various denominations to many areas of the world.

Methodism is a religious movement which traces its origin to the English reformer John Wesley. In America, Methodism achieved remarkable successes through its characteristic

¹Gaius Glenn Atkins, "Congregationalism," in Encyclopedia of Religion, ed. Vergilius Ferm, (New York: The Philosophical Library, 1945), p. 196.

crusading, evangelistic spirit. In their long history, the Methodists experienced a number of schisms, the most striking of which was the division into the Methodist Episcopal Church, Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and the Methodist Protestant Church. In 1939 these three denominations reunited into the Methodist Church, based on the episcopal and connectional system.¹ The missionary enterprise of the Methodist Episcopal Church was carried on by the Missionary Society, later superseded by the Board of Foreign Missions. After the merger, the Board of Missions, through its Division of World Missions, supervised the missions throughout the world.²

Initially, in their annual meetings of missionaries of the American Board, only foreign missionaries under life appointment could vote. Native pastors were not considered as missionaries and they formed their own ecclesiastical society. These two groups co-operated but were not organically related. The Methodists operated on a different basis. All missionaries and native pastors held their membership in some already existing Annual Conference until their number was large enough to warrant a separate organization. Then the General Conference would form an Annual Mission Conference to which those on the

¹Albert C. Knudson, "Methodism," in Encyclopedia of Religion, p. 487.

²William Warren Sweet, Methodism in American History, 2d. ed. revised. (New York, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1953), p. 434.

mission field would be transferred while the new pastors would become members directly. Thus the foreign missionaries and the native pastors were always members of the same organization.

C. The Scope and Limitations

The scope of this dissertation is partially defined by the title. It includes the history of the Congregational Mission in southern Bulgaria from 1858 to 1963 and in Macedonia from 1873 to 1921, and of the Methodist Church in northern Bulgaria from 1857 to 1963, in southeastern Austria-Hungary from 1898 to 1919, and in Yugoslavia, primarily in Vuyvodina and Macedonia, from 1919 to 1963. Southeastern Austria-Hungary is included because its territories later comprised the northeastern part of Yugoslavia, the mission thus being to the same people and area.

The educational and literary work of the American Board's mission to Bulgaria ultimately became more influential than some of the aspects discussed here, as is partially true also of the work of the Methodist mission to northern Bulgaria. However, little emphasis will be given here to these matters because they have been adequately investigated by previous researchers, particularly by William W. Hall, Jr. and James F. Clarke, [II] in their doctoral dissertations.¹ This dissertation is limited to the evangelistic or ecclesiastical aspects of the work with a few detours into their social, educational,

¹See below, p. 7.

and literary aspects as necessary to show the organic unity of these efforts. By evangelical activity is meant the endeavor to make Jesus Christ known to people as their Savior and to persuade them to become his devoted followers and to organize themselves into churches seeking to promote the Kingdom of God through Christian ideals and living, and mutual cooperation.

D. Previous Research in the Field

Few researchers and writers have done substantial work in the field and there has been no attempt to cover the whole history of any one of these missions from the beginning to the present. By far the most extensive work has been done in the area of the American Board's mission to Bulgaria. The largest and best single work is a doctoral dissertation of William Webster Hall, Jr., entitled The American Board Mission in Bulgaria, 1878-1918: A Study in Purpose and Procedure presented in 1937 at Yale University at New Haven, Connecticut, and later published in Sofia, Bulgaria, under the title Puritans in the Balkans. Not so relevant to the entire subject as the above studies, but very significant for the understanding of the effects of the mission work, is another doctoral dissertation presented at Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1937 by James F. Clarke, [II] entitled Bible Societies, American Missionaries and the National Revival of Bulgaria. Less well supplied with specific information on Bulgaria but more

comprehensive in scope and perspective is William E. Strong's The Story of the American Board: An Account of the First Hundred Years of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. A number of other authors, especially early missionaries, wrote memoirs which are relevant to the study, particularly Rufus Anderson, History of the Missions of the American Board to the Oriental Churches, also the writings of Cyrus Hamlin, Elias Riggs, S. C. Bartlett, and the biographies about John Henry House and William W. Peet by other people.

The Methodist work in Bulgaria has been described only until 1895. J. M. Reid's Missions and Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Vol. II and I. G. John's Handbook of Methodist Missions seem to paraphrase the Annual Reports of the Mission without proper acknowledgements. Julius Richter's History of the Protestant Missions in the Near East is largely inaccurate on both Methodist and Congregational work in Bulgaria. Despite several minor inaccuracies the work of Wade Crawford Barclay, A History of Methodist Missions, Vol. III, is the most reliable secondary source. For the developments in Bulgaria after World War II the most complete secondary source is Robert Tobias' Communist Christian Encounter in East Europe.

Very little attention has been given to Methodism in present day Yugoslavia. Aside from a few insignificant periodical articles, there are no secondary sources in English. No research was done in any language about the Methodist

Church in Yugoslavia except on the first twenty five years of Methodism in Voyvodina. One account is by F. H. Otto Melle, Das Walten Gottes im deutschen Methodismus and another entitled Festschrift zur Feier des Fünfundzwanzigjährigen Bestehens der Bischöflichen Methodistenkirche im Kgr. S. H. S. [anonymous]. Short references are made also in John L. Nielsen's Geschichte des Methodismus and Paul F. Douglass' The Story of German Methodism. Finally, mention should be made of an unpublished manuscript filed at the American Board Library under the title History of the Works of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions in the Near East and More Especially in Turkey, probably written by Charles T. Riggs.

E. Primary Sources

The dissertation is based mainly upon primary sources. These are either in (1) printed form in the Minutes of the Annual Conferences or Meetings, or Annual Reports of the Missionary Societies or Boards under consideration, available at many libraries, (2) unpublished reports of various kinds or (3) correspondence, official and unofficial. The American Board has filed most of this correspondence in its Archives at the Houghton Library at Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, where it is readily available on permission from the Board. The primary sources concerning Bulgaria end with the year 1933 when the mission was officially

withdrawn and the native churches became independent. The other great depository of such documents is the American Board Library at 14 Beacon Street in Boston, Massachusetts.

The Methodist Church reports and correspondence comparable to the American Board primary source material is kept in the Vault Section of the Board of Missions of the Methodist Church at 475 Riverside Drive, New York, N. Y. As a general rule, material of this kind over fifty years old is available for research, but that of a more recent date is rarely divulged.

A last but very important primary source is the correspondence established between the writer and such eyewitnesses of events and participants in the work as are willing to give a first-hand account unparalleled in other primary sources. This documentation remains on file with the author to be reviewed upon request.

A serious limitation lies in the lack or unaccessibility of records since both Bulgaria and Yugoslavia are now communist-controlled, making communication with the churches difficult and sometimes even dangerous. Consequently some very rich sources of information have been cut off. Comprehensive sources are lacking also for the war periods (the Balkan Wars, World Wars I and II) and the post-World War II period. It is more difficult to establish a proper historical perspective for the more recent period. In the last chapters, dealing with the situation since World War II, the goal is to establish

some evidences of the activities of the churches under most adverse conditions with the limited amount of available information, particularly from Bulgaria. These chapters may serve as basic sources for later investigation. Emphasis is placed on those chapters for which records are not being permanently conserved which will soon make them inaccessible to possible future research.

F. The Method of the Dissertation

The record seems to be best reviewed by combining a topical with a chronological approach. Beginning with the earliest missionary efforts in Bulgaria and Yugoslavia to the present time, we find three major and distinct periods, broken up by the two world wars, which may be thought of as ending earlier times, rather than initiating new ones. Such universal crises affected all churches everywhere, but especially those in these two small countries.

The sequence followed in this dissertation is the following: within each of the three periods, i.e., the period which terminates with the ending of World War I, the period which commences with the Paris Peace Conferences and ends with the termination of World War II, and the period after World War II, attention is given first to the Congregational Church in Bulgaria and also to Macedonia during the first period, then to the Methodist activities in Bulgaria, and finally to the Methodists in Yugoslavia or in the territories which later became Yugoslavia. Preceding this part of the narrative some

background information is offered and at the end appears a chapter containing the author's interpretations.

Within each chapter the account is chronological, based either on events of national history when the turning points of church history were determined by them, or by the internal development of the mission. Within this chronological outline a topical outline is followed which is usually confined in scope to the period under which heading it is considered. This pattern is, however, not invariably followed as it is necessary to discuss some topics which transcend the time delineation. Thus a semblance of unified approach is preserved, more so than in an exclusively topical or chronological order.

The attempt has been to use the sources in an order of priority. If at all possible, references are made to the most direct primary sources. When a number of sources tended to confirm any statement, the priority has been given to the printed source so that the reader may verify the statement, or the source which seems to issue from the more informed reporter. Preference is also given reporters who have been close to the scene of events. Thus if the same material appears in the Minutes of the Annual Missionary Conferences and the Annual Reports of the Missionary Society, the preference is given to the Minutes because they tend to be more elaborate and less likely to have been edited by some ill-informed or uninformed person. When sources conflict, this fact is stated

here; then the conflicting positions are stated with the reason for giving more credence to one or the other. It appears that conflicts are infrequent and they seem to be due to uninformed authors often detectable by their ignorance of the general background. The main difficulty is, however, the complete absence of direct source material on some phases of the problems presented here. Unless the researcher has some information based on his own experience or on knowledgeable persons, or unless a well-grounded opinion can be made without imperiling the truth of the total story, it seems wise to refrain from answering questions which the reader may well ask. This leaves empty spots in the narrative until more direct evidence is discovered, but it is better than constructing an answer of a dubious value. It is unfortunate that a number of personalities and events must thus remain in shadow however much they deserve to be presented in high light.

CHAPTER II

THE SCENE: A DESCRIPTION OF THE COUNTRIES UNDER CONSIDERATION

No man lives in a vacuum and no movement is uninfluenced by its environment. The written primary sources relevant for a particular topic usually provide the most direct information, while the general surroundings frequently provide invaluable insights into the way of life of a people, their mentality, their conception of the world, their customs and mores, their means of and satisfaction with existence and other important factors. No real understanding of a religious movement is possible without the proper geographical, historical, political, economical, social, and cultural perspective.

A. The Geographical Setting and Climatic Conditions

"It is a basic truth about Yugoslavia that an understanding of its geographical situation and physical properties is essential for an understanding of its stormy past and present problems."¹ This statement is undoubtedly true of all countries of Southeastern Europe. Generalities are often misleading, but it is truly said that the Danube and its tributaries

¹George W. Hoffman and Fred W. Neal, Yugoslavia and the New Communism, (New York: Twentieth Century Fund, 1962), p. 10.

and "the far-flung mountain formation of the peninsula tended to divide the people of one valley from those of the next, and thus to foster local particularism and local hatreds."¹ Yet, to the outsiders this area seems more of a natural bridge than a wall between Central Europe and the Near and Middle East.²

Because of these two factors taken together--inner fragmentation and outer accessibility--the Balkan countries were unusually subject to outside influences. On the one hand, the inhabitants were not able to unite to resist outside pressure; on the other, outsiders could easily enforce their will. So the people . . . separated from each other and divided among themselves, were deeply affected by the radiations of military power and of political, economic, cultural, and religious influence which emanated from certain great centers of Europe, from which armies, diplomats, merchants, scholars, and priests always found it easy to penetrate into the heart of the peninsula.³

From the geographical standpoint, Yugoslavia (particularly Vojvodina) may be classified together with Hungary as one geographic region usually referred to as the Pannonian Plains Region, while Southern Yugoslavia (particularly Macedonia) and Bulgaria, are regarded as the Balkan Mountain Region. These two geographical and climatic regions have also tended to polarize around "two magnets: Istanbul and Vienna."⁴

¹Robert L. Wolff, The Balkans in Our Times (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1956), p. 18. Abbreviated title BOT.

²Ibid., p. 19.

³Ibid.

⁴Charles Rebuffat, "The Country and the People," in Yugoslavia 1958, ed. Eugene Fodor (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1958), p. 36.

Often referred to as the "breadbasket of Europe," the Pannonian region is one of the flattest most fertile regions in Europe. Most of the region "is so flat that the rivers meander sluggishly across the landscape, and their courses are often bordered by swamps and marshes."¹ Vojvodina, Yugoslavia, is located in the southern end of the Pannonian Region. One feature of this region is the great navigable international rivers, the Danube, Tisa, Drava, and Sava. The climate of the Basin is characterized by cold winters and hot summers.²

Macedonia and Bulgaria are situated in the Balkan Mountains. This region is predominantly mountainous and its ranges stretch in the east-west direction.

The mountain ranges of these areas are wide, massive, and between them are spacious valleys. Very spacious is the Thracian Plain [usually called the Maritza River Valley] between the Balkan Mountains and the Rhodope Mountains and the steppes of Lower Danubian Bulgaria between the Balkan Mountains and the Danube . . . South of the Sar Mountain are sorted the large ring-like valleys of Macedonia. Some of them have beautiful lakes, . . . some again have only the remnants of old marshes.³

Macedonia and to a lesser extent Bulgaria have only a small portion of the total land area cultivated. "Excessive

¹Samuel Van Valkenburg and Colbert C. Held, Europe (2d ed.; New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1960), p. 637.

²Life Pictorial Atlas of the World (New York: Time, Inc., 1961), p. 320.

³Konstantin Jireček, Istorija Srba, Vol. I. (Beograd, Yug.: Naučna Knjiga, 1952), pp. 2f. The translation from Serbian and the explanation in brackets are provided by the present writer.

soil erosion and poor drainage of the bottom lands have contributed to the great poverty and backwardness of its people."¹ The long Turkish rule resulted in an oriental outlook which left deep imprints on the people and the economy of this area.² The cold winters and hot summers on the mountains differ from the climate along the river valleys only in that the winters in the valleys are milder due to the influences of the Black and the Aegean Seas.³

B. Recent Political History

The recent and contemporary historical situation in Bulgaria and Yugoslavia has been appropriately called "the legacy of dead empires."⁴ The Roman Empire, the Byzantine Empire, the Turkish Empire, the Austrian Empire--all these left positive and negative imprints upon the development of the Southeastern European states. Another important factor has been that the Bulgarians, Serbians, and Croatians had mighty kingdoms of their own in the early middle ages, to which they looked with nostalgia after they had been subdued or incorporated into the states of the neighboring great powers, hoping for the restoration of their glory.

¹Hoffman and Neal, op. cit., p. 21.

²Ibid.

³Van Valkenburg and Held, op. cit., pp. 679f.

⁴Wolff, BOT, p. 50.

1. From 1850 to 1919

The period of national awakening in Southeastern Europe was full of turbulence culminating in the Balkan Wars of 1912 and 1913 and in World War I from 1914 to 1918. The Turkish Empire, and the Austrian Empire, despite last-minute reforms, were hollow structures which crumbled when the great war shook the world. The unity which they provided to Southeastern Europe was, to a large measure, artificial. The rising national consciousness could not be stifled, but was often aggravated by the clumsy settlement of the national questions of these multinational empires.

a. The Austria-Hungary Empire.--Among the present Yugoslav territories included in the Austrian Empire were Croatia, Slavonia, Bosnia and Hertsegovina, and Voyvodina (Srem, Banat, and Bachka). Of the various nationalities controlled by the German Hapsburgs, the most clearly nationalistic were the Hungarians. The failure of the Hungarian revolution of 1848, which sought to bring about the decentralization of the Austrian Monarchy, brought about a period of reaction during which the emperor, Francis Joseph, tried to encourage centralization. However, by 1859 Francis became convinced "that the centralist forces in the monarchy were not strong enough to hold down simultaneously all the elements of national and social opposition."¹

¹C. A. Macartney, Hungary: A Short History, (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Co., 1962), p. 166.

The Compromise of 1868 was to give the Hungarians complete independence in internal affairs and to change the structure of the state into a Dual Monarchy. This placed the Hungarians on an equal footing with the Austrians, but left the other nationalities of the empire without the benefits of this Compromise. In some instances the nationalities under the administration of the Hungarian part of the monarchy were in a less advantageous position than they had been under the direct administration of the Hapsburgs, because the Hungarians were convinced "that the very survival of the Hungarian state depended on the maintenance of its Magyar character."¹

The Austria-Hungarian Empire had traditionally nurtured expansionistic tendencies in the direction of the Balkans and was vigorously competing with the Russian Empire for territorial expansion and political and economic influence on the Balkans at the expense of the decaying Turkish Empire. In this expansion it came into conflict not only with the rising Serbian state, but also with the hopes of other southern Slavs who wished to achieve independence from the empire. These nationalistic aspirations were severely challenged when the Monarchy annexed Bosnia and Hertsegovina in 1908,² a step which the southern Slavs never forgave and which ultimately proved to be the undoing of the Monarchy.

¹Ibid., p. 183.

²Ibid., p. 201.

The dissatisfaction culminated in the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand by a young Bosnian student, Gavrilo Printsip, in Sarajevo on June 28, 1914.¹ Suspecting that the Serbian state might have been involved, and wanting once and for all to settle old accounts with Serbia, Austria-Hungary issued an ultimatum which it knew the Serbians could not accept. This led rapidly to a declaration of war. Almost immediately Russia and Germany became involved, and then all the major powers, bringing about the World War.

Initially the fortunes of war seemed to be on the side of the Dual Monarchy but this was reversed by the end of 1917, when Austria-Hungary collapsed. In the partition of the Empire by the Peace Conferences, Austria and Hungary formed two independent states and were greatly reduced in size. Portions of their former territories were distributed among a revived Poland, a greatly enlarged Rumania, and the newly-created states of Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia.

b. The Ottoman Turkish Empire.--At the beginning of the period under consideration Turkey was still holding some portions of Serbia, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Greece, and Albania, but she was rapidly declining.

¹Wolff, BOT, p. 96.

For centuries the Ottoman despotism had been an inflamed tumor in the sensitive underbelly of Europe. The processes of retraction and internal decay had gradually transformed it during the nineteenth century into a kind of localized malignancy--painful, debilitating, but not immediately fatal. In applying to it the rough surgery of military revolution, the Young Turks of 1908 achieved a temporary relief . . . but provoked a deadly metastasis that helped to bring about the vast and multiple revolutionary disorders that the world has since experienced.¹

The other powers, especially the Russian and Austria-Hungarian Empires and the rising nations, made no effort to hide their expectations that "the sick man of Europe" would soon die. So, "the worm-eaten Ottoman dynasty was the first of the great autocracies still standing in the twentieth-century Europe to go down before the winds of change."²

While the sultans, Abdul Medjid and Abdul Aziz, granted minor reforms to the subject people of their multinational empire, the last of the sultans, Abdul Hamid II, was the incarnation of absolutistic despotism.

Though the monarchy was not formally abolished in Turkey until after the Great War, the overthrow of the absolutist regime there dates back to 1908. On July 23 of that year Sultan Abdul Hamid II, in a desperate, eventually futile attempt to save his throne, yielded to an ultimatum from a junta of military revolutionaries --the so-called Young Turks--and proclaimed a constitution. The reform brought about a real transfer of power that for all practical purposes put an end to the seven centuries of Oriental, semitheocratic despotism.³

¹Edmond Taylor, The Fall of the Dynasties (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1963), p. 100.

²Ibid., p. 97.

³Ibid.

In a succession of wars with Austria-Hungary and Russia and through numerous insurrections, Turkey lost territories very rapidly and was kept alive only because of the nineteenth century theory of balance of power. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, Serbia and Bulgaria became virtually independent, while Bosnia-Herzegovina was annexed by the Austrians. Macedonia, however, still remained under Turkish control, from which it was to free itself gradually after the celebrated Illinden rebellion in 1903 and the Balkan Wars.¹

The liberation movement of the former captive people could not be stopped. In 1912, the Balkan League, consisting of Serbia, Montenegro, Bulgaria, and Greece, defeated Turkey. The League was stopped from completely partitioning Turkey by the Western powers in the Treaty of London in 1913.² However, in dividing the spoils, the victors started to quarrel. In the ensuing war Bulgaria was in conflict with the rest of the League members, who were joined in their war efforts by Rumania and Turkey.

When the First World War broke out, Turkey was allied with Germany, Austro-Hungary, and Bulgaria. This was the "wrong" side of the conflict. As a result, Turkey lost all its territories in Europe, except Constantinople and vicinity, and ceased to play a role in European affairs.

¹Wolff, BOT, p. 88.

²Ibid., pp. 92f.

c. Bulgaria.--In the nineteenth century Bulgaria, being held by Turkey, was frequently a bone of contention between Turkey, which held it, and the Russians who in their less imperialistic and more pan-slavic moods wanted to liberate Bulgaria. The fate of Bulgaria became an aspect of the delicate international problem called the "Eastern Question." These wars led to the liberation of Bulgaria. This has been described as "a struggle for the national and cultural liberation of a people, waged against the background of rapidly changing economic relations, so that the history of the Bulgarian renaissance is at the same time a history of the growth of capitalistic relations in Bulgaria and the story of the birth of a new nation."¹

As the Turkish Empire became more and more corrupt their more than five centuries of rule was becoming increasingly difficult and the Bulgarians were more and more restless. Expecting the Christian states to rally to their cause at times of crises, and being provoked by almost unbearable exploitation, the Bulgarians repeatedly rose in rebellion against the Turks, only to be cruelly punished, and disappointed by the lack of substantial aid from the great powers, who were willing to incite revolts but not to support them if they were

¹Stanley G. Evans, A Short History of Bulgaria (London: Lawrence & Wishart Ltd., 1960), p. 90.

against their own temporary national interest. "Again the Haiduk movement [native guerilla outlaws] was the only form of open opposition left and it recruited from the villages, from the town intelligentzia, from the clergy and from the craftsmen."¹

In 1875 a Bulgarian insurrection was finally supported actively by Russian troops, and by March 1878 Turkey capitulated at San Stefano. The Treaty of San Stefano marks the formal date of Bulgarian liberation even though considerable areas of Bulgaria were still unliberated. Russia imposed such terms upon Turkey that a "Great Bulgaria" was created "stretching from the Danube to the Aegean and from Ochrida to the Black Sea, which was to be a tributary of Turkey and to be ruled over by a Christian government."²

Being afraid that this would give Russia an outlet to the Mediterannean, the other great powers contested this treaty and forced Russia into its revision. "At the Congress of Berlin, the powers of Europe modified the Treaty of San Stefano beyond recognition."³ Macedonia and western Bulgaria were returned to the Turks, while the rest of "Great Bulgaria" was divided into Eastern Rumelia and the Principality of Bulgaria.

¹Ibid., p. 100.

²Ibid., p. 114.

³Wolff, BOT, p. 85.

Prince Alexander of Battenberg was elected as the first prince of Bulgaria. In 1885 the population of Eastern Rume-
lia staged a bloodless coup proclaiming union with Bulgaria,
which provoked Serbia to declare a war in which they were
routed by the Bulgarians. But Russia was dissatisfied with
Alexander and forced his resignation, after which Prince
Ferdinand of Coburg was elected the new prince. He took the
title of tzar in 1908 after successfully removing Premier
Stambolski, who was a virtual dictator up to 1894.¹ The
following years were very turbulent because of the revolu-
tionary situation in Macedonia. After the Illinden Revolt in
1903, Macedonia was divided into zones in which various
European powers "inspected" the Turkish administration.
Despite the contention over Macedonia, to which Bulgaria,
Greece, and Serbia aspired, these countries joined the Balkan
League against their common enemy, Turkey.

The war against Turkey was successful and Bulgaria gained
the largest territorial addition at the expense of Turkey.
Because of the inability to partition Macedonia and solve
other territorial questions, the Balkan League collapsed.
In the Second Balkan war Bulgaria was defeated by her neigh-
bors, who took almost all the territories which Bulgaria
gained in the First Balkan war.

¹Evans, op. cit., p. 139.

Thwarted national aspirations, offended national pride, desire for revenge, the dynastic relatedness of Bulgaria to the Germans, and unwise diplomatic maneuvers landed Bulgaria in World War I on the side of the Central Powers, against the Allies. In 1915 Bulgaria entered the war, attacking Serbia from the rear, occupying Southern Serbia and Macedonia. The war solved no problems, for Bulgaria was the ultimate loser. The territorial questions were again revised in favor of her neighbors. Irredentist feelings remained high, making good relations with her neighbors impossible.

A positive highlight in the turbulent affairs of Bulgaria was the existence of a progressive constitution passed in 1879, which, despite its monarchic limitations, provided a liberal charter for the development of human rights, under which significant internal democratic development was possible.

2. From 1919 to 1941

After World War I, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia functioned as independent national states, but the war left so many unsettled questions that their post-war development was anything but peaceful. Bulgaria was a loser and nurtured hostile irredentist feelings toward her neighbors, which eventually drove her into the camp of the Axis powers, making her pro-fascist. Yugoslavia also had some frustrated territorial desires, mainly toward Italy, and was completely unable

to solve its national question as a multinational state.

Viewed in retrospect, the period between the wars was too short a time for the Balkan countries to work out their destinies satisfactorily. Imported constitutions, liberal though they might be, did not reflect the political maturity which the area achieved. Cynical politicians flouted them with impunity, and substituted manipulation and rigging for genuine consultation of public opinion. Everywhere, experiments in free government failed . . . Scarcely was war damage mended when depression struck . . . They were trapped in a dreadful century whose motive power they did not understand.¹

a. Yugoslavia.--The proclamation of the union of all South Slavs in 1918 was the crowning event of a long, painful, and determined effort to unite despite numerous differences. The new state was to be called the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, and the regent, Alexander Karadjordjević of Serbia was to become its first king.

From the first the crucial political issue was between Centralism and Federalism, the former being more in consonance with the dominant practice in the small pre-war Serbia, the latter with the diversified practice of the Hapsburg Monarchy. Unfortunately these two views tended to coincide with the narrowly pan-Serb and the Yugoslav outlook respectively.²

As a consequence,

the new state ran afoul of the conflict between Serbs and Croats. The Croatian delegates to the Constituent Assembly . . . refused to vote for

¹Wolff, BOT, p. 101.

²[H. C. Darby, I. L. Foster and Others], Jugoslavia. Vol. II. (Geographical Handbook Series, Naval Intelligence Division, Norwich, Eng.: Jarrold and Sons, Ltd., The Empire Press, 1944, p. 157.

the highly centralized constitution. This constitution, proclaimed in 1921 without their vote, was more a victory for the idea of Greater Serbia than for Yugoslavia.¹

The period between 1919 and 1929 was one of intrigues and party rivalries, culminating in the dramatic murder in the Assembly, of the leading members of the Croatian Peasant Party by a hostile deputy. This provoked a crisis, which the King tried to solve by proclaiming a royal dictatorship in 1929. He abolished the constitution and ruled by decree, changing the name of the kingdom to the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. This dictatorship did not essentially alleviate the problem of national disunity, yet it curtailed most civil liberties. The new constitution of 1931 was only seemingly democratic, because "even the constitutional facade concealed the persistence of personal authoritarianism."²

Just as Alexander seemed to have realized that his course was failing, he was assassinated in France. Under the regency of Prince Paul on behalf of the minor King Peter II, the country drifted from a pro-French position closer and closer to the Nazis. The external and internal pressures forced the government into signing the Axis Tripartite Pact in 1941, just when the Serbs and Croats appeared to have

¹Hoffman and Neal, op. cit., p. 59.

²Malbone W. Graham, "Constitutional Development, 1914-1941," In Yugoslavia, ed. Robert J. Kerner (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1949), p. 130.

worked out some sort of agreement to solve the national question by giving more autonomy to the various sections of the country.¹ A popular uprising and a coup d'etat thwarted the German plans. Hitler swiftly retaliated by attacking Yugoslavia without a declaration of war.

b. Bulgaria.--The Treaty of Neuilly of 1919 left Bulgaria without a considerable part of the territory and population which it claimed and forced to pay large war reparations and indemnities. The revolutionary situation which required Tsar Ferdinand to abdicate in favor of his son Boris, was mastered temporarily by the influential Stamboliisky, but he was murdered and his government overthrown in 1923.²

From 1923 to 1934 there were disorders of the worst kind, incited by the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization and the Communists. The situation changed with a new military dictatorship which lasted only until 1935 when Tsar Boris shrewdly established himself as a dictator, to stay in power until his death in 1943. During this period he continued all the bans on democratic activities imposed earlier by the "Zveno" military group. "Shrewd, cynical, quiet and ruthless, he apparently never felt very deeply about matters of principle,

¹J. B. Hoptner, Yugoslavia in Crisis, 1934-1941, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1962), p. 154.

²Evans, op. cit., p. 161.

and decided that after all it would be easiest to govern the country with an iron hand."¹ A police dictatorship abounding with violence and terrorism by all political groups was hardly conducive to progress. Because of the heavy indemnities imposed by the Allies, the irredentist feelings toward its neighbors, and because of German pressure, Bulgaria joined the Axis, although it maintained for a long time the status described as "neutral for Germany."²

3. From 1941 to 1945

The Germans and Italians attacked Yugoslavia in April 1941 and conquered it in two weeks. The Hungarian troops also aided in the attack and conquered Bachka and Baranya. The Bulgarian troops followed the Germans into Southern Serbia and Macedonia, which was assigned to them by the Germans when Yugoslavia was partitioned. Other parts were either given to Italy or were retained under direct German military government, with the exception of two puppet states, Croatia and Serbia.

The pro-Russian feelings in Bulgaria were so strong that the Bulgarian government did not dare to declare war against U.S.S.R., but only against the other Allies. The Bulgarian army fought the anti-Nazi guerillas in Greece and Yugoslavia, and co-operated with the Germans in many ways. Toward the

¹Wolff, BOT, p. 135.

²Ibid., p. 243.

end of the war, especially after Tsar Boris' death, envoys were sent to negotiate with the Allies, seeking to change sides. Suddenly, in September 1944, the U.S.S.R. declared war on Bulgaria, and the entrance of Russian troops into the country brought about a putsch which made Bulgaria a cobelligerent of the Allies. The armistice of October 1944 provided for the functioning of an "Allied Control Commission" in Bulgaria under the direction of the Soviet High Command.¹

While the government of Yugoslavia fled into exile to the West, the people of Yugoslavia started a guerilla warfare against the occupation and quisling troops. These guerilla troops finally crystalized into the "Chetniks" (nationalistic Serbian irregulars), who enjoyed the support of the Allies and the Yugoslav government in exile, but were eventually proven to have collaborated extensively with the Germans and Italians, and the Partizans, who were organized by the Communist Party of Yugoslavia. The struggle was not confined to fighting foreign troops, but developed into a full-fledged fratricidal civil war between a half-score of groups, in which all the hatreds of the past frustrations were unleashed. In this complex struggle the Partizans received the support of the majority of the people, since they were most clearly anti-fascist and were striving for national unity. With Allied

¹Ibid., p. 248.

material aid they succeeded in liberating about half of the territory of Yugoslavia before any Allied troops could reach the country. Through an intricate maneuver, the Communist leadership gained dominance in the provisional government, which gained international recognition.

4. Since 1945

The story of the post-war years is that of a masterful Communist take-over, which had similar phases but different timing in the two countries. Of the East European revolutions the first and most genuine was the Yugoslav Communist seizure of power; the Bulgarian Communists had a somewhat more difficult problem although they enjoyed considerable popular support.

Professor Hugh Seaton-Watson distinguishes three stages in the Communist take-over: (1) genuine coalition, (2) bogus coalition, and (3) "monolithic" regime.¹ The last stage is commonly called by the communists "democratic centralism", but most non-communists regard it as dictatorship and absolutism.

a. Bulgaria.--In Bulgaria the process of communization was determined by the presence of Soviet occupation troops sponsoring a coalition government of members of the Fatherland

¹Hugh Seaton-Watson, The East European Revolution (3rd ed.; New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1961), pp. 169-171.

Front, a popular war-time coalition which was controlled by the Communists, who were now placed in key positions in the new government.¹ They proceeded to eliminate not only all actual but even potential opposition by what is commonly regarded to be the severest purge suffered in Europe after the war. "Not only all politicians who had held office in wartime, but hundreds of innocent people whose only fault was opposition to Communism, suffered death and imprisonment."²

By rigging elections, by placing single lists of candidates in elections, threatening and intimidating both friends and foes, by eliminating all popular leaders of the opposition parties, the Communists became powerfully entrenched in the government. The minor king, Simeon II, was exiled and Bulgaria proclaimed a People's Republic.³ Throughout 1947, 1948, and 1949, the atrocious purges took place bypassing no segment of the population or organization in the country, including the churches. The purge included a series of show trials of prominent Communist Party members who were not entirely servile to the Party line dictated by Moscow⁴ (e.g. the Kostov trial).

¹William L. Langer (ed.), An Encyclopedia of World History (rev. ed.; Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1952,) p. 1190.

²Robert Lee Wolff, "Bulgaria," in The Fate of East Central Europe, ed. Stephen D. Kertesz (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1956), p. 279.

³Langer, op. cit., p. 1190.

⁴Zbigniew K. Brzezinski, The Soviet Bloc: Unity and Conflict (rev. ed.; New York: Frederick Praeger, 1961), pp. 93-94.

Ever since these events Bulgaria has been considered to be one of the most faithful satellites of the Soviet Union. After the death of Premier Georgi Dimitrov, who ruled Bulgaria from 1946 to 1949, and showed some measure of independence from the Soviet Union at least in foreign affairs, came Vasil Kolarov and then Vulko Chervenkov who carried out faithfully the Stalinist line. The death of Stalin in 1953, which brought a measure of relaxation in other East European countries, did not affect Bulgaria, as "Stalinists" dominated the Communist Party until well after Soviet Premier Krushchev's policy of de-Stalinisation went into effect in other Communist countries.¹ Only in the early 1960's were some measures of liberalization introduced in the public life of Bulgaria. Diplomatic relations with the United States, which were broken in 1950, were resumed in 1959, but there was still very little communication between Bulgarian citizens and Westerners. The public trials which are used for propaganda reasons by the Bulgarian Communist government are still a permanent feature of Bulgarian life.²

Economically Bulgaria was changing from a semi-capitalist economy to a socialist economy through industrialization and

¹Ibid., pp. 371, 373, et. al.

²"Bulgarians Charge Aide at U.N. Was Spy for U.S. at High Pay," The New York Times, December 22, 1963, pp. 1-2.

the collectivization of agriculture. "Bulgarian cultural life, like all other aspects of the national existence, was tightly compressed into a strait-jacket made in Moscow."¹ The premiers Anton Yugov and Todor Zhivkov had not availed themselves fully of the possibilities for limited independence within the emerging "polycentric" pattern of the Communist Bloc.

b. Yugoslavia.--The Communist take-over in Yugoslavia was achieved quickly. The Partisans of Marshall Josip Broz-Tito liberated more than half of Yugoslavia before the Soviet troops could even assist them. By the end of the war the Communists were so firmly in power that the Western Allies and the government in exile could do nothing to dislodge them. After a period of a year in which some former politicians were included in the government for the sake of form, the Communists came into complete power by an election designed to bring the Communist Party into unchallenged power² and to keep King Peter II in exile.

From 1945 to 1948 the Yugoslav Communist Party was completely controlled by the Soviet Union and was regarded as the model Soviet follower. Land reform, peasant collectivization, and planned industrialization were the major economic

¹Wolff, "Bulgaria" in the Fate of East Central Europe, p. 296.

²Hoffman and Neal, op. cit., pp. 79-80.

changes affecting society. Yet the desire for independence took precedence over desire for Communist solidarity and resulted in the break with the Soviet Union and other Communist countries in 1948. Yugoslavia was forced to build its own kind of socialism by cooperating with Western and neutral countries. This course led to open criticism of Stalinism and a reinterpretation of Marxism which allowed for a measure of liberalization unknown in other Communist countries.¹

The legal framework, including the Constitution, was reworked in such a way that it contained more decentralization and possibilities for experimentation. These far-reaching reforms did not change the essence of the society and human liberties were still denied the people. The regime's international policies and the improved standard of living as well as relaxations of party and state control preserved for the government a measure of popular support earned during the war. But the frequent vacillations between a liberalizing and restricting policy produced insecurity, and a deep-seated feeling of uncertainty of the future.² The well-being of the people of Yugoslavia is still the subject of the arbitrary decisions of the League of Communists, which rules the country primarily in the interest of its own leaders.

¹Fred Warner Neal, Titoism in Action: The Reforms in Yugoslavia After 1948, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1958), pp. 30-31.

²Hoffman and Neal, op. cit., pp. 407-413.

C. The Socio-Economic Conditions

In a period of less than a century the countries of South-Eastern Europe experienced a transformation perhaps unparalleled in other parts of the world. In some of the more isolated regions of the Balkans there existed until recently a socio-economic unit called the zadruga or communal multiple family which existed from the primitive days of Turkish domination,¹ and is based on the clanish communal principle found in primitive societies.

Parallel with and superimposed on this type of society were the large feudal land holdings, whose lords were usually people of non-Slavic groups. In Voyvodina and southern Hungary, these large land holders were the aristocratic Hungarian nobility, to whom many peasants were tied in almost complete servility.² In Macedonia and Bulgaria the landowners were Turks and Greeks, and the peasants "had to satisfy themselves with small fields, usually in more or less obscure, rather unfertile districts."³

After the liberation from Turks the land in these areas was distributed among the peasants and thus Macedonia and Bulgaria became lands of peasants and small holders. A middle

¹Wolff, BOT, p. 170.

²George Paloczi-Horvath, The Undefeated (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1959), pp. 14-23.

³Reuben H. Markham, Meet Bulgaria (Sofia, published by the author, 1931), p. 86.

class was slow to develop, because the merchants, money-lenders and administrators were Greeks or Hellenized Slavs. The development of capitalism began shortly before the first World War, and was intensified between the two world wars. There was still a great predominance of peasantry, for about eighty per cent of the people made their living through agriculture and the others who lived in small towns "that are not much different from the villages are also to a certain extent in agricultural pursuits."¹

In the first half of the twentieth century the process of migration began from the villages to the towns, with more and more peasant children entering the professions, trading and small scale production and a small but swelling working class. But capitalism did not have time to develop, except to produce a few ugly byproducts of exploitation characteristic of its earliest period. The changes from one type of socio-economic structure to another was belated but spontaneous, with the exception of socialism, which came early and was planned.

It should be remembered that Yugoslavia was the second country in the world to become Communist, next only to the Soviet Union, and Bulgaria was the third or at the most fourth. After the Communists took over, they consciously and ruthlessly

¹Ibid., p. 84.

started the process of planning in order to make a complete change from the mixed primitive-feudal-capitalist socio-economic conditions to socialism.

No revolution or party had ever before set itself the task of building social relationship or a new society. But this was the primary objective of the Communist revolution.

Communist leaders, though no better acquainted than others with the laws which govern society, discovered that in the country in which their revolution was possible, industrialization was also possible, particularly when it involved a transformation of society in keeping with their ideological hypothesis.¹

In the rapid process of industrialization and agricultural collectivization, the working class increased rapidly, the peasantry lost much of its land and became agricultural proletariat, while the tax bureaucratic apparatus swelled enormously. The whole society came to be ruled by those in whose hands was the ultimate control of all economic means through political monopoly--the Communists.

The new class instinctively feels that national goods are, in fact, its property, and that even the terms "socialist," "social," and "state" property denote a general legal fiction. The new class also thinks that any breach of its totalitarian authority might imperil its ownership. Consequently, the new class opposes any type of freedom, ostensibly for the purpose of preserving "socialist" ownership . . . This is an important contradiction. Property is legally considered a social and national property. But in actuality, a single group manages it in its own interest.²

¹Milovan Djilas, The New Class: An Analysis of the Communist System (New York: Frederick Praeger, 1961), p. 21 (paperback edition).

²Ibid., p. 65.

D. Education and Culture

The South Slavic population, having come under the influence of Byzantium while still in a very primitive state of civilization, received the Byzantine Christian cultural tradition which flowered until the Turkish captivity in the fourteenth century. Then followed the long centuries of Turkish rule, which were culturally dark ages, as learning almost ceased to exist, even among the clergy in the monasteries.¹ With the process of liberation, in the nineteenth century, came also a passion for education among the younger people who founded the first schools in Bulgaria and Macedonia in the 1840's. Vojvodina was more fortunate, as it always looked toward Vienna and Budapest, and sent its best sons to the universities in these and other European cities.²

The number of schools multiplied rapidly and led to establishment of institutions of higher learning, and soon "the intelligentsia" appeared. It was characterized by its ability, by scorn of manual labor, by administrative and professional employment and of course by chronic under-employment and under-payment, which caused it to produce an unusually large number of revolutionaries. The rest of the population

¹Francis Dvornik, The Slavs in European History and Civilization (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1962), p. 356.

²Istorija Naroda Jugoslavije, Vol. 2. (Beograd: Prosveta, 1960), p. 1110.

on the Balkans had a high incidence of illiteracy, ignorance and lack of cultural refinement, and developed to a certain degree scorn for and distrust of education. A large number of trained young men and women have returned to the villages as school teachers to elevate the educational and cultural level of the people.¹

After World War II "the Communist regimes in the Balkan states adopted very active policies in the field of education and culture."² Illiteracy has almost been stamped out, educational facilities enlarged, and much effort is given to emphasize the need for education and culture. The only drawback in the system is that culture and education have been purged of non-Communist opinions, and made into propaganda weapons of the government, which uses it to disseminate the Marxist-Leninist ideology.³

E. The Religious History

Of the Yugoslav regions Vojvodina is most diversified as far as religion is concerned. The majority of the people belong to the Serbian Eastern Orthodox Church, while the Roman Catholic Church commands a large following among the Hungarians and Croats living in Vojvodina. The Reformed and Evangelical (Lutheran) Churches are strong particularly among

¹Markham, op. cit., p. 206.

²Wolff, BOT, p. 568.

³Ibid., p. 569.

Germans, Hungarians, and Slovaks. Macedonia and Bulgaria on the other hand are "monolithic" in the religious sense as the great majority of the population is Eastern Orthodox.

Religious statistics of the population in Bulgaria and Yugoslavia are rare, based on estimates, and incomplete in scope. Of the more than 7,000,000 Bulgarians, over six million are Eastern Orthodox, 900,000 are Moslem, 53,000 Roman Catholics, 23,000 Armenian Church members, 20,000 Jews, and some 20,000 Protestants. There are only Congregational (Evangelical), Methodist, Baptist, and Pentecostalist Protestants in Bulgaria.

Yugoslavia had, according to the census of 1931, 7,500,000 Eastern Orthodox, 6,000,000 Roman Catholics, some 350,000 Protestants, 52,000 Uniates, 1,750,000 Moslems, 78,000 Jews, etc.¹ The Protestants are made up mainly of Lutherans and Reformed (Calvinist), and a few thousand Baptists, Methodists, Adventists, Free Brethren, Pentecostalists, and other religious groups. There are no recent religious statistics.²

¹J. Hutchison Cockburn, Religious Freedom in Eastern Europe (Richmond, Va.: John Knox Press, 1953), p. 92. These figures have greatly changed because of population increase, war conditions, and anti-religious pressures.

²A book which has been given official blessing in Yugoslavia and written to explain the religious situation from the governmental point of view contains no table of statistics on religious membership and only a few data of this kind scattered throughout the book. See Rastko Vidic, The Position of the Church in Yugoslavia. Translated from the Serbo-Croatian by Veselin Kostic. (Beograd: Jugoslavija, 1962), passim.

1. The Eastern Orthodox Churches

The Eastern Orthodox Churches "are those organized bodies of Christians which formed the original nucleus of Christendom in Apostolic times, together with those Churches which owed their foundation directly to that nucleus and have not since broken their communion with it."¹ Each Orthodox Church is organized on the basis of nationality. An Orthodox Church is autocephalous, ruled by a hierarchy frequently headed by a patriarch or metropolitan or exarch. It is characterized by elaborate ritual and doctrines believed to be of Apostolic origin as transmitted by the Early Christian Fathers. The Bulgarians, Macedonians, and the Serbs became Orthodox in the ninth and tenth centuries A.D. primarily through the activities of the disciples of St. Cyril and Methodius, who were the first missionaries to the Slavs.²

When the Moslem Turks conquered the Balkans the Orthodox Church became the guardian of national consciousness and the only native authority and carrier of tradition.³ Hence the Bulgarians, Macedonians, and Serbs developed a strong loyalty to the Orthodox Church. The Orthodox Churches tended to become

¹R. M. French, The Eastern Orthodox Church (London: Hutchinson University Library, 1961), p. 11.

²Alexander Schmemman, The Historical Road of Eastern Orthodoxy (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1963), p. 262.

³Nicolas Zernov, Eastern Christendom (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1961), pp. 134-136.

established churches until World War II when the separation of church and state was proclaimed by the Communists and the Orthodox Church lost its privileges.

2. The Roman Catholic Church

The Roman Catholic Church also extended its missionary activities to the Balkans in the ninth and tenth centuries. The Croatians, Slovenians, and Hungarians were completely incorporated into this religious body. For an extended period the Roman Catholic Church competed with the Orthodox Church for influence at the Serbian and Bulgarian courts but these two states eventually gave their complete allegiance to the Eastern Orthodox Church.¹ The Popes occasionally endorsed attempts to spread Catholicism in the Balkans by way of Hungarian crusades and by communal conversions of Orthodox people who were allowed to keep their Slavonic liturgy and all church usages, including a married clergy under the condition that they recognized the supremacy of the Pope. The number of these so called Uniates is small in Both Bulgaria and Yugoslavia.

3. The Moslems.

During the Turkish conquest a number of Orthodox Christians became Moslems. They inhabit certain regions in Bulgaria, Macedonia, Southern Serbia, and Bosnia. They were frequently

¹Francis Dvornik, The Slavs: Their Early History and Civilization (Boston: American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1956), pp. 116-146.

incorrectly regarded as Turks, but they are Slavic Moslems who were Turkized yet continued to use the local language. They were rarely willing to call themselves Bulgarians, Macedonians, Serbs or Croats as these nationalities carry religious overtones, as nationality usually determined one's religion. Moreover, the Turks made no official distinctions between nationalities but only between religions.

It was expected that when the Turkish yoke was thrown off that most Slavic Moslems would be eager to become Christians. The Orthodox expected them to return to their fold. The Protestants, especially in Bulgaria, felt that the rather austere Moslem religious practices would repulse them from the elaborate ritualism of the Orthodox Church and would make them eager to embrace Protestantism. During the Turkish rule it was forbidden to proselytise the Moslems. Why no large scale attempts to convert the Moslems were made after Bulgaria achieved independence is not clear. It seems that the Protestants lacked both money and personnel for extensive attempts, while small scale actions achieved little visible success. The time for a permanent establishment of missions to the Moslems in Bulgaria and Yugoslavia was too short, and the existing Protestant churches in these countries were plagued with financial problems as well as scarcity of personnel.

4. The Protestants.

The Protestant Reformation made no impact upon the Orthodox Slavic peoples, except in a few isolated cases. However the Reformation was successful in the sixteenth and the first half of the seventeenth century in Slovenia, Dalmatia, Istria, Croatia, and Slavonia and Hungary.¹ Lutheran influence came via Austria and Calvinist influence came primarily from Hungary where the mighty war lords accepted this religion as a means of resisting the central authority. The Catholic Reformation or Counter-reformation successfully reclaimed all these regions. In Hungary, however, a large number of people retained their Calvinism or Lutheranism to the present day. Protestantism was re-introduced only in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries into northern Yugoslavia, primarily Vojvodina, through the influence of national minorities. Even today only few congregations of the various Protestant churches and sects have been completely indigenized. More Catholics than Orthodox have become Protestant; but the number of conversions from either church is fairly low.² The Protestants were

¹Franjo Bučar, Povijest hrvatske protestantske Književnosti za Reformacije (Zagreb: Matica Hrvatska, 1910), p. 10, passim. Also M. Murko, Die Bedeutung der Reformation und Gegenreformation für das Geistige Leben der Südslaven (Prag, Česka Grafická Unie A.S. und Heidelberg: Carl Winter's Universitats-buchhandlung, 1927), passim.

²No statistical data exist on this. The general observation is restricted to northern and northeastern Yugoslavia. The conclusion is based on the author's experiential knowledge of the religious situation in Yugoslavia.

traditionally oriented toward Germany, even in cases of churches that had an Anglo-Saxon origin but spread via Germany. Only the Macedonian and Bulgarian Protestants had a distinct Anglo-American orientation since they were the fruit of the work of American missionaries.

5. Religious Liberty.

It is hardly an overstatement to say that there was never any real religious liberty in the Balkans. From antiquity to the present nationality was identified with religion and religious non-conformists were branded as traitors for whom little mercy was shown. Mutual religious persecution was continued until very recently. The established churches, the Eastern Orthodox and the Roman Catholic churches, and in some instances even by the larger recognized Protestant churches persecuted the non-conformists and adherents of smaller churches and sects. Until the end of World War II there was no separation of church and state and members of another religion were forcibly rebaptized or converted, as recently as 1944.¹

After the Communist take-over church and state were separated. The churches were ordered to abstain from any pronouncement about any social, political or other issue unless specifically permitted, while the state openly or covertly interferes in religious matters, and is openly hostile to religion

¹Vidić, op. cit., pp. 34-36.

and the churches all of which are now almost alike as to their disadvantageous position.¹ Under such circumstances there is no real freedom of worship, not to speak of freedom of religion and religious propaganda. The churches are discouraged and restricted in many ways, not often legally, but rather by economic, ideological or administrative strictures. Persecution of one religion by another has ceased--persecution of religion by irreligion is rife in both Bulgaria and Yugoslavia, although to a degree which varies from region to region and from time to time.

¹Cockburn, op. cit., pp. 96-97.

CHAPTER III

THE CONGREGATIONAL MISSION TO EUROPEAN TURKEY FROM 1850 TO 1878

The term "European Turkey Mission" has been used to designate the work of the American Board¹ among the Bulgarians, Macedonians, Albanians, and Serbs from 1850 to 1919 but this should be clarified. Until 1870 the area was considered as a part of the Western Turkey Mission. As a consequence of the spread of the mission, the name "European Turkey Mission" was applied from 1870 to 1912, despite the fact that Bulgaria was independent of Turkey. From 1912, when Turkey was virtually driven out of Europe, the American Board took up the name "Balkan Mission." At the same time it was recognized that the political realities in fact created four separate missions in the states of Bulgaria, Greece, Serbia, and Albania, and that the hostilities among these states did not permit a unified mission.² Since the term "European Turkey Mission" could be applied properly only for the period until 1878, it seems justified to restrict its use to the period

¹The shorter and more frequently used name American Board will be used instead of the full name American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM).

²Annual Report of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. From now on will be abbreviated to Ann. Rep. ABCFM, 1913, p. 57.

before this date and to consider separately the developments in Macedonia from 1878 to 1918, and in Bulgaria from 1878 to 1918.

A. The Purpose and the Beginning of the Mission

1. The Purpose and the Motives of the Missionaries

The purpose of the Christian mission is to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Throughout the ages this has meant various things to various people. Modern missionary movements were born out of the insights gained through the eighteenth and nineteenth-century revivals, and a subsequent humanitarian tendency in the West, through which people came to regard salvation as not being solely a matter between themselves and God, but also depending upon their relationship with other human beings.¹

The nineteenth century missionary impulse was strongest among the pietistic Christians who were most inclined to share their experiences of conversion and rebirth,² mainly brought about at revivals. Moslems, having proven themselves the most

¹Robert W. Goodloe, "Early Struggles of American Methodists Toward Overseas Missions," in Christian World Mission, ed. William K. Anderson (Nashville, Tenn.: Commission on Ministerial Training, The Methodist Church, 1946), p. 57.

²Harvey H. Potthoff, "Contemporary Theology and the Christian Mission," in The Christian Mission Today, ed. The Joint Session of Educations & Cultivation of the Board of Missions of the Methodist Church (New York: Abingdon Press, 1960), p. 14.

vigorous opponents of Christianity, were regarded by Protestants as a proper subject of missionary activities as early as the time of the Reformation when Slavic reformers dreamed of erasing the Turkish menace in the Balkans and Middle Europe by converting the Moslems. Such hope rose anew when Turkey in its period of declining power was forced to make various concessions to Western powers. But direct attempts could not be made to convert Moslems for the death penalty threatened any convert from Islam.¹ The conversion of Moslems was hoped to be achieved by reforming the native national Christian churches in the Turkish Empire, such as the Mesopotamian, Armenian, Greek Orthodox, and Bulgarian Orthodox Churches. Most Protestants considered these ancient churches as having lost the "pure" Gospel and thus having become incapable of influence by way of examples to Moslems.² The Turks did not object to the missionary activities of Christians among other Christians and Jews. Missions to the Jews were carried on by Christians through the centuries. It was thought that conversions of Jews could represent a fine example to the Moslems

¹William Webster Hall, Jr., Puritans in the Balkans, (Sofia, Bulgaria: Studia Historico-Philologica Serdicensia, 1938), p. 3. References will often be made to this published form of W. W. Hall's doctoral dissertation entitled, The American Board Mission in Bulgaria, 1878-1918: A Study in Purpose and Procedure (New Haven, 1937). References will be made to the typed dissertation for the purpose of verification. The book is substantially the same as the doctoral dissertation except for the omission of the opening chapter. The abbreviation for the book will be PB and for the unpublished dissertation will be ABAB.

²Ibid.

of what the blessings may be when non-Christians accept Christianity.

In the territories which were later to be occupied by the American Board for work among the Macedonians, Bulgarians, and other Balkan people, the first missionary activities of the American Board were opened with the idea that they would be oriented only toward the Jews, which in some cases, e.g., in Salonica, made up as much as half of the city's population. Such a station was established in Salonica (now Saloniki or Thessaloniki, Slavic name Solun) by 1849. At that time the Board's Secretary wrote in his instructions to the missionaries among Jews in Salonica

It may also be deemed expedient, in view of principles yet to be stated, when you form churches among the Jews in Salonica (if such be the will of God), freely to admit converts to them, should there be such, from the Armenian and Greek Communities.¹

And again by the same source a few years later

The Prudential Committee feels much disposed, as soon as men and means will allow, to occupy a station at Adrianople, mainly for the Jews, but with some reference, also, to the Armenians in that quarter.²

Such statements show that there was, if ever so small, a tendency to consider Christians of the ancient churches as

¹Rufus Anderson from Boston to Dodd and Maynard at Salonica, July 26, 1849. ABAR, Instructions to Missions, Vol. V, Letters to the Salonica Mission. The abbreviation ABAR refers to the American Board Archives at Houghton Library, Harvard University.

²Rufus Anderson to the Brethren of the Mission to the Jews in Salonica, July 7, 1851. ABAR, Instruction to Missions, Vol. V, Letters to the Salonica Station.

proper subjects of proselytism, despite the avowed purposes of spiritualizing the ancient churches and of basing their teachings upon the Gospel, placing in the hands of the local population in its own vernacular, rather than establishing their own brand of Protestantism.¹

That such reform would be possible without proselytizing was a rather naive thought; experience with all the native national churches showed this. The earliest missionaries to Turkey were men of acknowledged broad and hyperopic views, and were incapable of misjudging the situation to such a degree that they would have tried to transplant the rather democratic polities of the Congregational and Presbyterian Churches (for these were the denominations to which most of the American Board missionaries belonged) to the traditionally autocratic Eastern churches. But they were also men who were convinced of the absolute correctness of their position, and nothing but the closest approximation of their own religious experience would satisfy them as evidence of salvation in anyone. Therefore their activities could not but lead into proselytism. The leaders of the Orthodox Churches realized this from the

¹Hall, ABMB, pp. 50-52. Proselytism is the attempt to change the religious beliefs of the people to which missionaries were sent in such a way that they accept that which the missionaries believe. Proselytism can be but it is not necessarily a part of the missionary endeavor. A mission is the organized task of a Christian Church to perform a great variety of services to any group of people deemed to be in need of such ministrations motivated by the desire to express the love of God and men. The word mission has much broader implications than the word proselytizing.

very beginning. Cyrus Hamlin, one of the ablest missionaries of the American Board to Turkey, stated in 1849 that the purpose of the missionary schools is to convert young people and spread the Gospel.¹

When converts were made, the missionaries administered to them all pastoral care if they decided to be full communicants, although they did not discourage them from continued attendance at the services of their own churches. On the contrary, they encouraged such attendance with the hope that such converts would act as a leaven that would gradually transform the whole ancient body of a church. The missionaries seemed genuinely surprised when such activities were not welcomed by the priests, and they took much pain to protect converts from persecutions, which gradually increased. This process of separation was most marked and rapid among the Armenians, and in 1846 in Constantinople, a distinct Protestant Armenian Church organization was formed. This was seemingly contrary to the missionaries' wishes, but was an outcome of the persecution of the converted Armenians to whom this step seemed sheer necessity as a protection against the Orthodox ecclesiastics under Turkish Law.²

The American Board Mission to Bulgarians, Macedonians, and later Albanians, Serbians, and Greeks was a direct outgrowth of the mission to Turkey which started in 1819. It is

¹Missionary Herald, Vol. XLV, (1849), p. 399.

²Hall, ABMB, p. 57.

natural that the experience with the Armenians was in the minds of missionaries even though the stated purpose was only to reform the Orthodox Church. They were convinced that the formation of Protestant communities was forced upon them.

As in other parts of the Near East the missionaries wished to revive, not to subvert the Orthodox religious community. But in spite of greater tolerance than in any other Near Eastern Orthodox Community--Greek, Armenian, Syrian--the Orthodox Bulgarian authorities¹ forced the organization of a Protestant Church.¹

There is little reason to doubt the sincerity of such motivations, but there is also little reason to consider them realistic, or the methods employed as conducive to the achievement of these purposes.

2. The Precursors of the European Turkey Mission

About 1840 the American Board missionaries in Smyrna (now Izmir) and Constantinople (now Istanbul) turned their attention to the Bulgarian segment of the population in those two cities. As a nation, Bulgaria fell into oblivion in the West during their centuries of captivity under the Turks and of ecclesiastical dominance by the Greeks. Hoping to capture the interests of these people, Elias Riggs, one of the outstanding missionaries of the American Board, and widely regarded as one of the most accomplished American linguists of his time, himself learned the Bulgarian language and issued in 1841 or 1842

¹Fred Field Goodsell, They Lived Their Faith (Boston: American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, 1961), p. 293.

a little Bulgarian grammar, hoping thereby to kindle some interest in these people.¹

The British and Foreign Bible Society, through its agent Benjamin Baker, published a translation of the New Testament in the Bulgarian vernacular of which thousands were soon sold.² The Orthodox Churches used Greek as the language of the liturgy and of the Bible, except in a few places where the Bulgarian lower clergy used Old Church Slavonic, a language which had ceased to be the spoken language of this area centuries before. Such sale of the New Testament and of other pamphlets published subsequently by the British and Foreign Bible Society and the American Board Press, led to Bulgaria being viewed as a possible mission field by 1842 or 1843.³ Mr. H. J. Van Lennep, a missionary of the Board who visited Adrianople (now Edirne) in 1841, envisioned a mission to the

¹Charles Trowbridge Riggs[?], History of the Works of the ABCFM in the Near East and More Especially in Turkey; 1819 till 1934. Unpublished typed manuscript kept in the library of the American Board, now the library of the United Church Board of World Ministries, hereafter referred to as ABLib, 14 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. C. T. Riggs' work will be abbreviated to HWANE.

²Ibid.

³For an excellent account of the activities of the American Missionaries and the Bible Societies in the literary renaissance of the Bulgarians and their national awakening see James F. Clarke, [II], Bible Societies, American Missionaries and the National Revival of Bulgaria (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1937). Typed doctoral dissertation, two copies are at the Archives of the Widener Library at Harvard University.

Bulgarians, but the Board did not have enough resources for such an undertaking.¹

Yet this possibility was not forgotten. In 1851 the Secretary of the Board asked the missionaries stationed in Salonica

Give us all the information you can in respect to the Bulgarians. It may be greatly useful to others if not to ourselves. In preparing for your tours, you will naturally have that people in mind. Their eagerness for the Scripture ought surely to be met from some quarter. For reasons mentioned in the letters now going to the Armenian mission, we cannot institute a mission for the Bulgarians, nor even renew our mission to the Greeks.²

By April of 1852 the prospect of opening a mission among Bulgarians was again under consideration by the American Board at least as a possible offer to some other missionary society.

We need either from you, or from our brethren in the Armenian Mission, a regular dissertation on the opening and the call for a mission among the Bulgarians. I wish we had one to put into the hands of Bishop James of the Methodist Church during the meeting of their General Conference in Boston. We must be able to point our brethren of other Denominations to interesting fields in that part of the world, which are not occupied by us, to keep them from entering fields that are occupied by us.³

¹Ibid.

²Rufus Anderson to the Missionaries to the Jews in Salonica, Dec. 30, 1851, ABAr., Instructions to the Missions, Vol. V, Letters to the Salonica Station.

³Rufus Anderson to the Brethren of the Mission to Jews in Salonica, April 6, 1852, ABAr., Instructions to Missions, Vol. V, Letters to the Salonica Station.

3. The Missionaries "Discover" Bulgaria

It is evident that the earliest missionaries in Turkey little imagined that they would develop one of their most successful missions among the Bulgarians,¹ and when they did acquaint themselves with representatives of this nation, it was in order to channel away the interests of other societies from fields already occupied by themselves.

The missionaries were most favorably impressed by the Bulgarians because of their good response to the distribution of Bibles. Nowhere did people seem to be so eager to acquire copies of the Holy Scriptures as in Macedonia and Bulgaria. The missionaries interpreted this as hunger for the "pure" gospel, in place of the version of Christianity presented by the Eastern Orthodox Church. Therefore they regarded the Bulgarians, after a rather brief encounter with them, as one of the most progressive and promising peoples. To the spiritual hunger which they saw, they could not but respond with a desire to evangelize. They unanimously interpreted this as eagerness for a more spiritualized, less ritualistic type of Christianity.

This interpretation of the situation seemed to be corroborated in many ways. In 1860 an Armenian colporteur from Nicomedia sold books, tracts, and Bibles in over fifty

¹Tsvetko S. Bagranoff, The American Mission's Share in the Regeneration and Defense of Bulgaria (n.p., American Bulgarian Good Neighbor League, 1947), p. 2.

villages and towns around Philippopolis (now Plovdiv), and was usually well received by priests and teachers who recommended to the people that they buy Bibles from him. When people came to the khan (name for Turkish hotel) to buy books from him, he utilized the opportunity for evangelizing. According to the numerous missionary witnesses and acknowledgments, such preaching was the most adequate preparation for later missionary endeavors. This colporteur found people ready to buy his books and described them as being "in an awakened state of mind,"¹ in almost all villages he visited (Peshdere, Bardak, Belovar, Bertsikova) and in many of them he engaged the priest in a controversy basing his argument on the scripture. He was at least tolerated; only on one occasion was there open opposition. Experience of this kind gave the missionaries high hopes. They considered Bulgaria the "springboard" to converting the Slavic population of the whole Turkish Empire, and possibly of the Austrian and Russian Empire as well.²

Success did not follow easily. Extreme optimism gave way to moderation and in some cases to criticism and pessimism.³ The first missionary of the American Board to serve in Bulgaria, Charles F. Morse, found that some 20,000 copies of the Bible had been bought in order "not to read it but to own it

¹Ibid., p. 36.

²Ibid., p. 37.

³Missionary Herald, Vol. LVII, (1861), p. 313 and pp. 275-276.

as a sign of loyalty and patriotism, and as a magic thing whereby to drive away bad spirits and to assure God's goodwill."¹ Morse believed that they were placed on shelves and rarely opened because they served primarily as a symbol of Bulgarian nationalism. As far as was known, not a single person was converted through the sale of these Bibles.²

4. The Partition of Bulgaria between Methodists and Congregationalists

Julius Richter, a German historian of Protestant missions to the Near East, stated that the Methodists and Congregationalists divided the field in Bulgaria by about 1851 and that during that year "each society founded its first mission, the American Board occupying Philippopolis, and the Methodists Shumla."³ Other reports of missionaries and researchers indicate a later date of the occupation of the first station.

¹Charles F. Morse, Open Letter to the Jubilee Gathering, St. Johnsbury, Vermont, March 1908, in Skazkite Derzhani na Yubileiniya Sobor (Samokov, Bulgaria: Evangelsko-Uchilishtna Pechatnitsa, 1909), p. 118. The book is a symposium of speeches, lectures, and letters held in connection with the fiftieth anniversary of the Protestant Missions in Bulgaria. The abbreviated title SDYS will be used. Title in English: Stories Told at the Jubilee Gathering. Translation from Bulgarian furnished by the author.

²Ibid.

³Julius Richter, History of the Protestant Mission in the Near East (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1910), pp. 167-168.

There is a concensus of opinion that it happened at least five years later, i.e., in 1856.

As noted above, the Secretary of the American Board inquired about Bulgaria from the missionaries in Salonica who were active from 1849 to 1856. He sought an area where the Methodist Missionary Society could work without duplicating the labors of the American Board missionaries.

The opportunities in Bulgaria seemed so attractive that the American Board wished to extend its activities to this country as it bordered their own missions and because the Bulgarians lived along with some people (e.g., Armenians) whom the Board already served. It seemed that with a small additional outlay of funds and of personnel, a whole new people might be brought in with prospects of great success. However there was some hesitation in recommending this field to the Board in Boston for financial reasons.

Elias Riggs' visit to Varna in 1856 convinced the Western Turkey Mission that immediate steps should be taken. They commissioned Cyrus Hamlin, who was on furlough in 1856, to present their case before the American Board. While the Board considered it impossible to take up the challenge themselves, they advised Hamlin to suggest Bulgaria as a possible mission field to the Methodists. This Hamlin did at the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church session at Palmyra, New York, in the summer of 1856, which "led to the formation of

¹C. T. Riggs, HWANE, p. 60.

their mission to the Bulgarians on the Danube."¹ As a consequence of Hamlin's successful urging, he was elected a life director of the Methodist Episcopal Mission Board.²

Since the American Board missionaries had come in touch with Bulgarians around Adrianople and Rodosto, the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church and the American Board decided to "partition" Bulgaria. The stations of the Methodists were to be in Northern Bulgaria (which was regarded as Bulgaria proper) and the American Board missionaries in Southern Bulgaria (which included Eastern Roumelia, Thrace, and Macedonia).

B. The Work of the Mission from 1858 to 1870

Within the Scope of the Western Turkey Mission

1. The Establishment of the First Stations

In 1857 Cyrus Hamlin and Henry Jones, the Secretary of the Turkey Mission Aid Society, visited the region of Adrianople and Philippopolis. A consequence of that tour was that the Annual Meeting of the Western Turkey Mission in 1857 declared that it is the duty of American churches to take up mission work among the Slavs, and they requested seven missionaries to be stationed in Adrianople, Philippopolis, Monastir (now Bitola), and Üsküb (now Skopje).³

¹Cyrus Hamlin, Among the Turks, (New York: American Tract Society, 1877), p. 262.

²Hall, ABMB, p. 67.

³C. T. Riggs, HWANE, p. 27.

The exact circumstances of the arrival of the first American Board missionary to establish a station in Southern Bulgaria are somewhat obscure. The arrival of the Methodist missionaries, Albert L. Long and Wesley Prettyman, in Northern Bulgaria in 1857, preceded by at least a few months the arrival of the first American Board missionary.¹ With the aid of Edwin E. Bliss, an American Board missionary, the Methodists occupied Shumen and Varna.²

H. C. Haskell, one of the early missionaries of the American Board to European Turkey, reviewing the history of the mission at the time of its Jubilee in 1908, wrote that the first missionary couple were Rev. and Mrs. Charles F. Morse, stationed in Adrianople in March of 1858.³ In substantial agreement with Haskell, but not specifying the month of Morse's arrival, are C. T. Riggs,⁴ the anonymous author of the Historical Sketch of the Missions of ABCFM in European Turkey, Asia Minor, and Armenia to 1861,⁵ as well as W. W. Hall.⁶

¹Detailed documentation will be offered in Chapter VI on the Methodist Church in Bulgaria up to 1918.

²Missionary Herald, Vol. LIV, pp. 72-76.

³Henry C. Haskell, Istoricheski pregled na Evropeisko-Turskata Misiya za poslednite pedeset godini, in SDYS, p. 13.

⁴C. T. Riggs, HWANE, p. 27.

⁵S. C. Bartlett, Historical Sketch of the Missions of the American Board in Turkey (Boston: Published by the Board, 1896), p. 27.

⁶[Anonymous], Historical Sketch of the Missions of ABCFM in European Turkey, Asia Minor, and Armenia to 1861, p. 35. Transcript at ABLiB.

Cyrus Hamlin stated that when the Methodist Mission opened in 1857 "the American Board had already commenced a work in Roumelia, Rodosto, and Adrianople."¹ It is more likely that American Board missionaries considered Adrianople and Rodosto as out-stations since Armenians lived in this region.²

There is no record to corroborate the starting date of 1851 given by Richter, but as for considering 1858 as the year of Morse's occupation of Adrianople, we find a statement of his own which seems to deny this. He stated that he arrived on November 30, exactly one month after Long and Prettyman of the Methodist Missionary Society had started their work north of Stara Planina (Balkan Mountains), and opened a station in Adrianople, a town bordering Bulgaria, in order to get ready for missionary labor.³ Morse does not specify the year of his coming. He implies 1857, as this is the year specified as the beginning of the Methodist Mission to Bulgaria in both Methodist and Congregational sources. Morse obviously joined the Armenian Mission of the Western Turkey Mission in March 1857. He resided in Adrianople, for Adrianople had a sizeable Armenian population and was re-assigned to the Bulgarian Mission in March 1858.⁴ In September of 1858 Morse was joined by

¹Hamlin, op. cit., p. 262.

²Ann. Rep. ABCFM, 1852, p. 66 and Prudential Committee Minutes, 1856, pp. 12 and 79.

³C. Morse, Letter to the Missionaries, SDYS, p. 117.

⁴Hall, ABMB, p. 72. Also Prudential Committee Minutes, 1857, p. 220.

Theodore L. Byington who in 1859 toured Macedonia and Southern Bulgaria with Elias Riggs.

They selected Eski Zagra (now Stara Zagora, the Slavic form of Turkish Eski Zagra) for Byington's station, while two additional missionaries, James F. Clarke and William W. Meriam with their families occupied Philippopolis (Plovdiv) during the same year.¹ After studying the language and the people, they found this to be an ideal field of labor. Optimistic reports prompted the American Board to send, in 1860, William F. Arms to Eski Zagra, and Oliver Crane to Adrianople.² William Arms died in 1862 and in the same year Henry C. Haskell arrived and was assigned with Morse to Sofia.

2. The Earliest Activities and Impressions of the Missionaries

These missionaries to Bulgaria had gained valuable experience from the other Turkish Missions but they were not content simply to imitate previous work. They had all studied Turkish, as the Board wanted them to evangelize the Turks.³ According

¹Ibid.

²C. T. Riggs, HWANE, p. 27 and H. C. Haskell, op. cit., SDYS, p. 14. The American Board had a general practice to send missionary couples rather than single missionary men. The exceptions were the single women missionaries who were either school teachers or Bible women. It should be assumed that each missionary was accompanied by his wife, who had the status of his assistant rather than that of a full missionary, which was later acquired.

³C. H. Haskell, op. cit., in SDYS, p. 14.

to the example of the Nestorian mission, they did not want formal separation from the national church, but only a rebirth of spirituality. Thus they tried to indicate the errors of this Church and present what they considered the true Gospel.¹

a. The First Impressions.--The very first impressions of the missionaries were optimistic. They hoped that the Pomaks (Slavic Moslems in Southeastern Bulgaria) who disliked icon reverence might become evangelicals and so too perhaps the small, remaining sect of Bogumils, a Paulician Christian heretical sect which had flourished in Bulgaria in the Middle Ages.² Both of these hopes proved to be in vain. While Bulgaria was still under Turkish rule no missionary endeavor was permitted among the Moslems, whether they were Turks or Slavs. When Bulgaria became independent, many Turks withdrew to Turkey. It is not clear why no missionary was appointed to work among the Moslems in independent Bulgaria.

Nothing seems to have been done among the Moslems until after World War I, and then very little, primarily by way of selling religious literature and conversing with them. Activities of American Board missionaries to Bulgaria were restricted to the Eastern Orthodox Bulgarians, who are the large majority, as Bulgaria was one of the most homogenous nations in the religious sense.

¹James F. Clarke [I], "Evangeliskata Rabota: Neinoto Minalo i Budeshte" in SDYS, p. 91. Translated title: Evangelical Work; its past and future.

²Hall, ABMB, p. 69.

The question must be raised as to the propriety of a Protestant mission in a nominally Eastern Orthodox land. From the Turkish point of view such a mission was welcome as they knew the dividing effects of religious controversies. "The Turks welcomed any movement that caused a breach in the Christian population and at that time they were very friendly with Protestant Missions."¹

The Orthodox spokesmen always claimed that the Protestants had no right to establish a mission among Orthodox Christians; this act was considered as an immoral act of stealing Orthodox Church members and dividing a nation against itself, weakening it in its age-long struggle against their oppressors at the moment of the decisive struggle leading to independence.

Some Protestants felt that they had the inalienable right to proselytize every non-Protestant person, feeling that Protestantism was the only saving kind of Christianity. But this

¹J. M. Nankivel, A Life for the Balkans: The Story of John Henry House (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1939), p. 39. The tolerance toward Protestant missionaries and the possibility of finding a degree of justice among the Turkish officials should not be considered contradictory with the frequent harsh treatment of the Bulgarian population, including the Protestant Bulgarians. The Turkish Empire was based on military rule, and military rule is characterized by its harsh and decisive actions, bringing much suffering to the subjected population. While the subject people of the Turkish empire had little recourse against such excessive harshness and brutality, the foreign missionaries could always appeal to their diplomatic representatives in case their own influence failed, and by means of various pressures brought upon the Turkish government, the grievance could be eventually alleviated.

opinion was not universal. Justification also was found merely in the principles of religious liberty and toleration. Moreover, it was held that most Orthodox people were Christians in name only. Most of those who became evangelicals did so because they sought something different from the teachings of the Orthodox Church, or because they were fringe members of the Establishment attracted to a Christian way of life through the activities of the missionaries.

The Eastern Orthodox and the Roman Catholic Churches in Southeastern Europe adhered to the Constantinian pattern of church-state relations. The Methodists and Congregationalists supported the ideals of the free church movement as developed in America. These two concepts of course clashed. The Established or officially recognized churches, Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic, or Lutheran, felt justified in protecting their position from the free church threat by almost any means. This led to the many persecutions experienced by free church adherents. The free church movement in Southeastern Europe had a certain tendency toward separatism and sectarianism, but this was far outweighed by its contributions to the spread of religious liberty, its effects on the individual believer, and the advancement of religious education. All this promised a spirited challenge to the established churches resulting in a religious renewal in many of its local congregations. The charge of disuniting the nation was

unfounded because the Evangelicals were always very loyal citizens and have in the various national calamities proved just as reliable and staunch supporters of the nation as others.

It is questionable however whether the early missionaries fully understood the importance of the national question in the Balkans. They were dazzled by the perspective of spreading their work to Serbia, Bosnia, Hertsegovina, Russia, and perhaps even to other Slavic countries, should they succeed in Bulgaria. Some of them had seen nationalism as a threat to their goals and nursed the idea that Turkish domination of the Bulgarian nation would ultimately serve to the good of the Bulgarians, who would then pay more attention to the salvation and freedom of their souls than of their bodies.¹ Only after the achievement of Bulgarian national independence did the missionaries grasp fully that the fate of their mission was closely related to the general well-being of the nation. Independence proved to be an important ingredient of that well-being, and the missionaries soon found that their labors would bring more lasting fruits among a free than a servile people. This realization later forged a bond between them and the Bulgarians, so that after the liberation of Bulgaria the interests of the nation were closely

¹Hall, ABMB, p. 71.

associated with the interests of the mission.¹

b. The Bulgarian Orthodox Church Question.--The Bulgarians were fighting a two-fold struggle. On one hand they were trying to escape Hellenization by the Greek Orthodox Church, struggling for ecclesiastical independence. The Greeks used their jurisdictional prerogatives in Bulgaria to place Greek nationals in higher ecclesiastical offices. They insisted on the exclusive use of Greek in Scripture and liturgy, trying to stifle the Bulgarian language and national feelings. On the other side, the Bulgarians were trying to obtain national and political independence from Turkey. This complex situation is enough to explain the early success and the later disappointment of the missionaries. As long as the Bulgarians saw gains in co-operating with the missionaries to get rid of the Greek influence they were tolerant of them, and the persecution was carried on primarily by Greek bishops. But when national unity seemed to be threatened by the separation of the Protestants from the Orthodox, who considered religious affiliation with the Protestants tantamount to treason, the Bulgarian Orthodox bitterly opposed the work of the missionaries.

¹The relationship between the national awakening and liberation of Bulgaria to the activities of the missionaries has been adequately covered in a number of sources and need not be investigated here. See James F. Clarke, [II], Bible Societies, American Missionaries and the National Revival of Bulgaria, Chaps. XIII, XIV, and XV, pp. 251-305., also Hall, PB, pp. 40-47, 51-63, 257-263, and passim.

Before ecclesiastical independence was won by the Bulgarian Orthodox (Pravoslav) Church, the Greek bishops tried to destroy all Bulgarian Bibles and to force the people to use Greek. In 1860 two American missionaries took twenty Gospels in the Bulgarian vernacular to a village fair at Chirnane. The villagers were first suspicious but when a small boy took one of the books and read a few verses in Bulgarian they were interested and the books were soon sold.¹ Two Armenian colporteurs sold two thousand Gospels in 1862 on a trip from Constantinople in the directions of Vidin and Salonica, preaching at the same time in Plovdiv, Karlovo, Pirdop, Panagurishte and other villages.²

Catholic missionaries worked in Turkey from the time of the Crimean War, 1853, when Russia lost the sole protectorate over Christians in Turkey.³ The French supported these missions and the Uniate Churches, and they enjoyed some success, because Bulgaria had a fairly long tradition of playing the Roman Catholics against the Byzantines or Orthodox Greeks.⁴ When the Greek Patriarch of Constantinople was unwilling to bend to the Bulgarian demands, the Catholic suggestions of a Uniate structure for the Bulgarian church

¹J. F. Clarke, [I] op. cit., pp. 91, 92. ²Ibid.

³Anatole G. Mazour, Russia: Tsarist and Communist (Princeton, N. J.: D. Van Nostrand Co., Inc., 1962), p. 252.

⁴Francis Dvornik, The Slavs: Their Early History and Civilization (Boston: American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1956), pp. 116-146, esp. pp. 118-122.

were not entirely unattractive. The Protestants viewed this as a change from bad to worse. Some of the missionaries, such as C. F. Morse, engaged in a struggle against the Catholic missionaries by selling Bibles, preaching anti-Catholic sermons, and writing anti-Catholic pamphlets.¹ However, most of the Protestants abstained from such polemical activities.

In 1861 the situation with the Bulgarian Church became acute. The Greek Patriarch of Constantinople, acting also as the civil head of all Orthodox people in Turkey, threatened to exile the Bulgarian Bishops Ilarion and Avksentii.² A Bulgarian representative went to Elias Riggs to inquire whether the Bulgarian Church could in some way join the Protestant. The Roman Catholics promised protection from possible persecution if they became Uniates. Under Turkish law, full protection was enjoyed only if one was a member of a recognized religio-civil community, Orthodox, Catholic, or Protestant, over which a civil head, vekil, was placed who would protect the interests of this community at the Porta. The Orthodox Bishops applied to Riggs to permit them to come under the protection of the Protestant Community and Riggs presented to Sdepan Effendi, the Protestant civil head, a paper, composed in the name of the bishops, in which they recognized the Holy Scriptures as the only authority of faith

¹Morse, op. cit., p. 119.

²Ibid., p. 93.

and practice, and promised to submit all questions of rites and ceremonies to a lawfully constituted Synod of the Bulgarian Church.¹

Sdepan Effendi regarded this statement of the Bishops as being in agreement with evangelical beliefs and declared that if the papers were signed and put into his hands he could and would protect them. The Turkish authorities also informed the bishops that they could freely choose between the three communities. However, before the negotiations were completed, the Bishops decided to accept the alternative of exile, rather than to abandon Orthodoxy, hoping that they would, as they ultimately did, win the consent of the government to the independence of the Bulgarian Church.² The independence was realized in 1870. The Greek Orthodox considered the placing of an exarch at the head of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church by the Turkish authorities "schismatic."³

It is difficult to see how any such superficial negotiations could have brought lasting results, even had the bishops signed such a statement. Clearly, the missionaries did not quite understand the situation when they concluded so quickly that they would be able to evangelize all of Bulgaria. Missionary attitudes were soon to change toward

¹Elias Riggs, Reminiscences for my Children (not published, 1891), pp. 18-19.

²Ibid.

³Reuben H. Markham, Meet Bulgaria (Sofia, published by the author, 1931), p. 42.

Bulgarian customs and religious practices which they previously had regarded as well-nigh Protestant in spirit.¹

3. Encountering the First Difficulties

Difficulties were encountered even before the arrival of a missionary to his station. Lewis Bond, who arrived in 1868 at Eski Zagra described his trip in the following way:

We came, my bride and I, via Constantinople and Bourgas. Oh the torture of that three days' ride in a springless, seatless, and strawless white covered taliga horse drawn carriage, our feet held fast in their socks by luggage and several of the junior members of the Morse family, who couldn't be accommodated in two other wagons. Then that sleepless night on the ground floor in Kornobat khan, nine of us in a 9 by 10 room, after a brave effort to eat gritty bread and savory cheese, and beholding the others "havin' a good time" over three innocent lamb heads, as they "picked their eyes out one by one," and rolled the brain as a sweet morsel under their tongue. The party awoke early in the morning (we didn't awake at all); and in Sliven, in a room to ourselves in a new khan, there seemed no reason why we shouldn't have a restful night; but a thousand reasons showed up later. Never mind, it all made "Sweet Hour of Prayer," sound so much sweeter as we finally drove up the narrow entrance to the school yard in Eski Zagra as the girls were having evening worship.²

Such inconveniences, which are still not uncommon in the Balkans, were usually taken in humorous spirit. It was more difficult to take humorously the many persecutions and

¹Missionary Herald, Vol. LVII, (1861) p. 313 and pp. 275- 276.

²Letter of Lewis Bond from Plainfield, N. J. of June 20, 1908, to the Jubilee Meeting in Sofia, printed in SDYS, p. 140.

dangers, as well as the prejudices and ignorance now daily encountered.

a. The Murder of Meriam.--One of the earliest and most tragic occurrences was the murder of William Ward Meriam. Early in June 1862, Meriam, his wife, and infant child left Philippopolis for the Annual Meeting of the missionaries in Constantinople. That purpose accomplished, the Meriams started homeward at the close of June, arriving in Adrianople on July 2.¹ Not far from Adrianople they came upon a group of native travelers halted in dread of robbers said to be just a short distance ahead. But since they now outnumbered the robbers by three to one and had with them two Turkish guards, they decided to go on. They passed through the most dangerous area, but when they were already close to the next military outpost, the robbers attacked. The two frightened or faithless Turkish soldiers ran away. Meriam's carriage was first ignored but when the bandits saw it driven away in an attempt at escape, they fired into it. Meriam halted, being afraid for the lives of his family, but no sooner had he alighted than his head was pierced by two bullets. The pistol which he carried seems not to have been used; it was found with all the ammunition rusted in, on the person of

¹This incident is well documented. The details for this account are from James O. Murray, The Missionary and the Martyr (Cambridge: Riverside Press, 1862), pp. 10-20; W. W. Hall, ABMB, p. 78; and John A. Vinton, Vinton Book, written in longhand, p. 24. The last named is at ABLib.

one of the robbers, later apprehended. He died in a few seconds in front of his desperate wife. For two days the unfortunate wife guarded his body until friends came. He was buried by James F. Clarke.

Then came the terrible reaction. Fever in which life trembled in balance assailed her frame, but her vigorous constitution stoutly breasted it. Hope came and went and came again. But it was not in the counsel of the Lord that they should be long divided in their deaths. On the morning of the 25th of July, she fell asleep in Jesus.¹

b. The Missionary Message and the Bulgarians.--The great shock of Meriam's death still did not discourage his missionary colleagues, nor did the decrease in appropriations to the mission on account of the American Civil War. Meager success among the Bulgarians and persecution of their few converts was admitted with disappointment. When the Methodist and Congregational missionaries met jointly in Eski Zagra in 1863 to review their labors, Bulgarians, they decided, had given mental assent to their views, but their behavior was unchanged. From this they concluded that the Bulgarians were indifferent toward religion.²

The techniques for conversions which were so highly successful in nineteenth century American revivalism did not bear similar fruit in the Balkans. The Balkan peoples were

¹Murray, op. cit., p. 20. C. T. Riggs, HWANE, p. 3, states that her death was caused by the shock which produced premature labor.

²Hall, ABMB., p. 79.

preoccupied with problems of national liberation, statecraft, education, and the change from a tribal or feudal, to a capitalistic system. They were good listeners, but could not be convinced of the reality of personal sin, of the need for individual responsibility, of the necessity of faith in Christ involving utter dependence upon God. For centuries religious affiliation among the Orthodox Slavs had depended upon nationality. Although religion molded their culture in a corporate sense, it did not place any great demands upon the spiritual life of individuals as long as they conformed outwardly to the requirements of the Church.¹

The Orthodox in the Balkans viewed their Church as the institution which had preserved their national identity during the five centuries of Turkish occupation. As the spirit of nationalism arose every threat to the church was regarded as a threat to the nation, and even those who cared little for religion took a decisive stand against any separatist tendencies. Of course the missionaries did not think of their work in any such way. They saw themselves as benevolent visitors trying to help a people gain some of the benefits of the kind of religion and education which they enjoyed. The Orthodox Church regarded this as intrusion and proselytism by heretics, although many of the Orthodox recognized the necessity of reform, and the desirability of many Protestant characteristics.

¹Ibid., pp. 77-78.

The missionaries thought the best method of reforming the national church would be through individual conversions and the spreading of more enlightened religious literature, thereby to reactivate the body of the church. In this they encountered opposition by the priests who generally were bypassed in this process and often belittled, and who, from a doctrinal viewpoint could not admit errors being sure that their Church adhered faithfully to the teachings of Jesus through the apostles and ancient church fathers. Taking into account the attitudes of both sides, it may be realized that conflicts were inevitable.

The citizens of Sofia, who had welcomed Charles Morse and Henry Haskell in 1862 just after they had refused to allow a Greek Bishop to enter the city, in time tried to expel them. When Morse refused to go, they boycotted his meetings.¹ The Haskells left for Philippopolis to help J. F. Clarke after Meriam's death and the missionaries there and in Eski Zagra acquired a good number of communicants.² Morse remained in Sofia until 1867 when he moved to Eski Zagra. While in Sofia, Morse devised a helpful method by which he could get more people to listen to Protestant ideas.

¹Morse, op. cit., in SDYS, p. 121.

²H. C. Haskell, op. cit., in SDYS, p. 14. The missionaries of the American Board distinguished communicants from adherents as people who were in full communion and agreement with the Protestant doctrines and availed themselves fully of the clerical services of the missionaries. Adherents were those who attended religious services but remained outside the Protestant communion.

He translated from Turkish the sermons of Dr. Goodell, an American Board missionary in Constantinople. The announcement that he would read the sermon of that great preacher who had preached in the capital of the Empire drew many listeners.¹ His first convert was one Georgi Popov, whose wife later became an Evangelical and after some persecutions of this couple, Popov's brother and two married sisters also became converts.

c. The Riot at Eski Zagra.--The reading of the Bible has always been basic to Protestant Christianity. Illiteracy in Bulgaria was high and the missionaries were soon prompted to open a school for their followers and their children, as well as to raise the standards of a people about whom they were genuinely concerned. The earlier missionaries were inclined to regard schools as evangelizing agencies. The Girls' School in Stara Zagora (Eski Zagra) was founded in 1863 by Theodore Byington after the Bulgarians had completely boycotted his services soon after he arrived there in 1859.² By 1866, thirty-five girls were enrolled but they were mostly day-students, and their parents forbade them to attend services. Through the influence of Mary Esther Reynolds, a missionary teacher and the principal in the school, a few of the girls started to pray and

¹Morse, op. cit., in SDYS, p. 122.

²Ibid., p. 124.

some were converted. Their parents were then very disturbed. When Byington left to attend a conference they took action to remove their children and so all students, save six girls from northern Bulgaria, departed.

The next year they had only 14 girls. Charles Morse, who was now stationed in Stara Zagora, Mary Reynolds, and Rozeltha Abigail Norcross, taught the girls to defend themselves from persecutions by acknowledging that they were Protestants and thus seeking protection under the Sultan's firman, which granted toleration to all religious communities. But trouble eventually came in the form of a combination of kidnaping, rioting, and threat against life.¹

The main Bulgarian teacher, Miss Mariyka Genchova, was kidnapped from the school with the aid of her own mother. She succeeded in escaping, but her assailants pursued her when she took refuge in the school demanding that she be delivered to them. While the pupils and teachers locked themselves in, Morse went to talk with a mob rapidly gathering, but he was unsuccessful and had to take refuge himself. The mob threatened Morse with death and broke all the windows and most of the shingles on the roof, with stones. When they tried to enter, he defended himself with an iron bedpost. When the wrath of the mob subsided somewhat the steward of the school property gained courage and asked the

¹The following account was given by the main eyewitness and protagonist, C. F. Morse, op. cit., in SDYS, pp. 125-129.

people to leave which they did only after the steward had received support from Morse and his bed-post.¹

In order to prevent the repetition of similar incidents Morse decided to seek formal justice through the local government, but only some three or four of the less guilty agitators were arrested. After a number of deliberate illegal moves at the trial, the court declared the accused not guilty. Morse succeeded in interesting American and British diplomats and through them obtained justice. In time, all the guilty ones were sentenced. During all this, people asked Morse why he as a Christian did not forgive his enemies? He answered, "The Gospel consists of the Law and of the Gospel--at the present I am teaching them the law--when they learn it I will teach them the Gospel."¹

Once justice was satisfied he exercised his mercy by visiting the prisoners and providing financially for those who had no money, since the Turkish prisoners were not fed by the government. Later he asked for commutation of their sentences and when they were released they made peace with him. This ended the persecutions in Stara Zagora.

¹Ibid., p. 129. Translation from Bulgarian furnished by the author.

d. Persecutions in Yambol and Bansko.--More trouble was, however, in store elsewhere. Morse had to intervene in a similar incident in Yambol. There he insisted that the inhabitants pay for all the damages and promise not to bother again the attendants of Evangelical church services as well as to give land for a Protestant burial ground (the Orthodox did not allow Protestants to be buried in their cemetery and it was regarded a great dishonor to be buried in a Moslem or Jewish graveyard). Only under these circumstances did Morse promise not to press charges.¹

In 1868 difficulties occurred in Bansko. Bansko was a crucial place for Protestant work in Macedonia, and the missionaries were resolved to fight for religious toleration. The initiative of a small group of evangelically-minded Christian men in Bansko, led by a colporteur named Peter Musevich, got them into trouble. To help them Morse went to Bansko with Henry Pitt Page and Nikola Boyadzhiev, a native assistant. They tried to arrive unnoticed in Bansko one morning, but were surprised by an unfriendly mob and were denied quarters in the khan. They were finally given lodging by a friendly villager but only after Boyadzhiev was roughed

¹Ibid., p. 130.

up and the two missionaries threatened with expulsion.¹ Morse was again persistent and brought the troublemakers to justice. This was settled out of court when the militant citizens agreed in writing not to bother any further the Evangelicals.

When they returned to Bansko, however, a group of ruffians gathered at the khan, intending violence. This time the missionaries found resort in an ancient superstition. It was widely believed that if a missionary drew a likeness of someone he must become converted, else the artist could kill him merely by destroying the picture. Sullenly the men drew near as the intended victims were sitting in a public restaurant. Page took out a notebook and a pencil, and as he started to scribble in his diary, hostility melted away and the assailants vanished.² Having thus disposed of overt persecutions, the missionaries were able to hold a series of services, some of which lasted over five hours. The interested people in Bansko collected money and requested a preacher, promising to pay half of his salary. One of their villagers, Ivan Tonzhorov (Tonjoroff), then a student

¹Ibid., p. 131.

²Ibid., pp. 132-133.

at Phillippopolis Mission School for Boys, was eventually to become their pastor.

4. The First Bulgarian Evangelicals

The missionaries continued to arrive in Bulgaria. In June 1868 Lake was stationed in Philippopolis, Lewis Bond in Stara Zagora, and shortly thereafter H. P. Page to Philippopolis who was later stationed in Samokov. In 1868 Minnie Churchill Beach arrived to take the leadership of the Bible women. C. H. Morse returned to the United States in 1870.

By this time a sizeable force of native workers and active lay people had been formed.¹ The first converts in the short-lived Sofia station was the family of Georgi Popov. Two prominent workers were converted by reading Morse's controversial book, Papacy and Roman Catholicism, written as a polemic against Roman Catholics. This book was well received among the Orthodox, but only a few considered the arguments valid when applied to Orthodoxy. One

¹Unfortunately the missionary literature very rarely speaks about the work of the native pastors, Bible women, and other workers, except in statistical terms, and even when it does, the names of those involved are not given, except perhaps some first names. There are few exceptions to this pattern.

convert was Nikola Matinchev of Samokov,¹ whose daughter later married one of the most outstanding native pastors, Ivan Tonzhorov. Matinchev was persecuted for his faith until the missionaries intervened on his behalf. Another important convert was Vasil Karaivanov, who later became pastor of the Kyustendil church, which both his mother and sister joined.

The most important missionary helpers were the colporteurs. Their work did not simply consist of the sale of religious books, but included preaching, teaching, debates with the local priests and populace, and often included the facing of hecklers amid fervid opposition. Missionaries had by far the easier task in places where colporteurs preceded them. In some places the colporteurs exerted more influence and reaped more success than the missionaries, especially in small villages.² The colporteurs were mainly graduates of the mission's Boys' School, and during the summer most students earned a part of their expenses in missionary efforts, working in all of Bulgaria and Macedonia.

One of these was Peter Musevich who traveled mainly in

¹Ibid., p. 120.

²Hall, ABMB, p. 80.

Macedonia. He was a graduate of the Samokov Boys' School, and largely responsible for the rapid growth of the evangelical movement in Bansko and the resulting church organization in that place. His mother became a convert and at the age of sixty, and although nearly blind, she learned to read in order to be able to read the Bible.

Nikola Boyadzhiev was also a colporteur and later developed into one of the finest of the Bulgarian pastors. After coming to Morse, he became interested in the evangelical teachings and became a follower together with his wife. He spoke and wrote English, and was a good singer. He worked for a few years in Sofia after Morse left, later becoming the pastor of the Yambol church with a congregation of 150 and a nice church edifice. Morse described him as a tender, humble, and eloquent man with inner strength and loyalty to the Gospel, "the Melanchton of the Bulgaria mission."¹

At Merichleri lived an old man who had three sons with families. This large family became interested in Protestantism. They were visited by a native Protestant, Nacho,

¹Morse, op. cit., in SDYS, p. 124.

who was from Stara Zagora and later by Traiko Konstantin. Traiko Konstantin was a faithful Evangelical who gave the impetus necessary to the foundation of a church there. Later he went to the United States and married an American and eventually returned as a missionary to Bulgaria under the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

C. The Formation of Evangelical Churches from
1870 to 1878

1. The Establishment of a Separate European Turkey Mission

Up to 1870 the missionaries to Bulgaria and Macedonia were included in the Western Turkey Mission. The work in the European part of the Turkish Empire developed greatly and an increasing number of missionaries participated.

This was a distinct geographical location where problems were unlike those of the rest of Western Turkey, and it was decided at the yearly meeting of the mission in 1870 that the missionaries residing in European Turkey, including Elias Riggs in Constantinople, would form the European Turkey Mission.¹

¹H. C. Haskell, "Istoricheski Pregled na Evropeisko-Turskata Misiya za Poslednite Pedeset Godini," in SDYS, p. 15.

The increasing complexity of the work in European Turkey justified this step. Two schools were operating at that time. The Boys' School was founded by James F. Clarke in 1860 in Philippopolis, and the Girls' School by Theodore L. Byington in 1863 in Eski Zagra (Stara Zagora).¹ One of the first tasks with which the new mission had to cope was to find better sites for these schools. A location was found in Samokov and in 1871 both schools moved there where they stayed until removal to Sofia between 1926 and 1928.

Another memorable enterprise in which the mission participated was the translation and printing of the Bulgarian Bible, for which Elias Riggs and Albert Long deserve most credit. The creation of the European Turkey Mission is closely connected with the translation of the Bible into Bulgarian.

The little company who have hitherto been laboring in the Bulgarian language as a part of the Western Turkey Mission have now been set off as a separate mission, to do the work of evangelization for European Turkey. The first annual meeting of the new mission began its session June 30, 1871, and was attended by the five members of the mission now on the ground, by Dr. E. E. Bliss, as delegate, and by Dr. Clark, the Foreign Secretary

¹Floyd H. Black, The American College in Sofia, (Boston: The Trustees of Sofia American Schools, Inc., 1958), p. 7.

of the Board. Dr. Riggs came up to this gathering bearing in his hand the first bound volume of the Holy Scripture issued from the press in the Bulgarian language. Thus he brought to the fourth mission with which he has been connected the precious work of his last twelve years, finished and ready for use. It is the first instance in the history of this board where a mission has begun its work with the word of God in a language the people could understand, and with fervent thanksgiving the volume was laid upon the table as a cornerstone of the new mission.¹

Three important decisions were made at this first Annual Meeting: (1) to move the Girls' School to Samokov, (2) to move the Boys' School for a year to Philippopolis and then to Samokov, (3) to continue to work at Eski Zagra and Samokov but to leave Philippopolis for a while unoccupied.² Dr. Clarke was given a letter of appreciation for missionary work composed by Nacho and signed by 101 native workers. All those present at the First Annual Conference signed the Bible which Riggs had brought. It was later placed in keeping at the Samokov Church.³

At this time there was still no organized church on the territory of the Mission, although stations were operating at Eski Zagra (which was regarded as the main station),

¹Ann. Rep. ABCFM, 1871, p. 14. Also Vinton Book, p. 95A.

²H. C. Haskell, op. cit., in SDYS, p. 15.

³Ibid., p. 16.

Constantinople, Philippopolis, and Sofia. The latter was abandoned in 1869 in order to organize a station at Samokov. For a period of time Philippopolis was abandoned in order to concentrate on Samokov.¹ The converts of the missionaries were widely scattered and it was difficult to organize separate churches. The need for separation existed since the Protestants could be more effectively protected only if organized according to the requirements of the Sultan's firman for the protection of Protestants which required the formation of distinct religious communities.²

Unfriendly measures against the Evangelicals were taken in many places. In Panagurishte, Tatar Pazardzhik, Merichleri, and other places, people were told by the priests or influential townsmen not to trade with the Protestants, not to allow them to bake their bread at the public baker or to feed their cattle on the common pasture. Economic sanctions were re-enforced with ridicule and persecutions within the family.³

¹C. T. Riggs, HWANE, p. 44.

²Hall, ABMB, p. 61. Translation of the firman into English may be found in Rufus Anderson, History of the Missions of the American Board to the Oriental Churches, Vol. II, (Boston: Congregational Publishing Society, 1872), pp. 4-7.

³Ibid., p. 82.

Because of this persecution and despite advised patience by the missionaries, three Bulgarians went to the Turkish authorities on July 3, 1868, and proclaimed themselves Protestants.¹ Such public confession did not help the Evangelicals, even after they formed their own churches, for persecutions persisted. In the village of Kayaludzhere a mother of two children who showed Evangelical tendencies, was unclad and driven naked through the village while people mocked her and cursed her. An old woman from Pazardzhik was told that she would be denied burial and that her body would be given to the dogs. To this she answered that Jesus would take care of her soul and that she did not care what they did to her body.² In Panagurishte a mob burned the Bibles that were sold by a local merchant. In Ston a missionary was driven out of the village accompanied by the music of a gayda.³ The sale of religious tracts brought about the imprisonment of a missionary in Dubnitsa, while in Pazardzhik the school teacher let all the school children out of school in order

¹Ibid., p. 83. ²J. F. Clarke, [I] op. cit., p. 94.

³Ibid. Gayda is an instrument similar to the Scotch bag-pipe.

to throw stones at the visiting missionary.¹ Outrages against the native Evangelicals were always greater than against the missionaries, as the natives did not enjoy the consular protection which the foreign missionary could count upon to rectify the gross injustices.

2. The Organization of the First Native Church

Although the missionaries did not work to organize separate church organizations apart from the Orthodox Church,² they tried to increase the number of communicants and adherents in their stations. It is natural to assume that if a separate church had been organized it would have appeared in Samokov, Philippopolis, Stara Zagora, or Sofia, that is, cities having resident missionaries. That it did not happen may be taken as a proof of the sincere desire of the missionaries to avoid, or at least postpone, the organization of the first Evangelical church, and also as a proof that separation came largely because of persecutions by some of the Orthodox, and only indirectly as the result of missionary activities.

¹Ibid., p. 95.

²See supra, pp. 51-53.

The little town of Bansko in Northeastern Macedonia, some fifteen miles from Samokov was not frequented by the missionaries. It is not certain as to who among the native assistants or colporteurs (probably Peter Musevich) visited there, or when and how often he did this. By the time the first missionaries (Morse and Page) visited Bansko in 1867 or 1868, a group of peasants was already meeting. The visit of the missionaries prompted some persecution of this small group of Bible readers. These missionaries were not a little surprised to find a town in the mountains of Macedonia which was very progressive for the times, due to a young man from Bansko who had studied architecture in England and having come back, built the church and instilled in the people some of the English ways of life.¹ Although no obvious Protestant ideas were inculcated in Bansko through this man, the people were favorably disposed toward alien ideas.

In Bansko, Morse and Page were received by an audience of over one hundred people, most of whom had met earlier for Bible reading and prayer.² In 1868 William Edwin Locke

¹Morse, op. cit., in SDYS, p. 130.

²Hall, ABMB, p. 85.

joined the Philippopolis station and visited Bansko. The devotedness of the people impressed him, as some remained over five hours for worship.¹ This eagerness was in part due to the novelty of an American missionary's presence and in part to the novelty of any social, educational, cultural, or religious event in the lives of the villagers. In 1870 Bansko was visited by a Bible woman and a teacher who came from Eski Zagra. They spent the summer in teaching the Bible and conducting the services. Of their own initiative the Bansko group collected money for a building which would house a church, a school, and a parsonage.²

In 1870 eighteen heads of families signed a paper proclaiming their separation from the Bulgarian Orthodox Church. The missionaries were invited to organize a church in Bansko, and in 1871 through William Locke, Lewis Bond, and Henry Page a Congregational parish was set up. Ivan A. Tonzhorov was the first minister of this first church within the territory of the European Turkey Mission.³ Tonzhorov was to prove himself as one of the most capable Bulgarian pastors, especially after he was transferred to

¹Ibid. ²Missionary Herald, Vol. LXVII, (1851), pp. 37-38.

³Ibid., p. 380.

Philippopolis some ten years later.

The Bansko church was one of the most effective churches in the mission. One former Bansko Protestant wrote:

Mother has told me of the coming of the Congregational Missionaries in Macedonia now Bulgaria. Her father was the Orthodox priest in a big church near our house. When she was married and had two boys the American missionaries came bringing Bibles translated in the Bulgarian language. Grandma Maria on father's side told all her family: 'We are going to be evangelicals or protestants,' and they began to be evangelicals or protestants,' and they began building a church. Denomination was never mentioned . . . The church was upstairs, plain benches, the men sitting on the right, the women on the left, the children in front, the boys near the men and girls near the women. It was full all the time with young and old. Underneath [sic] were 4 big rooms for sunday [sic] school and regular school. Our teachers were graduates of the American school in Samokov, Bulgaria. The women had prayer meeting every friday [sic] in homes. Everyone read the Bible everyday and had family prayer before going to bed.¹

¹Mrs. Raina Boycheff, Toledo, Ohio [November 1963] to Paul Mojzes. She attended the Samokov Girls' School and became a teacher in Plovdiv while her husband became a minister. Graduating from Samokov Theological Institute and after finishing his training at Drew Seminary in 1907, he decided to stay in the United States with his wife. Some punctuation was added by this writer to make the statement clearer, without changing the meaning.

3. Other Evangelical Efforts of the European
Turkey Mission from 1871 to 1878 in Southern Bulgaria

The period saw advances despite continued opposition. Some forty Bulgarians attended Robert College in Constantinople, which was associated with the American Board Mission enterprise,¹ and although only a few became Protestants, they were not unsympathetic. These men were to become the first educated leaders of modern Bulgaria, when it achieved independence.² Such were Dr. C. Stoilov, prime minister; Dr. Ivan Gueshev, prime minister; Stefan Panaretov, ambassador; and V. Shopov, mayor and Bulgarian Commissioner. The education of Bulgarians at Robert College, Constantinople College for Women, and the Samokov Schools undoubtedly provided the necessary leadership in various fields, required for the proper development of the rising national feeling. But this same national feeling proved to be a powerful deterrent against their becoming

¹C. T. Riggs, HWANE, p. 44.

²Lord Bryce in Manchester Guardian. No date found on the clipping kept at the ABLib. The graduates of Robert College became the leaders in the government in the period from 1878 to 1918, particularly in the 1890's. But some graduates exercised influence between the two world wars.

Protestants.¹ For to break with the mother church, so powerfully identified with the struggle of the Bulgarian people, was to evoke strong resentment. Many who have assented to the content of the Evangelical teachings decided against joining the Evangelical Church.

The Evangelicals of Samokov, still being unable to form their own church, regarded themselves as members of the Bansko church by 1872. In 1874 churches were organized at Merichleri and Yambol, places also lacking resident missionaries.² Merichleri prided itself on having the first Protestant church edifice in Bulgaria, completed by 1873, with the aid of a young village native who took the place of a preacher who had been expelled from the village. The structure was shortlived. A mob one day first broke all the windows, threatened the pastor, and next day destroyed the whole building.³ The Evangelicals, undiscouraged, rebuilt the church. Similar disturbing experiences were the lot of Protestants of Samokov, Panagurishte, and Yambol, but usually Turkish civil authorities enforced justice--an

¹Richter, op. cit., p. 169.

²Hall, AEMB, p. 97.

³Missionary Herald, Vol. LXIX, (1873), p. 247.

unusual thing as violence was frequently unpunished in the Balkans.

Not all persecutions could be effectively prosecuted for they were often family affairs, considered private business in the Balkans, in which few dared to interfere. Local expressions of hatred occasionally threatened a Protestant neighbor's crops ready to be harvested. Many Protestants suffered slander, ridicule, and physical abuse if a parent or a spouse did not share the convictions of the new convert. The stepmother of a convert gave her the choice of ceasing to be an Evangelical or leaving home; she chose to leave, taking with her only one dress, never to return.¹ She became a teacher in Samokov and later a Bible woman in Plovdiv and there she died from over-strenuous work. Another girl, Maria Genchova, fled through a window from the house in which she had been locked by her mother, to prevent her associating with Evangelicals. She became a Bible woman in Bansko, and later a teacher in Samokov. The character of these two women was exemplary. Their colleagues regarded them almost as saints.²

¹J. F. Clarke, [I] op. cit., in SDYS, p. 95.

²Ibid., p. 96.

A favorable public response followed when new converts demonstrated an improvement of character. A young merchant who had stolen money from his partner returned it after he became Protestant. This act prompted his partner to become converted also. Such acts were thought most unusual. People were attracted to a religion that could produce such a change in a person. Even the enemies of Protestants had to admit that most of them showed exemplary behavior.

Despite concentrated efforts at Samokov where most missionaries served at least part of their terms, the local Evangelicals had their share of difficulties. When the missionaries started preaching in a private home with the aid of a native helper,¹ one attendant was anathemized at least a dozen times in the Eastern Orthodox Church. In 1872 some thirty Evangelicals from Samokov joined the Bansko Church, which then had a membership of two hundred. They retained this membership until the formation of their own church in September of 1880.² Samokov remained the center of activities, from which were supervised out-stations

¹Henry C. Haskell, "Sketch of Samokov Station," a short pamphlet issued by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions without pagination, place or date.

²Hall, ABMB, pp. 145, 146.

such as those at Sofia, Bansko, Banya, Kostenets, Ichtiman, and Dubnitsa.¹

4. The Foundation of the Bulgarian Evangelical Society

The most significant mark of the advance of the mission was the foundation of the Bulgarian Evangelical Society.² This was molded according to the Home Missionary Society in the United States of America, having the objects of spreading the Christian faith and morals to the Bulgarian people by printing books of a religious and ethical nature, of promoting colporterage and of settling and supporting preachers in communities unable to provide full support.³ It provided that only Evangelical church members could become executive committee members and officers, but others were welcomed as members if they agreed with the goals of the society.

A Society of this kind promised to be more effective than the missionaries, in many areas, as they understood

¹Ibid.

²This subject will be elaborated in Chapter V, p. 178.

³Hall, ABMB, p. 100. An English translation of the Society's constitution is in the ABAr. 1880-1889, Vol. I, No. 161.

the people and the country better, and because they could communicate more fluently. They could not be dismissed simply as foreigners by the more ardent Bulgarian patriots. At the Second Annual Meeting in 1876 the Bulgarian Evangelical Society counted some ninety members and permanent colporteurs.¹ As the missionaries became more numerous, Constantinople became the center of the publishing work, Samokov the center of educational work and Philippopolis (Plovdiv) the center of the evangelizing work.² Because of the needs of the two schools, Samokov received a larger share of missionaries in residence. Among those who served in Samokov were H. P. Page, W. E. Locke, J. F. Clarke, Mrs. Anna (V. A.) Mumford, and John Henry House.

With the insurrection and war of 1876 the Turkish authority went to excess in curbing the rebellious population. But the greatest peril was still to come: the Russo-Turkish war from April 1877 to March 1878 brought monumental changes for the mission. Eski Zagra (Stara Zagora) was almost completely destroyed. Lewis Bond and George Daniel Marsh witnessed the atrocities committed both

¹Missionary Herald, Vol. LXXII, (1876), p. 260.

²Hall, ABMB, pp. 145, 146.

by the Bulgarians on the Turks, and by the Turks (especially the Circassians and Bashibazouks, i.e., Turkish army irregulars) upon the Bulgarians. These two missionaries were nearly killed, but succeeded in making their way to Constantinople, while the mission property was destroyed when the whole town was nearly erased from the map!¹ The Philippopolis station was re-opened after the war by Bond and Marsh. Other stations were relatively unharmed, although the Samokov pupils had to be guarded by Edward W. Jenney and Lake as they were threatened with slaughter.²

During the war, relief was administered by J. F. Clarke, Marsh, Bond, Byington, and Robert Thomson of the American Board, and Frederick Flocken and Albert Long of the Methodist Episcopal Mission, impartially assisting both Turks and Bulgarians with food, wool, tools, and hospitalization. The missionaries had some misgivings about the value of Bulgarian liberation, and fears about the possible intolerance on the part of a newly created Bulgaria. They already knew the Turkish authorities who had afforded them

¹Ibid., p. 104.

²Hall, ABMB, pp. 105-110 and Missionary Herald, Vol. LXXIII, (1877), pp. 36-38.

a measure of toleration. However, they were correctly credited with contributing to the Bulgarian national cause through their faith in the Bulgarian people, their help in Bulgarian literature and education, and their assistance through relief work in the war of liberation.¹

In a narrow sense they did not really know that they were helping Bulgarian nationalism and contributing to the formation of a new national state. They were not trying to be revolutionaries and had no intentions to mix in political and social conditions. Yet in an ultimate sense their work influenced the national development of Bulgaria. Had they not done what they did the outcome of many conflicts would have been worse. They thought they kept aloof from politics, but those who regarded them as revolutionaries were only in part wrong, for their work and presence had revolutionary implications.

¹C. H. Haskell, op. cit., in SDYS, p. 22.

CHAPTER IV

THE CONGREGATIONAL MISSION TO MACEDONIA

FROM 1873 TO 1918

A. The Time of Aspirations: The Establishment and Progress of the Mission in Macedonia Until 1895

1. Evangelization in Macedonia up to 1873

Missionary effort in this area could hardly have had a more glorious origin. Act 16: 8-10 tells how the apostle Paul received the call for help when he was in Troas. It was Paul who made the first convert in Europe, a woman named Lydia in Philippi, the capital of the Roman colony of Macedonia.¹ Here he established a congregation in Thessalonica to which he later wrote his two great epistles. The name Macedonia has ever since exerted a special charm upon Christendom, not the least upon various Protestant missionaries. To missionaries in that country the association has meant identification with the original apostolic movement.

But great obstacles now loomed in Macedonia. The Macedonians sought to throw off the Turkish yoke; yet they,

¹Acts 16: 12-16.

with the Albanians, were the last ones to obtain liberation. In periods when the Turks relaxed their harsh measures in other provinces, this was not experienced in Macedonia.¹ Therefore Macedonia became a center of revolutionary activity, with brigandage, lawlessness, misery, poverty, and extreme insecurity, as well as a singular preoccupation with liberation for which no price was held too big to be paid.

Because distinctive national consciousness developed here more slowly than in Bulgaria, Greece, and Serbia, these countries tried to count the Macedonians as part of their own peoples. Claims of this nature were made easier by a fantastic mixture of nationalities and languages.² In regard to that situation E. W. Jenney wrote:

There is but one drawback and that is language. One needs to know Bulgarian, Greek, Turkish, Wallachian and Albanian, at least, to be very successful here. The language is a compound of all these, with a little French and German. The people will use words from three to seven of these languages in one sentence, and call it Bulgarian. Many of the people could hardly tell whether they were of one nationality or of another; for Bulgarians have been Hellenized and vice versa; and

¹Wolff, BOT, p. 18. This author agrees with R. L. Wolff's statement that Macedonians are neither Serbians, nor Bulgarians, but Slavs who speak a dialect somewhere between the two and have a distinct nationality.

²Quoted in Riggs, op. cit., p. 45.

Serbs, Vlachs, Albanians and others have intermingled most inextricably.¹

Most of the Macedonians spoke a language which differed little from the Bulgarian which the missionaries spoke. Through their close associations with Bulgarians, they shared almost unanimously the view that Macedonians were essentially Bulgarians.² They felt that the term Macedonians was referring only to their geographical location and did not connote a Macedonian nationality.³

2. The Opening of the First Station in Macedonia

A church was organized in 1871 in the village of Bansko, located in the Razlog district in the northern part of the

¹C. H. Haskell, op. cit., in SDYS, p. 20. Also Annual Report of the American Board, from now on abbreviated to Ann. Rep. ABCFM., 1874, p. 8.

²The exceptions being E. W. Jenney and Mary Matthews, missionaries in Monastir (Bitola), Macedonia. In a letter of Miss Matthews from Oberlin, Ohio of May 2, 1941 to Miss Mabel E. Emerson of the American Board, Miss Matthews expressed the view that there are Bulgarian Macedonians, Greek Macedonians, Rumanian Macedonians, Serbian Macedonians, Turks, Jews, and Albanians living in Macedonia, and that the mission found most response among the Bulgarian Macedonians.

³Tzvetko S. Bagranoff, The American Mission's Share in the Regeneration and Defense of Bulgaria, n.p. American Bulgarian Good Neighbor League, 1947, the whole book is mainly devoted to such questions. Even more so is Vladimir A. Tsanoff, (edit.) Reports and Letters of American Missionaries Referring to the Distribution of Nationalities in the Former Provinces of European Turkey, (Sofia: n.n., n.p., 1919.)

country. The Protestant influence spread throughout the Razlog, a favorite field from the missionary viewpoint, where they were welcomed. In 1873 a new station opened at Monastir (Slavic form Bitola or Bitolia).¹ The missionary families of John William Baird and Edward W. Jenney were the first residing there.

Monastir was a government center of a whole Turkish vilayet (district), including parts of Macedonia, Albania and Greece. It was a multilingual commercial city from which work might be spread to at least three language regions. Moreover, it was a healthy place.²

The services in Monastir were conducted by a native helper, while the missionaries studied the language. At first they had as many as sixty people in a service, but as the novelty wore off the attendance fell to twenty or twenty-five.³ The native helper was a licensed preacher. By 1875 they had obtained an additional helper, and started a Sunday School. Although attendance did not increase, it was observed that people in the market and streets were discussing "the relative merits of the Greek and Protestant faith."⁴ The

¹Ann. Rep. ABCFM, 1873, p. 9.

²Ann. Rep. ABCFM, 1874, p. 8.

³Ibid., p. 10.

⁴Ann. Rep. ABCFM, 1875, p. 14.

possession of Bibles by many people helped the cause of Mrs. Baird who conducted Bible readings with a small number of women. Personal contact was one of the most important avenues of communication, as many shunned Protestant worship services. A significant step was the conversion and assistance of a former priest and teacher who now preached in his native village.¹

In 1877 the station had cause to rejoice, despite war conditions, in that the difficult times made people more responsive to preaching.² In 1878 the station reported its first outstation in which one of the two licenced preachers was located. In Monastir the attendance was reported at thirty to forty with almost no active anti-Protestant opposition. The war of 1877/78 really by-passed Monastir, which seemed like an "earthly paradise" to the missionaries who toured war-ravaged regions.³

Converted members in Monastir spoke several languages. The sermon was preached in Bulgarian or the Macedonian dialect which was understood by the majority, but the prayers by laymen were at times offered in Bulgarian, Serbian, Albanian,

¹Ann. Rep. ABCFM, 1876, p. 14.

²Ann. Rep. ABCFM, 1877, p. 19.

³Ann. Rep. ABCFM, 1878, p. 27.

Greek, Wallachian, English, German, as well as in Gypsy languages.¹ Yet no disunity resulted. Progress was made in the Razlog district, with the center in Bansko, which had no resident missionaries but was visited by the Samokov and Philippopolis missionaries, and in western Macedonian work, with the station in Monastir.

Evil days descended again upon Macedonia a few years later. It is surprising that the Mission had not enlarged its missionary force here to give stability to the native impetus. With more missionaries and native preachers they would have better weathered the storm.

3. Missionary Work in Revolutionary Fermentation

The disappointment of the Slavic population in Macedonia after the Treaty of Berlin was enormous. Their last beam of hope that Christian Europe would intervene in their behalf against the Turks was lost. Macedonians and Bulgarians became determined to gain liberation without regard to method. The missionaries shared in these aspirations, although they did not approve of the steps intended to achieve this goal. They shared, though not equally, in the general suffering of the

¹C. H. Haskell, op. cit., in SDYS, p. 20. Also Missionary News from Bulgaria, No. 8, (1886), p. 3.

population inflicted both by the Turks, who were fighting to preserve the status quo and by the revolutionaries who fought to upset it.

The Internal Macedonian Organization (I.M.R.O.) was organized in Resen in 1893 to work for an autonomous Macedonia.¹ It consisted of a network of revolutionary bands whose members were called komitadi, a derivative word based on the name of the leadership as an organization formed of a committee. Dissatisfied with the goals and methods of this organization, a group of men headed by Boris Sarafov organized the External Macedonian Revolutionary with headquarters in Sofia, aiming to annex Macedonia to Bulgaria.² The main weapon of this group was sudden raids into Macedonia, attacking the Turks, then pulling back. In 1902 a group headed by Stoyan Michailovski and General Souchev split away from the Central Committee of E.M.R.O. and organized the Superior Committee, with which the partisans of Sarafov were in bitter enmity.³

¹Langer, An Encyclopedia of World History, p. 718.

²Ibid.

³J. F. Clarke, "Macedonia and the Capture of Miss Stone," Samokov, Bulg.: typed manuscript, December 13, 1902, p. 15. In ABLib files on Ellen Stone.

I.M.R.O. incited the famous Ilinden Rebellion in 1903,¹ with the help of other revolutionary groups. This rebellion was put down by the Turks. As a consequence the population suffered greatly. The mission did not fare well either, for the effects of the rebellion and its suppression were all-encompassing. It was not until the First Balkan War in 1912, that Macedonia was freed from the Turks through the joint action of four Balkan States, Montenegro, Serbia, Bulgaria, and Greece.²

During this period new missionaries continued to arrive. Resident missionary families of the Monastir station were the J. W. Bairds, E. W. Jenneys (from 1873), Lewis Bond, Jr. (from 1882), W. E. Locke (from 1885), Edward B. Haskell (from 1893), and William P. Clarke (from 1904). Besides the missionary couples the following single women were also stationed in Monastir: Sophia Crawford, Lillian Spooner (from 1883), Mary Haskell, (from 1910), and Delpha Davis (from 1911).³ There

¹Wolff, BOT, p. 88. Wolff is not in agreement with Langer on the dates of the Macedonian Revolutionary Organizations insisting that the "External" was organized in 1895 and the "Internal" in 1906 (p. 87.) The actual formation of the two major wings is not crucial for the work of the mission, but their activities were.

²Markham, op. cit., pp. 70-73.

³Compiled from the various Ann. Rep. ABCFM.

were never more than two missionary couples and two missionary teachers in Monastir at the same time, and often the number was reduced to one of each. Since some stayed but a few years in Monastir, the result was a relatively small force, ministering to a large geographical area containing at least 2,000,000 people.¹

The Monastir station was fortunate in having a Bible woman, named Mariyka Raicheva, educated at Samokov who succeeded in breaking down the prejudice of the local women. The attendance at the worship services increased to over forty by means of Bible reading, personal interviews, and talks on the street and the market.² After the disturbances of 1878 when the missionaries were again free to travel, Bond and Jenney toured 160 days including frequent visits to the only out-station during this period, the village of Vatasha.³ They were received by good audiences in Prilep and Resen. The tranquility of the Monastir congregation was broken by lack of unity among the faithful, yet no serious damage occurred.

¹J. W. Baird, Sketch of Monastir Station; European Turkey, n.p., n.d. and no pagination; and Missionary Herald, Vol. LXXXIX (1892), pp. 386-398.

²Ann. Rep. ABCFM, 1879, p. 19.

³Ann. Rep. ABCFM, 1880, p. 31.

4. The Monastir School

It is striking to observe that at this place and time due to the general level of ignorance and superstition the younger people alone realized the value of education. The missionaries felt that they should attack the problem squarely and help the younger generation. Since the women, being the most uneducated group, expressed the greatest opposition to education the school was operated primarily for girls, although at first boys attended also. In 1881 a building was purchased and the permission was obtained from Constantinople to open a private school.¹ By 1882 a building for the school and a missionary residence were erected, which was later in 1897 used as an annex to the school. The directresses of the school were a Bulgarian teacher, Mariyka Raicheva from Sliven, from 1878 to 1880,² then Mrs. E. W. Jenney from 1880 to 1881, Sophia Crawford from 1881 to 1884, Lillian Spooner during 1884, Harriet L. Cole, from 1884 to 1909, and Mary L. Matthews from 1909 to 1920. Delpha Davis acted as principal in 1913 and 1914

¹Ann. Rep. ABCFM, 1881, p. 31.

²H. C. Haskell, op. cit., in SDYS, p. 21, and Ann. Rep. ABCFM, 1879, p. 19. Also two lists of workers of the Congregationalists in Macedonia, sent in 1962 by the oldest minister, Rev. Pane Temkov, to the author. Also ABAr, Balkan Missions, 1910-1919, No. 24.

when Mary Matthews was on furlough.¹ These missionary teachers were aided by native teachers who were mostly graduates of the Samokov Girl's School or the Monastir School. Outstanding among them was Rada Pavleva who served for over twenty-six years.

Until 1895 the school also had a boys' day department and was therefore considered co-educational, but after that time the school became a girls' school.² Then boarding was exclusively for girls, with boys received in the day school. A great variety of nationalities was involved in the school--Macedonian, Bulgarian, Albanian, Austrian, Serbian, Gypsy, Jewish, Rumanian, Armenian, Greek, etc. Most of the thirty-five graduates of the school became teachers in elementary schools for a period of at least five years. These schools were in some way connected with the Evangelicals of a particular village. The preachers were often teachers in such elementary schools, and often the school, parsonage, and meeting places were located in the same building. Nearly 75

¹Report of the Girls' Boarding School, April 28, 1910, ABAr., Balkan Mission 1910-1919, No. 24, p. 24 and Ann. Rep. ABCFM, 1913, p. 57.

²Ibid.

teachers were involved in the Monastir Boarding School and in the various elementary schools in the territory of Macedonia, including the Razlog district.¹ Participating also in the teaching process were Lewis Bond, his daughter Violet, Mary Haskell, and William P. Clarke.²

5. The Spread of the Mission

The first four adherents in Monastir were taken into full communion in 1881 although they were ridiculed by the priests, who with others held it a shame to change faiths.³ The next year it was felt that "decided progress" was made when another out-station was established in the town of Strumitsa. Persecutions by the Greek Orthodox bishop ensued, but were restrained by the Turkish government, and the small congregation managed to buy a house for worship.⁴ The Strumitsa out-station had an interesting origin. A young teacher was

¹Among the women teachers were included Mariyka Raicheva, Rada Pavleva, Dobra Pelasheva, Parashka Stamenkova, Efa Velkova, Donka Panayotova, Efa Bousheva, Lyuba Kodzhobabova, Estira Mladenovich, Marika Zrneva, and Evangelina Yoveva. Men teachers included Georgi Kyrias, Vladimir and Dobre Daskalov, Georgi Pop Iliev, Misho Andov, Kostake Izev, Iliya Kyutukchiev, and Pane Temkov.

²All these names are derived from three lists supplied by Macedonian ministers still living which were sent to this author for the purpose of serving as source material.

³Ann. Rep. ABCFM, 1881, p. 31.

⁴Ann. Rep. ABCFM, 1882, p. 24.

imprisoned in Constantinople for teaching Bulgarian against the orders of the bishop who wanted to Hellenize the Strumitsa people. Turkish prisoners of this kind had some freedom and he could attend evangelical services in Constantinople. Here he became converted. Upon the expiration of his term of exile he returned to Strumitsa and initiated worship services.¹ At Monastir the students organized a missionary society and were active in the church.² But the missionaries felt that they had not achieved any marked results, although they were welcomed in neighboring villages. The towns of Isteep (Shtip) and Üsküb (Skopye) seemed to be open for their work, even though one preacher left Üsküb under the pressure of persecution.³

Mr. K. Petkanchen, who was the colporteur for Macedonia,⁴ found his work delayed when he was required to have all his

¹From a letter from Paula Moyzes of Novi Sad, Yugoslavia to the author in which she related the statements of eyewitnesses or oldest members of the Strumitsa, Koleshino, Murtino, and Monospitovo churches sent for the purposes of this study. Paraphrased from the Serbian by the author.

²Ann. Rep. ABCFM, 1882, p. 24.

³Ann. Rep. ABCFM, 1883, p. 31.

⁴Sleeper, Samokov Station Annual Report, 1886, p. 14.
ABLib.

books censored by the Turkish authorities. The colporteurs¹ represented both the British and Foreign Bible Society and the American Bible Society, and they played a very important role in Macedonia since this mission never displayed such strength in the number of native pastors as did Bulgaria. The unwillingness of young ministerial candidates to go into Turkish territory was the main reason for the relatively restricted development of Congregationalism in Macedonia. Therefore the colporteurs played the important role of the evangelist as well as the educator.

6. Monospitovo and Murtino: Samples of the Work of Outstations

In 1885 a new outstation was formed in Monospitovo, which progressed despite persecutions.² Progress made in these outstations during years of war, brigandage, and persecutions,

¹From the list of workers supplied by Rev. Pane Temkov to the author. Among the more noted colporteurs were Mladenovich from Prishtina, Naum Stoykov of Monastir, the brothers Kyrias from Monastir who were in charge of the Depot of the British and Foreign Bible Society there, Tetov of Salonica, Ziko of Monastir, Yanaky Vrosto of Salonica, Nikola Tenchev from the Razlog district, Hristo Zrnev from Yenidje Vardar, Ivan Chesmedzhiev of Skopye, Eftim Vinarov of Gornya Dzhumaya in the Razlog, Dimiter Karadelev, K. Momirov, M. Dimitriev, etc.

²Ann. Rep. ABCFM, 1885, p. 27.

as well as of lack of support, is difficult to account for except as the result of a singularly strong determination to follow convictions, come what may. The number of dedicated people was never great, and thus the new churches never experienced a boom in numbers, but their history is rich in heroic deeds. The twin villages of Monospitovo and Murtino, only about a mile from each other according to the story of the oldest members, may be taken as example.¹

Around 1877 the komitadis killed some of the Turkish population including children. When the culprits were not apprehended the Turkish authorities sentenced some of the villagers to prison terms in Salonica and Constantinople. From Monospitovo, Koce Valkakov, Gotse Retsev and Georgi Siljavski were thus imprisoned. In the prison they were converted by the missionaries and received Bibles. When they eventually returned home, they told the villagers of their spiritual experiences, and later held meetings and invited missionaries to meet with them.

The Murtino outstation was formed in a similar manner by innocent ex-convicts. Having been converted in the prison

¹A compilation of statements by oldest members of the Murtino and Monospitovo churches made by Paula Moyzes, Novi Sad, Yugoslavia, in 1962 and sent for the purpose of this study.

they returned home, gathered in private houses, and as a result several families became Congregationalists. In a period of twenty years some twenty families joined.

In both villages the Evangelicals opened primary schools. Before that all schools were parochial. The Turkish authorities interfered but little, but pressure came from the Greek clergy who resented the teaching in the Bulgarian language by the graduates of Samokov Schools, who often taught English also. The Turkish authorities provided military protection against such persecutions, and often guarded the pastors and missionaries on their trips and during services.

In 1900 the missionaries noticed a slackening of activities, except in the new station Radovish, where an increase from twenty to forty was reported.¹ The Monospitovo and Murtino members had succeeded in erecting church buildings in the 1890's. On this occasion the first General Conference of Protestant churches and communities in Macedonia was held there.² The conversion of a policeman sent to keep order during the conference did not preclude persecutions, but it

¹Ann. Rep. ABCFM, 1890, p. 34.

²Ann. Rep. ABCFM, 1899, p. 48.

made the evangelicals jubilant. Later someone set fire to a gasoline container and the fire damaged the church beyond repair. A new church was built in 1912 and 1913.¹

7. The Progress of Other Macedonian Congregations

In the Razlog a number of churches were organized in the 1880's. The people of Isarovo were a source of some satisfaction to the missionaries for their willingness to side with the Evangelical cause.

The people of the village Isarovo at this time are very poor, but they are working nobly to build their church and the parsonage. When I was there before in the spring of '81 the meeting house was up and partly enclosed, now [1883] it is finished sufficiently to be occupied. There is now a neat little pulpit and benches fill the auditorium: the men sit upon one side and the women upon the other--the floor is of earth, the walls likewise, the mud-plaster having never yet been covered with lime for the reason that they could not afford. From one corner a flight of steps lead up into a tiny tower from which the brethren ring out the summons to the place of prayer; but alas! the handbell which he rings is hopelessly broken, and sends out a weak, cracked summons, which is not in the least cheering and can be heard but a few steps away.²

¹From the collection of eyewitness reports by Paula Moyzes.

²Journal of Extracts from the Letters of Miss Ellen M. Stone, Missionary to Bulgaria and Turkey, No. 1, (May 24, 1883-January 1, 1884), n.p.

Mehomia, which had for a number of years only one wavering Protestant, had congregated some fifty adherents and communicants by 1886.¹ Six new members, all women, were accepted by Ivan Sitchanov in Bansko with the help of the Bible women, Ralu Georgieva and K. Usheva.² Preachers were stationed in Veles (Kuprüli), Skopye (Üsküb), Strumitsa (including Monospitovo and Murtino), Radovish, and Kafadar.³ Three of them were trained at Samokov and two were untrained. In 1886 Monastir had 47 members (but no organized church), Kafadar and Vatasha had four, Strumitsa nine, and Skopye two.⁴ The Bulgarian Evangelical Society planned to hold its meetings of 1887 in Monastir but was unable to do so because the political disturbances of that year were particularly severe.⁵ The group in Monastir was greatly embarrassed by one incident. A vagrant claiming religious persuasion turned up from Samokov. It was

¹Missionary News from Bulgaria, No. 10, (December 20, 1886), p. 3.

²Ibid.

³Missionary News from Bulgaria, No. 8, (July 10, 1886), p. 4.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Missionary News from Bulgaria, No. 13, (May 10, 1887), p. 2.

learned he had been in the United States preaching as a Baptist, a Free Methodist, a Seventh Day Adventist, and a Perfectionist, all the while exploiting the more naïve of his hearers with financial schemes. On return he had been offered the pulpit of the Congregational Church in Sofia, but instead attempted to start a splinter-group of evangelicals. In Monastir, he proclaimed his views "with screaming, and stamping and jumping . . . He styled the Congregational Church 'the abominable sect of the devil,' and begged the Lord to permit a few of the neighboring mountains to fall on the missionaries, one of whom he proclaimed the biggest liar in the place." He attracted only four members to his following, but not for long.¹

When work in Resen, Krushevo, Prilep, Veles, and Skopje did not bring hoped for results, missionaries concentrated on the more distant villages, such as Kavardartsi, Velyusa, and Radovish, where there were 52 members in 1887 in a new building housing the Church, the parsonage and the school. Lewis Bond was asked by a deputation of men from Velyusa to preach to the women of Velyusa. A group of Raklish men "almost forcibly" took Bond and the native preacher, Anastasov, to preach in their village "as they did earlier Mr. Baird."² At the outset in

¹Ibid., pp. 7-8.

²Ibid., p. 8.

Strumitsa the wives were in great opposition to their husbands' evangelical tendencies. One wife abandoned her home and four small children because her husband became a Protestant. But by 1887 many women started attending Evangelical meetings, and the congregation soon numbered thirty communicants. Two students from Samokov were allowed by the authorities to preach in some seventeen places in Macedonia.¹

A Missionary Society in Monastir had 75 members although until 1892 there was no church organization there. These communicants were poor and lived far away. Mrs. Bond was held in high esteem in the vicinity because of her medical work and ability as a lecturer. She had cared for many typhoid fever victims at the time when they were stationed in Eski Zagra in 1875 and thus gained nursing experience.² Harriet Cole led the Girls' School almost singlehandedly from 1884 to 1888 with such success that she was regarded as "one of the best workers ever sent out to the Mission."³

¹Missionary News from Bulgaria, No. 15, (Oct. 6, 1887), p. 1.

²Mrs. Bond to Mrs. Haskell, Eski Zagra, October 2, 1875. The letter is in the files of ABLib.

³C. T. Riggs, HWANE. p. 45a.

Striking out from Monastir which had five outstations in 1888, the missionaries became interested for the first time in evangelistic work among the Albanians.¹ They were led by Baird, who hoped for the help of native young men. The European Turkey Mission met in Monastir in 1890.² This event brought about a religious awakening at the Girls' School. Otherwise the years went by in routine work and steady solidification of the work. The Balkan peninsula is an area in which Protestantism found it impossible to achieve startling successes but its very presence is to be considered a success.

In 1893 Edward B. Haskell, the son of Dr. Henry C. Haskell, was stationed in Monastir. He was born in Plovdiv and raised in Bulgaria so the Bulgarian language constituted no problem. The Haskell, the Clarke, the Bond, the Marsh, and the Baird families all gave to the Balkan mission a second generation of people who felt that this area was as much their homeland as the United States. They understood

¹Ann. Rep. ABCFM, 1889, p. 36. The Albanian work will be considered separately, but only briefly.

²Ann. Rep. ABCFM, 1890, p. 32.

the Balkan situation better than any new missionary could hope to. For many of them Monastir was one of their earliest assignments. They brought youthful enthusiasms, which compensated for their lack of missionary experience. They were able also to rely more and more upon native pastors, through the latter's agency, the Bulgarian Evangelical Society.¹ The role of the missionary was undergoing a change, especially in Bulgaria. They came to view themselves as aids to the native pastors rather than the other way around as it had been with their parents.² In Macedonia however, few native pastors were willing to serve. Therefore Baird and E. B. Haskell devoted much time to touring and by 1894 the Monastir station had nine outstations.³ They were convinced that more would have been done if there had been more missionary or native assistance.

8. The Foundation of the Salonica Station

In 1894 the most productive people of the Monastir station, Haskell and House, were transferred to Salonica.

¹See above p. 99.

²Ann. Rep. ABCFM, 1893, p. 32.

³Ann. Rep. ABCFM, 1894, p. 30.

Bond and Baird remained in Monastir. Salonica had the commanding position because of its geographical location and its railroad and road connections. The mission here administered the area of the Razlog Plains, with Bansko as the center, and of the Maritsa and Struma Valleys with Strumitsa as the center formerly supervised from Monastir. In these sections indeed they had much more success than in Salonica itself. The Monastir station was in fact declining. The congregation in Monastir was divided and unable to grow, even after a measure of unity was restored, as the prerequisite of Bond's acceptance of the Monastir pulpit in 1895.¹ The only organizations doing well were a Woman's Christian Endeavor Society and a Missionary Society formed primarily from the pupils and alumnae of the Girls' school. Nearly all out-stations of any consequence were taken away from the superintendency of the Monastir station. It was said that "the work outside of Monastir is in its infancy, and the people are poor and are growing poorer. The station has been able to secure and employ but a few native helpers."² Only the

¹Ann. Rep. ABCFM, 1895, p. 36.

²Ann. Rep. ABCFM, 1896, p. 36.

school, popular and enlarged, including accomodations for the primary department and the kindergarten,¹ which was one of the first in Macedonia, seems to have been well off.

B. The Time of Troubles: 1895 to 1912

1. The Environment

The period of Macedonian history from 1895 to 1912 was dark and turbulent. Monastir, being the main city of a vilayet, which included most of Macedonia, was particularly the focus of revolutionary activity although most of the fighting was closer to the Bulgarian border in the mountains between Strumitsa and Bansko. For this and for geographical reasons, Monastir always had a large Turkish garrison, and was on the route of the Turkish army whenever it had a conflict with Austria-Hungary, Serbia, or Montenegro. Since every army subsists on the local population, this situation was a burden not easy to carry, and more and more people joined the armed revolutionary brigands. There was hardly anyone who was not at least in sympathy with the goals of the revolutionary brigands, if not with their methods. It is small wonder that the mission in Macedonia found it almost impossible to carry on.

¹Ibid.

Most of the missionaries of the nineteenth century were the product of the Christian Endeavor Movement, under the influence of Dwight L. Moody's methods of evangelism.¹ They believed in the infallibility of the Bible, the sinful nature of man, a real hell, efficacy of prayer, the saving mission of Jesus Christ, the necessity of conversion, and the visible manifestation of the fruits of this conversion with love toward all men.² The missionaries made use of the revivalistic methods long since discarded in the United States.³ Although such methods did produce a wave of revivals in the European Turkey Mission in the 1880's,⁴ the methods had little appeal to the Slavic temperament. The Eastern Orthodox tradition of non-emotionalism in religion, love of ritual, and basic feeling of assurance that salvation is guaranteed if all the obligations of an individual to the church are carried out loyally, made an environment which was not conducive to crisis experiences which would result in conversion.

¹Hall, ABMB, p. 137.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 139.

⁴William Strong, The Story of the American Board (Boston: The Pilgrim Press, 1910), pp. 385 and 386.

2. Touring and Revivals

The spiritual fruits of missionary labor were most evident in the Monastir Girls' School where the pupils were exposed to the continuous pious influence of their teachers and missionary couples. Nine out of twenty-four boarders became church members. This school in Monastir increasingly relied upon its own graduates for teachers, who led an earnest religious life, together with the students whom they led in morning and evening prayer and Bible reading.¹

Much touring and native evangelism bore some fruits if in no other form than in the "exceeding interest" displayed by many villagers.² The Salonica station had twenty outstations, with two ordained pastors, four preachers and twenty-four other natives associated with the mission. At one time there were 442 communicants and an average attendance of 887, besides 715 Sunday school students.³ Monastir had only three outstations, eleven members, and no ordained native pastors. The Monastir communicants contributed something toward Bond's salary.

¹Ann. Rep. ABCFM, 1898, p. 40.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

Bond visited Strumitsa and Radovish although they belonged to the Salonica station. Among the Salonica missionaries, Haskell drew large audiences everywhere. A revival was also held in Razlog. M. Anastasov, who died in 1899, spent 27 days of touring during a year. Anastasov, one of the first Macedonian pastors, was from Strumitsa, where he encountered much opposition. The Orthodox sought to accuse him before the Turkish authorities. This effort succeeded and in 1885 he was brought to the governor in the presence of the Orthodox bishop who accused him of preaching without any ecclesiastical permission. Anastasov answered, "Jesus Christ sent me." When the bishop insisted that Macedonia was under the sultan's rule rather than Jesus', Anastasov said "I beg your excellency to note that I claim that Jesus Christ does govern here and I regret that the bishop ignores his allegiance."¹ While this statement could hardly have endeared him to the Turkish governor, he was not entirely displeased with Protestant opposition to the Orthodox ecclesiastical authority. Anastasov was sent to prison in Constantinople, but was released through the intervention of a high Turkish official.

¹Missionary News from Bulgaria, No. 2, (April 30, 1885), p. 4.

On other occasions pastor Atanas Christov spent eight days in touring, Grachanov thirty days, Daskalov seventy-four days, and a Bible woman, named Kerafinka Usheva, sixty-five days. Kerafinka Usheva was from Bansko where she "has been a mother of the flock--a physician to both body and soul, and, with a loving heart has labored for all in the village, both Bulgarians and Turks, so that she has gained universal respect and many outside of the evangelical friends come to her for aid."¹ Her daughter Anitsa was also a Bible woman.

The more prominent workers in Macedonia in 1895 were the preachers Sedloev in Mehomia, Ivan Isakov in Bansko, and Grachanov in Eleshnitsa. They all joined the missionaries in their revival efforts which consisted of a series of meetings lasting from two to ten days in the five outstations of the Razlog district, in Radovish, Strumitsa, and Velyusa.² Noteworthy were also the colporteurs Ivan Marko Boyadzhiev and Eftim Venarov.

In 1901 the Salonica station was reinforced by Theodore T. Holway who just came from the United States, and with

¹F. Kingsbury, Samokov Stations Annual Report, May 18, 1888. Filed in ABLib.

²Ann. Rep. ABCFM, 1898, p. 41.

Ellen M. Stone, who was earlier stationed in Samokov and Plovdiv and where she also used to be in charge of the Bible women. Political disturbances were increasing with insurrections, bad harvests and financial stringency, but "the dark clouds that have overshadowed the land seem to have turned some hearts toward God, the refuge of troubled souls."¹ Religious interest was discovered in Doiran, Upper and Lower Todorak, Eleshnitsa and Goleshovo, while in Murtino, despite the disturbances a parsonage was built.² "The Servian work in Prishtina, and Mitrovitza, and surrounding towns, is an interesting and growing work. The first Servian School of the Mission has finished a successful year in Prishtina."³

Nor did the disturbances drive many people to God. The Monastir station had only four ordained native preachers and one organized church with 69 members.⁴ In all likelihood, the Monastir church sought to establish itself as a distinct church organization in 1900. "The evangelical work in this district seems to meet with more difficulties than in any other station."⁵ Many listeners attended but few decided to

¹Ann. Rep. ABCFM, 1901, p. 42.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 43.

⁴Ibid., p. 41.

⁵Ibid.

make the final step and join the Evangelicals, a drastic break with one's former religion and ancestry, which involved a stigma of unpatriotism.

3. The Capture of Ellen Stone and Katherine Tsilka

For exciting events hardly anything in missionary annals can match the capture of Ellen Stone from Roxbury, Massachusetts and Katherine Tsilka the wife of an Albanian preacher.¹ Katherine Tsilka was educated at the mission schools in Monastir and Samokov and later attended the Northfield Academy in Massachusetts and the training school for nurses at the Presbyterian Hospital in New York where she met and married Gregory Tsilka. Her husband studied at Union Theological Seminary, and after return took up missionary work in the Albanian town of Kortcha.

Mr. and Mrs. Tsilka attended a meeting in Bansko, led by Miss Stone. After the meeting the three with five Bible women and three young students from the Samokov Boys' School started toward Samokov together with three horse drivers.

¹A Yugoslav film was made recently on the subject of this capture. Although the investigation may belong more properly in a novel, it is not altogether inappropriate to describe it here.

When they were about twelve miles from Bansko and fifteen miles from Dzhumaya, still some twenty miles away from the Bulgarian border, they were held up by armed brigands. All the others were released having been robbed of their valuables, except Miss Stone and Mrs. Tsilka who were made captives.¹ The date was September 3, 1901.

This was not the first time that missionaries were attacked. J. F. Clarke was threatened with his life twice in 1900, unless he would make money payments, which he refused to do. J. H. House was arrested and threatened with beating in 1901.² So these people were well aware of the dangers of traveling. At first the supposition was that these were armed robbers seeking money, but soon the suspicion arose that the Macedonian Revolutionary Organization was behind all this.³ The Protestants of the Razlog plain including the pastors of the Bansko church were indeed deeply involved in insurrectional activities. It seems

¹J. F. Clarke, "Miss Ellen M. Stone's Captivity" in The Congregational and Christian World, January 25, 1901, p. 121.

²Hall, PB, p. 57.

³Clarke, "Miss Ellen M. Stone's Captivity," p. 121.

likely that several members of the Bansko church knew of the plans to kidnap Miss Stone and were even accessories in the act.¹

Miss Stone and Mrs. Tsilka were, happily, well treated. Mr. K. Petkanchen from Bansko acted as a liaison to deliver a message to Henry C. Haskell of Samokov and then to William W. Peet, the treasurer of the Mission in Constantinople, to whom Miss Stone communicated her situation by letters written in Bulgarian.² An initial demand was made for 25,000 Turkish gold liras, to be delivered within eighteen days without the knowledge of either the Turkish or Bulgarian governments.³ That was an amount of \$110,000, which was about twice the weight of Miss Stone in gold! Opposition of missionaries against the payment of ransom was unanimous. It was felt that this would make such

¹Hall, PB, p. 166.

²Ellen Stone to W. W. Peet from Macedonia, September 20, 1902, and Ellen Stone to Henry C. Haskell from Macedonia, September 20, 1901 and October 8, 1901. The first letter written by Stone to Peet was probably lost. The photostatic copies of the three letters are included in the appendix.

³E. Stone to W. Peet, September 20, 1901. The letters were written in Bulgarian.

kidnapping a profitable business. In the meantime the brigands threatened to abuse the two captives if the pursuit by the Turkish soldiers and bashibazouks (irregulars) did not cease.¹ On learning that collection of the money had been started by Miss Stone's friends in the United States, the brigands extended their deadline!

The American Minister to Constantinople, Leishman, the Dragoman of the American Legation in Constantinople, Mr. Garguillo, William Peet, and John Henry House, especially the latter three were most responsible for the eventual liberation of the two captives.² Of the sum of \$77,432.56 collected by 2,264 voluntary subscriptions in the United States,³ \$66,200 was delivered by Peet, House, and Garguillo in secret negotiations with the brigands, escaping the observation of over two-hundred watchful Turkish soldiers.⁴

¹Ibid.

²A letter of Grace H. Knapp to Mrs. Gould on file at the ABLib.

³U. S. House of Representatives, Sixty-First Congress, Third Session, 1910, Report No. 1792.

⁴Louise Jenison Peet, No Less Honor: The Biography of William Wheelock Peet, (Chattanooga, Tenn.: Privately Printed, 1939), pp. 58-104. This is the best first-hand report of the complex payment delivery process.

During the captivity Mrs. Tsilka gave birth to a daughter whom she named Ellencha in honor of Ellen Stone. They were finally released on February 23, 1902,¹ at Gradashortsi near Strumitsa.²

Miss Stone and Mrs. Tsilka were presumably bound by oath not to reveal the identity of the kidnapers, or of the places to which they were taken, in order to avoid reprisals by Turkish authorities upon the inhabitants of those villages.³

¹Fred F. Goodsell, They Lived Their Faith, (Boston: American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, 1961), p. 65.

²Letters of J. W. Baird of Samokov to William Barton of the American Board in Boston of November 28, 1902. On file at ABLib.

³Miss Stone's story appeared in McClure's Magazine of May to October 1902 (Vol. XIX, pp. 3-16, 99-109, 222-231, 464-471, 562-570, and 587). For other details of this incident one may consult Hall, Puritans in the Balkans, pp. 157-167; M. M. Popoff, "With the Brigands of Bulgaria; the Views of a Native Bulgarian Pastor," in the Commercial Advertiser, New York, Dec. 28, 1901; "How the Release of Miss Stone was Effected" in The Congregational and Christian World, Boston, March 22, 1902; Letter of W. W. Peet to Miss Florence A. Fensham of the American Board in Boston, Constantinople, March 6, 1902; Grace M. Boyton, An Expert in Humanity: William Peet and His Remarkable Work in Turkey (n.p. n.n., 1916). Also see typed manuscript of J. F. Clarke of Dec. 13, 1902, from Samokov entitled "Macedonia and the Capture of Miss Stone," letters of J. W. Baird from Samokov to J. Barton of Boston of Oct. 30, 1902, and Nov. 28, 1902, letters of J. H. House from Salonica to W. W. Peet, May 27, 1902, Ann. Rep. of the Am. Bd., 1902, pp. 40-41, Missionary Herald, Vol. XCVIII (April and May, 1902), pp. 40-41, Missionary Herald, Vol. XCVIII (April and May, 1902), pp. 181, 143-146, and great number of letters by missionaries in the ABAr, Vols. II, III, and IV.

Missionaries later tried to find out just who was responsible for all this and who was behind it. For the most they were satisfied that it was the work of one of the Macedonian revolutionary organizations of which there were three in existence at that time.¹ Many missionaries attributed the capture to the Boris Sarafov group² which is usually referred to as the External Macedonian Revolutionary Committee, and it was believed that the highest Bulgarian statesmen had knowledge of the capture and of the culprits.³ It is quite possible that the Bulgarian people as a whole were sympathetic to the aims of this group, which seems to have used the money to replenish its treasury toward financing the insurrection of 1903.

The missionaries could not agree on what measures should be taken to recover or repay the ransom money, or who should be held liable. Some blamed the Bulgarian government, as it gave support to the I.M.R.O., E.M.R.O., and others blamed the

¹J. F. Clarke, "Macedonia and the Capture of Miss Stone," Samokov, typescript, Dec. 13, 1902. At ABLib.

²J. W. Baird to J. Barton, Samokov, Oct. 30, 1902, and Nov. 28, 1902. At ABLib.

³J. H. House to W. Peet, Salonica, May 27, 1902. At ABLib.

Turkish government because it happened on Turkish territory.¹ In the end none of the kidnapers were tried or punished, and world public opinion turned its attention to the plight not only of the kidnapped women, but the Macedonian people. This was after all the goal of the organization!

Miss Stone was given an immediate furlough. In the United States she tried to raise the money given for her ransom by writing and lecturing. She became so involved in this task that she never returned to the mission field.²

4. The Disturbances of 1903

Touring was almost completely curtailed in 1903. At this time in Monastir an able native pastor was attracting large congregations with his preaching, but both Salonica and Monastir had become centers of the so-called "Ilinden Revolt" (Elias Day Revolt) of the same year. Meanwhile the insurgents

¹Hall, PB, pp. 163-164.

²The incident had a happy end, but an ugly post scriptum was written by an over-commercialization of her lectures and some embarrassments to the American Board and herself through the actions of her brother and some of her own mistakes. A voluminous correspondence on this aspect is kept on file at ABLib.

fought Turks on the street, bombed, burned, and killed.¹ Though the sympathies of the missionaries were probably on the side of the insurgents, they could not conscientiously approve of their methods, so they posed as impartial in the struggle, while sharing the sorrows of the people and administering relief.²

These combats with the Turks were costly in lives and property. The missionaries of Bulgaria, Salonica, and Monastir, distributed the money sent by The Christian Herald of New York,³ and other agencies and individuals. J. H. House and E. B. Haskell formed the Agricultural School in Salonica to which they brought orphans from Monastir.⁴ The ordinary affairs of the Monastir church and the Girls' School were not affected. In several other places the church activities were interrupted by the insurrection.⁵ An orphanage was opened in

¹The premature death of Mrs. E. B. Haskell (Martha H. Miller) was caused by the fighting near their house while she lay gravely ill after childbirth (From "Biographical Notes about E. B. Haskell,") by an anonymous author. Now at ABLib.

²Ann. Rep. ABCFM, 1903, p. 39.

³Ann. Rep. ABCFM, 1904, p. 38.

⁴Ibid. The school first served the Macedonians, but later, when Salonica became Greek territory, it served Greeks living in the vicinity.

⁵Ibid.

1905 with the help of the Bible Land Mission Aid Society from Great Britain, in which twenty girls and fourteen boys were placed.¹ It was named the Essery Memorial Orphanage after receiving a \$2,200 home for forty children as a gift from the United States. In 1906 the stations experienced a setback because of financial problems resulting from the American Board's inability to appropriate more than 63 per cent of the mission's estimate.²

5. The Work in the Outstations

The work in the outstations was progressing. In Mitrovitsa, Serbia, "several young men recently consecrated themselves to God, organized a Christian Endeavor Society, and hold regular meetings after the sermon."³ Mitrovitsa had five communicants and 23 adherents, but their children were expelled from public schools in the attempt to compel them to recant the "Protestant heresy."⁴ In Prishtina, the only school supported by the American Board in Serbia had ten students.⁵

¹Ann. Rep. ABCFM, 1905, p. 38.

²Ann. Rep. ABCFM, 1906, p. 52.

³Ann. Rep. ABCFM, 1904, p. 44.

⁴Ann. Rep. ABCFM, 1907, p. 51.

⁵Ann. Rep. ABCFM, 1906, p. 60.

Prejudices were gradually broken down. The congregation in Drama developed rapidly into the strongest outstation in Salonica. In Mezhydurk there were now nine Protestant families, with a total of eleven communicants and 29 adherents. In Strumitsa the number of communicants increased to 30, and after eleven years their elementary school received government recognition.¹ "The work in Uskub is hindered by the fact that the young men are inclined to flee from the difficulties besetting them at home and take refuge in America."² In Zetovo a married pastor was requested for whom they offered to provide a parsonage and chapel and a contribution toward his salary. The preacher in Prilep was assailed because of his faith, but was in time freed after a ninety-five day confinement.³ Prilep had its first communion service in 1907, at which a young, persecuted teacher was baptized. A school and a Sunday School were established in Yenidje.⁴ An unusually able pastor, Luka A. Mirchev, the secretary of the Bulgarian Evangelical Society, came to Monastir in 1907, where he held services with an average attendance of 118 and a Sunday School of 96, and opened a preaching place in Jenimahala with 72 attending.⁵ Monospitovo "suffered terribly in its spirituality

¹Ibid., p. 59

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

⁴Ann. Rep. ABCFM, 1907, p. 48.

⁵Ibid.

from the implications of its members in revolutionary work."¹

6. The Koleshino Church

Even when a church showed progress, as in Koleshino when they bought land for a chapel in 1906,² conditions remained unfavorable. The komitadis killed two Turkish soldiers in the vicinity of Monospitovo and Murtino, and three local men were accused and sentenced to imprisonment at Hemen Batum, Asia Minor.³ There they were converted. Upon their return they persuaded the psalt,⁴ Mane Isev, from Koleshino to read and discuss the Bible with others in Koleshino. Isev then initiated a polemic with the priests as to the Orthodox Church customs. He gathered young people about him to study the Bible, often meeting secretly in the woods. At the feast of St. Spas in Koleshino on May 15, 1899, the Greek Bishop required all the people to surrender their Bulgarian Bibles to him, under the pain of anathema. A discussion evolved in which

¹Ibid., p. 50.

²Ann. Rep. ABCFM, 1906, p. 59.

³This whole account is based on the collection of memories of the oldest members of the Koleshino church in 1962 by Mrs. Paula Moyzes, Novi Sad, Yugoslavia.

⁴A layman of the Orthodox Church who chants at the services.

several men declared themselves to be Evangelicals. Reacting to the attacks of the bishop they labeled him Belzeebub, and said that they would rather follow Mane Isev. Chaos ensued and the men were terribly beaten. The bishop tried to persuade Mane Isev to give up his beliefs or to keep them to himself, but Isev refused. In 1899 he went to Strumitsa and declared to the Turkish authorities that he wanted to become a Protestant. He invited the local preacher from Strumitsa, a native of Radovish, Kosta Kimov, to preach in Koleshino, and in May some fifteen or twenty persons gathered for the first service.

The bishop encouraged people to persecute the families of the brothers Mane and Mite Isev, and the villagers forbade them to feed their livestock on the common pasture, burned their rice on the field, and destroyed their gardens and fields. In 1905, Mane Isev, still in conflict with his neighbors, received a letter from a Greek woman teacher demanding that he either renounce his Protestantism or be murdered. His friends took the letter to the authorities in Strumitsa and the Greek teacher was imprisoned. But so was Mane Isev! Only after diplomatic

intervention from the American Consulate in Salonica, after an involved process was he acquitted. The teacher was sentenced to two years in prison but Isev spoke in her behalf because he knew that she was led into her acts by the Orthodox bishop. Thus she was released. But in 1906 the whole family of Isev was again threatened by a group of seven komitadi, seeking for their lives. The Protestants believed that these men were paid by the bishop.

Meanwhile House and Haskell came to see if they could help. In Strumitsa they were told that the trouble was caused by the bishop. When the Koleshino villagers burned the small Protestant chapel built there by the old Protestant families, these missionaries were able to intervene. The arsonists had been taken to court by Isev where they were each fined eighty gold liras, but the culprits subsequently refused to pay. House and Haskell succeeded in arranging a retrial and the criminals were sentenced to a hundred years in prison! This too was later commuted, and they were freed in 1912. Some of these men were from the group of the komitadis who tried several times to kill Mane Isev and who did kill a Protestant called Vasil Kitanov. For all this a new chapel was built in

1912, which is still in use at the present and Mane Isev remained the lay leader of the Koleshino congregation until his death in 1926.

7. Missionary Work in Albania

Before 1905 people of various nationalities worshipped together in Monastir and elsewhere. But as the Balkan wars approached they became more nationally conscious. One missionary wrote,

The efforts of the extremists lately are succeeding to some extent in causing friction in mixed evangelical communities which up to this year ignored political factions and lived harmoniously as brethren.¹

In 1908 the Monastir station suffered further loss when Phineas B. Kennedy and C. Telford Erickson opened the Kortcha station in Albania.² Activities here go back to preachings by a Greek Protestant, Gerasim Kyrias, and A. Thomson of the British and Foreign Bible Society.³ With the support of the American Board, Kyrias' sister, Sevasti Kyrias, opened a school for girls in Kortcha, the first

¹Ann. Rep. ABCFM, 1907, p. 51.

²Ann. Rep. ABCFM, 1908, p. 48.

³Missionary Herald, Oct. 1892, p. 398.

girls' school in Albania to use the Albanian language.¹ J. W. Baird and Mary Matthews studied Albanian to be able to meet this challenge more effectively. The Albanian people were generally friendly and open-minded, and the missionaries felt that much could be done in Albania once the nation shook off the Turkish overlords. One of the first Albanian pastors was Mr. Sinas who initiated the translation of the Bible from Greek into Albanian.²

This school was however closed by the authorities more than once because of the use of Albanian, and Kyrias decided to invite regular missionaries, hoping thereby to find a measure of protection. The Kennedys and Ericksons worked primarily in Kortcha and Elbasan with preaching outstations in Tirana, Durazzo, and other places. They had the help of the able Gregory Tsilka and a number of native pastors. The work developed slowly and after the wars it was abandoned entirely because of the financial inability of the American Board to support it.³

¹Mrs. Edward W. Capen, "Violet Bond Kennedy," May 1953, Photostatic copy filed at ABLib.

²Ann. Rep. ABCFM, 1900, p. 42.

³Discussion of the work of the American Board in Albania does not belong under this topic, though clearly related to it, and interesting in itself.

C. The Time of Wars: 1912 to 1918

1. The Balkan Wars

The years before the Balkan war passed rather quietly. The missionaries expected much relaxation after the Young Turk Revolt of 1908, a hope that proved to be exaggerated. The Macedonian mission was enforced by William Cooper but this addition was not sufficient to bring radical improvements. Very little work was done in the extreme eastern part of Macedonia, while the Monastir station was altogether too weakly staffed with missionaries and native workers to be of consequence in the coming years.

The term "European Turkey Mission" was no longer applicable after the Balkan Wars. It gave way in 1913 to the title "Turkey and the Balkan Mission,"¹ without formal action. Macedonia was divided between Greece, Bulgaria, and Serbia. Greece occupied the cities of Salonica and Kortscha in which the American Board had stations. Bulgaria was forced to confine itself to the Razlog district of Macedonia, rather than annexing all of Macedonia as they

¹Ann. Rep. ABCFM, 1913, p. 57.

had hoped. Serbia occupied Skopye (formerly Üsküb) and Bitola (formerly Monastir) and other territories of Western Macedonia.

Both the Greek and Serbian governments followed an anti-Bulgarian policy, which greatly affected the mission. The Greeks tried to naturalize the Slavic Macedonians and the Albanians. When Phineas Kennedy was arrested in Kortcha and forcibly taken to Greece, the work of the Salonica station in the Bulgarian language was almost completely suspended.¹ The Serbians, who also occupied a large part of Albania, arrested Erickson and Tsilka. Anxious to retain parts of Macedonia, they maintained that Macedonians were southern Serbians, and took measures to enforce the use of Serbian language in the Bitola Girls' School and in the churches.²

When Delpha Davis became the acting principal upon Miss Matthews' furlough, the school was allowed to continue and to hold graduation exercises, except that

¹Ibid., pp. 64-65. The Salonica Station was forced to re-orient itself to work with Greek people, although it served the Slavic people in the vicinity as much as possible. Because of this re-orientation the station ceases to be within the scope of this dissertation.

²Letter from Monastir, ABAr., Balkan Missions, 1910-1919, No. 31.

compulsory Serbian language teaching was introduced. Neither teachers nor students were allowed to use Bulgarian. By that time the school had nearly oriented itself to the use of English. They were permitted on rare occasions to use what the Serbians called the "Balkan language" (Macedonian).¹ The Serbians maintained an outwardly friendly and courteous approach, while tightening their bureaucratic controls. Being suspicious of pro-Bulgarian feelings, they put a Serbian teacher on the staff, ostensibly to teach the Serbian language, but whom the missionaries suspected of spying.² They were now prevented from crossing the borders, and although the Monastir station was allowed more relations with the American Board mission in Bulgaria than the Greeks had allowed to Salonica, it was clear that the idea of maintaining one mission was breaking down, despite the rising idea of Balkan federalism.³ In Serbian Macedonia only W. P. Clark and Delpha Davis remained. Their labors were concentrated in educational work as the day school enjoyed an increase

¹Ann. Rep. ABCFM, 1914, p. 70.

²Letter from Monastir, ABAR, Balkan Missions, 1910-1919, No. 31.

³Missionary Herald, Vol. CXVII (June 1921), p. 197.

of 185 per cent in enrollment due to the discontinuance of the Bulgarian and Greek schools, while the parents also requested the organization of a kindergarten.¹

2. World War I

Although near the place of origin of the World War in 1914, the town of Bitola (Monastir) was not affected until later. In 1915 Mary Matthews returned and Delpha Davis went on furlough. Relief work became a major concern, as it had been during the Balkan wars. The school was doing so well that they contemplated making the smaller boys' department into a separate school. The total enrollment in the school was 144 of them: 77 were girls, many of whom were boarders, and 67 boys, who were all day students.²

But in October 1915 the Serbian government closed the school and all Serbians left the city, fleeing toward Salonica, in advance of the Austro-Hungarian, Bulgarian, and German armies. On December 2, 1915, the Bulgarian army occupied Bitola and Delpha Davis and Rada Pavlova left for

¹Ann. Rep. ABCFM, 1914, p. 92.

²Ann. Rep. ABCFM, 1915, p. 97.

Sofia en route to U.S.A.¹ The staff was now reduced to William Clarke and Mary Matthews, and they continued on during the Bulgarian occupation. Evangelism or touring was impossible and church work was restricted to the older members. Yet services were overcrowded, and the Bulgarian soldiers, of whom some were Protestants, took part. New members were received into membership.² The Bulgarians had become more liberal and tolerant through their acquaintance with missions for over half a century and work under their occupation was easier.

The Bulgarian occupation lasted less than a year. Serbian, British, and French troops occupied Bitola in November 1916. Clarke was told to leave for the United States as soon as possible, but Miss Matthews stayed in Bitola throughout the whole war sharing the suffering of the people. She and the girls and a few of the women teachers undertook any relief work they could find, no matter under what flag they served,³ sick at heart to see so much

¹ Letter from Monastir, ABAR, Balkan Missions, 1910-1919, No. 31.

² Ibid.

³ Delpha Davis, Christmas Under Three Flags, (Chicago: Woman's Board of Missions of Interior, n.d.), passim.

needless suffering. During the Bulgarian occupation of Monastir the French bombarded it; when the French-Serbian forces took the city, the Bulgarians bombarded it from the surrounding hills. The mission school was used as headquarters by the French General Dessort who left only after a long and effective shelling.¹ This was not the first time the school had been requisitioned. The Germans used parts of it to quarter their horses and maintenance men.² The Bitola church building was used as a hospital under Anglo-Serb control. Teachers of the mission school flocked here for jobs, as the school was not functioning.

The services continued in private houses. With the return of the Serbians, Pastor Mirchev was interned in France, while his family was cared for by Miss Matthews at the school. One of her main forms of relief work was the care of Macedonian women whose husbands or sons worked in America, and sent money to their families. She arranged to receive the money through the American Consul-General in Salonica and exchange it into local bank notes. This

¹Mary L. Matthews to Mabel E. Emerson of the American Board in Boston, Lancaster, Wisc., Nov. 1, 1948. On file at ABLib.

²Ibid.

sort of effort had the effect of opening doors which had previously been closed.

The churches in the area of Strumitsa and Bansko belonged to Bulgaria after 1913, and enjoyed the toleration of the government. Much of the same good care was enjoyed by the missionaries and the native pastors as those of other Bulgarian churches.

CHAPTER V

THE CONGREGATIONAL MISSION TO SOUTHERN BULGARIA FROM 1878 TO 1918

A. Evangelization in the Principality of Bulgaria and Eastern Rumelia from 1878 to 1887

1. The Political Liberation and the Mission

This period begins with the gaining of independence by the Bulgarians under Russian protection. The question was whether the new state would have the strength and the will to provide protection such as the mission had enjoyed under the Turkish government, which had found it desirable to foster division among its Christian subjects. There was no little uncertainty about this. In time confidence in the Bulgarians increased enormously. The Russian army officers who ruled Bulgaria in 1878 and 1879 were co-operative and courteous,¹ but this did not last long. Soon even the Bulgarians, who owed their liberation to Russia started to resent her interference and lack of tact.²

The political situation derived from the Treaty of Berlin (1878). Samokov became the capital city of the new

¹Hall, ABMB, p. 114.

²Wolff, op. cit., p. 87.

Principality of Bulgaria, based on the Tirnovo Constitution (1879) with a prince ruling a virtually independent country. Philippopolis belonged to Eastern Rumelia, under a governor appointed by the Turkish government. It was now a vassal state of Turkey with a large amount of autonomy.¹ Monastir with the rest of Macedonia remained under direct Turkish government. Reforms were promised by the Treaty of Berlin, but they remained a dead letter.

The Tirnovo Constitution promised religious toleration despite the established role of the Orthodox Church. The Organic Statute of Eastern Rumelia provided that all faiths were represented at the provincial assembly. For the Protestant side this was fulfilled by the pastor of the Yambol church. The secretary to the governor of Eastern Rumelia was assistant editor of the Protestant Weekly Zornitsa (Morning Star). A teacher of the Samokov Boys' School was elected to the legislature of the Principality.² Conditions in Bulgaria and Eastern Rumelia were now more advantageous for Evangelical activities than in Turkey.

The missionaries received a boost to their confidence when J. F. Clarke was received in audience by Prince Alexander of Battenberg, who in turn visited the Samokov station

¹Markham, op. cit., p. 62.

²Hall, ABMB, p. 118.

in 1879.¹ But the Constitutional system was suspended between 1881 and 1883 by the Russian administration, which tried to inconvenience the mission by harassment, drafting of the students of the Boys' School, and endless bureaucratic demands.²

The missionaries were fully in sympathy with the bloodless coup whereby Eastern Rumelia was annexed to Bulgaria and Philippopolis again brought into the same political unit with Samokov. They also rallied to aid Bulgaria in its short but victorious war with Serbia in 1885.³ William Hall aptly reported that from this war onward, the missionaries realized that their fortunes depended on the fortunes of Bulgaria as a political unit. They declared their full support of the new nation and its national strivings, and even shared prejudices and hatreds. Since the war was short, not much relief work was needed, but the missionaries were allowed to do religious work among the soldiers. Prince Alexander abdicated in 1887 and Prince Ferdinand was elected by the National Assembly in spite of contrary Russian wishes. This did not affect the position of the Evangelicals and the missionaries. The regent, Stambulov, granted George Marsh an audience in 1887, from which he left in a very optimistic mood as to the mission's future.⁴ Prince

¹Ibid., p. 120.

²Ibid., p. 127.

³Langer, op. cit., p. 718. ⁴Hall, ABME, pp. 130-131.

Ferdinand and his wife ~~Eleonora~~ were friendly to the mission from the beginning.

2. A Survey of the Work

The effectiveness of the missionaries was reduced by two incidents of internal dissension. One was caused by J. F. Clarke's involvement in relief work among the refugees in northern Macedonia in 1879 whereby his evangelizing work suffered. For this he was criticized by other members of his mission,¹ the exceptions being J. H. House, E. Riggs, and T. Byington, who were not involved in any of the controversies. The second controversy was more serious although it had a very insignificant cause. Mrs. Anna Mumford had established her own private school after she left the mission school. This was considered as unfair competition! Lewis Bond maintained friendly relations with her, but George Marsh tried to forbid this. The ensuing quarrel ended by the removal of Bond to Monastir in 1882 despite the protests of the Bulgarian Evangelicals who disliked the lack of charity displayed by Marsh.²

a. The Native Pastors.-- During this period a number of churches were organized and in some other places genuine interest for the Evangelical work was displayed. In 1886 the Tserovo-Tatar Pazardzhik church was set up for the

¹Ibid., p. 121.

²Ibid., p. 122.

Protestants of these two communities.¹ Another church in Panagurishte was dedicated with 350 people in attendance. At one time there were great persecutions in this place, including the stoning of a missionary. Preacher Petranov started the work in Panagurishte. Though he had begun with but a few, the church had become prosperous because of his work and that of Sitchanov, Kostov, Kumanov and others.²

Interest in the evangelical type of Christianity was manifested in 1872 in Kyustendil and Palanka.³ In Dobreneshta a native pastor preached in the Orthodox church but was later restrained by the priest. The Turkish official however, saw this as an attempt in the direction of progress and sought to have the preacher invited again. But by that time the preacher was already evangelizing in Kramen.⁴

The Bulgarian Evangelical Society sent pastor Tsanov to Sofia in 1886 as Sofia was under the management of the Bulgarian Evangelical Society rather than the missionaries.

¹Missionary News from Bulgaria, No. 9 (September 16, 1886) p. 1.

²Missionary News from Bulgaria, No. 10 (December 20, 1886) pp. 6-7.

³Hall, ABMB., p. 99.

⁴Missionary News from Bulgaria, No. 7 (May 20, 1886) ABLib, p. 3.

Tsanov was a teacher at the Boy's School in Samokov before he became the pastor in Sofia.¹ He was a graduate of Amherst College, and became the senior Bulgarian teacher at the Samokov Boys' School and was elected a member of the National Assembly.² Later he was elected the president of the Bulgarian Evangelical Society³ and in 1902 became the editor of the Zornitsa.

Prior to Tsanov the preacher in Sofia was Ivan N. Matinchev, M. D. who had studied both theology and medicine in the United States. When the church in Sofia was organized in January 1884⁴ he became the first pastor. He increased the congregation greatly but disagreed with the Bulgarian Evangelical Society as to the need for a separate Protestant Church. Later he gave up his pastorate to establish a medical practice in Sofia where he became later the secretary of the Medical Council, distinguishing himself for his services to the Jewish people who were generally shunned by the population.⁵

¹W. W. Sleeper, Samokov Station Annual Report of 1886, written in longhand and filed in the duplicate Annual Reports of the Samokov stations at ABLib.

²Hall, PE, p. 176.

³Annual Report of the Bulgarian Evangelical Society 1897-1898, (Philippople, Bulgaria: Imprimerie Commerciale, 1899), n. p.

⁴W. Sleeper, Samokov Station Annual Report of 1884-1885. ABLib.

⁵Hall, PE, p. 87.

The towns of Kostenets and Banya had Paladinov for preacher. Paladinov and Vlaev of Bansko jointly supplied Pirdop. Vlaev was the preacher for six years after Tonzhorov left for Philippopolis but had to resign in 1885 on grounds of ill health.¹ New work was attempted in Radomir, while the Dzhumaya work had dwindled to a few followers. The Bulgarian Evangelical Society placed Mishkov at Dubnitsa as the second pastor whom they supported beside the pastor of the Sofia church. Pastor Litza who supplied Nevrokop preached in Seres both in the Greek and Bulgarian language, but was compelled to leave when the Greek populace broke up the Bulgarian meeting.²

In 1886 one pastor, Kosta Y. Pachadzhiev, undertook to serve the four out-stations of Kostenets, Banya, Ichteman, and Sestrino. Ivan Sitchanov was moved from Samokov to Bansko to fill the place of Vlaev and soon his service resulted in a religious awakening. He was assisted by Mrs. Ralu Georgeva, a voluntary Bible woman. Some Orthodox people, seeing Sitchanov's success accused him falsely before the Turkish authorities of being a revolutionary

¹W. Sleeper, Samokov Station Annual Report, 1884-1885, p. 7. ABLib.

²J. F. Clarke, Samokov Station Annual Report, 1885-1886, ABLib. In Seres, a Mr. Sampson of the Southern Presbyterian Mission worked among the Greek and Hellenized population before any Bulgarian work was attempted.

brigand, and the Bansko chapel was sealed up. Through the intervention of John Henry House, and the British consul in Salonica, Sitchanov was cleared and the chapel re-opened.¹

Eleshnitsa and Yakoruda in the Razlog district in Macedonia belonged still under the supervision of the Samokov station and were served by Pramatorov. In Banya and Mehomia, a young preacher, named Litza, who graduated from the Samokov Theological and Scientific Institute in 1883, became involved in a misunderstanding with the parishoners. Because of some jealousy "he committed some indiscretions in work and conduct which have undermined his influence in these places."² Despite attempt by the missionaries to reconcile the dispute, Litza was released from service in Mehomia in 1887, as was Mr. Pramatorov from Eleshnitsa in 1888, on grounds considered unsatisfactory by a council of leading Evangelicals in Bansko.³

A number of new missionaries were engaged in the work in Bulgaria: William W. Sleeper, Frederick L. Kingsbury, the sole medical missionary from America who

¹W. Sleeper, Samokov Station Annual Report, 1886, pp. 12-13, ABLib.

²Ibid., p. 14.

³Frederick L. Kingsbury, Samokov Station Annual Report, 1888, p. 9, ABLib.

ever worked in Bulgaria, Ellen Stone, Sara Elizabeth Graves, W. H. Belden, etc. John Henry House was called in 1881 to Constantinople to become editor of the Zornitsa. Henry C. Haskell spent most of this period in the United States and returned in 1887 to be stationed in Samokov.¹

In June 1886 the mission received a new press through the friends of Ellen Stone on which they first published a pamphlet in Bulgarian, "Look to Jesus" and the Missionary News from Bulgaria in English.² William Sleeper, who acted both as the pastor of the Samokov congregation and was a teacher at the Collegiate and Theological Institution, was also responsible for setting up and managing the successful printing shop.

b. Bible Women.-- Among the most significant torchbearers of evangelical work were the Bible women. Some of them were formally trained, others were not. Some were voluntary workers but most of them were paid. Because they taught women, by reading to them and selling them Bibles they came to be called Bible women. Ellen Stone, who was for a short time a teacher at the Girls' School

¹H. C. Haskell, Sketch of the Samokov Station, n.p., n.d. ABLib.

²Missionary News from Bulgaria, No. 8. (July 10, 1886), p. 1.

at Samokov, was transferred in 1883 to Philippopolis to take charge of the work of the Bible women.¹ Ten years later she had 19 Bible women working under her.

These women were mainly humble souls whose identity is not easy to establish. Only a few were mentioned by name. Miss Stone's assistant was Miss Akrabova. These two women organized a training class for Bible women between May 24 and July 2, 1886.² Miss Stone believed that Bible women should be considered as on a par with teachers, which could be accomplished by introducing regular training of the kind that other teachers received. She and others felt that the Bible women were indispensable for the mission.³ She wrote: "We must be minute-women ready always for every call, for there are hungry souls among these friends and a multitude who need to be alarmed, and entreated to flee from the wrath to come."⁴ Missionary wives assisted the Bible women and toured the region with their husbands but their main activity was in

¹C. T. Riggs, HWANE, p. 45a.

²W. Sleeper, Samokov Station Annual Report, pp. 4-5.

³Missionary News from Bulgaria, No. 8. (July 10, 1886), p. 3.

⁴Journal of Extracts from the letters of Miss Ellen M. Stone, Missionary to Bulgaria and Turkey, "No. 1, from May 24, 1883 to January 1, 1884. Written in longhand and filed at ABLib.

the locality of the station where they taught sometimes in the schools, or organized Ladies' Benevolent Societies to help destitute women.

It may seem strange today when the Protestant churches in the Balkans are attended largely by women, that in the early years they constituted the main antagonistic group.¹ When Protestantism represented a radical change only the men could dare to take decisive steps. They also held the economic means in their hands and social dominance made them more independent for such radical steps. But the women had to be cultivated more carefully, and only women, Bible women, could do this job as they so admirably did.

B. Bulgarian Congregationalism between 1887 and 1912

1. The Native Protagonists

The Bulgarian Congregationalists entered the period of complete de facto national independence with eight churches, 553 members, 62 native workers, and 26 American missionaries.² But the significance of this work should not be judged by statistics. Its influence was far out of proportion to its modest numbers. As noted above, the first

¹Annual Report ABCFM, 1879, p. 19.

²Hall, ABMB, p. 143.

churches in Bulgaria were organized in Macedonia and Eastern Rumelia with Bansko, Merichleri, and Yambol heading the list. The larger towns followed later, with Samokov organizing a church in 1880, Philippopolis in 1883, Sofia in 1885.

Among the graduating class of 1887 of the Collegiate and Theological Institute in Samokov were leaders later responsible for forward strides in the churches. The names of Nikola T. Boyadzhiev, Georgi Petrov, N. Chakalov, Ivan Angelov, and A. S. Tsanov are worthy of mention.¹ A. S. Tsanov was to become the president of the Bulgarian Evangelical Society, N. Boyadzhiev was to become the well-loved and recognized leader of the Sofia Congregational Church, I. Sitchanov was the able pastor in Bansko in the 1880's and the Methodist pastor in Sofia, when that church opened a station there in 1907.²

By far the most popular and able pastor, when he reached the zenith of his career was Ivan A. Tonzhorov. From his first pastoral charge in Bansko he moved to Philippopolis where he became a spirited leader. He introduced many innovations in the work in the 1880's,

¹Missionary News from Bulgaria, No. 13 (May 10, 1887), p. 8.

²Hall, PB, p. 182.

such as a Y.M.C.A., a night school, outdoor services in a public garden (this was discontinued as it was repugnant to the members of his congregation) and public preaching. He was an excellent extemporaneous speaker drawing large audiences.¹ In 1887 he received permission to visit and preach in prison.² But the Philippopolis Church and the whole mission was shocked in 1890 with the report that Tonzhorov was having improper relations with the wife of the leading deacon. Tonzhorov tried to justify this rather than repenting of it and he was forced to resign. His deposition was regarded as "a greater calamity than the murder of Meriam."³

Awakening was still the goal of the missionaries and native pastors. They conducted a series of revivals at Samokov and Philippopolis in 1891, at Ichtiman in 1896.⁴ Miss Stone led the activities of the Bible women, who faced serious difficulties because of Turkish social mores as to the position of women. In both Macedonia and Bulgaria it was regarded improper for a woman to preach in a church. Bible women, therefore, occupied themselves

¹Hall, ABMB, pp. 146 and 147.

²Missionary News from Bulgaria, No. 13, (May 10, 1887), p. 8.

³Hall, PB, pp. 124-125.

⁴Ibid., p. 115.

with women and children, but some countered by methods of their own.

After listening to a long drawn-out discourse, often given in some place where there is no preacher, by a man who can scarcely read, then knowing that God has another message for the people, I arise and come forward and tell them how I know they will be glad to receive the greetings my friends in America sent them. From that we become friendly, and then I tell them of Christians I have met, and the message about prayer, or faith or giving comes in.¹

Through the concerted efforts of the Bible women, colporteurs, native pastors and preachers, and missionaries the number of churches doubled in the 1890's and the number of communicants increased even more. In 1898 there were 16 organized churches, 1,200 communicants, 3,000 adherents, 80 Bulgarian workers, and only 23 missionaries and a number of new churches of which the most remarkable were those in Sofia and Philippopolis.² A constitution drafted by J. H. House and A. S. Tsanov was basically congregational in polity, but with a fairly strong uniting base. The churches called themselves Evangelical rather than Congregational, in an attempt to eliminate denominationalism. This constitution was adopted in 1888,

¹Mary Haskell, Over in Macedonia, (Chicago: Woman's Board of Missions of the Interior, n.d.), p. 3.

²Hall, PB, p. 119.

and was revised by a General Conference in 1899. The missionaries involved themselves and the churches in a number of service projects. Marsh supported the temperance movement in relation to which many societies were organized, backed by all evangelicals. J. F. Clarke was involved in relief work for the Armenian refugees, and F. Kingsbury, as the sole medical missionary, provided valuable service, despite government restrictions.¹

A limiting factor was the relatively large turnover of native workers, caused in part by internal dissensions, the clash of personalities or old village rivalries. The real grounds of difference were cloaked in theological language, meaning that the congregation would squabble over a minute interpretation of the Scripture, each group claiming that salvation depended on its particular teaching. In Tserovo contending parties split the church trying to control the pulpit in order to harangue each other.² Poor health also attended the native pastors. Numerous illnesses plagued the Bulgarians. These pastors worked so hard and traveled so much, that they could hardly have been very resistant to disease. Blago Sarandov, for example, left the

¹Ibid., p. 133.

²J. F. Clarke, Samokov Station Annual Report, 1892, p. 9. Filed at ABLib.

ministry in Kostenets because of ill health. Others sought other vocations because salaries were so small that they were not able to support their families.

New men were constantly being licensed to preach in place of those who had left. In 1891 and 1892 Constantine Grachenov from Bansko, Georgi Sedloev from Yakoruda, Todor Hostov of Mehomia, Georgi Petrov of Padovich, and Marko N. Popov in Sofia were so called.¹ Bible women, such as Katherine H. Todorova of Mehomia, helped provide services to a community which was temporarily left without a minister. Still another measure was extensive touring of villages by several pastors. Pastor Anastasov of Strumitsa helped out in Southern Bulgaria by covering Seres, Lower Dzhumaya, and Melnik. He was of great help as he spoke Greek and Wallachian (Rumanian) besides Bulgarian.

In Samokov the missionaries were aided by the preaching of C. J. Terziev and A. Tsanov on alternating Sundays, but such methods in the long run, were injurious to the church.² After Sarandov's retirement, the proselytizing activities of the Baptists (organized in 1888 by a German immigrant minister) almost destroyed the congregation in

¹Ibid.

²H. C. Haskell, Samokov Station Annual Report, 1897. p. 3. ABLib.

Kostenets. Some other churches were weakened by indifference or lack of preachers.¹

Trained preachers and pastors were also drawn away by their desire to study abroad, mainly in the United States. The missionaries were generally opposed to this, as the small Bulgarian congregations could not pay for well-trained ministers, and many of these young men so changed their outlook that they had great difficulties in adjustment when they returned, when they felt they were working against odds in a sectarian atmosphere. But Bulgarian pastors who were trained abroad advised the talented younger men to follow the course they had taken.² Although the missionary attitude is understandable, and the problems of foreign education serious, the sending of students abroad was a wise measure. Those who returned proved themselves superior leaders and commanded great respect in Bulgarian life.

An example, although not of a minister, was that of Stoyan Vatralski. He was a Protestant, a graduate of Samokov and of Harvard University (class of 1894), and he became an outstanding poet regarded as the "Tolstoy of

¹Ibid., p. 9.

²J. F. Clarke, Samokov Station Annual Report, 1888-1889, p. 3.

Bulgaria." He admired Tolstoy and resembled him physically and in actions. He struggled for righteousness in individual, national, and social life, and for peace, which he envisioned as possible if a Balkan Alliance was formed.¹ He composed verses for a great number of Evangelical hymns used in all the churches.² He founded in Sofia the "Anglo-Saxon League for the Promulgation of Anglo-Saxon Ideals in the Balkans."³ After World War I he was disappointed in the act of the U.S. Congress which ratified a treaty which was injurious to Bulgaria's interests. At this time Bulgaria looked toward the United States, as a pupil in the democratic way of life and religious tolerance. He felt strongly that this action would injure the Protestant cause in Bulgaria.⁴

Sofia, the capital of the country, being under the supervision of the Bulgarian Evangelical Society, had a strong congregation with very capable ministers. After

¹Charles E. White, "Stoyan Vatralsky," on file in ABLib.

²Information given by Rev. Kroum Jordan of West Medway, Massachusetts, during an interview on November 5, 1963.

³Mary Haskell, Glimpses of Bulgaria During the Present Crises, (Oberlin, Ohio: private printing, 1918) n.p.

⁴Stoyan Vatralsky, "America's Part in Bulgaria's History." An article in an unidentified periodical filed at ABLib.

Ivancho N. Matinchev and A. Tsanov came Nikola C. Boyadzhiev, who was regarded in the 1880's as "the oldest, best and most beloved pastor." He served with great success in Sofia until his death in 1891.¹ He was followed by Marko N. Popov who was considered a very consecrated and able leader belonging to a new generation of pastors, among whom Tsvetko S. Bagranov, Dimiter N. Furnadzhiev, Ivan N. Tsakov, and D. Gradinarov were growing in power, influence, and breadth of view.²

2. The Transformation of the Mission

Great changes took place after 1900 such as were "rarely witnessed in the corresponding period anywhere."³ After the war of 1897, came the revolution of 1903, and the wars of 1911 to 1913, and 1914 to 1918--all of course greatly affecting Congregationalism. Among the original personnel of twenty-three, sixteen died or withdrew, so that only the Bairds, the Houses, the Thomsons, Mrs. Marsh, Miss Matthews, and J. F. Clarke were alive in 1915.⁴ But a large number of missionary children returned to work in Bulgaria: two each of the Clarkes, Haskells, and Houses, and one each of the Bairds,

¹Hall, PB, p. 124.

²C. T. Riggs, HWANE, p. 60.

³Ibid., p. 59.

⁴Ibid.

Marshes, and Bonds.¹ With the death of Elias Riggs in 1901, Constantinople ceased to be a station of the European Turkey Mission.² Leroy F. Ostrander, who became the capable principal of the Boys' School in Samokov, and Theodore T. Holway joined in 1901.

Missionary life was strenuous, required much touring on very bad roads, frequent preaching and financial hardship, although they were paid according to their needs and not according to ability. These were people under life appointment, and most of them adjusted well and learned the language; those who did not were less respected. The use of interpreters reduced the effectiveness of a missionary, and capable Bulgarian pastors were often more effective evangelists than the missionaries. Few of the missionaries were great intellectuals but several were great religious leaders.³ Most of them had B.D. degrees, and a few had M.A. degrees or honorary doctoral degrees. They were for the majority relatively less well educated than the Bulgarian intellectuals.⁴ Their services were often unkindly refused with threats or even violence

¹Ibid.

²Hall, PB, p. 152.

³Interview with Kroum Jordan, in West Medway, Mass. November 5, 1963.

⁴Reuben Markham to James Barton, Samokov, November 1, 1913, ABAr, Balkan Mission, 1910-1914, Vol. IV.

as in the beating of J. F. Clarke by six men in 1892. Usually life was monotonous but they found in it many challenging and rewarding features. Even experiences like Miss Stone's captivity did not shake their deep faith in the potentialities of Bulgaria as a nation, and in the prospects of a Protestant mission.

The Evangelicals were often an embarrassment. Most of them in the frontier districts and in Macedonia not only sympathized with I.M.R.O., but one pastor of the Bansko congregation was suspected of being a member of the Superior Committee of the Macedonian Revolutionary Organization.¹ During the Ilinden revolt many outrages were committed on both sides, with acute suffering for all. Many villages were burnt, many people killed, many became refugees. The missionaries administered extensive relief. The administration of relief was concentrated in Monastir and Salonica, but much was done also in Bulgaria, especially around Plovdiv, Adrianople, and Burgas, where many thousands of refugees from Macedonia fled.

Preoccupation with affairs of national independence reduced both the quality and the quantity of spiritual life of these congregations. This was a matter of great

¹Hall, PB, p. 166. The missionaries sympathized with the desires of native Evangelicals to participate in the efforts of national aspirations, but were set against their participation in a movement such as I.M.R.O., which chose any means to achieve its ends. On the other hand, they did not provide or point to a substitute program feeling that the force of the evangelical message would solve all the problems.

concern to the missionaries and the zealous native pastors. It was reflected in the statistics which showed only a very slight increase in 1908 over 1898 for now the movement had 19 churches, 1,451 communicants, and 4,190 adherents¹. But there were brighter spots, such as the religious revivals in the Samokov schools in 1902, and a concerted effort of all native pastors in a revival in 1905. Success brought about the self-support of the Plovdiv church in 1908, as well as the church in Sofia in 1909. Many of the churches suffered because the financial situation of the people had so declined on account of constant wars. A larger number of better trained pastors for the small congregations may have helped to improve the situation by providing a firmer foundation in the local congregations.

3. The Congregationalist Co-operation with the Methodists

As time went on increased co-operation developed between the Congregationalist and Methodist Missions. Superintendent George S. Davis and E. F. Lounsbury of the Methodist Episcopal Mission to northern Bulgaria attended the Annual meeting of the European Turkey Mission in Samokov in 1892.² Visits were reciprocated so that there

¹Ibid., p. 170.

²"Points Picked from the Annual Meeting of the European Turkey Mission, Samokov, Bulgaria, April 12-19, 1892" ABLib.

were always one or two Methodists present at each American Board Annual Meeting, and one or two Congregationalists present at the Methodist Episcopal Annual Mission Conferences. The two Missions held joint summer conferences after the first Methodist Summer Conference in 1895. The pattern followed was that of the Northfield Conferences in the United States. The first joint conference was held in 1896 at Samokov, thereafter alternating between southern and northern Bulgaria.¹

In 1906 misunderstanding was the result of insistence by the Methodists on opening a church in Sofia.² But theologically there was little dividing the two missions, and relationships had been fairly smooth, following the precedent set by Albert Long and Elias Riggs. This tradition led to a jointly celebrated jubilee of fifty years of work in Bulgaria, in 1908.

Some missionaries felt that the declining influx of new native preachers and teachers represented an "almost alarming situation" and that the better educational opportunities elsewhere attracted young people away from the ministry.³ Some of the pastors suggested that the Ameri-

¹Hall, PB, p. 119.

²This will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter VI.

³George D. Marsh to J. Barton, Philippopolis, May 30, 1912, ABAr., Balkan Mission 1910-1919, Vol. IV.

can Board should send out fewer missionaries but increase their salaries, and strengthen theological education, thus solving the problem. The missionaries felt slighted, especially as they knew the American Board's policy favored local self-support. If the number of missionaries were reduced, it appeared that the Board would not pay more to any pastor than the church which he served would pay had it been self-supporting.¹ The situation was aggravated by comparison with the lot of the Methodists in the north, where the aim was not so strictly toward self-support. There they were willing to pay the native pastors on the same scale as the missionaries, and such benefits attracted at least one Congregational pastor to the Methodists, Ivan Sitchanov.²

In the 1908 Jubilee, missionaries and native pastors of both the northern (Methodist) and southern (Congregational) evangelical missions gathered in Sofia. A series of public services and meetings were held, in which all the prominent people participated. J. F. Clarke spoke about the past and future of the Evangelical mission. H. C. Haskell gave a historical survey of the work of the European Turkey Mission. The Congregationalist A. T. Tsanov spoke of the Bulgarian Evangelical Society and Evangelical

¹Hall, PB, p. 176.

²Ibid.

literature, and the Methodist S. Tomov discussed Bulgarian Evangelical literature. The Congregationalist V. I. Shopov and the Methodist Ivan J. Sitchanov considered the influence of the Mission upon the historical development of the Bulgarian people.¹

4. The Bulgarian Evangelical Society²

Though this Jubilee celebrated fifty years of missionary work in Bulgaria, the Bulgarian Evangelical Society, which was founded thirty-three years before, i.e. in 1874, was very much in the spot-light, as having contributed greatly to the spread of Protestantism in the country. The Jubilee was a manifestation of co-operation both between the Methodists and Congregationalists and between the missionaries and native Protestants.

The Bulgarian Evangelical Society (Bulgarskoto Evangelisko Druzhestvo) was organized to establish independent native work for the salvation and education of the Bulgarian nation, and to assist the missionary endeavor to spread scriptural Christianity on the Balkans.³ The goal of the society was proclaimed as saving of souls for

¹Skazkite Derzhani na Yugileniya Sobor, pp. 13-101, contains these speeches in printed form in the Bulgarian language.

²See also supra, p. 99.

³A. Tsanov, "Bulgarskoto Evangelisko Druzhestvo i Evangeliskata Literatura" in SDYS, p. 37. English title: Bulgarian Evangelical Society and Evangelical Literature.

eternity, by accepting the message of a pure gospel as proclaimed among Bulgarians by a group of Protestant foreigners.¹

The first to conceive the Bulgarian Evangelical Society was A. S. Tsanov, who shared the idea with Ivan A. Tonzhorov and Nikola T. Boyadzhiev. The three spoke to other ministers and received support from N. Matinchev, N. Chakalev, P. Ivan Shopov, D. Tenev, A. Kazandzhiev, Petranov, G. Panchev, V. Karaivanov, the brothers Pop Todorovs, P. Georgiev, Ivan Angelov, and others.² Tsanov was then appointed to write the constitution of such a society which was reviewed in the fall of 1874 by a commission consisting of Matinchev, Tonzhorov, Boyadzhiev, M. P. Todorov, Kazandzhiev and N. Chakalev. At a meeting of southern Bulgarian and Macedonian Evangelicals in Samokov, July 16-19, 1875, the constitution was discussed and accepted, and was revised only after twenty-two years in Sofia.³

The activities of the society consisted in (1) the publication and distribution of religious and moral books, and (2) the assistance to Evangelical churches and communities to financially support a pastor. Over twenty books, such as, Where are You Going?, Youth Counselor,

¹Ibid., p. 35.

²Ibid., p. 37.

³Ibid., p. 38.

The Basic Bible Truths, Religion in Everyday Life, etc., and the periodicals Home Friend, Sunday Lessons, Weekly Zornitsa, Monthly Zornitsa, Christian World, Children's Guide, The Abstainer, and The Abstinence Flag, were published or distributed and sponsored by the society.¹

The Society spread rapidly and by 1882 had 200 members, employed a colporteur, operated a book store in Sofia, and supported Matinchev as a preacher in Sofia.² By 1884 they supported another preacher in Dubnitsa, and later in Ichtiman, Slivno, and other places. That year they met for the first time for their regular conference on Methodist territory, as several Methodists and Baptists joined it on grounds of its non-denominational character. At the annual meetings of the Society, which met each year except in 1878 and 1879, the business meetings were enlivened with educational public lectures.³ Topics like, "The influence of Christianity upon Community," "Intemperance", "The Church and the School", "Patriotism",⁴ "From What and Why do the Bulgarian Peasants Suffer in their Present Condition?" "What has Christianity Done for the Home?" etc.⁵

¹Ibid., pp. 39-40. The titles of the books and periodicals translated from the Bulgarian by this author.

²Hall, PB, p. 77.

³A. Tsanov, op. cit., p. 41.

⁴Missionary Herald, Vol. LXXVII, August 1881, pp. 314-315.

⁵Annual Report of the Bulgarian Evangelical Society: 1897-1898, (Abridged from the Bulgarian), (Philippople, Bulgaria: Imprimerie Commerciale, 1899), p. 3.

were quite well attended. The membership of the Society was usually over two hundred, except during the year 1898 when it diminished to 182 due to a severe financial crisis.¹

The missionaries and the Society enjoyed cordial relations and working jointly on common problems. They exchanged delegates to their annual meetings.² Native ministers were aware of the advantages of a solid core of missionaries among them, while the missionaries felt that without the natives their work would be in vain and that the natural process for a mission was to rely increasingly on native workers until the church could be completely indigenized.

An important step was taken in 1909 when 44 Congregationalist, 48 Methodists, and 2 Baptists met and established a handbook of rules about church-state relationships which in 78 articles treated the problems of marriages, divorces, and similar ecclesiastico-civil problems. Marko Popov of the Sofia Evangelical Church was chosen as the official Protestant representative to the government, while Ivan Sitchanov of the Sofia Methodist Episcopal Church as

¹Ibid., p. 6.

²A. Tsanov, op. cit., p. 42.

his assistant.¹ The co-operation was so fruitful that it was decided at this meeting that the two churches should work toward a church union.²

5. The Existence of the Mission Questioned

The mission's activities in education and publication were more fruitful than in evangelism. Only one new church was reported between 1908 and 1912, the one in Stanimaka. The missionaries were greatly disturbed about this, although they had long since realized that they would not be able to convert all Bulgarians. Some of them felt that this weakening of the Protestant movement, would mean it was no longer a stimulus toward reform in the Orthodox Church, and thus indicated its failure. They did not wish to compose a small divisive sect, and so it was suggested that it might be advisable to pull out of Bulgaria entirely.³

The Bulgarian Evangelicals within the field of the American Board mission also deplored the stationary character of the movement, but they regarded their situation in a somewhat different light than the missionaries. The latter had called the separate church communities into being and thereby had assumed an obligation not to desert them but to see that they were adequately sustained regardless of whether or not they were accomplishing the larger end for which they had been designed.

¹Hall, PB, pp. 225-226.

²Ibid., p. 226.

³Ibid., p. 227.

To the Bulgarian Protestants the situation presented a condition which admitted of no theorizing. The missionaries were not unaware of the justice of the point of view of their Bulgarian colleagues, and a certain tension is discernible among them between two somewhat contending ideals,--the promoting of the larger purpose influencing the nation at large and the fulfillment of their responsibilities toward the small Protestant minority.¹

Steps were taken in 1902 to remedy the lack of native workers, when Mary Haskell started a training course for Bible women, but this lasted only until 1907. The more zealous missionaries saw a remedy in a series of revivals which drew audiences of up to 300 in Sofia, Samokov, and the Razlog district between 1909 and 1912. At some of the revival meetings as many as fifty declared themselves born anew.²

6. Theological Controversy

The theological liberals did not consider revivalism an effective remedy for their predicament. In their opinion a closer fellowship with the Eastern Orthodox Church should replace the proselytism favored by the conservative missionaries, with the exception of Robert Thomson. The theological liberals felt that Bulgaria offered a considerable degree of tolerance for religious work. They wanted to take

¹Ibid.

²Ibid., p. 232.

advantage of the new spirit of friendliness and co-operation on the part of the Orthodox, which was in evidence by 1910.¹ They criticized both churches and sought for a message appealing to the intellectuals, which they felt was not provided by any of the churches in Bulgaria.

These religious liberals included Edward B. Haskell, Reuben H. Markham, and Lyle Woodruff. All younger men with good education, who were influenced by theological trends in the United States, they were concerned with the unwillingness of the others to change their methods which were the same as those employed fifty years before, under wholly different circumstances. Haskell has revealed to his family that he had twice gone through a religious crisis in which he doubted the very existence of God. Both times he had altered his religious beliefs.² This process of doubt and spiritual discouragement started in 1894 after which a form of liberalism became his way of thinking. He later accepted the fallibility of the Bible and literary criticism (1909).³ The other two missionaries had arrived in 1911 and 1912. Markham believed substantially in the same basic tenets of liberal theology.

¹Ibid., pp. 230-232.

²Interview with Dr. Henry Haskell, Dean of Wheelock College, Boston, Mass., the son of E. B. Haskell, on October 29, 1963.

³Hall, PB, p. 238.

All this met with great opposition by the conservatives, especially George Marsh, William Clarke, and John House, some of whom sought to deny them the pulpit. However there was little personal hostility and in some cases conservatives and liberals were capable of exemplary co-operation, e.g. Haskell and House in Salonica.

The Liberals were united in their admiration for the Christ-like spirit and diligence of their conservative colleagues and they conceded that 'life is more potent than belief'. Nevertheless they regarded the conservative temper of the mission as a tragic hindrance to the work it was called upon to do.¹

Markham and Haskell objected particularly to preoccupation with "saving of souls," the unwillingness to accept the theory of evolution, and to discuss social problems.

Haskell attacked the situation by offering public lectures in Salonica, as did Markham in Samokov, especially in the period when the pulpit was denied to him, speaking on modern problems from the Christian perspective. Both men received enthusiastic support, especially by the students. To the younger generation they seemed like heroes as they grappled with problems not within the traditional missionary sphere (e.g. Markham's publication of his discovery of a shallowly buried man shot secretly by the government to silence opposition). Their willingness to lend support to unpopular causes

¹Ibid., p. 235.

struck a responsive chord in these young people.¹

The older pastors, uninvolved in new theological developments, lagged behind the Bulgarian intelligentsia in their thinking. Markham's lecture at the Boys' School in Samokov in 1913 on "The Religious Tendencies of the Present Age", gave rise to the whole controversy.² The new ideas were offensive to older missionaries and the native preachers. Markham then resigned from his assignment as a missionary, remaining in Bulgaria as a teacher and publisher. This he did with regret, as he thought very highly of the vocation of the missionary.

Even though not recognized and publicly appreciated . . . they [the missionaries] passionately and [next word illegible - perhaps "unselfishly"] give everything they have to serve them. I have never seen such a display of wholly unappreciated devotion. Let anyone who thinks religion isn't a powerful and vital thing visit a few missionaries.³

The contest was long, heated, and occasionally injudicious. The liberals felt that the mode of the work did not agree with their conscientious beliefs. They were reluctant to express their ideas for fear of doing more

¹Interview with Henry Haskell, October 29, 1963.

²Hall, PE, p. 242.

³R. Markham to J. Barton, Samokov, August 14, 1913, ABAR, Balkan Missions, 1910-1919, Vol. IV.

harm than good but they could not profess things which they did not believe.

Wrote Markham to Barton, the Secretary of the American Board in Boston who sympathized with the liberals,

But I, made as I am, can not more work for the Evangelicals here, than Gordon of Boston could jubilantly participate in the propaganda of the shakers or the mormons. I have no feeling of animosity for any one here. Outside of religion we are very friendly. But religiously we don't hitch.¹

The Markham case loomed large, as the Methodist superintendent Elmer Count accused the American Board of having a Unitarian in its missionary force. Barton tried to defend Markham, but Markham admitted that he was theologically unitarian, although he had not said so to the Bulgarian people. The liberals did not consider that such beliefs were a proper reason for vicious theological controversy.

The liberals felt that the work of the mission should be the concern of all, and that they should have the right to speak out on all issues. Wrote Markham, "Can any one under 30 resign himself to a dying cause without at least a few convulsions?"² During the war Markham was persuaded

¹R. Markham to Barton from Samokov on May 10, 1915. ABAR Balkan Mission 1910-1919, Vol. IV.

²R. Markham to Barton from Samokov on June 5, 1915. ABAR Balkan Mission 1910-1919, Vol. IV.

to take again an appointment as a missionary but he resigned in 1918. His love for Bulgaria was so great that he returned there after the war again as a missionary.

Although he shocked the older members of the mission by the outspoken expression of his views, Markham was in a sense the epitome of the evangelical missionary spirit, for his enthusiasm was boundless and his faith in the power of the social gospel to remake a broken world undimmed.¹

E.B. Haskell was characterized by this same type of idealism, enthusiasm, and advanced theological and social views.

Although the mission in Bulgaria was not so advanced theologically as other missions of the American Board, and although the number of liberals was small, they received the full support of the American Board, which held that the liberals represented the thinking of a considerable number of the churches in the United States supporting the program.² At the same time the mission lost the support of the Bible Lands Mission Aid Society, and the Methodists discontinued the proposed merger with the southern mission. The Bulgarian Evangelical Society

¹Hall, PB, pp. 238-239.

²Ibid., p. 242.

complained to the American Board, of the presence of the liberals in the mission. But the conservative missionaries felt that the liberals should be tolerated as a sign of their belief in religious freedom.¹

C. The Work During the Wars of 1912 to 1918

Further development of the controversy, or its possible resolution, was interrupted by the series of wars in which Bulgaria participated. New missionaries (W. Cooper, R. Markham, L. Woodruff, Edith Douglass) came into conditions which were not much different from those experienced by some of the early missionaries, and some of them questioned whether Bulgaria was a place in which they cared to spend their entire lives.² But there was little time to contemplate such problems; they were at once drawn into relief work, necessitated by war, and often financed through the efforts of missionaries on furlough.³

1. The Balkan Wars

As soon as the war of 1912 started the schools, except the Samokov Girls' School and two primary schools, were closed. Many ministers were drafted, and the peri-

¹Ibid., p. 244.

²Edith L. Douglass, "The Story of My Life in the Balkans and in Turkey," 1956, p. 1. Typed manuscript on file at ABLib.

³Ibid., p. 3.

odical of the mission, Zornitsa, suspended printing. The missionaries worked among soldiers distributing tracts and talking with them.¹ The name of the mission had to be changed. It was renamed the Balkan Mission, but in reality it was four separate missions, as there was little or no contact between Bulgaria, Serbia, Greece, and Albania, or with Turkey.²

Mary Haskell remained to nurse 27 Bulgarian wounded soldiers when the Turks recaptured Adrianople. She conducted them safely through an exchange of war prisoners via Constantinople back to Bulgarian territory.³ The missionaries identified themselves with the Bulgarian cause but tried to be impartial in their service, which brought them great respect and admiration. They were indignant when Bulgarian national aspirations were crushed through the Treaty of Bucharest in 1913, and wholeheartedly defended Bulgaria against charges of atrocities. Woodruff was appointed with three other Protestants including Dimiter Furnadzhiev, to serve on a six-man commission to represent Bulgarian claims in England and the U.S.A. on behalf of King Ferdinand during the

¹Hall, PB, p. 248.

²Ann. Rep. ABCFM, 1913, p. 57.

³Advance, March 22, 1954. From a clipping filed at ABLib.

summer of 1913, carrying with him the weight of J. F. Clarke's, Thomson's, and Baird's memoranda on the same subject.¹

2. World War I

The first World War threatened to destroy the work of the mission. The missionary staff was greatly reduced but would have suffered more had the United States declared war on Bulgaria and Turkey.² Nearly all communications with the United States were interrupted, and banking operations were paralyzed. Some funds for relief work and current expenses were sent by the American Board through the mediation of the Standard Oil Company, various other business companies, and the American Embassy.³

The worship services were for a while better attended, as often happens in times of crises. However, this religiosity based on insecurity and fear was often replaced by a sort of lethargy and loss of faith.⁴ For the first time the Bulgarian Evangelical pastors were exempt from military service, but touring was restricted.⁵

¹Hall, PB, p. 253. Also assorted clippings in the files of ABLib. on L. D. Woodruff.

²C. T. Riggs, HWANE, p. 64.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid., p. 65.

⁵Hall, PB, p. 255.

The few missionaries who remained, concentrated on education, as the mission schools were operating at full capacity through most of the war, despite the obvious lack of necessities and the increase in prices. Both schools received government recognition, in 1914 and 1915, and were now bona fide institutions of gymnasium level.¹ But printing and like activities ceased.

Markham and Haskell were convinced that it would be a mistake for the United States to declare war upon Bulgaria. Bulgaria did not want war with the United States despite its being in the camp of the Central Powers and these two men were given safe conduct to travel to the United States and present their story. They claimed that Bulgaria entered the war because of national aspirations and not because of any enmity toward the United States, supporting the side which was willing to satisfy its claims more fully.²

It is difficult to estimate how much their urging influenced the United States Senate and responsible government officials. Haskell and Markham felt that their in-

¹Ibid., p. 207. Gymnasium is a European institution for secondary education preceding university education. It provides the students with sufficient general education to enable them to proceed with specialized training at the university, such as law, medicine, technology, philosophy, etc.

²[Anonymous.] Biographical Notes about E. B. Haskell, n.d., n.p. Typed manuscript on file in ABLib.

fluence was perhaps crucial, and did not shun active lobbying, despite the danger of being arrested as pro-Germans and spies.¹ They defended themselves against this charge and justified the Bulgarian action. The Bulgarians had intervened with Austria, to let the two missionaries pass through Austrian territory, they said, in the hope that the American government might become sympathetic to Bulgaria's claim to Macedonia, and not declare war.² Woodruff later involved himself in the political fate of Bulgaria, when he argued the case of Bulgaria at the Paris Peace Conference, in 1919.³

The American Board censured the missionaries for their involvement in these political activities, but they did not heed this admonition. They wanted to help the young state as best they could. This laid them open to the charge that they had become Bulgarized instead of having Americanized Bulgaria,⁴ which was partially true. This carried some unpleasant connotations because the Bulgarian claims were not impartial. The American Board missionaries in Bulgaria thus involved themselves

¹Ibid.

²Markham to Barton, Topeka, Kansas, June 25, 1918, Abar, Balkan Missions, 1910-1919, Vol. IV.

³Hall, PB, p. 263.

⁴A charge made by Elmer Davis of New York in New Europe of July 4, 1918, quoted by E. B. Haskell in the Springfield Republican of November 8, 1918, quoted by W. Hall, PB, p. 261.

in a political controversy which could have had disastrous consequences upon the American Board's work in countries hostile to Bulgaria. On the other hand this identification with Bulgaria was commendable in so far as there was no call to "Americanize" Bulgaria. It also illustrated the extent to which missionaries adapted themselves to their "second fatherland". Apart from all they may have accomplished in the interest of peace, the facts were that the missionary influence in Bulgaria was thereafter greatly enlarged.

CHAPTER VI

THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL MISSION TO NORTHERN BULGARIA, 1857-1919

The Methodists in Bulgaria were less influenced by outside events than by the shifting policies of their own denomination. Hence the division of their history is based on internal events in the life of the mission rather than on the political history of Bulgaria, as was the case of Bulgarian Congregationalism.

A. From 1857 to 1871

1. Preparatory Steps

From the very beginning the Methodist Episcopal Mission to Bulgaria was somewhat anachronistic and out of tune with the other missions of the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church. There was a general reluctance to enter into any European country, because the Europeans were all nominally Christians. However, the Methodist missionaries to Bulgaria were the only ones working among people predominantly of Eastern Orthodox faith, and for many years the Bulgarian mission was the sole Methodist Episcopal Mission in the Balkans, and among the Orthodox Slavs. The practice of the Methodist missionaries was to go to lands where they were invited, either by relatives

of American Methodist immigrants or by immigrant returnees who had become Methodists in the United States.¹ In the case of the missionary enterprise to Bulgaria, the claim was made that "the Methodist Episcopal Church is engaged in proclaiming the Gospel in Europe principally because Europe wants Methodism,"² but the Bulgarian experience of the first fifty years stands in contradiction of this statement. The American Methodists felt that their evangelical religion should be wanted by Bulgarians, but it is doubtful whether there was great sympathy on the part of the majority of Bulgarians.

When the Methodist Missionary Society contemplated entering a field like Bulgaria it had no conscious intention to organize a separate church.

In the beginning this mission was not an evangelistic agency in the same sense as the other overseas missions of the church. Its direction was not to lead people to break the ties which bound them to the State Church but, as Durbin [the Corresponding Secretary of the Methodist Missionary Society] said, to awaken in the Bulgarian Church . . . a desire for evangelical religion, and lead her people to seek the same.³

¹The Imperishable Message: The Story of 1930 and 1931, Being the Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of The Methodist Episcopal Church (New York: Board of Foreign Missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church, n.d.), p. 165.

²Ibid.

³Wade Crawford Barclay, History of Methodist Missions, Part II: The Methodist Episcopal Church, 1845-1939, Vol. III: Widening Horizons, 1845-95 (New York, The Board of Missions of the Methodist Church, 1957), p. 1038.

Such motivation was not novel among American Protestants, as the American Board was guided by exactly the same motivations and principles. The American Board's work in Turkey was the source of inspiration to the Methodist Board to do similar work in this region. It will be remembered that the American Board feared unnecessary competition in Turkey by other Mission Boards, particularly the Methodist Board, and that they sought to indicate to the Methodists a part of Turkey which had not yet been ministered to by any Protestants. Bulgaria seemed to be just such a field.

By 1852 the Methodists crystalized their desire to enter the Turkish field. Then the Secretary of the American Board requested from the Salonica missionaries of the American Board a prospectus of the Bulgarian field as an area to which he could direct the attention of the Methodists.¹ This suggestion was heeded by the Methodist Episcopal Church. At that time the Methodists were expanding to new areas. The General Committee of the Missionary Society created a \$5,000 fund, to which additional appropriations were to be regularly

¹Rufus Anderson to the Missionaries to the Jews in Salonica, April 6, 1852, ABar. Instructions to Missions, Vol. V, Letters to the Salonica Station.

added until the time came when a mission to Bulgaria could be opened for participating in the resuscitation of the Eastern Orthodox Churches in Turkey.¹

For a number of years several of the more prominent members of the American Board mission at Constantinople advised the Methodist Board of the fine prospects of entering Bulgaria.

For some years previous to the establishment of this mission, the peculiar political and religious agitation of the countries on both sides of the Lower Danube seemed to indicate very important revolutions in the conditions of society, opening the way for a speedy spread of evangelistic Christianity among the people.²

Later Dr. Elias Riggs wrote to Corresponding Secretary of the Methodist Missionary Society, John P. Durbin, again recommending Bulgaria as a mission field. He reported that American Board missionaries were exhilarated by their observation of the Bulgarians who seemed much more receptive than any other folk with whom they had come into contact. Bishops Simpson and Waugh encouraged the acceptance of such suggestions.³

The most effective arguments were presented by Cyrus Hamlin, an American Board missionary at Constantinople, after he had

¹J.M. Reid, Missions and Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, rev. and extended J.T. Gracey, Vol. III (New York: Eaton & Mains, 1896), p. 201.

²The Annual Report of the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1864, (New York, Printed for the Society, annually), p. 85. Abbreviated title: Ann. Rep. MSMEC.

³Reid, op. cit., p. 202.

unsuccessfully pleaded with the American Board to take up Bulgaria as a mission field. In the summer of 1856, he presented his views at the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church at Palmyra, N.Y., persuading it to start a mission as soon as possible.¹

At this time, at the conclusion of the Crimean War, the surging Bulgarian nation was trying to liberate itself both from Greek ecclesiastical jurisdiction and Turkish civil bonds. Here was a revolutionary situation into which entered a group of religious men, "whose chief aim was to enlighten and save humanity, and vindicate truth wherever found."² They hoped to do whatever they could for the Bulgarians, unimpeded by prejudices against Americans and undisturbed by any American commercial or other group interest which could nullify the impact of their work. It was of course a great difficulty that their desire to evangelize was not shared by the hierarchy of that church. Sending of missionaries was done without consulting the Patriarch of Constantinople or the jurisdictional bishops. With all due regard for the values of free religious propaganda and religious toleration we can see today that these people acted with a certain arrogance and presumption in assuming that the Christianity espoused by

¹Hamlin, op. cit., p. 262.

²Tsvetko Bagranoff, The American Missions' Share in the Regeneration and Defense of Bulgaria (n.p., American Bulgarian Good Neighbor League, 1947), p. 2.

American Methodists, Congregationalists, and Presbyterians was what was needed here. One reason for this was the assumption by some that what had been found to be good in America would also be good elsewhere and would therefore be desired by these people if they could just be told. Being from a democratic society with a free church spirit they may naturally have felt that the local people could determine what their own needs were. But to the Orthodox, decisions of this sort were wholly the responsibility of the hierarchy. Should the hierarchy find no need for Protestants, the residence of missionaries involved many complications, including the danger of severe persecutions.

2. The Appointment and Location of the First Missionaries

On May 20, 1857 announcement was made that Bishop Matthew Simpson had appointed Albert L. Long and Wesley Prettyman, as the first missionaries in Bulgaria, to establish a station jointly.¹ They traveled via Constantinople, just then visited by Bishop Simpson, where they were joined by Edwin E. Bliss with whom they toured northern Bulgaria, designated as the Methodist "sphere of interest" comprising the region between the Danube River and the Balkan Mountains. Contrary to the recommendations of the Board, they chose two cities, Varna and Shumen, for stations,² the reason being that the two

¹Barclay, op. cit., p. 1018.

²Ibid., footnote on p. 1019.

missionaries did not get along well with one another. Prettyman took up Varna as his residence, while Long decided to live in Shumen (Shumla). These stations were established before the beginning of 1858, (probably in November 1857)¹ a few months before the American Board arrived in Bulgaria.

The first few months were spent in language study. Long was a very talented linguist. He learned Bulgarian so rapidly that he held his first service within two months after his arrival. On the urging of the Missionary Committee both missionaries were established in Shumen (Shumla).² The missionaries made good inroads in Shumen, on the ground of Prettyman's knowledge of medicine and Long's knowledge of the language, but they could not hold out indefinitely without help. In 1858 Bishop E. S. Janes appointed Frederick William Flocken as another member. He was born in Odessa, Russia, of German parentage, and spoke Russian and German. After ten years of residence in the United States,³ he volunteered to return to Europe as a missionary.

An invitation was received from Tirnovø, and Long moved

¹Missionary Advocate, January 1858, pp. 76f.

²Barclay, op. cit., p. 1019.

³Ibid., footnote p. 1019, also J. P. Durbin to W. Prettyman, F. Flocken and A. Long, December 27, 1859 in "Bulgaria Letterbook," March 20, 1854-November 1866, p. 16 and Bishop E. S. Janes to W. F. Flocken, November 6, 1858, "Bulgaria Letterbook," p. 58. MBMAr.

there in September 1859 establishing the second station.¹ He had mixed success. He was both condemned from the pulpit of the Orthodox Church and had some friendly priests come to his home to discuss religion.² At Shumen Prettyman preached in English and Flocken in German, until 1860 when Flocken went to the town of Tultcha (now Tulcea in Rumania). A Bulgarian priest became one of the chief colporteurs co-operating with the mission, though he was employed by the British and Foreign Bible Society.³

Tultcha was a town in northern Bulgaria in which lived a mixed population of Bulgarian, Rumanian, Russian, and German people. Flocken was well suited to work in this town as he could minister to the Germans, who were Lutherans, and also to the Russians of the Molokan sect, who had escaped from persecution in Russia and settled on Turkish territory.⁴ Very little was known about this small sect and Flocken was one of the first men to study them. They were a sectarian group but remained within the fold of the Russian Orthodox Church. Under the influence of Simeon Matfeovich and Arina Timofeovna, both formerly in the service of the Russian embassy

¹Ann. Rep. MSMEC, 1859, p. 55.

²Reid, op. cit., p. 208.

³I. G. John, Hand Book of Methodist Missions (Nashville, Tenn.: Publishing House of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1893), p. 531.

⁴Ibid., p. 532.

in England, they began observing practices that the two founders probably saw at Wesleyan services. They were called Molokans by the other Russians since they drank milk (moloko) during fast days. They had no icons, temples, crosses, candles, priests. Since these people were friendly toward Flocken, he had hoped that as a result of his work, they might become Methodists. Here was a chance to gain a foothold for mission work within the Russian Empire.¹

When the expected progress among Molokans did not proceed as rapidly as hoped, Flocken directed his attention to the German colonists; the Bulgarians were not the direct aim of his mission, except as he reached them through an elementary school which he founded there.² Flocken's hope to convert the Molokans finally failed, as they were not willing to separate from the Orthodox Church, but his school did much better. In 1860 he had 52 pupils and soon thereafter 218 boys and 40 girls.³ By 1862 Flocken admitted two full members and two probationers, organized two Sunday schools, and a boys' and a girls' day school for which the Molokans provided a building.

3. The First Native Workers and Early Struggles

The missionaries soon received help from a number of natives. An assistant of Flocken, named Gabriel Eliev, con-

¹Ibid., pp. 531-533.

²Ann. Rep. MSMEC, 1864, pp. 85-86.

³Reid, op. cit., pp. 220 and 223.

sidered himself as the first Protestant convert in Bulgaria, and was later widely regarded as being the oldest Protestant. He was a translator for Cyrus Hamlin and Henry Jones of the Turkish Mission Aid Society, when they toured the country before any mission was established.¹ At Tultcha, Flocken was assisted by a Molokan convert Ivan Ivanov, a person so reliable that Flocken was able to leave Tultcha without fearing that the whole work would have been in vain. Prettyman found a valuable assistant in a young and enthusiastic school teacher named Milanovich, a Bohemian.

In 1862 the Protestant missionaries were under attack by the religious journals of the Orthodox and Catholic churches. They were unable to answer any of the charges, as they had no press.² Whether purposively or out of ignorance, the Orthodox charged the Methodists with large scale proselytism, saying that by 1859 there were 380 Methodist missionaries in Turkey stationed in 108 places, being in almost all larger towns of the Empire.³ There were, of course, only three missionaries

¹Hamlin, op. cit., p. 263.

²Reid, op. cit., p. 220.

³Marin Drinov, Istoricheski Pregled na Bulgarska-ta Tsrkva: ot samo-to nachalo i do dnes, (Vienna, L. Sommerov, 1869), p. 175. There may have been a confusion in the author's mind about the denominational affiliation of the American Board, but even so the number is grossly exaggerated.

in northern Bulgaria, and no Methodists in any other part of the Turkish empire. Their small number made them feel especially grateful for the assistance they received from natives.¹

The Orthodox clergy and followers considered the work of the Methodist and American Boards as undesirable. They regarded Protestantism as being merely a negation of Roman Catholicism, and a danger to their faith. But they also felt that there would be few converts. They wholeheartedly agreed with the statement of J. L. Patterson, who said about Protestant missionaries,

. . . acting on that principle everywhere they first make a tabula rasa of minds, on which they never afterwards succeed in inscribing the laws of sincere faith of consistent practice. The work of the Protestant missions is simply destructive.²

On the other hand the Methodist missionaries were experiencing the same kind of deflation of enthusiasm about the Bulgarians which the American Board missionaries experienced in the corresponding period, finding the people essentially

¹Laura S. Bixby, An Outline of the Foreign Missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church (Syracuse, N. Y.: n. n., 1876), pp. 131-132.

²Drinov, op. cit., p. 178. Quoted from J. L. Patterson, Journal of a Tour in Egypt, Palestine, Syria and Greece, London, 1852, p. 455.

ignorant, superstitious, and prejudiced.¹ Wesley Prettyman despaired so much that he requested return to the United States, and his resignation was accepted in 1863. Prior to his resignation Prettyman had pleaded with the Missionary Society to send reinforcement, if their work was not to be in vain.

The Board sent a two-man commission, consisting of Louis S. Jacoby (the founder of German Methodism) and W. F. Warren, to investigate conditions in the Bulgarian mission and the mismanagement of funds by Prettyman.² The study revealed that (1) the plans and methods of the missionaries were sound and that they were doing all in their power to fulfill their tasks, (2) the clerical and political opposition was harming the work of the mission, (3) the mission needed a superintendent, (4) a printing press would contribute much to the work, (5) a missionary should be stationed in the capital of the Empire, Istanbul, and that (6) the greatest cause of distress was indecision as to whether the goal of the mission should be to revitalize the Orthodox Church or to organize a separate Methodist Church, either of which seemed impractical.³

¹There is a voluminous correspondence of Secretary J. P. Durbin with Long on this subject. See Long's letters to Durbin of February 23, 1863, April 1, 1863, etc. from the MBMAR.

²See voluminous correspondence of J. P. Durbin to mission personnel during 1862-63, e. g. August 25, 1862, September 4, 1862, March 3, 1863 all in "Bulgaria Letterbook," MBMAR.

³Barclay, op. cit., p. 1022.

Long remained in Tirnovo until 1863, where he had fairly good success preaching in a rented hall. He requested the Mission Board to employ Gabriel Eliev and make him a member of the mission, while he would still remain a colporteur of the British and Foreign Bible Society, and this request was granted. In 1863 he left Tirnovo and moved to Constantinople where he was to spend most of his very fruitful life, ministering also to a Bulgarian congregation of from ten to forty members.¹

In Bulgaria itself there was a further reduction in the number of adherents and at the joint conference of the two missions working in Bulgaria held at Eski Zagra ca. 1862, with expressions of disappointment, it was decided that the common policy should be one to postpone organizing separate churches, but that it would be proper to receive communicants and to extend to them full ministerial services. This may have seemed to the missionaries as a compromise solution to their dilemma, but actually this biding for time may have been one reason for their comparative ineffectiveness. The mission certainly did not try to co-operate with the Orthodox Church; a clear-cut policy either for a separate church, or for revitalization of the Orthodox Church, would have produced better results. Neither the missionaries nor the General Com-

¹Ann. Rep. MSMEC, 1864, p. 87.

mittee in New York knew exactly what they wanted and this paralyzed the work.

Another reason for the paralysis of the work, not only in the first years, but in the later years as well, was that the Missionary Society never made a full commitment to the mission work in Bulgaria, while the American Board had no doubts of the permanency of its mission. This insecurity haunted the missionaries and the native workers year in and year out, bringing them into despair or exhilaration as the Missionary Society's General Missionary Committee alternated its decisions about Bulgaria.¹

4. Brighter Days

Although the Bulgarian Methodist Mission in Bulgaria was under episcopal supervision as were all other Methodist Missions, the first bishop to visit them, Bishop Edward Thomson, came eight years after the mission was organized. Bishop Thomson, accompanied by Albert Long, who was appointed superintendent of the Bulgarian mission with his removal to Istanbul, visited Varna, Tultcha, Tirnovo, and Svishtov (Sistoff). The bishop was rather impressed, especially with Flocken's work in Tultcha. He reported to the Missionary Board optimistically that the work in Bulgaria could be blooming if at least

¹Barclay, op. cit., p. 1039.

three more missionaries were sent, to give special emphasis to schools rather than churches, which, he thought offered less prospect.¹

The re-enforcement did not arrive until 1887. The missionaries continued their loyal work. In Istanbul, Long co-operated with Elias Riggs on the translation of the Bulgarian Bible, printed two books, The Dairyman's Daughter, which he wrote in 1864,² and Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress in 1866 as well as few tracts.³ He also started to publish the first Bulgarian periodical, the Zornitsa (The Morning Star), in 1863.

Gabriel Eliev experienced some success in Svishtov where he broke the opposition through his exemplary Christian life, but in three years had no more than twelve to fifteen members. Flocken's usefulness in Tultcha was considered at an end.

The information which has come to us during the last year or two tends to raise doubts whether the Molokans are inclining to a proper Church organization, or rather aiming to be instructed in scriptural doctrine and ecclesiastical usages by our mission, and thus be better able to reform and consolidate their own communities. We incline to the latter opinion and believe that they will not resolve themselves as a body or gradually as individuals into a scriptural

¹ Ibid., p. 1024.

² Ann. Rep. MSMEC, 1864, p. 86.

³ Ann. Rep. MSMEC, 1866, p. 105. The original translation of Long, written by him in longhand is in the possession of Dr. Floyd Black of Arlington, Mass., formerly president of the American College in Sofia.

living Church. And yet, if they are informed and reformed, and become evangelical in their hearts and blameless in their lives, they will be a religious beacon-light . . .¹

It is clear from this statement that the reforming of these people without their actual acceptance of all Protestant beliefs was regarded as only second best, placing in doubt the avowed purpose of the mission. Confirmation of this view is seen in the fact that the refusal of the Molokans to become Methodist members was decisive in the discontinuation of Flocken's work among them. He paid more attention to the German population in Tultcha, but having offended them, he had to abandon the notion that the German Methodists would extend their mission to all German colonists in Bulgaria.

In 1868 one missionary family, that of Rev. E.A. Wanless, arrived and was stationed in Ruschuk where they were to be joined by the Flockens. This recommendation of the Mission was not carried out as a sudden and unexpected revival occurred in 1868 among another Russian religious sect, the Lipovans. This happened just when Flocken was preparing to leave Tultcha. He changed his plans in order to help the leader of the group of Lipovans, Dimitri Petrov, to organize the group into a regular Methodist Episcopal Society, in two classes each with a leader, three stewarts and an exhorter [Petrov] who was licensed by the leaders' meeting.² This was the first Methodist

¹Ann. Rep. MSMEC, 1864, p. 91.

²Reid, op. cit., p. 228.

Episcopal Church among Russians; its sudden appearance gave much optimism to the missionaries as to prospects within Russia. Therefore The Articles of Religion, The General Rules, Catechism No. 2, parts of the ritual, ninety hymns, and a brief church history were translated into Russian to give the new believers the chance of acquainting themselves with current Methodist beliefs.¹

By 1870 Petrov was so well trained that he took charge of the young society, and Flocken moved to Ruschuk. The Tultcha society had by this time 17 full members, 1 on probation, and 38 in the Sunday School.² In 1869 Eliev was able to organize the second Methodist society, this being the first Bulgarian society, with 14 members. Some younger members of the Svishtov church suffered persecution when they neglected to close a store on an Orthodox religious holiday, but were left in peace after they were recognized as bona fide Protestants by higher authorities.³

Smaller groups of Protestants were formed in Pleven (Plevna), Lovech (Lovcha), Lom Palanka, and elsewhere. They were "perhaps but partially instructed" believers, but they gave hopes to the missionaries.⁴ Two additional assistants, Nikola S. Vlaev and Todor Angelov, were added to the mission.

¹Ibid.

²Ann. Rep. MSMEC, 1869, p. 134.

³Ann. Rep. MSMEC, 1868, p. 128.

⁴Ibid., p. 129.

In Ruschuk the missionaries encountered a hostile opponent in an Orthodox monk, who wrote a book against them, frightening the simple people away from the Protestants.¹ The missionaries complained that it was not persecution and opposition that harmed their work most, but orders by priests and teachers that people should stay away from the missionaries.² But this obstacle could, they felt, be gradually overcome, with patience, and with the distribution of Protestant literature in the homes across the nation.

5. Albert L. Long, *The Bulgarian Bible*, and Zornitsa

When Albert Long came to Constantinople he soon forged a life partnership of linguistic scholarship with Elias Riggs of which the major product was the translation of the Bible into the Bulgarian vernacular. Drs. A. Long and E. Riggs were not the first or the only such translators. At Bucharest the Four Gospels had been printed in 1828 as translated by Serafim of Eski Zagra and Sapunov of Trevna. In 1840 the whole New Testament was published at Smyrna, by the monk Neophyte P. Petrov, of the Rila monastery, with the aid of Metropolitan Hilarion of Tirnovo.³ This work was published by the British and Foreign Bible Society, which requested Dr. Riggs

¹Ann. Rep. MSMEC, 1870, p. 106.

²Reid, op. cit., p. 230.

³C. T. Riggs, HWANE, p. 44.

to revise the New Testament and to authorize an Old Testament translation. Riggs requested the aid of the very competent scholar, Photinov of Smyrna, who had prepared the first draft of a translation of the Old Testament into Bulgarian from modern Greek and French, but he died of consumption upon his arrival in Constantinople in 1858.¹

With the co-operation of A. Long and two Bulgarian literary workers, the poet Petko Slaveikov and Christodoulos Kostovich, the revision of the New Testament was completed, "making some use of a translation by the Abbot Neophyte, from the Slavic into the Macedonian dialect, and another by Mr. Slaveikoff from the Greek, in the Eastern Bulgarian dialect, and carefully comparing their work with the Servian, Russ, and other translation."² The translators chose to use the eastern Bulgarian, or Thracian dialect, rather than the Macedonian dialect. This proved to be a wise choice at a time when the conditions of the spoken language were not settled, since the literary language later incorporated the eastern, rather than the western dialect.³ Riggs rewrote

¹Elias Riggs, Reminiscences for My Children (n.p., Not Published, 1891), n.p.

²Missionary Herald, Vol. LXIII, (Dec. 1867) No. 12.

³John Bellows, The Memorial Service for the Late Rev. Elias Riggs, D.D., LL. D., Missionary of the American Board. . . . (Gloucester, Mass.: Published by John Bellows, n. d.), p. 14.

some passages; his main concern and duty was to see that the spirit of the original was preserved. The Rev. Mr. Long saw to it that the idiomatic and acceptable usage of words was employed.¹

The whole work of translation continued for twelve years and was completed in 1871. In the meantime Long spent two years in New York supervising a parallel electrotyping of the Old Church Slavonic version and the New Bulgarian version of the New Testament, while the other translators finished the Old Testament translation. When the Bible was translated it was the best translation possible under the circumstances of a changing language and rapidly changing scholarship of which the translators took advantage. Despite its accuracy and definite contribution to the establishment of the Bulgarian literary language the translation was not recognized by the Holy Synod of the Eastern Orthodox Church. They called it "the Protestant Bible," and prepared to translate their own version from the modern Russian.²

Dr. Long was also the first translator of Hymns into Bulgarian, but more important still was his work in connection

¹Ibid., p. 11.

²Ibid., p. 18.

with the Zornitsa. It was the oldest Bulgarian paper which Long started either in 1862¹, or in 1863², which is the most probable date, or in 1864.³

After the first issue of Zornitsa the Turkish authorities were slow in recognizing it. When Long expressed concern to the American Minister in Istanbul, the latter approached the Grand Vizier in order to speed up the permission. The following conversation ensued:

"By the way, your Excellency, what are the prospects for the little Bulgarian paper which some of my countrymen wish to publish?"

"You mean that republican journal?" said the Vizier.

"Oh, no, your Excellency," replied the Minister, "you have been misinformed. It is not to be a political but a religious sheet."

"But is it not to be Protestant?"

"Yes, your Excellency."

"Well, Protestantism is republicanism."⁴

Actually, Dr. Long suspected that the delay was due to the interference of the Bulgarian censor, who had attended a Jesuit college and was the editor of a Jesuit paper, but the Minister of Public Instructions finally permitted the work to be continued.⁵

¹Bagranoff, op. cit., p. 8.

²Ann. Rep. MSMEC, 1864, p. 87.

³Vladimir A. Tsanoff (ed), Reports and Letters of American Missionaries, (Sofia, n.n., 1919), p. ix.

⁴Edward B. Haskell, "American Influence in Bulgaria," in Bagranoff, op. cit., pp. 20-21.

⁵Ann. Rep. MSMEC, 1864, p. 87.

Albert Long edited the Zornitsa, as a monthly journal, until 1872. Later the editorship was transferred to American Board missionaries living in Constantinople, Theodor Byington until 1885, and Robert Thomson, from 1885 to 1896. They supervised also a weekly edition of Zornitsa (1875 to 1885) and Excerpts from the Monthly Zornitsa (1878-1896).¹ During the financial crisis of the American Board all this was discontinued, but Zornitsa was again issued after 1902, under a succession of editors of whom the more prominent were, A. S. Tsanov, Ivan Tsakov, D. Gradinarov, and Reuben H. Markham. The paper was later transferred to Samokov and from there spread its influence among Protestants and Orthodox alike, having actually more Orthodox subscribers, not only in Bulgaria, but also in Macedonia. The reason for its popularity was that it was the oldest periodical in Bulgaria and was characterized by non-partisanship, soundness, propagation of ethical principles in government and society, support of liberty, toleration, and democracy, etc. The Zornitsa covered a wide variety of interesting subjects about the place of religion in society, the connection of religion and morality in home and national life, and provided informative articles on medicine, foreign countries,

¹S. Tomov, "Bulgarska Evangelska Literatura" in SDYS, p. 64. Title in English: Bulgarian Evangelical Literature.

education, culture, etc.¹ When the publication was stopped in 1940 by the Fascist government of Bulgaria, it was widely regarded as one of the most influential in the country.² It resumed its publication after the Second World War but was finally forbidden by the Bulgarian Communist government in 1948.³

B. From 1872 to 1892

1. The Abandonment and Resumption of the Mission

In 1871 Flocken and Waneless were suddenly recalled to the United States "for reasons not fully explained."⁴ This meant the abandonment of Bulgaria as a mission field, as these were the only two missionaries on the territory of northern Bulgaria, while Superintendent Long was pre-occupied with his literary and teaching work in Constantinople. Bishop Simpson declared,

¹Izvodi ot Vestnik Zornitsa za 1877 god., (Istanbul, Turkey: Knyigopechatnitsa na A. H. Boyadzhiyan, 1881), passim. Illustrative of the above statement are articles entitled: "God Does Not Think as We Do," "Russian Universities," "The English Parliament," "The Influence of Christianity," "The Eyes," "God Chooses the Weak to Shame the Powerful," etc.

²Floyd Black, The American College of Sofia, (Boston: Trustees of the American Schools in Sofia, Inc., 1858), p. 9.

³J.F. Clarke [I], Typed Script of Broadcasts of the Voice of America, Program No. 3, "The Making of Bulgaria," p. 4. Broadcasted probably in January 1955.

⁴Barclay, op. cit., p. 1024.

It is due to the Church to say that the peculiar circumstances considered so promising when this Mission was founded have almost wholly changed, and the Bishops and General Missionary Committee have, for the time at least, suspended missionary operations in Bulgaria.¹

The whole Annual Report of 1870 was optimistic, reporting advances that seemed to promise a better future, especially had re-enforcement been given,² but the whole work, except in localities where Eliev and Petrov and other native assistants continued their humble efforts, was brought to a standstill. The native pastors sadly lacked experience in leadership and they pleaded that the work of the missionaries be resumed. These pleadings resulted in the resumption of the mission despite serious doubts as to its viability, and in 1873, Bishop Harris, the Episcopal overseer, again sent Frederick Flocken, and a new missionary, Henry W. Buchtel, to Bulgaria.³

Albert Long tried to provide leadership as superintendent during the years when the mission was abandoned, but in 1873 he decided to resign as he was increasingly occupied in his teaching at Robert College in Istanbul. He noted that there was no reason for the pessimistic attitude taken by the

¹Ann. Rep. MSMEC, 1871, p. 97.

²Ann. Rep. MSMEC, 1870, pp. 105-106.

³Ann. Rep. MSMEC, 1872, p. 118.

General Missionary Committee, as there was only one place in the mission of the American Board which did better than the Svishtov congregation, that is, without having a resident missionary and unaided by a school.¹

The new superintendent, Flocken, and Buchtel thought that the situation in Bulgaria was advantageous since many people felt disappointed that the newly created Bulgarian Exarchate had not instituted a measure of spiritual reforms. The use of the Old Slavonic Bible and a liturgy more unfamiliar than the Greek, and the hasty appointment of Bulgarian bishops, without testing their worthiness, were criticized. The expected re-enforcement did not materialize as the "financial distress in the United States made it impossible to re-enforce the mission."² Just as they started to reorganize the work, Mrs. Buchtel became ill and she and her husband were forced to return to the United States. Flocken was again alone and discouraged. He saw the moments of advantage disappearing, and tragedies happening, such as this,

Brother Getscho, at the village of Vinaia, in the absence of any of our helpers, and because his place is three day's distance from here, had, during the year [1874], to bury his child alongside the grave of his father, in his own yard, with his own hands, amid the scorn and derision of the villagers, saying that this is the way the mission rewards him for becoming a Protestant.

¹ Ibid.

² Reid, op. cit., p. 536.

³ Ann. Rep. MSMEC, 1874, p. 125.

2. Episcopal Visits and the Annual Mission Meetings

Flocken tried to cope with the situation by training a class of young men for the ministry. A number of them had gone to the United States to the Drew Theological Seminary, while Flocken established a school at which he trained Stephan Getchov, Yordan Dzhumaliev, Naiden J. Voinov, and Stephan Kiltchov.¹ While still studying they helped in the mission work with the aid of two Bible women, Mrs. Clara Proca and Mrs. Magdalena Elieva, who were supported by the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society. This group was reinforced in 1875 with Elford F. Lounsbury and Dewitt C. Challis who were appointed by Bishop Harris, being stationed in Svistov and Ruschuk, respectively. S. Getchov was in charge of the new outstation Orchania (Orkhanie) and G. Eliev of another new preaching station, Pleven.

A high point of the missionary work was the organization of the first Annual Mission Meeting held on Oct. 2, 1876, at which Bishop Andrews presided. Episcopal visits were a source of great moral support, and often resulted in financial support and increased confidence by the General Missionary Committee. This did not happen regularly and Bishops who presided over an annual meeting were not necessarily those who had episcopal

¹Ibid., p. 124.

supervision over Bulgaria. Bishops Simpsons, Clark, Ames, Harris, Andrews, Walden, Mallalieu and others were supervising the Bulgarian mission from the beginning till 1891.¹

These Bishops who toured Bulgaria and presided over annual meetings encouraged the missionaries and native workers, and urged that the Church in America give its full support because,

The planting of the Bulgarian Mission was clearly providential, and it cannot be abandoned without serious injury to the cause of the Gospel truth and the hopes of men . . . [The Mission must continue because the Bulgarian Orthodox Church] does not exalt either the written or preached word to its proper position.²

During the Episcopal visit of Harris, Gabriel Eliev was ordained deacon and elder, on the basis of his services, though he did not have the necessary training. Naiden Voinov, Tena Nachov, and Stephan Getchov were ordained deacons and received on trial, while Todor Nikolov, Yordaky Tsvetkov, and Dimitri Mateiev were made exhorters. They were all received into the full service of the mission, and paid salaries by the Missionary Society. Ivan I. Ikonov after study in the United States, returned to his home to help the mission, and Ivan Ivanov was given a licence to preach.³

¹Ann. Rep. MSMEC, 1857-1891.

²Ann. Rep. MSMEC, 1873, p. 125.

³Ann. Rep. MSMEC, 1876, p. 126.

These men proved to be active workers. On their tours they preached in many places, including Kuprivitsa, Kuzilmurat, Voditsa, Razgrad, Vratsa, Gabrovo, Travna, Rakovitsa, Elena, Bebrova, etc. Bishop Andrews was of the opinion that Superintendent Flocken covered too much ground taking into consideration the number and character of his helpers.¹ In all of these places the congregations were very small and much energy was dissipated on touring and tending a few Protestants or pro-Protestants in the various distant localities. The Woman's Foreign Missionary Society increased its financial support to three or four Bible women and teachers, including Mrs. Clara Klaia, Mrs. Varvara Ivanov, and Mrs. Kreslina Todorov.² The support of Bible women, female teachers, and some students at the Samokov School of the American Board was commenced by the W.F.M.S. in 1874.³

3. Temporary Withdrawal in 1877-1878

The Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1879 forcibly retired the missionaries from the field. The calamities of war meant personal tragedies in two of the missionary families. The Flockens fled before the advancing Russian armies, but could not get

¹Ibid., p. 127.

²Ann. Rep. MSMEC, 1877, p. 146.

³Annual Report of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1913 (New York, Published by the W.F.M.S., annually), p. 205,

further than Pest because Mrs. Flocken had to be delivered of a baby. F. Flocken waited shortly and returned to Bulgaria, but did not enter it on learning that it would not be possible for him to supervise the entire field. The territory was divided by the Russians and Turks and no crossing from one territory to the other was possible. When he returned to Pest his child had died and his wife had survived with great difficulties.¹

Both the Challises were taken ill with small-pox, and Mrs. Challis succumbed, after which Mr. Challis, who had acted as the Acting Superintendent left for the United States in the interest of his small child. He remarried in the United States and later returned to Bulgaria. Flocken was also forced to leave for the United States because of his wife's illness. Thus terminated his long and useful ministry. Lounsbury, Ikonomov, and Eliev tried to remain in Ruschuk but were also forced to flee. Lounsbury returned to the United States, also on account of his wife.² Most tragically almost all Methodists in Lovech were wiped out by a group of Circassians returning after the retreat of the Russians. The minister Naiden Voinov and six members of his congregation were killed³, including

¹Ann. Rep. MSMEC, 1877, p. 146.

²Barclay, op. cit., p. 1027.

³Ann. Rep. MSMEC, 1877, p. 147.

the father, mother, brother, and wife of the pastor S. Getchov.¹ The reason for these outrages are not known but they were probably killed in the revenge directed against all Bulgarians. Nothing was heard about the fate of many of the native workers until after the war. All touring was interrupted, the work of the mission schools suspended, but Flocken succeeded in supplying the native preachers with some funds, and even in aiding those preachers of the American Board mission who had fled to northern Bulgaria. Dr. Long rendered again an invaluable service by supervising the native pastors during the war.

4. The Aftermath of the War--Persecution and Apathy

The General Missionary Committee reviewed the situation in Bulgaria in November 1878 and decided to continue the station with the native ministers, to whom S. Tomov from the United States was added and to re-enforce them with two American missionaries. Dewitt Challis was assigned to act as superintendent and he called the Second Annual Meeting in September 1879. His report contained a request for four missionary couples, two women missionaries, and a printing press.² Elford Lounsbury, Addison R. Jones, and John S. Ladd were sent out in 1880. With the ministers G. Eliev, S. Tomov, I. Ikonov, and S. Getchov, they then had the strongest missionary force in their history up to that date.

¹Reid, op. cit., p. 256. ²Barclay, op. cit., pp. 1027-28.

Again no brilliant successes were recorded, but a steady progress was achieved. Some of the towns which once had very promising work were ruined through the war and it was difficult to revive it. Especially painful was the ruin of the Svishtov congregation, partially through the weak leadership of Eliev up to 1875, and through the scandalous behaviour of Dimitri Mateiev. This man kept a rum-shop during the war of 1878, and his wife, an alcoholic, had a street brawl with another preacher and thereby undermined Protestant influence for many years.¹ In Tirnovo, where S. Tomov was sent, the congregation was very small and the work was distracted by preoccupation with politics and office-seeking. Yet at the time when the National Assembly met there were some twenty people in attendance, as some members of the National Assembly were evangelicals.²

I. Ikonomov and G. Eliev were sent to minister in two new locations, Gabrovo and Sevlievo, where they ran into noisy opposition despite the fact that only three to six people in each place came to hear them. Getchov in Lovech worked "under the embarrassment of a 'prophet in his own country,' and doubtless for that reason the attendance is small, averaging only seven."³ In other places such as Orchania, Lovech, and

¹Ann. Rep. MSMEC, 1879, p. 144.

²Ibid., p. 145.

³Ibid., p. 146.

Tultcha there were also small groups. An awakening occurred among the ministers at the Second Annual Meeting, through S. Tomov's preaching, so eloquent that it produced the first "old-fashioned" Methodist revival in Bulgaria.¹ Echoes of this revival spread throughout the churches in 1880, especially in Svishtov, with many outsiders drawn to the meetings, but at the same time the work at Gabrovo had to be abandoned for lack of interest, while at Orchania, Dimitri Ivanov was "hooted at and stoned through the streets, and sent out of town under arrest."²

The Bulgarian Methodists and the missionaries often had the viewpoint of John Wesley, in judging their effectiveness by the opposition to their cause; the more opposition, the more they were convinced that their preaching was effective.

A rumor comes to us from St. Petersburg that the Russian Church authorities are much disturbed by the success of American missionaries in Bulgaria, and were about to take steps to put an end to the spread of our work. This, to us, seems like a cipher message from heaven, assuring us of the approval of our divine Master, and urging us to greater activity in the work.³

But opposition was not always so encouraging. Opposition came from all corners, including politicians who were indiff-

¹Ibid, p. 149.

²Ann. Rep. MSMEC, 1880, p. 163.

³Ibid., p. 166.

erent to religion but did this because of political expediency. The war brought with it aftereffects of licentiousness and corruption, and the few that had an interest, primarily younger men, indicated it secretly. The missionaries believed on theological grounds that the nature of man was corrupt. "But in no part of the world is the devil's yoke more firmly fixed upon the necks of the people, and carried in more loving submission than here. Human nature develops, almost unchecked, all its native meanness."¹

The existence of the mission was brought into question again in 1886, when at the meeting of the General Missionary Committee, Earl Cranston argued that the money spent on the Bulgaria mission could be much more profitably spent on missions in countries where there was less opposition. A smaller group defended the Bulgaria effort and argued through its spokesman, Daniel Curry, that had other missions of the Methodist Church to undergo such "pummeling" from the General Missionary Committee they would have ceased to exist.² The General Committee had in 1882 well-nigh decided to close the mission and did not do so only because a telegram arrived from Bishop Foster, Corresponding Secretary Reid, and Dr. A. Long

¹Ann. Rep. MSMEC, 1881, p. 193.

²Barclay, op. cit., p. 1032.

from Constantinople, advising new appropriations.¹ A similar crisis of confidence occurred in 1890 and the threat of pulling out from Bulgaria became an almost permanent feature of the mission.²

With all the money that they could gather from various sources, the missionaries tried to give their work an air of permanency through the purchase of real estate, in places where they could, seeking relief also from the whims of landlords.³ This brought a moderate increase in attendance, as many Bulgarians avoided attending services in private houses, when they were used to service in church edifices. Some of the places of worship were in very inconspicuous, and even unseemly places, one being a former Turkish harem.⁴

The death of preacher Naidenov and the illness of the Joneses placed the mission in a difficult position in 1884 but this was partially alleviated by a supply preacher Haralambi Dimitrov and of Traiko Constantine, once a Congregational preacher in southern Bulgaria. Constantine studied in the United States, married an American Methodist, and returned as a missionary of the Methodist Missionary Society. Another worker

¹Ann. Rep. MSMEC, 1883, p. 165.

²Statement of Bishop J. H. Walden in the Western Christian Advocate reprinted in The Gospel in All Lands, August 1891, pp. 358f.

³Ann. Rep. MSMEC, 1884, p. 170.

⁴Ann. Rep. MSMEC, 1887, p. 225.

was a converted priest named Peter Tikchev, from the vicinity of Razgrad. He had been driven out of his village and joined the mission in Ruschuk. In 1886 the acquisition of Ivan and Bancho Todorov and Peter Vasilev and in 1887 of K. G. Palamidov and Peter Dunov and of the elder Mindo G. Vulchev in 1888 strengthened the work of the mission. The first woman missionary was Linna A. Schenck who arrived in 1886.

The acquisition of property and the organization of schools probably saved the mission, though Bishop Ninde felt that the Methodist Episcopal Church was receiving the "cold shoulder treatment." The uneducated masses were ignorant, superstitious, and obedient followers of the Orthodox Church, while the educated drifted into agnosticism.¹ Hope was placed in educating a new generation which would be more receptive to the Protestant message. The liberal Bulgarian Constitution guaranteed religious toleration, and the missionaries felt that the best class of Bulgarians were already secretly sympathetic to the mission. An increasing number of army officers, officials, and young people attended the meetings. Very little was done, however, to offer a more attractive message to those who were inclined to agnosticism. The situation was made more difficult because the public school

¹Ann. Rep. MSMEC, 1886, p. 207.

pupils were not allowed to attend any meetings of the mission and thus no communication was possible.¹ It was this predicament that forced the foundation of schools by the mission.

5. The Schools

a. The Girls' School--The Superintendent of the mission, D. Challis, was convinced that things would go much better if the mission opened two schools, one for girls and one for boys, since co-education was unthinkable in Bulgaria at that time. The General Committee had authorized the opening of a girls' school in 1880, and appropriated \$1200 for the purchase of a building.² The initial plan was to locate the Girls' Boarding School in Svishtov since it had the largest church, but real estate was too costly. Challis then decided that in a smaller place, like Troian, with its beautiful location, the girls would be protected from the city influences, of which the missionaries were afraid. The school opened in Troian with a dozen pupils in December, but it encountered much opposition. Episcopal anathemas were issued and arson and threat was used against those who would co-operate with the school so that it was forced to close at the end of the academic year of 1880-1881.³

¹Barclay, op. cit., p. 1029.

²Ibid., p. 1028.

³Reid, op. cit., pp. 248-249.

Challis then decided to move the school to Lovech (Loftcha) where they were able to buy property on an excellent site, and despite some opposition the school soon increased in attendance and in public favor.¹ The staff of the school consisted of Superintendent Challis and some assistant teachers, graduates of the Samokov school. In 1883 the Girls' School again experienced difficulties, and was closed by the order of the government until October 20, 1883. This happened when the government became controlled by reactionary pro-Russian, anti-constitutional elements opposed to the Protestant movement. Reopening was guaranteed when the liberal constitutional government was reinstated.²

The W.F.M.S. became increasingly involved with this kind of work and in 1884 appropriated \$4000 for the purchase of a new building.³ In 1885 the W.F.M.S. sent Miss Linna Schenck, who became principal of the Girls' School in Lovech. Years of alternating encouragement and discouragement followed. Miss Schenck was the lone American teacher until 1887, when Miss Ella B. Fincham joined her. Miss Schenck had to leave for the United States in 1890. In 1892 Miss Kate Blackburn came, and Miss Fincham left Bulgaria a few months after her arrival.

¹Ibid.

²Barclay, op. cit., p. 1030.

³Ann. Rep. of W.F.M.S., 1913, p. 206.

The entire responsibility rested upon Miss Blackburn, including preaching during an interim in Lovech until a new pastor was supplied.¹ In 1893, Miss Lydia Diem, the daughter of a Swiss Methodist minister, joined as a teacher. She was there until she married in 1899, and in 1895 her sister Amelia Diem helped out for a few years.² From 1899 to 1900 Miss Blackburn was again the sole American teacher until she was joined in 1900 by Dora Davis.

The progress of the Lovech Girls' School was not rapid but steady. The school enjoyed an enviable reputation, and besides regular courses it offered courses on the duties and obligations of Christian living. The advanced class studied the Articles of Religion and the General Rules, and the Discipline of the Methodist Church, the Life of Christ, etc.³ Some of the girls joined the church, and the congregation in Lovech increased steadily because of the good influence of the school.

One of the first native teachers was Yordanka Goncharov, a graduate of the Samokov School, who was teaching during the turbulent years when the school was closed by the government. During that time the school was once attacked by three drunken

¹Ibid.

²Barclay, op. cit., p. 1035.

³Ibid., p. 1037.

⁴The Journal of Extracts from Letters of Miss Ellen M. Stone, No. 1, May 5, 1883 to Jan. 1, 1884. On file at the ABLib.

men, perhaps under the influence of the misunderstood harangues of the Orthodox bishop.¹ At the time the school had only fifteen boarders. In ten years it was to have forty-eight to fifty.² This number was maintained until 1906, while in 1907 the number was reduced to thirty-six.³

Most of the teachers were Bulgarian Protestants,⁴ but some were of the Orthodox faith. Miss Blackburn remained the principal until 1916 with Dora Davis as assistant, but they were compelled to leave Bulgaria for three years during the First World War, returning immediately after it. In the meantime Miss Marika V. Raicheva was the principal and led the school through the very difficult years. She was forced to close the school in 1919 because of lack of funds.⁵ The school was helped also by foreign teachers who stayed for

¹Ann. Rep. MSMEC, 1883, p. 166.

²Barclay, op. cit., p. 1037.

³The Minutes of the Sixteenth Session of the Bulgaria Mission Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church Held at Voyvodovo, May 2-5, 1907, (Ruschuk, Bulgaria: Press "Pobeda", 1907), p. 50.

⁴Among the teachers of the Bulgarian nationality were Yordanka Goncharov, Dobra Delchev, Anka Tsvetkova, Marika Raicheva, Vulkan Papasov, Sophia Proka, Nikla Maltchova, T. S. Bagranova, Slavka Getchova, Leona Vasileva, Anna Boyadzhieva, Todorka Gancheva, Rina Doneva, Evanka Duinska, and others. Ann. Rep. MSMEC, 1890, p. 226.

⁵Ann. Rep. of the W.F.M.S., 1919, p. 134.

short periods usually during the furlough of one of the permanent missionaries. Such were Sarah Elder, Kate E. Moss, Ella Blackburn of the United States, Hanna Diem and Ella Gutt from Switzerland, and M. Vieville from France.

In 1905 an Alumni Society was organized, and in 1907 the school initiated a seven-year instead of a six-year program, in order to improve its work which had been lagging behind the public schools.¹ Among the regular courses English, French, Bulgarian, science, music, culinary arts, and sewing took prominent places, as did religious instruction.² It lacked specialized teachers and the buildings had become inadequate.

In 1913 Lovech was occupied by the Rumanian army during the Second Balkan War, and the teachers had great difficulty in preventing the spreading of cholera to the school. The water supply was infected and the city quarantined.³ During the war of 1886, and again during World War I, the school was temporarily appropriated for hospital purposes. Girls of the school were put in Red Cross positions, and they worked to relieve the sufferings of the population.⁴ In 1912 some 250 Bulgarian soldiers were quartered on the school grounds.⁵

¹Minutes of the Bulgarian Mission Conference, 1907, p. 50.

²Ibid., p. 45.

³Ann. Rep. of the W.F.M.S., 1916, p. 207.

⁴Ibid., 1919, p. 105.

⁵Ibid., 1913, p. 207.

This involvement in national calamities and willingness to serve the interests of the Bulgarian people made the school and its teachers very popular not only in Lovech, but in all of Bulgaria. When Miss Kate Blackburn retired after slightly over thirty years of great service she "retired amid the protests and sincere regrets of the officials and people of the city of Lovech and returned to her native home to spend her last days."¹

b. The Boys' School.—The Boys' School was organized in Tirnovo a few months after the Girls' School during the academic year 1880-1881 under the leadership of Mrs. Emma K. Jones and I.I. Ikonov.² The Tirnovo period was very short because the mission could not purchase any land. After the end of the academic year the school was moved to Svishtov where a church and parsonage were just erected.³ The school started with five students and had eight the next year; it functioned as a combined theological and day school.

The government first moved against the Boys' School in 1883, during the abrogation of the Constitution. An attempt was made to stop the building of the school but the building was completed before the city engineer could intervene.⁴

¹Bagranoff, op. cit., p. 7.

²Barclay, op. cit., p. 1028.

³Ibid.

⁴Reid, op. cit., p. 250.

Then it was charged that the school was not properly registered with the school inspector and was therefore illegal. In fact they had registered the school, but the inspector did not issue them a receipt, and he later denied the notification. The teachers, S. Tomov and I. Ikonov, protested and were imprisoned, the American members of the school were insulted, the school was sealed in January while a large mob gathered demanding that the missionaries be expelled from Svishtov.¹ However, it was reopened on Oct. 1, 1883, under unpleasant but tolerable conditions. The outcome of this conflict was regarded as a victory for the missionaries.²

In 1885 Mr. J. S. Ladd took up the direction of the school which he continued until his return to the U.S.A. in 1889. Then it was carried for a year by M. Vulchev. In 1892 D. Challis was appointed president of the Literary and Theological School in Svishtov, just before his retirement from the mission,³ and then the school returned to the leadership of Dr. M. Vulchev in 1892. Beside the above-mentioned presidents of the school, other capable ministers and teachers such as S. Tomov, I. Ikonov, B. Todorov, G.V. Popov, and A. Meshkov taught there.⁴

¹Ibid., pp. 258-259, and 252-253. Reid erroneously describes the same event twice without realizing it. See also Ann. Rep. MSMEC, 1883, p. 166.

²Ann. Rep. MSMEC, 1883, p. 166.

³Ann. Rep. MSMEC, 1891, p. 207.

⁴Ibid.

The school had its share of difficulties, and suffered from the lack of a clear goal, much as in the case of the Boys' School of the American Board. In both cases there were conflicts between the needs for theological and for general education. Better general education was to be had in the public schools. Government recognition was lacking, and to improve the schools would have demanded great expenditure, which could be applied to evangelistic work whereby more visible results could be achieved.¹ On the other hand if the mission operated a purely theological school, many ministerial students could not pay as much as the regular students did. It was also argued that it would be difficult to decide who was "called" to the ministry by God and who was not, for many had studied theology merely in search of security without being gifted. It appeared that some occupational training was needed which an industrial department would have provided. Said Challis, "It will not do to always have more preachers than laymen."²

Until 1893 the school had five regular classes for those who were attending the literary department in which they studied for the first three years a course prescribed by the Ministry of Education, and in the fourth and fifth years the Bible,

¹Ibid., p. 222. For a full treatment of the predicament in regard to the Boys' School of the American Board, see Hall, Puritans in the Balkans, pp. 191-200, and 207-220.

²Ann. Rep. MSMEC, 1891, p. 222.

rhetoric, natural science, higher mathematics, political economy, international law, and the history of civilization, courses roughly corresponding to the government gymnasia, but not carried on with the same high standards. In the sixth year, which was designed only for those who wanted to become ministers, they took up theological studies.¹ Since their diplomas were not recognized the students were drafted for military service, but could not become teachers or enter the university. In 1893 it was proposed to reorganize as a theological school, as well as a pension in which students of public schools would enjoy the atmosphere of a Christian home.² This was done the following year, when the school was transformed into a theological seminary and a students' home,³ and moved to Ruschuk.⁴ The reason for the sudden end of the Svishtov School was that the school was set on fire by some enemy of the Methodists.⁵ This move almost ended the Svishtov church which had been infused with life by the Boys' School.

¹Ibid., pp. 221-222.

²Ibid., 1893, pp. 211-212.

³Ibid., 1895, p. 251.

⁴Minutes of the Bulgaria Mission Conference, 1906, p. 55.

⁵John L. Nuelsen, Theophil Mann, and J. J. Sommer, Kurtzgefaste Geschichte des Methodismus von seined Anfangen bis zur Gegenwart (Bremen: Buchhandlung und Verlag des Traktathauses, c.m. b.H., [1920]), p. 733.

6. The War of 1885-86 and the Aftermath

The mission was divided into four districts (Lower Danube, Upper Danube, Varna, and Balkan District) and had 12 regular workers and ten on trial,¹ as well as 45 members, 31 probationers, 137 adherents, and 96 average attendants.² A bloodless coup d'état united Eastern Rumelia with Bulgaria in 1885, followed by a war between Serbia and Bulgaria. These events did not bring any significant interruptions in the work of the mission, save in the excitement which accompanies every war, for the war, which was won by Bulgaria, was too short to bring great suffering to the populace. For a time there was quiet progress in Varna and Ruschuk, but misconceptions arose. It was again charged that the mission paid money to the converts. A letter was received from Silistria, written on July 23, 1885,

I pray the trustees of the Protestant society, in Ruschuk, to send me traveling expenses, if possible, that I may come to Ruschuk, because I desire to enter the above-mentioned nationality. Probably a number of my special friends will follow me into the same nationality. However, be assured that many will follow me. I am awaiting your answer and the money by return boat that I may come. A.G.³

This letter reveals the popular misconception about financial profits that are available to converts, and the inability of Bulgarians to distinguish religion from nationality, or to see

¹John, op. cit., p. 537.

²Ann. Rep. MSMEC, 1884, p. 177.

³Quoted in Ann. Rep. MSMEC, 1885, p. 189.

the more meaningful qualities which characterize religion. Practices traditionally employed by the Protestants were scorned by the Bulgarians. House-to-house visitations were rarely tolerated, despite the proverbial hospitality common in the Balkans. There were many prejudices such as a childish terror of a person who was observed praying with closed eyes. Clerical opposition continued. In 1889 the exarch sent out a circular asking both civil and ecclesiastical authorities to take strict measures against Protestants and Catholics.¹ The result was that the various ministries restricted the mission work, closing a number of churches. Still another problem was the disturbances caused by the Baptists. This denomination was never very successful in Bulgaria, and was the least willing to cooperate with other Protestants, often proselytising its members and weakening their work, since the Bulgarians did not understand denominational differences. This was particularly acute in Hotantsa where a Baptist colporteur did much damage to the Methodist congregation.²

An increase in the congregations, notably in Varna, took

¹Ann. Rep. MSMEC, 1889, p. 235.

²Ibid., p. 236, and Ann. Rep. MSMEC, 1890, p. 227.

place after the Serbian war.¹ In Sevlievo a group of Turkish women approached the preacher, asking him to read the Bible to them. Lovech prospered on account of the Girls' School and the number of adherents was raised from 30 to 150.²

The year 1888 was judged very successful by Challis and Lounsbury, although the membership did not increase rapidly, and there was still only about one Methodist for every 10,000 people. A primary school with 20 students operated in Hotantsa.³ Peter Vasilev showed good progress in his village work in Ivantche and Yaidji. The first Methodist Episcopal Church edifice was completed in Varna in 1888. The next year the chapel in Ruschuk was completed, so that these two cities and Svishtov now had good church structures. Tul-tcha (Tulcea) was now in Rumanian territory. There was hope that the work might extend there and it was re-entered after two years of abandonment.⁴ A society was founded in Silistria, which experienced persecution but survived. In 1890 a new chapel and a school built from local resources were dedicated by Bishop Warren during the Annual Meeting.⁵ In 1894 a new church and parsonage were dedicated in Tirnovo. Protestants

¹Ann. Rep. MSMEC, 1886, p. 211.

²Ann. Rep. MSMEC, 1887, p. 256.

³Ann. Rep. MSMEC, 1888, p. 280.

⁴Reid, op. cit., p. 266.

⁵Ibid.

were found now in also Bulgarski, Bala, Kosoue, Silistria, Endjekuvi, Suzla, Guseldjialan, Dobritch, Razgrad, Rahova, and Shumen.¹ Another cause for rejoicing was that some of the Orthodox priests accepted some of the evangelical practices, especially preaching in vernacular.²

In 1886 four young men trained at Svishtov and four young women trained at Lovech entered church work.³ The Methodist missionaries felt the same way about the training of native ministers as did the Congregational missionaries, i.e., that it was best to have them trained in Bulgaria. Those trained in the United States required higher salaries, and their training and talents were not to be adequately used in small places with hardly a dozen hearers.

It was felt that men must be raised up and trained on the soil who could live in comfort and with self-respect on such salaries as the native churches might be expected to pay, and that such a body must constitute the main part of the ministry of the country.⁴

This was sound thinking with respect to the financing of the mission and the maintenance of solid roots among the simple folk, who did not require very intelligent exposition of theology and who indeed were suspicious of educated people. But it precluded the possibility of gaining wider intellectual respectability.

¹Ann. Rep. MSMEC, 1891, p. 217.

²Ann. Rep. MSMEC, 1888, p. 285.

³Barclay, op. cit., p. 1032.

⁴Reid, op. cit., p. 247.

C. From 1892 to 1919

1. The Organization of the Mission Conference

D. C. Challis was replaced in 1891 with a new superintendent, George S. Davis, appointed by Bishop Mallalieu, after having spent four years as the editor of the Omaha Christian Advocate.¹ He was the fourth in the line of superintendents, remaining in Bulgaria seven years prior to his return to the U.S.A. in 1896.² The success of Davis and his predecessors, as well as of his eventual successor Elmer E. Count is difficult to measure because of the lack of comparison. The Methodists never had a sufficient number of missionaries in the field to enable a choice for the superintendency. A subcommittee's report to the General Missionary Committee in 1894 sums up the total situation in Bulgaria in this regard fairly well.

(1) There is evidence that the small force of the mission, the brief service of several of the missionaries, the political vicissitudes which have interrupted the work, and the scanty results of the labor bestowed have much of the time painfully depressed the spirit of the missionaries. They have not labored in strong hope; and no great leader has risen among them whose faith, wisdom, and courage has been able to revive and rally them to success.

(2) There is evidence of much mutual distrust, criticism and recrimination in the mission, that is, among the native ministers and membership, and which are

¹Barclay, op. cit., p. 1035.

²Ann. Rep. MSMEC, 1897, p. 101.

directed in part against the missionary force . . .
 (3) There is evidence tending to show that many of our native agents are unduly affected by mercenary considerations, and are therefore perfunctory and unimpressive in their ministry.¹

In addition the missionaries and superintendents lacked many desirable characteristics which make good leadership, and this made itself felt in the work of the whole mission.²

In 1892, when the Methodist Church had 135 members, 47 probationers, and 137 adherents, Bishop I.W. Joyce came to Svishtov, Bulgaria, and set up the Bulgaria Mission Conference according to the decision of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church.³ The previous year Bishop Walden moved nine preachers to new posts. He decided that the superintendent should not have his own preaching station in order that he should be free to supervise the preachers more actively. Superintendent Davis took this recommendation seriously and traveled much. His conclusion was that the Methodists needed more churches and more laymen rather than more preachers.⁴

An impressive list of preachers was recognized as charter members of the new Conference. Of the eighteen members four were Americans, D.C. Challis, E.F. Lounsbury, J.S. Ladd,

¹Minutes of the General Missionary Committee, Nov. 18, 1895, pp. 290f., MBMar.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., 1892, p. 232.

⁴Barclay, op. cit., p. 1034.

and G.S. Davis. Challis, after 16 years of labor in Bulgaria, and Ladd, after 12 years, were transferred back to American Annual Conferences. Gabriel Eliev, the oldest pastor, was superannuated. He died at Sevlievo in February 1908, at the ripe age of 88.¹ The other charter members were Stephen Getchov, Marine D. Delchev, M.G. Vulchev, Zacharia G. Dimitrov, Ivan Todorov, Bancho Todorov, K.G. Palamidov, Traiko Constantine, Ivan Dimitrov, Peter Vasilev, I.I. Ikonov, Stephen Tomov, and Peter Tickchev.² Of one other pastor, who would have probably been a charter member, was recorded

Early in this calendar year [1892] our pastor at Yaidjea [Damian Christov] was cruelly beaten [in Hibelee] with clubs, sustaining injuries to his body and mind, from which he has not recovered.³

These preachers and pastors were supported by a group of local preachers and exhorters such as Yordaky Tsvetkov, Christo Pavlov, G.V. Popov, Todor Nikolov, A. Meshkov, Petko Stoichev, N. Kovatchev, Tsvetan Tsvetanov, Ivan Kagadzhiev,⁴ Tseno Georgiev, D.L. Balabanov, G. N. Babadzhev, Martin Rohachek, etc. of whom some later became pastors. To this group two American missionaries were added, L. T. Guild and Arthur J. Jolly in 1893, but both returned to the United States within a year.⁵

¹Ann. Rep. MSMEC, 1909, p. 487.

²Barclay, op. cit., p. 1035.

³Ann. Rep. MSMEC, 1892, p. 233.

⁴Ann. Rep. MSMEC, 1890, p. 226.

⁵Barclay, op. cit., p. 1036.

A very valuable addition was that of Pavel Todorov from the Presbyterian Church, who became a member of the Conference in 1907,¹ and later became a district superintendent.

After the organization of the Annual Conference episcopal visitations to Bulgaria became regular and the Annual Mission Conferences were presided by bishops. Vincent, Newman, Fitzgerald, Goodsell, Walden, and Burt.

2. The Work of the Churches Up to the Time of the Balkan Wars

In 1894 The Mission Conference was divided into two districts, The Lovech District, with Traiko Constantine as the Presiding Elder, and the Ruschuk District with G.S. Davis as the Presiding Elder. Although,

every foreign missionary on this soil is an unwelcome intruder, and every native pastor, or every member, is regarded by the ignorant classes (trained by the wily and equally ignorant priests) as disloyal to his country,²

it was still considered highly unsatisfactory that there was only one foreign missionary and so little missionary property.³ There were still many adverse conditions. The son of a preacher "was enticed into a priest's barn and beaten into insensibility by men hired for that purpose." One convert had his wife and

¹Ann. Rep. MSMEC, 1897, p. 100.

²Ann. Rep. MSMEC, 1892, p. 232.

³Barclay, op. cit., p. 1037. Lounsbury returned to America in 1892.

child torn from him; their return was promised by the Orthodox bishop on the condition that he renounce Protestantism.¹ It was reported that success could be secured by better church buildings, burial grounds, and pastors, in order to provide more adequate service to those people who became Protestants, thereby burning all bridges behind them, which required much courage.²

The years of 1895 and 1896 were again periods of relative success; 80% of the membership had been secured within the past decade. The number of members increased to 177, with 73 probationers, 300 adherents and 300 Sunday school pupils.³ They felt that they were not doing worse than the American Board missionaries, taking into consideration the relative number of missionaries and the amount of appropriation.⁴ The Conference was strengthened by the organization of the Woman's Missionary Society and Epworth Leagues (youth work) in 1895.⁵ It seems that this was done because these organizations functioned well in America. In the case of the Epworth League such work was truly necessary and was popular, but never achieved

¹Ann. Rep. MSMEC, 1892, p. 233.

²Ann. Rep. MSMEC, 1894, pp. 200-201.

³Ann. Rep. MSMEC, 1895, p. 251.

⁴Ann. Rep. MSMEC, 1896, p. 191.

⁵Ann. Rep. MSMEC, 1895, p. 251.

any significant success. The schools were also working actively, as they had more full-pay students than they could accept.

In Lovech the school was virtually the only supply of church members, as the town people had little interest in the church.¹ The situation was the same in Svishtov where the church rapidly deteriorated after the school was removed to Ruschuk, in which one of the largest and best congregations soon after grew up. Sevlievo, Rahova, and Orchania were abandoned, while the Varna congregation experienced a boom through the influx of Armenian refugees.²

After the departure of G. Davis, the Bulgaria Mission was again in such condition that Bishop Walden considered closing it, or giving it over to the American Board.³ Yet, in the following years Methodists were so successful in some villages that the Orthodox Church did not appoint any priests. These villages became almost entirely Protestant.⁴

In 1905 a new district was organized with the center in Vidin, covering the towns of Lom Palanka, Svishtov, Voyvodovo, and Vidin,⁵ but in the next year the whole district was again alligned with the Ruschuk District, presided over by Pavel

¹Ann. Rep. MSMEC, 1897, p. 101.

²Ibid.

³Hall, Puritans in the Balkans, p. 180.

⁴Nuelsen, Mann, and Sommer, op. cit., p. 733.

⁵Minutes, Bulgaria Mission Conference, 1906, p. 41.

Todorov, along with the towns and villages of Ruschuk, Silistra, Hotantsa, Varna, Shumen, Kossui, Rahova, Razgrad, Tubrakan, Hibelee, and Baltchik. Marine D. Delchev presided over the Lovech district, which included beside Lovech, Orchania, Pleven, Sevlievo, Tirnovo, Vratsa, Yaidjea, and Gabrovo.¹ Many towns had occasional services depending on the fortunes of the work and the acquisitions of suitable pastors or local preachers.

In 1905 the Conference received a new superintendent, Elmer E. Count. He was previously superintendent of the Italy Mission Conference. He undertook an aggressive policy of evangelization which increased the membership 18 per cent in two years. By 1910 the Methodists counted 482 members and some 1000 adherents, as compared to the 1,500 members and 2,500 adherents recorded by the American Board Mission in the same period.² Concern was expressed about the lack of a preparatory school for pre-theological students, so that the Bulgarian ministerial candidates could take advantage of the Central European Methodist Theological Academy then being established in Frankfurt am Main in Germany.³ Previously S. Tomov had con-

¹Ibid., 1907, pp. 29-39.

²Hall, Puritans in the Balkans, p. 180.

³Minutes, Bulgaria Mission Conference, 1906, p. 41.

ducted a less formal program of theological education in Ruschuk.¹ Interest was taken in such social questions as temperance, smoking, and Sabbath observance. The Methodists and the Congregationalists appealed to the Minister of Public Worship to enforce the law forbidding the opening of stores, coffee-houses, and bars for the whole of Sunday, and to abolish national elections on Sundays. In this they sought Orthodox co-operation.²

Great harm was done by Methodist-Baptist competition in some places, as well as dishonest deeds of false evangelicals. For example, there was a case two women from Sofia coming to the village of Vratsa identifying themselves as evangelicals as a means of covering up some dishonest commercial dealings and when they disappeared, it left a mark of dishonor upon the evangelicals.³

The Bulgarian pastors particularly hoped to save villagers before they became morally corrupted.⁴ As for the townspeople, hope was evidently given up, as the majority were considered atheists, agnostics, socialists, as well as immoral and licentious. The reports do not concretize such broad charges. One feels that the inability to cope with urban problems

¹Ofitsiyalen Protokol, 1905, p. 55.

²Ibid., p. 24.

³Ibid., p. 36.

⁴Ibid., p. 29.

was so rationalized. Attention was given to the villagers who were more prejudiced, but who were also more "religious" and even credulous.

Most of the attendants [in Pleven] are young men—some of them socialists—who at the close of the evening meetings hold debates trying to refute the evangelical truths. They endeavor to show to their own satisfaction the superiority of socialism and the happy days that will come as soon as everybody is a socialist. But however it may be the word is being preached unto them and we may be sure that sooner or later it will accomplish its saving work. There have been no conversions during the year.¹

The Methodist mission revealed an important weakness in its indiscriminatingly negative attitude toward the Socialists. At the end of the nineteenth century Bulgaria had both Utopian and Marxist Socialists, many of whom sincerely strove to improve the social conditions in Bulgaria and were motivated by high ideals. The missionaries considered Socialism a misplaced loyalty and idealization of man and fought it ardently by placing emphasis on future life and salvation of the soul rather than of the body and the redemption of society.

The approach of the Methodists was revivalistic. Revivalism achieved many positive results at certain times and places. The Bulgarian Methodists, guided by the American missionaries, were mistaken in the notion that revivalism was the only legitimate evangelistic approach. Their preaching of the "pure"

¹Ibid., p. 37.

Gospel, which was supposed to guarantee success proved only partially the answer to Bulgarian needs, despite occasional spectacular results in converting incorrigible people,¹ and even in awakening whole congregations, such as Varna, Voyvodovo, Pleven, and Gabrovo in 1906 and 1907. Such efforts were prompted by the Aggressive Evangelism and World Wide Prayer League Committee, the Wesleyan Brotherhood, the Epworth League, the Woman's Missionary Society, etc., and included the active participation of pastors, Bible Women, and teachers.²

But revivalism did not appeal to a large number of people who were reared in the Orthodox tradition and whose society had little in common with the American scene. Yet the missionaries tried to transplant all American institutions and practices of former days instead of devising new forms and methods applicable to the specific situation. The contemporary liberal theological outlook gaining stronghold in the West would have been more meaningful to the younger generation and the "agnostics" with whom the revivalists had little patience.

The Methodists of Bulgaria (and of Yugoslavia)³ did not

¹Ibid., pp. 38f.

²Minutes of the Bulgaria Mission Conference, 1906, pp. 27, 30, 39, 42f, 45, et al.

³All of this applies also to Yugoslav Methodism and to a lesser degree to Bulgarian Congregationalism in which the majority had views like the Methodists', but who produced a number of more imaginative leaders and ideas.

produce men who would have acquired theological depth and perspective. The unity of the mission was preserved by the absence of theological controversy. The absence of such controversy was partially due to the absence of theological thinking and scholarship. The pastors came from the same social group as the members, i.e. primarily from the peasantry. Only a few of them received an adequate theological training and none of them became real scholars. They were primarily concerned with the local problems of their parishes to which they applied as best they could the traditional revivalistic and common-sense methods. Those who had a larger vision did not stay in Bulgaria since they felt that the atmosphere among the Protestants there was stifling.

No important permanent inroads were possible unless the exclusive reliance on individual revivalism could be transcended. The reported membership increase of 196 per cent in 1907 and the growing toleration of the Methodist Episcopal Church by Bulgarians reflected in the addition of 92 new members,¹ was deceiving as it did not change the ratio of Protestants and Orthodox. The Protestant did have a potentially disproportionate influence which was reflected in some situations and due to this their work was considered a success rather than failure, even though they did not enter into politics or other social questions due to their

¹Ofitsiyalen Protokol, 1907, p. 25.

preoccupation with the struggle for survival, with personal salvation, and with the moral and religious improvement of the individual. The view prevailed that society would be changed if individuals changed and in so far as this happened the work of the Methodists was marked with success.

In order of importance the feature of our work to be most emphasised is of course soul winning. This is our chief business. Next to this is the item of self-support and the next the matter of various benevolences.¹

This was the statement of the superintendent, Count. But too often the sad reply was, "but the people do not wish to accept the Spirit who gives life; therefore the success is insignificant. Somehow this seed does not take deep root in the life of these citizens."² Such realization must have been very painful. Missionaries and pastors were forced to label their hard labor as "years of sowing rather than reaping."

3. Relations with the Congregational Mission

In the Summer of 1908 the Methodist Mission and the American Board (Congregational) Mission jointly celebrated their Semi-Centennial Jubilee. This event crowned many years of cooperation in Bulgaria, based on the division of the country into two fields. The attitudes were sufficiently alike to

¹Ibid., p. 33.

²Ibid., p. 28.

give hopes that eventually there would be a single combined mission. Several attempts were made to bring this about.

On November 1, 1894, the Missionary Society's Committee on Western Europe recommended the appointment of a commission to confer with the American Board concerning the possible transfer of the Bulgarian work to them. On November 18, 1895, the commission notified the General Missionary Committee that a transfer is not feasible chiefly because of strained financial conditions of the American Board, and the only hope of overcoming the present "highly unsatisfactory" conditions was to obtain "large reinforcements of missionaries and missionary property."¹

Though the American Board was unhappy about some aspects of the Methodist mission, particularly the salaries of the native pastors trained abroad, the two missions worked in harmony until G.S. Davis became Superintendent in 1891.² Controversy started in 1892 with the appointment of Stephen Tomov to Sofia, which was within the American Board territory, and was served by the Bulgarian Evangelical Society and the American Board.

In 1862, the corresponding secretary of the Methodist Missionary Society had renounced any claims on Sofia,³ at a time when it was not the capital, but a small village. The situation had changed and the Methodists wanted to have someone there to "defend its interests before the Central

¹Barclay, op. cit., p. 1037.

²Hall, Puritans on the Balkans, p. 128.

³Ibid., p. 129.

Government." The American Board opposed such unilateral action, and Superintendent Davis recalled Tomov after Albert Long had urged the bishops, especially Bishop Joyce to request this withdrawal. Davis acted promptly saying that he knew nothing of the previous agreement.¹

The issue rested until 1905 when Elmer Count decided that the Methodists should attempt to have a preacher in Sofia. Among the American Board missionaries some felt it would do no harm, but others felt that it would be a calamity. The Methodists had a number of reasons for their attempted occupation of Sofia. They felt that (1) the old agreement was outdated, (2) that they had a right to establish a station among the Methodists who migrated to Sofia and, (3) that it would be advantageous to have someone to represent the denomination there.²

The Methodist Missionary Society was not as certain as E. Count was about the advisability of occupying Sofia. Count felt that the occupation was only a matter of time, and was postponed until 1907 only to preserve harmony among the two missions.³ Count reported to the 1907 Annual Missionary Conference,

Our position is well known by the brethren of that

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid., p. 130.

³ Ibid., p. 181.

[American Board] Mission. I am happy to say that there is a general impression among them that a closer affiliation should exist among us for accomplishing the common object before us.¹

The Methodist position was well known, but not quite appreciated by the Congregationalists, as they had tried in 1906 to co-operate with the Methodists and to include them in the publishing of the Zornitsa. The Methodists regarded their occupation of Sofia as a condition for further co-operation and this was finally approved by the American Board missionaries but not by the native pastors. The Congregationalists held that if the Methodists came to Sofia they should use the general name Evangelical in order to avoid confusing the Bulgarians with denominationalism.² The Methodists, on the other hand, considered the American Board a Congregational agency, and their use of the term Evangelical as a "sham or delusion."³

The Prudential Committee finally approved the Methodist request in October 1907 and soon afterwards the Methodists opened a preaching station there.⁴ John Sitchanov, who had just transferred from the American Board Mission to the Methodist Mission was placed in Sofia. After six months a congregation was

¹Minutes, Bulgaria Mission Conference, 1907, p. 28.

²Hall, Puritans in the Balkans, p. 181.

³Ibid., p. 184.

⁴Ibid., p. 181.

organized,¹ and the Methodists adhered to the promise not to proselytise among Evangelicals (Congregationalists). But they had great difficulties with obtaining a hall in a good location.² Bad feelings were raised in the contest, which could only weaken both missions. They were unable to publish a joint paper as the details could not be agreed upon. The blame for this seems to have rested upon the Methodists who seem to have had a feeling of inferiority or a stronger denominational pride than the Evangelicals (Congregationalists).³

The next years saw the gradual resumption of more cordial relations between the two missions. In 1909 a Congress of the two denominations agreed on a Handbook of Rules to guide both churches in state-church questions.⁴ In 1913 a Panevangelical Congress was held in Sofia with 72 delegates and attendance of 150 to 500 people at the various meetings. At this meeting steps were taken for the eventual union of the two missions.⁵ This was not dissimilar to the jubilee meeting in Sofia five years earlier when forty pastors, preachers, Bible women, missionaries, and others held a series of meetings which culminated in a joint communion service and a

¹Nuelsen, Mann, and Sommer, op. cit., p. 735.

²Hall, Puritans in the Balkans, pp. 182-183.

³Ann. Rep. MSMEC, 1909, p. 488.

⁴C. T. Riggs, op. cit., p. 60.

⁵Ibid.

jubilee sermon.¹ The prospects for union were clouded only when Count took a totally negative attitude toward closer cooperation because of the conservative-liberal controversy in the American Board Mission and withdrew from further negotiations. These were resumed only after World War I.

4. Work in a War Atmosphere

During the first decade of the twentieth century the Methodist Mission in Bulgaria received invitations to preach to people in southern Russia, Rumania, and Albania.² Despite the financial difficulties and the lack of personnel, the superintendent was eager to accept such invitations. He blamed the duplicity of government officials, and the Orthodox priesthood for the inability to respond to these calls. In 1908 the General Conference of the Methodist Church officially enlarged the borders of the Bulgaria Mission Conference to include the kingdoms of Serbia and Rumania.³ It is not clear what the significance of this decision was, when it was known that both governments did not allow the Methodist to work in their lands.

The year 1908 was one of political excitement in all of the Balkan Peninsula on account of the Young Turkish revolution

¹Ibid.

²Ann. Rep. MSMEC, 1906, p. 125.

³Nuelsen, Mann, and Sommer, op. cit., p. 736.

which toppled the sultan, the annexation of Bosnia and Hertsegovina, and the coronation of the Bulgarian Prince Ferdinand as a tsar. All this was not conducive to good missionary work, yet ten young men volunteered to enter the services of the mission.¹ Prejudices against the Protestants were slowly disappearing, although individual cases of persecutions would still be known.² Count conducted a revival in Pleven during his visit, which was accompanied by some of the emotional phenomena, characteristic of the early Methodist work, evidently bringing him much satisfaction.

Just before the war, the Bulgarian Protestants were visited by some prominent British and Americans, in 1909 by F. B. Meyer, in 1911 by John R. Mott, J. A. Campbell, Sherwood Eddy. All seem to have made deep impressions upon the Bulgarians.³ Superintendent Count gained the help of a young Jewish convert, named Silverstein, who had great success in preaching in Sofia, and stirred the Jewish community.⁴ But his mission was not long. He was accused of some irregularities which marred the first impressions and he returned to the United States.⁵

¹Ibid.

²Ann. Rep. MSMEC, 1909, p. 484.

³C. T. Riggs, op. cit., p. 60.

⁴H. B. King to Dr. Barton from Samokov, Nov. 14, 1914, Am. Bd. Arch., Balkan Mission, 1910-1919, Vol. 4.

⁵F. H. Otto Melle to F. M. North, July 1, 1915, MBMAR. #21-B-1, June 1912-December 1919.

The period of the Balkan Wars and the First World War brought severe suffering to the mission.¹ Every available man in the churches was drafted. During the Second Balkan War the towns along the Danube were bombarded by the Rumanians. Everyone fled and the church services were suspended. When the Rumanians were later contained behind the Danube, the pastors and the people could return home,² but many congregations were scattered in 1914 as the hope for safety drew people to the interior of the country. The greatest suffering was in Ruschuk, Lom, Vidin, Svishtov, and Varna.

Touring was extremely difficult. Both natives and foreigners were registered and closely watched, and forbidden to go from place to place unless they had government permission. The superintendent spent five weeks getting permission to tour the stations and still could not visit those located on the Danube or the Black Sea. Count was forced to leave Bulgaria in 1914 or 1915 and Bishop Nuelsen appointed F. H. Otto Melle to substitute for Count as a supervisor on two occasions.³ The churches tried to cope with the problems of relief, as the financial support by the people ceased, and

¹Ann. Rep. MSMEC, 1916, p. 336.

²Ibid., p. 337.

³Verhandlungen der 5. Sitzung der Missions-Konferenz der Prediger der Bischöflichen Methodistenkirche in Oesterreich-Ungarn, 1916, p. 28.

prices soared. Many people lost everything they possessed. The families of the pastors living on small salaries suffered greatly.¹ Only one Annual Conference was held during the war. Observing the acute suffering, Count had agonizing questions as to the responsibility of the churches for the war and its consequences.

I am wondering how far the evangelical church is responsible for this war, because of its failure, or neglect, to size up the importance of the Balkans in the relation to the spreading of vital Christianity over the earth; never since the greatest tragedy of history was enacted on Calvary has God ever so definitely pointed out a portion of the earth as the place to plant the gospel, as when he checked Paul, the greatest missionary and evangelist the world has ever seen, from continuing his evangelical touring of Asia Minor and sent him to the Balkans. It was more than mere incident in church history. The issues involved were so far reaching that no one but the greatest man that Christianity had to give would do.

The statemanship of the world has awakened to see the value of the Balkans in carrying out their great schemes. No section of the world has excited their interest more. Not so with Christian statemanship. In the plea for interest in spreading God's kingdom over the earth "the Macedonian cry" has been made to do service in metaphor for all parts of the earth, at the expense of that section which was literally in God's eye when he painted the vision for Paul and made the cry ring in his soul.

Because of its unique position the Macedonian vision and cry meant to cling to the Christian Church until it would put upon it the emphasis that God did, when by a miraculous man-

¹Ann. Rep. MSMEC, 1916, p. 337.

ifestation he sent Paul to begin his work there. Had the Christian Church treated the question as seriously as God did, in all probability the root cause that produced the present war would not have found a congenial soil in the Balkans. In these times it well behooves Christian statesmanship to profit by the experience of political statesmanship and give heed to the urgent problems of the Balkans that has proven, in recent history, to be the match that has set Europe on fire.

One does not have to agree with the theological presupposition of this man to comprehend the essential soundness of his observation. It would be foolish to say that the Balkan Wars and the First World War could have been avoided had the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Congregational Churches given more money, missionaries, talent, time, and concern--all that which makes a mission succeed. But it would be equally erroneous to overlook the possibility that the Balkan conflicts through the centuries mixed with their countless economic, political, diplomatic, social, and cultural factors, might have been mitigated, had the people and their governments been touched more deeply with the Christian message, and walked in the footsteps of Jesus. For this the whole Church, not only the Methodists and Congregationalists, but also the Orthodox, Catholics, and all others, shares the guilt.

¹Ibid., p. 338.

CHAPTER VII

THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL MISSION TO SOUTHEASTERN

AUSTRO-HUNGARY FROM 1898 TO 1918

A. From 1898 to 1911

1. The Antecedents of the Mission

Methodism spread to Austria-Hungary by way of Germany. Germans converted to Methodism were eager to evangelize among all German-speaking people. Soon their attention was turned to the German-speaking population living in Austria and the Southeastern part of the Dual Monarchy. The territory of southeastern Austria-Hungary, usually called Voyvodina, was annexed to Yugoslavia after World War I and hence is included within the scope of this dissertation. In order to show the origins of this movement it is necessary to turn our attention to the two movements giving rise to Methodism in Yugoslavia. One was German Methodism and the other was the Blue Cross temperance movement. The Blue Cross societies in Voyvodina, particularly in Bachka, served as "conveyer belts" in the spread of Methodism to these regions, i.e. members of these societies invited Methodist preachers to evangelize among them and became the first adherents to this

movement in the region which spread from America to Germany and from there to Voyvodina.

a. German Methodism.--The Nineteenth Century witnessed the low ebb of spiritual life in Germany. During this time the secularism of the German immigrants to America had come to the notice of the Methodists and prompted work among them. A large number of German immigrants were gathered into the Methodist Episcopal Church.¹ In 1835 William Nast was appointed as missionary to the German Americans. An extension of German Methodism from America to Germany followed when letters of German immigrants to their families about their religious experiences led to curiosity in Germany and to the formal request for preachers by people dissatisfied with the decline of religious activity in the land of the Reformation.² They were dissatisfied with rationalism, the worldliness of the clergy, secularism, and the infrequent preaching of God's grace. William Nast appointed people like

¹A. J. Bucher, "Von den Angangen des deutschen Methodismus in Amerika," in Das Walten Gottes im deutschen Methodismus, F. W. Otto Melle (ed.), (Bremen, Germany: Buchhandlung und Verlag des Traktathauses, G.m.b.H., [1925?]), pp. 69-87, esp. 73-74.

²John L. Nuelsen, Theophil Mann, and J. J. Sommer, Kurzgefasste Geschichte des Methodismus von seinen Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart, (Bremen: Buchhandlung und Verlag des Traktathauses, G.m.b.H., [1921?]), p. 583.

Louis Jacoby, Louis Nippert, Erhardt and Frederick Wunderlich, and Ernst Mann, to go to Germany, to talk with people and form societies. They preached wherever they could and despite many interruptions by mobs and officials the movement increased in strength.¹ The first Methodist class was formed in 1850 and soon thereafter the first Quarterly Conference was established. The periodical Der Evangelist appeared in order to complement Der Christliche Apologete from America.

The geographical position of Germany and the wide distribution of Germans on the Continent facilitated the spread of Methodism to other regions among German-speaking people, first to Switzerland, then to Austria and to the southeastern regions of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. German Methodism carried out a drang nach Osten, with the same vigor but not with the same imperialistic motivations as the German nation did in the political sense. This drang was not a set plan of the Methodists, but was a spontaneous movement, started on a small scale, motivated by a vigorous desire to communicate the Gospel to any who would listen. They were led by the invitations of people desiring such witnessing, regardless

¹Paul F. Douglass, The Story of German Methodism, (New York: The Methodist Book Concern, 1939), p. 103f.

of obstacles. The rapid spread of this movement to Switzerland, Austria, Hungary, and Yugoslavia is remarkable. So Methodism came to what is now northeastern Yugoslavia (Voyvodina) and what was then southeastern Austria-Hungary from Germany via Vienna.

b. The Blue Cross Societies.--During the last decade of the nineteenth century Blue Cross temperance societies were organized in Bachka.¹ The European temperance movement had its roots in similar movements in the United States. The Blue Cross temperance society was organized in Geneva in 1877 by the Swiss pastor Louis-Lucien Rochat.² In 1881 the society was given the name Blue Cross, because it was supposed to do for the alcoholics that what the Red Cross did for the wounded on the battle-field. In 1890, after the movement spread to a number of countries, the movement was incorporated as the Federation Internationale des Societes de Temperance de la

¹Bachka is the part of Voyvodina delineated by the rivers Danube and Tisa, bordering on Hungary proper, few miles north of the city of Subotitsa (Sabadka). In this chapter Serbo-Croatian geographical names will be used first while Hungarian and German names will be given paranthetically, because they were used extensively in the period under consideration.

²V. Bode, "Enthaltsamkeitsvereine," in Evangelisches Kirchenlexikon, ed. Heinz Brunotte and Otto Weber, Vol. I, (Göttingen: Vanderhoeck & Ruprecht, 1956), p. 1093.

Croix-Bleue.¹ The society spread to Hungary in 1894, while the spread to Bachka must have come shortly after that date.

The national Blue Cross societies each directed by a Central Committee were made up of regional groups and these in turn of local groups and sections. They urged people to sign pledges of total abstinence for a length of time and to promise to combat the abuse of intoxicating drinks by others. Each group consisted of active members and adherents, the difference being that active members had to have a record of three months of total abstinence.² The Blue Cross was in an intermediary position between total abstinence societies and the "moderation" societies. They urged total abstinence for members but did not condemn the moderate use of alcohol by others. The Blue Cross urged co-operation among all Christians in the accomplishment of this goal, and was distinctly religious and Christian, but non-denominational in its approach.³ The word of God was considered the strongest weapon against alcoholism and members frequently met for worship services.

Blue Cross societies were organized in Novi Vrbas (Ujverbasz, Neu-Werbass), Srbobran (Szenttamas), Tsrno Brdo (Feketehegy), Novi Sad (Ujvidek, Neusatz), and Kutsura, and were

¹"Blue Cross," in Standard Encyclopedia of the Alcohol Problem, ed. Ernest Hurst Cherrington, Vol. III, (Westerville, Ohio: [American Issue Publishing Co.?], 1926), p. 975.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

supervised from Budapest by Theodor Biberauer, the head inspector of the society, and by other officials of the society, such as Robert Feinsilber, Johann Chorvath, and even head lieutenant von Knobelsdorff.¹

The goal of this society was to unite both drinkers and non-drinkers under the banner of temperance.

Das Hauptmittel, welches in dieser schönen Arbeit benützt wurde, war die Verbreitung der Hl. Schrift und die Predigt des Evangeliums. Es wurden wöchentliche Versammlungen abgehalten, je nach freiem Entschluss sonntäglich oder auch werktags. Eine innige Begeisterung erfüllte die Leute, und besonders die Geretteten waren hochbeglückt.²

These societies worked primarily among the German colonists, who came into these regions mainly during the reign of Joseph II, ca. 1780 from Württemberg, Nassau-Hessen, Elsass, and the Pfaltz.³ A large number of these Germans were Evangelicals (Lutherans)⁴ and Reformed (Calvinists), but there was an equal number who were Catholics. Too little is known about the religious situation among these people but many of them did not

¹Festschrift: zur Feier des Fünfundzwanzigjährigen Bestehens der Bischöflichen Methodistenkirche im Kgr. SHS. (Novi Sad, Yug.: Verlag der Buchhandlung der Bischöfl. Methodistenkirche, 1923), p. 8. Will be abbreviated to Festschrift.

²Ibid.

³Oswald Bickel, "Wie es seinerzeit war," Schweitzer Evangelist, (November 5, 1944), Year 51, No. 45, p. 711.

⁴The Lutheran Churches in Europe call themselves Evangelical Churches, and should not be confused with the Evangelicals in Bulgaria who were Congregationalists and used this term synonymously with Protestantism.

attend the services of the Evangelical and Reformed Churches regularly, because they desired a more fervent and pietistic emphasis than offered in these churches. Such pietistic tendencies made them more ready to accept Methodism, but it is impossible to trace the roots of this pietism. In their meetings, seeking to find literature that would adequately fulfill their religious needs, they used the German Methodist Hymnbook Frohe Botschaft and read eagerly Der Christliche Apologete sent from America.¹ Attempts by later Methodists to identify the senders of the issues of Der Christliche Apologete, the periodical, so crucial for the commencement of Methodist work in the Bachka, were not successful.

2. The Invitation of Methodists to Bachka

In der alten Doppelmonarchie Oesterreich-Ungarn gab es seit 1870 eine einzige Methodistengemeinde und zwar in Wien. Unter unsagbaren Bedrückungen und Behinderungen fristete diese die ersten 25 Jahre ihres Bestehens, ohne nach Art der Methodisten sich ausbreiten und ausdehnen zu können. Mit dem 25-jährigen Jubiläum dieser kleinen Märtyrergemeinde setzte eine neue Zeit ein. Der Herr schenkte in Wien eine wunderbare Erweckung. In der Zeit von 3 Jahren entstanden 6 neue Versammlungen in Wien, darunter eine tschechische.²

An attempt to gain support in the city of Bratislava (then Pressburg), in Hungary, failed even though the laws

¹Melle, op. cit., p. 300.

²Robert Möller, "Wie der Methodismus in die Bačka kam," Lebensweg (Novi Sad, Yug.), Fifth Year, No. 2 (January 15, 1923), p. 6. Möller was the Methodist minister in Vienna, and being an aggressive evangelist he spread Methodism into Hungary, being the pioneer Methodist missionary in this country and in Bachka.

guaranteeing religious freedom were more liberal. Robert Möller, a Viennese Methodist minister, despaired of gaining entrance into the Hungarian part of the dual monarchy.¹ But in 1896 he was invited by the Y.M.C.A. to preach in Budapest. He used the opportunity to evangelize in a German Reformed Church, without proselytizing but using a distinct Methodist approach of individual evangelism rather than mass evangelism.²

An unexpected avenue opened for Möller's work in Hungary, and he was not a man who would waste opportunities. Members of the "Blue Cross" societies in Vrbas and Srbobran, which were adjacent towns, distant but some 5 miles, had read in the Christliche Apologete about Robert Möller and they invited him to preach to them. Möller's own version is,

Da fanden diese Freunde eines Tages im "Apologeten" meine Wiener Adresse und schickten mir sofort eine Einladung. In diesem Schreiben hiess es: "Wir können Ihnen freilich nichts versprechen als das Reisegeld III. Klasse, gute Verpflegung und 5 Gulden. Aber wir versprechen Ihnen viele dankbare Zuhörer." Unterschriften waren drei Namen: H. Schmidt, Ph. Jakob and J. Dietrich. Das war für mich ein Ruf aus Mazedonien.³

The year given is 1897 for the first arrival of Möller both in his own version and in the version published by the mission during the celebration of the 25th anniversary.⁴ However in a letter to the General Missionary Committee Möller stated that

¹Ibid., p. 7.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., in Lebensweg, Fifth Year, No. 3 (February 1, 1923,) p. 111.

⁴Festschrift, p. 8.

he evangelized in Budapest in 1898 and later in that year started to work in Bachka.¹ This statement does not preclude Möller's possible earlier visit in 1897.

John Tessenyi-Jakob, the son of one of the signers of the above letter, Philipp Jakob, who was the leader of the Blue Cross in Srbobran, and later the District Superintendent of the Northern Yugoslav Methodist District wrote,

One of the leaders of the anti-alcoholic Blue Cross movement happened to receive a copy of the American paper "Der Christliche Apologete". In this he found the address of Pastor Härle, to whom he wrote. Br. Härle turned the letter over to the Distr. Supt. in Berlin, who in his turn wrote to Bro. Robert Möller in Wien. And the latter was happy to visit down in the Bacska.²

This statement is corroborated by a letter of the Vrbas teacher Henrik Schmidt written on September 22, 1898, from Novi Vrbas (Neu-Verbasz), Hungary.³

Neu-Verbasz, com. B.B. Ungarn, 22.IX.1898. Sr. Hochwürden Herr Methodistenprediger H. Robert Möller, Wien. Hochwürdiger Herr Prediger!

¹C. Schell and Robert Moeller to the General Missionary Committee, Berlin, October 14, 1898; Möller to Palmer, Vienna, October 14, 1898; and Möller to General Missionary Committee, Vienna, October 25, 1900, MBMAR., M folder, "Europe pre-1913."

²J. Tessenyi-Jacob to Paul Mojzes from Pasadena, Calif., October 29, 1963. Extract copied in entirety as written. The letter is on file with the author.

³A typed copy of this letter was sent to the author by Ferdiand Mayr from Vienna mailed in January 1964. The original is probably owned by Ferdinand Mayr, who was a Methodist minister in Yugoslavia since World War I and became later the Superintendent of the Austria Mission Conference.

Durch das Lesen des Christl. Apologeten" von Cincinnati gelang es mir Adressen von Methodistenpredigern zu bekommen u. da ich ein Verlangen nach dieser christl. Lehre habe wandte ich mich an den lieben Prediger Joh. Härle in Herisau mit der Bitte mir ein Gesangbuch u. Katechismus der Kirche gegen Bezahlung zu senden. Dieser liebe Bruder sandte mir das Verlangte und noch einige andere Sachen gratis und war so freunlich mir auch ihre werthe Adresse zu schreiben.

Sulzberger's "Erklärung", Steven's "Methodismus", Nast's Katechismus, Wesley's Predigten 2 Bände durchgelesen erweckten immer mehr Verlangen nach dieser Lehre und spornen mich an immer tiefer in dasselbe einzudringen weshalb ich mich erkühne an Sie, Hochw. Herr Prediger mit der Bitte zu wenden: Sie möchten die Güte haben mir ein Werk zum durchstudieren zu empfehlen, denn das herumsuchen in den verschiedenen kostet viel Geld und Zeit habe mir heute ein Exemplar "Kirchenordnung" bestellt.

Bitte mir zu schreiben wenn Sie diesen Brief erhalten und mir Ihre genaue Adresse anzugeben denn ich hatte so sehr vieles von Ihnen betreff Ungarn zu erfragen.

Ihr im Herrn treu verbundener Schmidt Henrik Lehrer. P.S. Da ich die genaue von Herrn Schell bekam, war ich so frei ihn um die Zustellung an Sie zu ersuchen.

The impression from this letter is that Schmidt was not yet acquainted personally with Möller. If this is true, the date of Möller's visit to Bachka would have to be after September 22, 1898, rather than 1897 as claimed by Möller twenty-five years later. The reason for this assertion is that Schmidt, the village school teacher, and Möller, one of the rare visitors from the capital of the empire, could not avoid meeting during Möller's first visit to Novi Vrbas, due to the small size of the village. This is corroborated by the letter mentioned by Möller in the Lebensweg, according to which Schmidt was one of the three men who invited him to come. When Möller came he was reportedly met at the station by

"teacher Sch.", whom he recognized as a tall man with a large sheet of paper attached to his umbrella.¹ Accordingly the first visit of Möller should be dated at the end of 1898, and this was also corroborated by Martin Funk, the successor of Melle in Budapest and the later Hungarian district superintendent.²

During this first visit Möller preached first in Novi Vrbas in front of an audience which packed the largest school room in town, and because of lack of space the meeting was transferred to the local Reformed Church.³ The first family which cordially accepted Möller was that of Jakob, from Srbobran, where Möller also found an appreciative audience. He also preached in Tsrno Brdo (Feketehegy), Sekić (Szegegy) and Kucura, in all of which he was cordially welcomed.

The first visit was so successful that Möller was invited to visit them more often, which he did. In his next visits he acted more in the capacity of a Methodist minister, and this brought upon him the first difficulties. The Blue Cross officials in Budapest were dissatisfied and disturbed with his activities, feeling that he had no right to propagate the interests of his church. Möller replied that he would not divorce

¹Möller, op. cit., Lebensweg, p. 11

²Martin Funk, "Survey of the History of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Austria-Hungary and Jugoslavia," 1926. A typescript at MBMLib file on "Austria Mission, Hungary Provisional Conference, and Jugoslavia Mission Through 1957."

³Möller, op. cit., Lebensweg, p. 11.

his preaching from the message and interests of his church but would be willing to step down if the people of Bachka requested this. The people of Bachka answered that they were inviting Möller again and requesting the Methodist Episcopal Church to station a Methodist preacher among them.¹

The next opposition was ecclesiastical and civil. The ecclesiastical opposition was carried out by other recognized Protestant Churches, particularly by Evangelical (Lutheran) pastors, but never by Roman Catholics or Eastern Orthodox.² Often it seemed that this opposition would root out Methodism at the very beginning, but this was prevented by the decisiveness of convictions of people like Philipp Jakob, Johann Haser, Karl Pfeiffer, Kathi Frank, and others who zealously defended their right to invite any preacher and effectively prevented the authorities jailing or exiling him.³ Möller tried to prevent these persecutions and hindrances by going to talk with the town officials who issued various prohibitions of his meetings. They defended themselves on the grounds that they were prompted to act by the ecclesiastical authorities in town, while these in turn blamed the civil authorities. All this opposition notwithstanding, the

¹Ibid., in Lebensweg, Fifth Year, No. 4 (February 15, 1923), p. 14.

²John Tessenyi-Jacob to Paul Mojzes, Pasadena, Calif., October 31, 1963.

³Möller, op. cit., in Lebensweg, Fifth Year, No. 4, p. 15.

enthusiasm for the Methodist message was so strong that Philipp Jakob, Johann Hauser, and Karl Pfeiffer petitioned the North German Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, under which auspices the work in Austria-Hungary was being carried out, to send them a regular preacher.¹

3. The Pioneer Pastors

Jakob, Hauser, and Pfeiffer were all from the Srbobran Blue Cross. The Novi Vrbas Blue Cross had lost its leadership through some internal difficulties and the society at Srbobran took the initiative. Möller felt that it would be prudent to restrict preaching to villages in which there were as yet no Blue Cross activities.² Then the leaders of the Srbobran society, Philipp Jakob and his son Julius Jakob decisively moved to support the Methodist cause and invited the young preacher, Franz Havranek, who was appointed by the North German Annual Conference in 1899, to come to Srbobran and live as the guest of Johannes Hauser and Philipp Jakob.³

Havranek's ministry was characterized by limited success. It was met by the opposition of the civil authorities inspired by the clergy of the Lutheran church. He worked in Novi Vrbas, where he was most successful, Srbobran and Crno Brdo, travelling mainly pedes apostolorum,⁴ as did most Methodist ministers in

¹Melle, op. cit., p. 301.

²Festschrift, pp. 9-10.

³Ibid., p. 10.

⁴J. T. Jacob to Paul Mojzes, Pasadena, California, October 31, 1963.

this region until the railroads were built. Even today many villages do not have railroad or bus service.

In Novi Vrbas, Havranek preached at the house of K. Pfeiffer and the family Frank, where he admitted the first probationers in the spring of 1900 and administered the first sacrament of the Lord's Supper.¹ In 1900 District Superintendent E. Schell of the North German Conference was the first official to visit the Bachka. An earlier proposed visit of Bishop Walden, on his way to Bulgaria had not been carried out because Möller could not accompany him. Schell received a good impression of Havranek's work but recalled him in the summer of the same year after the persecution became more pronounced. Even the visit of Möller to a high government official in Sombor did not eliminate persecution entirely.² However, the exact cause of Havranek's recall is not clear. Möller and Melle stated that it was because he was easily discouraged and was afraid of persecutions,³ Melle added that this led

¹Festschrift, p. 10.

²Möller, op. cit., Lebensweg (February 15, 1923), p. 15.

³Ibid., also Melle, op. cit., p. 301 and Verhandlungen der 1. Sitzung der Missions-Konferenz der Prediger der Bischöflichen Methodistenkirche in Oesterreich-Ungarn, Vienna, May 4-7, 1911, "Bericht des Distrikts-Vorstehers" F. H. Otto Melle, p. 37. The minutes of the Annual Mission Conferences will be abbreviated to Verhandlungen with the appropriate year and pagination.

him to abandon entirely his ministerial vocation. John Tessenyi-Jacob wrote, "Havranek was well loved and all deeply regretted when he has been recalled in 1899. For several months the Church leaders in Germany hesitated to send another man to Bachka, owing to the difficulties."¹ In another letter Tessenyi-Jacob corrected the date of Havranek's departure as being the summer of 1900 rather than 1899.² Another version of why Havranek left so soon was that he gave offense because of his past manner of life, which was considered unfit for a minister.³

Havranek's departure set the work back considerably and the small communities were neglected. The district superintendent felt that he should not appoint anyone to go to Bachka, unless he volunteered. Then F. H. Otto Melle, probably under the influence of Robert Möller,⁴ volunteered a few weeks after he had received his first pastorate in Dresden, Germany, to the astonishment of his congregation.⁵ When Meller arrived the former enthusiasm for Methodism had subsided. He was well received in Srbobran but in Novi Vrbas, where he was supposed to

¹J. T. Jacob to Paul Mojzes, Pasadena, October 31, 1962.

²J. T. Jacob to Paul Mojzes, Pasadena, November 13, 1963.

³Festschrift, p. 11.

⁴Möller, op. cit., Lebenswegen, (Feb. 15, 1923), p. 15.

⁵Melle, op. cit., p. 302.

found his main station, the people had been told that if they ever invited a missionary they would be all imprisoned and that he would be exiled.¹ Melle's request to hold services was denied, but he decided to force the issue so that he could carry his case to higher authorities. He announced that there would be a service on Christmas day. Two gendarmes (policemen) were dispatched to tell him that he would be arrested if he held a worship service or a lecture. The officials did not find him, and the news spread; a throng gathered to witness the arrest. The encounter between Melle and the gendarmes was the "hour of decision" for the Methodist work.² Melle was not easily outwitted. He said that he did not believe the order to be in compliance with the laws of the country guaranteeing religious liberty, but that he would for the time obey the local order, as he did not want to be lawless. Then he asked the gendarmes whether it was forbidden to play Bible Quiz games, i.e. puzzles. The somewhat bewildered gendarmes answered that no such prohibition was contained in their order. So, Melle asked questions from the Bible and, according to the need, supplied the shorter or longer corresponding answers. This proved most effective. This service was the most memorable in the history of Yugoslav and Austro-Hungarian Methodism. A number of people testified later that they made the decision

¹Ibid.

²Ibid., p. 303.

to become Methodists and to commit themselves seriously to the Christian way of life during that Christmas puzzle-service.¹ The meeting resulted in a wave of revivals in the various Bachka towns and villages, while the Novi Vrbas authorities finally gave permission for holding services, although they persisted in hindering the work for many years.

Otto Melle gained rapidly a reputation in European Methodism as an able pastor and with his successful preaching in Kutsura, Tsrno Brdo, and Sekic' in the following years, he enlarged his field to proportions that were not easily managed by one pastor. In the summer of 1901 the work in Hungary was organized as a separate circuit of the North German Conference (up to 1901 it was a part of the Vienna circuit) and Otto Melle was appointed to be the supervising elder.² Bishop Vincent visited Bachka in 1902, accompanied by the superintendent of the Italian Mission Conference, William Burt, who was later elected as Vincent's successor. In 1903 Vincent visited again with Professor Bucher, later the editor of Der Christliche Apologete.³

As Bishop Vincent realized that Melle needed at least one other assistant he appointed Hugo Georgi, the secretary of

¹Ibid., p. 304.

²An elder is the highest rank of ordination for the clergy after they have been ordained as deacons, finished their theological studies, and spent a period on trial in an Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

³Festschrift, pp. 12-13.

Methodist Youth Work in Germany. He became the first resident preacher in Novi Vrbas where he was well liked and preached with great enthusiasm,¹ until he was sent in 1904 to the theological seminary at Frankfurt a/M.² Melle could now extend his tours. While visiting Srem (the ancient Roman Province of Sirmium), the young preacher violated an order not to discuss the Bible in the village of Beshka. He was escorted by a Croatian constable to Novi Sad in Bachka. He did not fail to realize that Novi Sad was a potential stronghold for Methodism and the next preacher who was sent out, Robert Schuldt, was stationed there.³

4. Stabilization of the Mission from 1904 to 1907

The District Superintendent of the Berlin district, W. M. Schutz, reported to the Annual Conference of North Germany in 1904 that there were three preachers, seven stations, 15 full members, 61 probationers, and 71 newly acquired members and probationers.⁴ He noted the purchase of land and a good house in Vrbas for worship services,⁵ but also the continuation

¹J.T. Jacob to P. Mojzes, Pasadena, November 13, 1963.

²Festschrift, p. 14.

³Ibid., p. 13.

⁴A typed extract from "Der Bericht des Superintendenten W.M. Schutz an die Norddeutsche Konferenz, 1904," supplied to the author by one of the former Methodist ministers in Yugoslavia.

⁵Vrbas and Novi Vrbas are twin towns in which there was only one Methodist community. Referrals to either one designate the same congregation.

of the persecutions which had troubled the mission from the beginning. The work of the mission was reported as steady, and the superintendent expressed the hope that it might survive, even though its existence had many times been brought into question.

A very important step was taken in 1904. Thus far Methodist ministers from Germany served the German populace living in Bachka. One of the sons of Philipp Jakob, Johannes Jakob, who was a pharmacist, assisted Melle in his evangelization services to which a few Hungarians from Srbobran came, asking to be received. Johannes Jakob (the English rendering of the name is John Tessenyi-Jacob) worked for a whole year among these Hungarians, being able to preach in both Hungarian and German, after first serving as an interpreter to Melle. He succeeded forming a Hungarian Methodist class and finally a Hungarian congregation in Srbobran, thus for the first time reaching the Hungarian nationals in Bachka.¹

In 1904 William Burt became the resident Bishop in Europe, giving full support to the work in Bachka, with which he had become acquainted before he was elected. Johannes Jakob, after establishing also a Hungarian Blue Cross Temperance society, abandoned his pharmaceutical practice and went to study at the

¹Melle, op. cit., p. 307 and "Bericht des Superintendenten W.M. Schutz an die Norddeutsche Konferenz, 1904." Also J. Tessenyi-Jacob to P. Mojzes, Pasadena, November 13, 1963.

Frankfurt Methodist Seminary in 1904. From this temperance society a Hungarian local preacher, Markus Kuszli, a former alcoholic, came forward to serve the Hungarian congregation. He was promoted to an assistant pastor's position in 1907 for the Srbobran circuit a position that he held until 1916.¹ Julius Jakob, the older brother of Johannes Jakob, served as an exhorter in Srbobran and the vicinity.

Robert Schuldt was transferred to Novi Vrbas from Novi Sad when Hugo Georgi left for theological education. Ernst Voigt became the new pastor in Novi Sad. He was responsible for the organization of a new Methodist church in Budisava (Tiszakalmanfalva) in the vicinity of Novi Sad. In 1905 Albert Reinsberg substituted for Robert Schuldt, and Otto Hanel was placed in Srbobran to take the place of Otto Melle, who went to Budapest to organize Methodist work in the capital of Hungary.² In 1906 Wilhelm Lichtenberger became the pastor in Novi Sad. He came from a remarkable family; his father was for fifty years a Bible colporteur for Serbia, and he later became housefather in the Bible School at St. Adrae, Austria, after serving as an able Methodist minister in Novi Sad and Tsrvenka,³ while his brother, Theodor, became a preacher also.

During his pastorate in Novi Sad Robert Schuldt established

¹Festschrift, pp. 14, 15, and 22.

²Ibid., p. 15.

³Otto Bickel, "Missionsstreifzuge in Jugoslawien" in Der Schweitzer Evangelist, 1940, p. 269.

a Methodist congregation in Yarak,¹ in which the whole village of some 3,000 Germans was influenced by his evangelization, and a Sunday school with eighty children was functioning. Other new stations among the Germans sprang up, one in Pribichevićevo (Kishker, now called Zmayevo) and another in Shove. An increasing number of villages and towns requested Methodist preachers and this required an increasing organization and spreading of the work.

5. The Flourishing of Methodism in Bachka

Compared with the work elsewhere in Austro-Hungary the work in Bachka made good progress. In 1907 the Methodist work in the Habsburg monarchy was put under the administration of the North German Conference with Otto Melle a district superintendent at Vienna. Hungary was divided into four circuits, Budapest, Novi Sad, Srbobran, and Novi Vrbas.² Thus three out of four circuits were in Bachka and Albert Reinsberg, Albert Ohlrich, and Wilhelm Lichtenberger were appointed to be supervising elders of the three circuits.³

This reorganization, as well as the others before and after, did not produce any radical changes, but facilitated steady

¹Robert Schuldt to Paul Mojzes from Berlin-Charlottenburg, West Berlin, ca. end of November 1963. The letter is in long-hand in gothic characters and the name of the town is not quite legible, resembling Yarak, but reads Jarweck, perhaps misspelt or the contemporary name for what is now Bački Jarak and was called Jarek by the Germans two decades ago.

²Verhandlungen, 1911, p. 38.

³Festschrift, p. 15.

progress which was experienced in all congregations up to World War I, save in Novi Vrbas. Here persecution was experienced in 1907 and 1908 causing later stagnation.¹ New men from Germany came to strengthen all three circuits. Herman Melle, the younger brother of Otto Melle, came to Novi Vrbas, and through his work a crisis in this town was met. Through much self-sacrifice he succeeded in so organizing the congregation that it was for many years one of the most prosperous. Eventually the most beautiful of all Methodist churches in Yugoslavia was built here.

Martin Funk came from the seminary to Srbobran where he worked to a point of exhaustion, serving in Vrbas, Tsrvenka, and Sivats. In 1911 he was transferred to Budapest, becoming district superintendent of the Hungarian Mission after World War I. Alfred Mehner came to Novi Sad and remained there for five years. As a result of his faithful service, there remains today a very nice chapel and apartment building, still serving as the headquarters of the Methodist Church in Yugoslavia. This house at 7 Lukijana Mušickog is still one of the best looking older houses in Novi Sad.

The work in Bachka had one peculiarity: the three circuits had almost identical problems, and when progress was reported in one it was true also of the other two; if failures

¹Ibid.

²Verhandlungen, 1911, p. 38.

were reported in a district they could be discovered in the same measure in the other two.¹ A weakness was displayed in the Hungarian language work in Srbobran, Bechey, and Churug.² The greatest failure seems to have been with the Hungarians. They were the politically predominant element here before World War I. Had they become attached to the Methodist Church in greater numbers it would have provided the church with a measure of indigenization because the Hungarians still represent the largest national minority in Vojvodina. Most of the Hungarians in the Bachka were Roman Catholics or Calvinists with strong loyalties to their churches, so that Methodism never took root among the Hungarians.

B. From 1911 to 1918

This period is distinctive because of wartime conditions and because of the change in organizational structure rather than because of any difference in the kind of work or policy pursued by the Methodist Episcopal Church. The Austria-Hungary Mission Conference was organized in 1911 and became obsolete when Austria-Hungary collapsed as a political formation in 1918.

1. The Austro-Hungarian Methodist Mission Conference

A new phase in the history of the work, was the organization of the Austro-Hungarian Mission Conference in Vienna,

¹Verhandlungen, 1911, p. 38.

²Festschrift, p. 16.

May 4 to 7, 1911, by Bishop Burt. The new Conference had seven ministers with F. H. Otto Melle as its district superintendent and 670 church members.¹ There were four circuits in Hungary, with 313 members and 20 preaching stations.² The Hungarian language work made no apparent strides as one preacher, Schmidt, who was to work with Hungarians, became so discouraged that he resigned after one week. Then Kuszli spent half of his time in Srbobran and half in Budapest so that both cities suffered from this arrangement.³ The greatest problem facing the new Mission Conference was the question of the training of young ministers, especially from among the people of those countries where the Methodists worked among the German minority; new pastors stem from these people, "who know the people, who speak their language and who want to stay here."⁴ A certain amount of insecurity was evident when the connections with the North German Conference was severed,⁵ but as it developed this change was not too significant for the work in the Bachka, which remained much the same as before.⁶ The members of the Conference were much encouraged when the statistics showed a nine per cent increase in membership (sixty-one in all), much more than the three per cent gain in the North German Conference.⁷

¹Ann. Rep. MSMEC, 1911, p. 444.

²Verhandlungen, 1911, p. 38.

³Ibid., p. 39.

⁴Ibid., p. 40.

⁵Verhandlungen, 1912, p. 43.

⁶Festschrift, pp. 16-17.

⁷Verhandlungen, 1912, p. 43.

The second Annual Conference was held in the new chapel at Novi Sad. Progress was reported in membership as well as in finances, in recruitment of a ministerial candidate (Ferdinand Drumm from Novi Vrbas), and in publishing. Der Evangelist für Oesterreich-Ungarn commenced in 1912 along with Hungarian language publications of the Keresztyén Könyvesház (Christian Book House)¹ which issued the Hungarian Methodist periodical Békeharang (Bell of Peace).

The circuit of Srbobran had eight preaching stations (among them two Hungarian, one in Srbobran and one in Bechey), supervised by Paul Riedinger, the first German pastor who came from the South-German Annual Conference.² The Novi Sad circuit, despite the failure to maintain a preaching station in Pribichevićevo, because of pressure from the civil authorities, had displayed the greatest advance as the congregation had built the first chapel in the territory of Hungary; they had a net increase of 15 members which was the largest in the conference. Occasional services in Hungarian were held at this chapel.³ Another chapel was completed within a few months at Sekić, in the Novi Vrbas circuit, where a good advance was made, albeit less than hoped for.⁴ Johannes Jakob, the first native pastor took Herman Melle's place. By 1914 they were ready to build

¹Ibid., p. 44.

²Ibid., pp. 45-46.

³Ibid., p. 47.

⁴Ibid.

a chapel, but the outbreak of the war prevented this.¹ The Vrbas work extended to Szegedin, Hungary, which was served with good results until 1914.

Superintendent Melle visited the United States in 1913 to attend the World Christian Student Association Conference at Lake Mohonk, N. Y.² He had the opportunity to travel and to inform German and English-speaking Methodists with the problems of the work in the Dual Monarchy, gaining more financial support than he hoped for.³ In Cincinnati he talked with Dr. William Nast and other important German Methodists connected with Der Christliche Apologete. He gained the sympathy of Nast's sister, Fanny Nast-Gamble, who willed to the Austria-Hungary Mission Conference \$50,000 to be used after her death for the purchase of a church in Budapest. Just before the relations between the United States and the Central Powers were broken in World War I, the money was transferred to Melle. He bought property in Budapest and also a chapel for Sivats, Bachka. The same funds were used to support the ministers during the war, when no money could be sent from the United States.⁴

In 1912 Bishop John L. Nuelsen, a Swiss-American, was sent as Bishop of the Methodist Church for Europe, giving the Methodists of Central and Southern Europe one of their most

¹Festschrift, p. 18.

²Verhandlungen, 1913, p. 41.

³Ibid.

⁴Melle, op. cit., p. 314.

outstanding leaders.¹ Under his and Melle's leadership the Austria-Hungarian conference made rapid strides. It grew in membership thirteen per cent over 1912,² at the 1914 Annual Conference the increase was fourteen per cent over 1913, with Novi Sad experiencing an increase of 21 members, Vrbas of 33, Srbobran of 13, after having gained 15 members the previous year. Superintendent Melle reported that "the Conference year 1913/14 was for the Monarchy a year of peace, for our work it was a year of victory and progress, and if we could have held at the end of the same year the Annual Conference, as it was planned, it would have been a real Victory Conference."⁴ However, the work was still not strong enough to warrant expansion to neighboring Serbia, though such expansion was contemplated.⁵ In the last year before the war Novi Sad was served by Paul Riedinger, who arrived four months after A. Mehrer had left. An epidemic of cholera had occurred, however Riedinger soon brought the whole Novi Sad circuit to new heights of spiritual and organizational attainment.

Johannes Jakob with two assistants, Kuszli and Wenninger, were so successful that this circuit had the largest increase

¹Douglass, op. cit., p. 186. ²Verhandlungen, 1913, p. 42.

³Verhandlungen, 1915, p. 45.

⁴Ibid. Translated from German by the author.

⁵John L. Nuelsen to F. M. North, March 6, 1914, in MBMAr, Correspondence file #310.

of membership. The out-station in Szegedin had more than sixty adherents in contrast to the first few announced meetings which were visited by no one. Heinrich Mann was now in charge of the Srbobran circuit, assisted by Georg Sebele from Novi Sad,¹ who spoke both German and Hungarian. Sebele brought invaluable service for future Methodist work. He was a native of Bachka, of Roman Catholic parents but since childhood he had attended Methodist Sunday School for which he was regularly punished by the priest and was eventually expelled from the parochial school. He was a salesman, but as the preachers noticed his ability and invited him to help he sacrificed his good position to become an assistant preacher at a small salary.² He continued to progress but could not go to study theology at the Frankfurt Seminary because the war broke out. He studied by himself and prepared his Conference examinations alone, or together with the other young ministers.

2. The War Confusion and Disorder, 1914-1918

The First World War was "shockingly unexpected" to the European Methodists.³ The Annual Conference of 1914 planned

¹Verhandlungen, 1915, p. 46.

²Paula Moyzes to Paul Mojzes from Novi Sad, November 27, 1963, also Robert Schuldt to Paul Mojzes from Berlin-Charlottenburg, end of November 1963.

³Douglass, op. cit., p. 187.

for Vienna was cancelled. Most of the ministers and almost all male members of the churches soon found themselves in the German or Austro-Hungarian army. It all seemed like a bad dream, for the Methodists planned their whole work in hope of peace, but now for the mantle of the peacemaker had to be substituted the uniform of the warrior.¹

The attitudes of all the ministers toward the war are unknown, but from the superintendent's report it may be concluded that all of them readily answered the call to arms and lamented only because the churches were not attended or regularly served during their absence. While mobilization had priority over all other interests,² it seems they were satisfied when any of the ministers were declared unfit for military service, or was granted leave, in order to recuperate from wounds or exhaustion.³ The Methodist ministers felt that Austria-Hungary was fighting a just war, in which the suffering and destruction was lamentable but necessary,⁴ and they were willing personally to sacrifice for the cause of patriotism. But there is no evidence that they tried to whip up the emotions of their members to give their fullest support.

What implications had the war for the work of these Methodists, in Europe? (1) When such sacrifices and principles are at stake, is missionary work, which in such relatively small

¹Festschrift, p. 20

²Verhandlungen, 1915, p. 49.

³Ibid., p. 50.

⁴Ibid., pp. 49-50.

proportions, worth the effort?, (2) Should work be abandoned in places where the ministers have been mobilized? and (3) Are there any social responsibilities for the church to fulfill? These questions arose. The first was decisively answered in the affirmative. Any other answer was deemed materialistic; the work of the church is to save souls; this work is valued above any other and must be fulfilled both in war and peace.¹ When the Austro-Hungarian army was victorious in Serbia, Montenegro, Poland, and Russia this seemed to the ministers a God-given opportunity to spread to newly occupied territories.² It was then considered imperative to maintain the work of the church under any condition. Those ministers who were not drafted took responsibilities over the circuits of their mobilized colleagues and worked untiringly, under very difficult conditions.³ One single congregation, the one in Szegedin, was abandoned during the war.⁴ In many churches the continuity between pastoral visits was maintained by older laymen who with few exceptions maintained the congregations in their previous conditions.⁵ The war also brought to the fore the equality and usefulness of women, and it was realized that their services might be employed for the well-being of the church.⁶

¹Verhandlungen, 1916, p. 18.

²Ibid.

³Verhandlungen, 1919, p. 20.

⁴Verhandlungen, 1918, p. 18.

⁵Verhandlungen, 1916, p. 19.

⁶Verhandlungen, 1918, p. 28.

The proclamation of the Gospel and salvation through Jesus Christ, especially through revivals, was considered as the main method of procedure, even in the war.¹ At the same time the ministers and laymen emphasized the social responsibilities of the individual and community. Pastors tried to express their concern for soldiers. In Srbobran, the Methodists gave their chapel to be used as a hospital, providing beds, medical equipment and personnel to help heal the wounded.² On October 14, 1916, the same congregation established an orphanage, the first such established by any Methodist Church during World War I, for which members provided housing and furniture, with the support of the Annual Conference and the Swiss Methodists. They cared for sixteen children, each local church contributing enough to provide for one or two children.³

There were many transfers of ministers, most of them very sudden, as it was never known who would be mobilized next. The first to be drafted was Paul Riedinger, soon followed by Heinrich Mann and the two seminarists, Ferdinand Drumm and Gustav Malach.⁴ Johannes Jakob remained the sole ordained pastor in Bachka, but toward the end of the war he was also drafted. Karl Kreutser who was transferred from Vienna to Vrbas was drafted within a few months of his arrival, but was later stationed in Bachka

¹Ibid.

²Verhandlungen, 1915, p. 51.

³Melle, op. cit., pp. 316-318.

⁴Verhandlungen, 1915, p. 50.

because of war fatigue.¹ Markus Kuszli was largely incapacitated when a heavy piece of luggage fell on his head.²

Fortunately for the work, Georg Sebele was found unfit for military service at every examination, because of his small stature. He performed a gigantic service for the church, despite his lack of training in theology. For a number of months he carried the whole work in the Bachka by himself.³ Soon two young men came to help in the Bachka, Ferdinand Mayr, from Vienna, in 1916 and Oswald Bickel, from the Swiss Methodist Conference.⁴ Occasionally Joseph Schlanger, a lay preacher from Strassburg stationed in Subotitsa (Sabadka, Maria Theresiopol), came to assist the young ministers.⁵

Transportation was difficult as it was primarily used by the military, and much of the traveling had to be done on foot. One example may illustrate sufficiently what devotion and energy it required. Wrote Otto Bickel:

Ich erinnere mich an einem Sonntag: Früh von Verbas aus zu Fuss zwei Stunden Marsch, von 9-10 Uhr Predigt, in der brennenden Mittagssonne 1½ Stunden Marsch, von 1-2 Uhr Predigt. Wieder 1½ Stunden Marsch, von 4.30 bis 5.30 Uhr Predigt und nochmals 2 Stunden Marsch

¹Festschrift, p. 22.

²Verhandlungen, 1916, p. 20.

³Festschrift, p. 22.

⁴Ibid., also a typed report by Georg Sebele written in English probably immediately after World War II. In file of the author.

⁵Otto Bickel, "Wie es seinerzeit war" in Schweitzer Evangelist, 51st Year, No. 45 (November 5, 1944), p. 712.

zurück nach Verbas, womit der Kreis beschlossen war, und nochmals 8-9 Uhr Predigt. Vier mal Predigt, 7 Stunden Marsch, dazwischen seelsorgerliche Unterredungen. Ausser am Montag waren wir auch täglich an einem anderen Orte, sodass wir drei Gehilfen uns meist nur am Montag sahen.¹

The work in Bachka was the least disrupted of all the Austro-Hungarian circuits.² Novi Sad was for a time a difficult place to carry on regular activities as there were many restrictions due to the proximity of the front.³ Later, however, when the Austro-Hungarian and German armies occupied Serbia, Bachka was well behind the front lines and did not suffer either from fighting or from hunger as this is one of the most fruitful agricultural regions in Europe. Numerically the churches did not suffer greatly, but their rapid growth was checked. In 1915 the total church membership of the whole conference increased by only four, serious losses being felt by many local congregations which were then only partially offset by the gains in membership in Novi Sad and Vrbas.⁴ In 1916 the Conference total membership recorded a loss of 20 members in comparison with 1915 and totaled now 935 members.⁵ At the 1918 Conference (in 1914 and in 1917 no Conferences were held) it was discovered that another reduction of twenty members was experienced over the past two years.⁶

¹Ibid., p. 713.

²Verhandlungen, 1918, p. 19.

³Verhandlungen, 1916, p. 21. ⁴Verhandlungen, 1915, p. 50.

⁵Verhandlungen, 1916, p. 28. ⁶Verhandlungen, 1918, p. 26.

Certain definite advances were made. Houses were bought in Pribichevićevo, Sivats, Srbobran, and Budisava,¹ while other congregations reported that their newly built chapels were filled to capacity. In Bachka most churches experienced a revival and gained in membership. Only a few failed to gain new members, a feat indeed under the trying war situation.² In the summer of 1917 the Bachka Methodists displayed not only their strength, but also Christian charity when they invited fifty women and children from starving Vienna to recuperate.³

Still more courageous was the orphanage undertaking. When the orphanage was organized and the first two children received, the Bachka Methodists had very little money. They relied on aid from the United States, but to their disappointment the United States entered the war against the Central Powers.⁴ Fortunately the Swiss Methodists came to aid to support the orphanage in which Hungarian, German, and Serbian children lived together happily, regardless of their nationality and confession, under the deaconess Milda Lehmann.⁵

It is surprising that the congregations in Novi Sad, Novi Vrbas, Srbobran, Sivats, Churug, Bechey, Tsrvenka, Sekić,

¹Verhandlungen, 1916, pp. 20-22.

²Verhandlungen, 1918, pp. 20-21.

³Melle, op. cit., p. 318.

⁴Verhandlungen, 1918, p. 26.

⁵Ibid., p. 27.

Kutsura, Budisava, Kula, Pribičevićevo, Shove, and Feketić, could be so capably served by four untrained men, Sebele, Kreutzer, Mayr, and Bickel. The clue might be found in their attitude toward the work.

Ich hatte nur 9 Monate Studium hinter mir, die andern Brüder hatten noch nicht studiert, wir waren also junge Laien. Aber wir nahmen die Aufgabe ernst und Gott gab seinen Segen dazu. Neben der Seelsorge- und Predigerarbeit, führten wir auch die Kassabücher und Kreutzer, Sebele und ich bereiteten sich auf das Probepredigerexamen vor, das wir an der Konferenz im Oktober 1918 in Budapest ablegten und dort als Probeglieder aufgenommen wurden.

Gottes Segen lag sichtlich auf der Arbeit, immer wieder konnten wir neue Mitglieder aufnehmen. Offenbar war unser Superintendent mit uns zufrieden, er besuchte die Batschka Öfters und hielt die Vierteljahrskonferenzen. Von den jungen Männern die wir damals in unseren Gemeinden hatten, sind die Gebrüder Adolf und Ferdinand Drumm, sowie Phil. Grailling und Loenz [sic] Stahl ins Predigtamt getreten.¹

Several lessons were apparently learned by the Methodists toward the end of the war: (1) The central importance of the proclamation of the Christian message, (2) the need for unity in local congregations, exemplified by the drawing together in war circumstances, (3) the importance of the laity, including women, in holding services, Sunday Schools, and personal visitations, (4) the need for a greater involvement of the youth in the church in the manner of the Roman Catholic and Social Democrat Youth organizations,² and (5) the need for social and educational work.

¹Otto Bickel to Paul Mojzes, Pfäffikon, Switzerland, December 7, 1963.

²Verhandlungen, 1918, p. 28.

The churches did not essentially weaken during the war. While their rapid growth was checked, the war served as an "ordeal of fire" which in some ways strengthened those who remained loyal throughout. It left the Methodists in South-eastern Austro-Hungary with a strong foundation for continued growth.