

A BLACK HEART

**The work of Thomas Jefferson Bowen among blacks in Africa
and in Brazil between 1840 and 1875**

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To my late brother

ADONIAS ALVARO DE SOUZA
1950 - 1997

I am missing him very much

VIVER, AMAR, VALEU!

*Quando a atitude de viver,
e uma extensao do coracao
e muito mais que um prazer,
e toda a carga da emocao
que era um encontro com o sonho,
que so pintava no horizonte,
e de repente diz presente,
sorri e beija nossa frente,
e abraça e arrebatava a gente,
e bom dizer viver valeu!
ah! ja nao e nem mais alegria,
ja nao e nem felicidade
e tudo aquilo num sol riso,
e tudo aquilo que e preciso
e tudo aquilo paraíso,
nao ha palavra que explique
e so dizer: viver valeu!
ah!, eu me ofereco este momento,
que nao tem paga e nem tem preco
essa magia eu reconheco,
aqui esta a minha sorte,
me descobrir tao fraco e forte,
me descobrir tao sal e doce
e o que era amargo acabou-se,
e bom dizer viver valeu,
e bem dizer: amar valeu, amar valeu!*

(Luiz Gonzaga Jr. - "Gonzaguinha")

ABSTRACT

This thesis is about Thomas Jefferson Bowen (1814 - 1875), a Baptist missionary of the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, United States. Bowen worked in Africa and tried to work with slaves in Brazil. These facts made Bowen a missionary ahead of his time. He had a different perspective and attitude to Africa and Africans. His book *Central Africa*, his personal letters, his articles, his life, show that he was deeply involved with the idea that Africa could be much more than only a good place to purchase slaves. His whole missionary life was expended in a project to train blacks to work in Africa as missionaries and teachers.

What made Bowen a different missionary from his fellows in his time was the fact that he was able to understand and respect the culture of the people with whom he was involved. He could see and appreciate the structures of the African society and he planned a development project from the African perspective. He was a missionary who believed that the Western society was not appropriate for Africa. Africa had to find its own way. He was different because he believed that missionaries have to speak the language of the people and should not force the native people to learn English as a "holy" language.

We present this work as a tribute to this missionary whose life and relationship with blacks can be seen as an example of respect and understanding of the culture of a people.

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Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam

I can clearly remember the day when I met a group of teachers from South Africa, they were in Brazil representing the School of Theology of the University of Natal looking for Brazilian students who would like to study theology in the new South Africa as an opportunity to exchange experiences. We had a short meeting in the gardens of the Baptist Theological Seminary of Southern Brazil, Rio de Janeiro. There the teachers met the students who were listening with attention to their words translated for us by a friend. On that day I decided to come to South Africa. This happened in 1990 and this thesis is one of the results of that first meeting almost eight years ago.

To study in a foreign country is not easy for anybody. Loneliness, homesickness, *saudade*... Were words always present in my vocabulary which helped me keep alive memories, smells, faces and gestures. Because I did not forget these things, I would like to say thanks to many people and organizations that made possible my "survival" in the foreign land of South Africa.

I would like to say thanks to my family in Brazil which always, at any time, was supporting me, it is a big incentive for my life. I know that they suffered very much to see their "little boy" going away to an unknown world. I am very thankful for their kindness.

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Finally I want to say thanks to my precious friends, friends in Brazil who were always an incentive and force. I am missing them very much and I am looking forward to seeing and hugging them again. Together with these I would like to say thanks to my friends in South Africa, and friends from all over the world who had the kindness to share their life with me. Particularly I would like to thank the friends in the Lutheran House of Studies, the place where I lived these last two years. We had a lot of fun. Thanks for the support all of the time. I will never forget you.

Ad Perpetuam Rei Memoriam

**"T'is not my purpose to excuse
The conduct, which I would lament;
God grant that I may ne'er refuse
To see my errors and repent."**

(Thomas Jefferson Bowen)

1. INTRODUCTION

"My heart was black,
but Christ made it clean" ¹

The verse above is well known among the Baptists in Brazil. It is an old children's song which has been sung for a long time in the Sunday School classes of the Brazilian Baptist Church. The emphasis in this song is the idea that a black heart means dirty and sinful, but Christ has made the heart white which means pure and clean.

There are a few questions which can be asked in connection with this song and the problem of prejudice in relation to blacks: What comes to a child's mind (same for an adult) when he/she hears or sings the verses of the above song? What can be the "normal" association with a black heart or white heart? Is the child able to distinguish the metaphor in this song and to not associate "black" or "white" heart directly with the colour of the skin? Is it not a clear point that could fix a prejudice about black people in the mind of the child? Can the child with black skin feel comfortable with this comparison? Many other questions can be asked.

Most of the time when people need to make a comparison between colours, the colour black will always means bad, dirty, sin, confusion. This is a kind of universal statement about the colour black, a silent convention and consensus about the meaning of the word black which can signify more than simple convention when it comes to the reality

¹ It is a free translation from the Portuguese text: "*O meu coracao era preto, mas Cristo ja me limpou.*" One can find the same music with different words. A more politically correct translation says: "my heart was *dirty*, but Christ made it *clean*."

of race relations. On the other hand the colour white will appear always connected with the idea of pure and clean . Meanwhile one can say that the main objective of the song is to show the difference between the heart which has not received Christ (a dirty heart) and the heart which has received Salvation through Christ according to the Baptists' doctrine of salvation. Nevertheless there is no doubt in the writer's mind that the verses of the song can reinforce the general idea that black is dirty and sinful no matter if the reference is to people or objects.

The use of this song by the Baptist Church may ~~teaching~~ children not only about the doctrine of salvation but also to reinforce ideas of prejudice and discrimination. In this way it will contribute more and more to the increase of the problem already present in TV, society and the many jokes which involve the prejudicial idea of black.

The title of the present work, "a black heart" has the figurative aim of showing Thomas Jefferson Bowen as a missionary who had a different view of black people despite a context which emphasized the idea of a black person as dirty and sinful. "A black heart" then presents Bowen as a white missionary from the Southern Baptist Convention (USA) who made a choice to work with black people in Africa and slaves in Brazil; in his heart the idea of black was different from that of the people around him. His heart was black in the sense that he could connect black people with good things and did not have to repeat old concepts about the topic. He was able to see the beauty of the blacks despite his context, culture and environment. This work will analyse the situation and problems of the black people through the eyes of Thomas Jefferson

Bowen according to his papers between 1840 (year of his conversion) and 1875 (year of his death).

Thomas Jefferson Bowen experienced his conversion in a Baptist Church. In becoming a Baptist he decided to embrace the view and action of the missionary work of the Southern Baptist Convention. It happened that exactly at the time of his conversion the Baptists in the United States were involved in the issue of slavery which later brought a division between the North and the South of the United States. That division meant a division between the Baptist Churches in the South, which had an interest in supporting the institution of slavery, and the Baptist Churches in the North which defended the idea of freedom for all slaves. The Baptists in the North understood that the slavery system was incompatible with Christian ethics. This key question which brought division into the Baptist family in the United States was the one of slavery.

The fact that Bowen was a man of the South and also a missionary from the Southern Baptist Convention influenced him to see blacks with prejudiced eyes and to write about the inferiority of blacks. One of the topics in chapter four will show this influence which he received from his context in the Southern society and even from his own denomination. Nevertheless, the difference between Bowen and some other missionaries, who in some cases were also slaveholders, is the fact that Bowen changed his mind about black people when he started to work in Africa and discovered a different but not inferior people.

This point is clear in his book about his work in Central Africa. Bowen had his heart transformed from a racist perspective about blacks to a heart that became, again figuratively, a black heart which saw blacks with a different perspective. Within this context the objective and aim of this paper is to demonstrate that Bowen had a different attitude and vision about black people even with him being a Southern white American Baptist. His letters, articles and his book *Central Africa* are full of appreciation and consideration for the black people. A reconstruction of the situation of black people in Bowen's time will show us the contrast between his vision and the vision of his denomination. This work also is interested in researching some of the contextual situations mentioned by Bowen and the attitude of the Church towards the problems. Parallel to this will be shown Bowen's vision as a missionary and his preoccupation with, and dreams about, the evangelization of Africa and his black leadership training project.

The personal aim of the research is also present. Several reasons can be given for the author's choice of this topic. There is a particularly great interest in Thomas Jefferson Bowen because he touches three dimensions of my life. He was working among Africans in Nigeria, the place where, probably, part of my family came from, since my ancestors were slaves in Brazil, probably from Nigeria. He also tried to work in Brazil as a missionary among slaves and Brazil is my home country. Another reason is the fact that as a Baptist, I have an interest in studying the race relations of this denomination. Bowen came from the Southern part of the United States and was a missionary of the Southern Baptist Church in the USA which had (has?) a strong racist

attitude towards blacks. Bowen nevertheless decided to work especially with black people. Later, a group from the Southern part of the USA founded the first Baptist Church in Brazil. This research then is part of a wider look at the racist influence which the Southern American Baptists had on the Baptist Church in Brazil.

1.1 Definition of Concepts

It is important to clarify some of the key words which this work uses, mainly concepts that involve the idea of prejudice or racism. Several times the comments on this question will refer directly to the Baptist Church, or more specifically, the Southern Baptist Convention, United States. However it should be clear that when these comments are made they do not include the whole Baptist family in that country or of that denomination. The work deals with the racist attitude within the Baptist Church as a so-called Christian institution. It is clear that among the Southern Baptists there were women and men who did not agree with the situation of racism and the support of the slavery institutions.

To define prejudice or racism is not an easy task. There are many ways of understandings and practices which include not only the relationship between whites and blacks (in the particular case here) but which can be met also in different ways of life. However, one can not forget the fact that this work is dealing particularly with the concepts and consequences of racism and prejudice between whites and blacks.

This work refers many times to the problem of the slave trade and its use as support for an economic system. In this topic we recognize clearly that not only whites contributed to the expansion of the evil of the slave trade but blacks in Africa did also. Many Africans inside Africa collaborated with the slavery institution. Even among blacks slavery was a reality. Bowen himself was directly involved in a fight among tribes in Yorubaland to stop the slavery trade. This is something important which can not be forgotten in a work that deals with the relationship between whites and blacks within the reality of slavery. However this work is not dealing with the problem inside the different tribes in Africa but is dealing with an institution which calls itself Christian and desires to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ as a symbol of life and freedom.

But how can we define the word racism and related words, like prejudice and discrimination? This is not an easy task in the middle of a whole bunch of possibilities and definitions on the complex theories and practices of human relationship. But when the word racism or any judgment appears in this work, it should be clear that the intention is to look for a better Christian answer and attitude towards the question, according to the particular view of the researcher's Christian life.

A discussion is included in chapter three about how the Europeans and North Americans built their view of Africa. In that context we will find a discussion on the question of the others in relation to us. The discussion is about how the others are seen by others, or how the North Americans saw Africans. The quality of this vision will define what kind of relationship one group will have with another.

Robert Miles presents two possibilities to see the other. He says that we can have the “Imagined Other” which means the idea that we make about the other in the context of fantasy or imagined things. But we can also have the “Real Other” that will come to our minds through the process of knowing the other.² But even inside the process of the “Real Other”, the view which somebody has about the other will depend on how much involvement one has with the other. This question of the “Other” will define the intensity of prejudice, racism or discrimination.

Racism is not only an issue of relationship of races but also a point that deeply involves economic and political issues. The question of racism involves an ideological and political struggle. In relation to the problem of racism between whites and blacks, Theodore Allan says: “It is rather a political act: the invention of the white race.”³

Carmichael and Hamilton give us the following definition of racism: “The predication of decisions and policies on considerations of race for the purpose of subordinating a racial group and maintaining a control over that group.”⁴ This is a summary about the definition and implications of racism as seen in this work, more about the topic will appear in chapter three where the issue of the *representation of the Other* will be brought out.

2 Robert Miles, *Racism*, (London: Routledge, 1989), chapter 1.

3 Theodore W. Allen, *The invention of the White Race*, Vol.1, Racial Oppression and Social Control (London: Verso, 1994), p. 22.

4 S. Carmichael and C.V. Hamilton, *Black Power: the politics of liberation in America*, (London: Jonathan Cape, 1968), p. 3.

1.2 Sources

Thomas Jefferson Bowen still is a missionary about whom little has been written. There are some works dealing only with his biography. It is of interest to comment here on three of the main works about Bowen.

David Carson Davis submitted a masters thesis in the Baylor University, Waco, Texas, in 1978 with the title: *Thomas Jefferson Bowen and his plan for redemption of Africa*. There is no doubt that this is a more critical text focusing on Bowen's missionary work in Africa. The limitation of Davis' text is the fact that it is still strongly centred on Bowen's biography with the facts in chronological order. The analysis of Bowen's work only comes at the conclusion.

Cecil Roberson is an important name with regard to Bowen's biography. He has made a collection of Thomas and Lurena Bowen's papers (letters, articles and diary) which is a useful source for anybody attempting to write about that missionary. Besides Roberson's attempts to collect Bowen's papers, he has written an unpublished biography of Bowen (*Bowen or an Evidence of Grace*). Unfortunately this biography has a limited value as a source because it does not present any documentation.

Centelha em Restolho Seco (Spark among dry stubble) is a book by Betty Antunes de Oliveira. It is not a text specifically about Bowen, but it is an important text for studying his work in Brazil. Betty Oliveira was the first historian to point out the work of Bowen

in Brazil, she presents a chapter about him which is important and the only source available in Portuguese. In the process of researching her own genealogy Betty Oliveira discovered a strong connection between the beginning of the Baptist movement in Brazil and her family history. The title of her book is part of a speech from Bowen.

The present work will be one more contribution to the life and work of Thomas Jefferson Bowen pointing out his importance for the missionary movement among blacks. Another important approach for the present text is the contribution toward a reconstruction of the history of the Baptist Church in Brazil.

The primary sources for this work will be the direct sources from Bowen: 1) Bowen's personal letters. These show Bowen's desire to work in Africa and in Brazil. In this thesis they will be an important source about Brazil. Also his letters are important sources for showing his relationship with the Southern Baptist Convention, other missionaries and blacks; 2) the articles which Bowen wrote for magazines and newspapers of the Baptist denomination. In these articles Bowen expresses his vision about the missionary enterprise and makes suggestions to change the way in which the Church should look at and promote mission; and 3) the book that Bowen wrote as a report of his missionary work in Africa, which shows clearly his thinking about Africa and his vision for black people. This is a book not from somebody who was merely travelling in Africa but from a man who was living among Africans. Besides these sources other books were useful to demonstrate the historical context of the black people and the Church at that time.

1.3 Overview

This study presents the above problem within seven chapters in the main body of the work. This thesis will be divided into two parts. The first part will deal with the historical context related to the situation of blacks in the United States, within the Baptist Church and also in society. This first part is formed by chapters one to three. The second part will be related directly to the work of Thomas Jefferson Bowen and the conclusions about his missionary life among blacks.

Chapter one, which is the present introduction, deals with the problems, motivations, definition of concepts and a methodology.

Chapter two comes with the problems of the Baptist Church in America around the slavery issue and how this question promoted a division among the Baptist family in the United States. This chapter also presents a brief history of the group called Baptist, from its beginnings to the period when the Baptists in America dealt with the issue of slavery which resulted in a division of this denomination into two main groups: Northern Baptists and Southern Baptists. The objective of this chapter is to demonstrate the context of the Baptists' life, this being was the denomination of Thomas Bowen, and more particularly the Southern Baptist Convention. He had experienced his conversion in the Baptist Church exactly when the Baptists (and also other denominations) in North America were experiencing a schism under the slavery issue.

Chapter three will bring into view the Baptist missionary enterprise in West Africa and the North American and European vision of Africa. The objective of this chapter is to demonstrate what was the main vision about black Africans and the motivation to send missionaries to this part of the world. In this case we can see that it was not only based on the fact that the Churches were following Jesus' command but it had much more of an interest in the colonization of Africa, a colonization which could bring the Gospel and the Western way of life. Behind this project of colonization was the intention to send free blacks to Africa to prevent the "white" community to becoming a mixed society.

The action and work of Thomas Jefferson Bowen begins to appear in chapter four. This chapter traces a brief biography of Bowen before his conversion in the Baptist Church. Then it deals with the direct work of Bowen among blacks in Central Africa and his main thinking about the black people with whom he made contact. The objective here is to show how Bowen saw Africa and his main thinking about that continent and its people. A discussion about Bowen's alleged racism is also included in this chapter.

Chapter five shows the insistence of Bowen in following his dream to work with Africans. Because of several problems it was impossible for him to continue his work in Central Africa, so he asked to be sent to Brazil which he knew had a huge Yoruba community. He thought it would be easy to work with slaves in Brazil, for this time he knew the Yoruba language very well. His contacts with the slaves in Brazil were not well seen by the authorities and he had problems in carrying on in his work with slaves. Before he went to Brazil, he had wrong impressions about the religious liberty there or

the possibility of working with black people. Most of these wrong impressions came from books that were written by travellers in Brazil and were published in North America. This chapter presents Bowen's enterprise in Brazil and his project to work with black people there.

"The end of a dream" is the title of chapter six which not only presents Bowen's last years when he was seen as a mad man, but also seeks to present the fact that he became a forgotten missionary in the missionary bibliography of Brazil. In the official history of the Brazilian Baptist Convention, Thomas Jefferson Bowen is presented as a failed, weak, sick, insane missionary. This chapter deals with the value and recognition of Bowen as an important missionary.

**"They, at least, according to the inflexible laws of nature, deserve a
better fate than slavery...
these people had a right to remain unmolested
in their native land."**

(Bowen, *Central Africa*, p. 94)

2. THE BAPTISTS IN AMERICA AND THE SLAVERY ISSUE

Slavery was the most important issue which brought the Baptists in the United States into schism in 1845. The religious question was involved with the political and economic factors of the slavery issue. The Baptists in America were a fairly united denomination, mainly concerning the missionary responsibility of the Church. The separation came when the question of slavery became an open discussion. The Northern Baptists, now called the American Baptist Convention, and the Southern Baptists, the Southern Baptist Convention, started to go their in separate ways.

Our interest in presenting a brief history of the Baptists in America lies in the fact that Thomas Jefferson Bowen was a missionary from the Southern Baptist Convention, which had been created to support the slave system in the United States. Ironically we can call that Convention a "Slavery Support Convention", although that does not mean that all the American Baptists from the South defended the slavery system. However one cannot deny that the Convention was created specifically to be a safe and comfortable place for the conscience of those who were strong defenders of the slave system.

The missionary task was one of the key works of the new Southern Baptist Convention, which can be seen as a form of self-compensation or an attempt to show that they were preoccupied in spreading the Gospel in the world and could not be blamed for not loving the people around them. Bowen was one of the missionaries of the new

Convention and he was sent to Africa to work with black people, "to make Africans free" and to bring freedom for all creatures in the earth from the "evil of the devil". This was what the Southern Baptist Convention believed was the task of the missionary. Bowen was sent by a Convention which believed that the evil was far away. However, the reality of evil was close to the Southern Baptist Convention, we can say that the "evil of prison and non-liberty" was the Convention itself, with its defence of the slave system. What a big contradiction!

2.1 The Baptists

Leon McBeth in his book *The Baptist Heritage* presents a summary about the origins of the Baptists as a group of faith:

The modern Baptist denomination originated in England and Holland in the early seventeenth century. Baptists emerged out of intense reform movements, shaped by such radical dissent as Puritanism, Separatism, and possibly Anabaptism. Influenced by the Reformation theology of Ulrich Zwingli and John Calvin, the English Bible, and a deep desire for spiritual reform, some of these Separatists adopted baptism for believers only. They later applied that baptism by total immersion and were nicknamed "Baptists" for the practice."⁵

McBeth expresses the most acceptable theory about the origins of the Baptists as a denomination. Besides this theory, other historians came out with different points of view of the Baptists. One of these is the theory which claims an identification between

⁵ Leon H. McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage*, (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1987) p. 21.

the modern Baptists and the anabaptises. Support for this theory comes from the connections in the names and other spiritual relationships between the two groups.

On the other hand some of the theories seem to be quite strange or ridiculous in the way in which they try to render the Baptists proud. Perhaps the most exotic theory in this group is that of secessionism. This idea says that the Baptist denomination is part of an historical line of succession which comes from the New Testament, beginning with John the Baptist until today. Some historians say that earlier dissenters were simply Baptists under other names (i.e. Anabaptist).

The Baptists also had problems over the question of the atonement. Divisions arose because of what one or another group believed to be the correct interpretation of the death of Christ. In this aspect, we find two main groups: General Baptists and Particular Baptists. The General Baptists agreed with "general Atonement" as had been taught by the Dutch theologian Jacob Arminius prior to the rise of the Baptist movement (his movement was called Arminianism and he gained many followers). The theology of atonement from Arminius teaches that Christ died for everyone, this is in opposition to Calvinism which teaches a salvation only for the elect. The Baptist group which agreed with Calvinist theology later became known as Particular Baptists.⁶

England presented a strong spirit of reformation in the sixteenth century. King Henry VIII decided to split the Church in England from the hierarchical structure of Rome

⁶ David T. Morgan, *The New Crusades, The New Holy Land*, (Tuscolosa and London: University of Alabama Press, 1996) p. 1.

according to his own interests. Edward VI, son of Henry VIII, was still a child when he became king. His advisers took the opportunity to embrace a more protestant view for the Church in England, changing aspects in the theology and in the practices. After Edward VI died the situation was in doubt as to which direction the Church would take with the new sovereign, Mary Tudor. She was the Catholic sister of Edward VI and took the Church back to the Catholic faith, later re-uniting it with Rome. Elizabeth Tudor gained the throne after Mary and once more pushed the Church toward Protestantism. Nevertheless many of the Protestant defenders among the Churchmen desired a more clear and Calvinist Protestantism. These leaders did not agree completely with Elizabeth's reform of the Church.

The opposition to the reformation under Elizabeth Tudor brought about two kinds of movement: the Puritans and the Separatists. The first group sought a more "pure" Church, they had no desire to leave the "official Church" but wanted to reform the Church itself through a more evangelical view, promoting a complete change in its structure and theology. The second group were in disagreement with the kind of reformation the Puritans desired. This group presented a more radical reformation view, desiring a total separation between Church and State. They came to the conviction that Church and State could not walk together under the same umbrella. The Baptists came, then, from this latter group called separatists.⁷

Since then, the Baptists have experienced many internal divisions which came about

⁷ See: R. J. Archeson, *Radical Puritans in England, 1550-1660*, (London and New York: Longman, 1990).

for different reasons. The division that generated the Southern Baptist Convention in the United States is only one which shows the variety and differences within the Baptist family along the centuries. The Baptist World Alliance, which is a global fellowship of Baptists, is the organization which brings together “different” types of Baptists in the world, despite the fact that there are some other groups which call themselves Baptists and do not participate in the world Alliance. These groups tend to be radical, successionist and believe that the Baptist Church is the only true Church which Jesus had commissioned in the world, however they do not recognize the other groups as Baptist. Their idea is that the Baptist Church is the Kingdom of God itself and they do not want to have fellowship with other Baptist groups which do not have the same view as them. In its report for the Seventeenth Baptist World Congress held in Buenos Aires in 1995, the Baptist World Alliance presented the following numbers - 38, 775, 293 Baptists in 153, 957 Churches spread through 112 nations in 180 different Baptist organizations.⁸

2.2 The Baptists' Beginnings in the United States

Accepting the theory of the beginning of the Baptist denomination from the English Separatists, it will not be a problem to affirm that the Baptists in America stemmed from a British background. Roger Williams is well known among the Baptists in America as the founder of the first Baptist Church in the United States, in Providence in early

⁸ Baptist World Alliance, *Seventeenth Baptist World Congress*, (August 1 - 6, 1995), p. 66-71.

1639.⁹ He was born in England and his family were members of the Church of England. Later he was ordained a minister in the Church of England after his graduation as a Bachelor of Arts. During the development of his studies and ministry Williams became a separatist and his new convictions drove him into trouble with the State. He was forced to leave England and he then went to the "New World". There he worked with the Church of Salem, near Boston, which was a Church with a strong separatist view where he was very welcome.

Williams decided to go strongly with his ideas of Separatism and this brought to him problems in the New Colonies. One of the problems between the State and Williams was related with his teaching:

First, that we have not our Land by Pettent (sic) from the King, but the Natives are true owners of it, and that we ought to repent of such a receiving it by Pattend. Secondly, that it is not lawfull to call a wicked person Swear, to Pray, as being action of God's worship. Thirdly, that it is not lawfull to heare any of the Ministers of the Parish Assemblies in England. Fourthly, that the civil Magistrates power extends only to the Bodies and Goods, and outward State of men.¹⁰

Williams had identified himself with the Indian cause since he had come to America and he is seen as the first Baptist missionary to the Native people of the United States. His teaching about the land seems to have been a revolutionary approach to the

9 McBeth, p. 124.

10 Ibid, p.128.

question. According to him the land belonged to the Indians (Natives). The English people or the King were not the true owners of the land. This was an affront to the sovereignty of the English rulers in the Colonies.

These complex relationships between colonizer and colonized are a point of constant conflict. It is a long discussion about who has the rights to the land even if it is a clear issue for the colonized. The United States of America is not different in this aspect. Who came first? Who owns the land? We can say that the colonizer never came first, this is the reason why he/she is called a colonizer.

The question should be not who came first or last but should deal with the respect between one and another. James Loewen says something interesting about the presence of black people in the United States. He says that the country that we now know as the United States was settled around the year 1526 when a group of five hundred Spaniards and one hundred black slaves founded a town near the mouth of the Pee Dee River in present-day South Carolina. Many of them died on account of disease and disputes with the nearby Indians. Later the slaves rebelled and killed some of their masters and escaped to the Indians. Only 150 Spaniards survived and went to Haiti. What Loewen wants to draw out is the fact that one of the first settlements in the United States, after the native Indians, was made by blacks, years before the English people came. This gives historical authority to see the blacks as a part of the land even when the British Colonies started. The "white Europeans" were not the first nor

the second to come to the “New World”, they were to the most one of the last ones.¹¹

After appearing before the court because of his teaching, Williams was condemned to leave the Colony. He decided to stay and was a fugitive among the Indians. Later he and some friends from Salem established the nucleus of Providence Plantations. The name Providence was to commemorate God’s providence to him in his distress. It was in this context that he organized the first Baptist Church in the “New World”, with a huge range of liberties, mainly in the religious field, for those who were in the new settlement. This was in 1639.¹² Without doubt the Baptist Church in America had a completely “revolutionary” beginning. We can say that this revolutionary atmosphere was in the Church for a long time. Certainly the same revolutionary atmosphere was present among the Northern Baptists in the United States when the issue of slavery came to a public discussion. Roger Williams was a good example of a defender of freedom. McBeth gives us an idea about the rules in Providence:

The records confirms that Williams not only held these views but also lived by them. Some who doubt this may point to the case of Joshua Verlin who was exiled from Providence, much as Williams had been from Boston. But the circumstances were quite different. Verlin was known as “a young man boisterous desperate,” who would not join in the public worship at Providence nor allow his wife to do so. He beat his wife severely in an effort to prevent her attendance, citing the standard arguments for wifely submission. Verlin was never called in question for his own religious views but was disenfranchised for beating his wife and denying her civil rights. (...) This new

11 James W. Loewen, *Lies my teacher told me: everything your American history textbook got wrong*, (New York: The New York Press, 1995), p. 131.

12 McBeth, p.130.

liberty gave the woman an independent status and the right to leave her house without the consent of her husband. She was no longer his chattel, no subject to his religious conscience... Providence was the first civil government to recognize these feminine rights as a natural and civil right.¹³

But Williams himself did not last long as a Baptist. He had other ideas and was looking for the correct and right way to find the truth. He decided leave the Baptist group. He came to the conclusion that the doctrines and theology of the new Church was not in conformity with his own thinking as a whole. He started to doubt the kind of baptism which he was administering, not for its form (immersion) but about its authority. He believed that the real baptism should be administered by an apostle. The Church ordinances are valid only if ministered by a person who is part of the line of succession from the apostles. If there was any break, then Jesus would have to send a new apostle to reinstitute the line of succession. Williams finished his days seeking for an apostle and was out of any Church membership.¹⁴ At least he did not claim to be this new apostle.

From this beginning the Baptist Church in America started to grow from different points. In the Southern Colonies the Baptists came only later in 1682, with the organization of a Church in Charleston.

13 Ibid, p. 130.

14 Ibid, p.132.

2.3 The Schism on the Issue of Slavery

The Baptists had, since the beginning, a tendency to come together in associations and conventions which had the objective of bringing the Church together in fellowship and in cooperative work. This kind of organization by associations became a Baptist mark along its history. The strongest of these national organizations was the General Missionary Convention of the Baptists of America for Foreign Mission or, simply called, the Triennial Convention, organized in 1814. This Convention included the majority of Baptists in the North and in the South, and its main objective was to work with the missionary enterprise, collecting money to send missionaries around the world, mainly to India. It is clear that many other Baptist groups did not participate in the Convention for reasons already mentioned.

Despite some political problems in the organization, which brought some tension between Northern and Southern leaders, the Triennial Convention worked very well, promoting foreign missions as well as home missions. It was a unifying body until 1845 when the Baptists were divided over slavery. It is important to emphasise that the Baptists were not the only ones to face these problems of division but also other denominations, each one in different times or in different ways.

The blacks who were converted to a Christian Baptist faith also had their own organizations at that time. Nevertheless, in some cases they worshipped together with the “white Churches” positioned separately in the Church, normally in the balcony. The

process of the evangelization of the blacks took some time to start, firstly because of the pre-conceived view of the whites that the blacks were too ignorant to understand the teaching of the Gospel. There was even the idea that blacks did not have a soul or were not in God's plans for salvation.

It is important to note that the process of the evangelization of blacks only started after the lawmakers decided that the fact that a slave could be a Christian did not guarantee to him freedom. There had been an ancient law which said that it was not correct for one Christian to hold another Christian as a slave. The Synod of Dordrecht in 1618 had established basic doctrines which supported the right of a Christian slave to his or her freedom:

[It was resolved] that those who had been baptised ought to enjoy equal right of liberty with other Christians and ought not to be handed over again to the powers of the heathens by their Christian masters either by sale or by any other transfer of possession.¹⁵

This law made the evangelization among slaves difficult because the planters did not want to lose their "property". However, by 1660 new laws which asserted that the slaveholders did not need to free their slaves when they became Christians facilitated the evangelization of the blacks.¹⁶ The slaves had then the opportunity to have more contact with the Gospel. Once more, the contradiction between the letter of the Gospel and the Christian praxis, is clear.

¹⁵ Richard Elphick and Hermann Giliomee, editors, *The Shaping of South African Society, 1652 - 1840*, (Cape Town: Longman, 1989) p. 188.

¹⁶ McBeth, p. 776.

Another problem for the development of the process of evangelization of blacks, was the belief that a Christian slave would become more "intelligent" than other slaves. Many slaveholders believed that conversion made the slaves worst slaves because they started to learn how to read and to write. Many of the leaders of the slave conspiracy were Christians and they were able to read and to write. This kind of thinking, which was in the mind of the slaveholders, caused them to disagree with the evangelization of slaves. ¹⁷

The great time for blacks to turn to Christianity was the revival awakenings, from which the black Churches started to spread. The Georgia Association of Baptist Churches (white) received the Savannah First Coloured Church as a member in 1790, and later the All-Black Sunbury Association was created. This association was formed for black and mixed Churches and although the majority of the members were blacks, it is clear that the blacks were under-represented. "We presented our letters of credence, petition or statistics, and took a back or separate seat in the body. We had a vote, and at most times timidly used it, but never had a voice in the body unless answering some questions asked." ¹⁸ Black Baptists in the North tried to form associations of Churches in a first effort to create a national body. Later, in 1895, the National Baptist Convention was created and, despite some divisions, remains until today.

Concerning the theology and the hopes which the black Church presented, it was more

¹⁷ Winthrop D. Jordan, *White Over Black: American Attitudes Toward the Negro, 1550-1812*, (Chapel Hill: Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1968), p. 180 - 181.

¹⁸ Mechal Sobel, *Troblin' on: the slave journey to an Afro-Baptist faith*, (London: Greenwood Press, 1979), p. 358.

linked with the theme of freedom according to the teaching of the Bible. The theme of freedom and liberty from the oppressor was part of the life of the black Churches and seemed to them particularly relevant to their oppressed status. Some of the topics which the Churches emphasized were: "the Babylonian captivity, the Exodus of the chosen people from slavery in Egypt, freedom in Christ, the second coming of the Messiah to begin a new day of liberty for all believers."¹⁹ One can make connections between the theology of the black Churches in the United States at that time and Liberation Theology which developed in Latin America. Both of them were born in a context of extreme oppression.

The black Churches played an important role between the public discourse and the hidden transcript.²⁰ It is clear that the slaves heard what their masters preached to them, but there was a big difference between the way that the slaves reacted to their masters' faces and what they did behind their masters' backs. This contributed to the development of a particular and personal form of Christianity which was born in this context of oppression. Expressions, gestures, "good behaviour" were what the masters expected from the slaves in the public worship. It was a very different scene when the slaves had opportunities to worship by themselves: corporal expressions, voices, songs, dances, clapping of hands show how they wanted to be and to do. In this

¹⁹ William H. Brackney, General Editor, *Baptist Life and Thought: 1600 - 1980 - A Source Book*, (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1983), p. 106.

²⁰ To find out more about the hidden transcript or how the oppressed find ways of escaping from the oppression of the dominant see the book by James C. Scott: *Domination and Arts of Resistance - Hidden Transcripts*. For more information on how the religious life was in the black slave community in the United States of America, see the book by Albert J. Raboteau: *Slave Religion: The Invisible Institution in the Antebellum South*.

environment they experienced moments of supposed liberty, where they could be themselves. This interaction with each other was reality and became an important way to say things and send messages to each other that could never be understood by the masters. A clear example of this method in hidden transcript among the slaves was the well-known "Negro Spirituals" which could be used as an instrument of communication and revolution.

Despite the fact that some historians try to present different views about the schism among the Baptists in North America, it is clear that slavery was the key point in this process. Baptists in the North were concerned about the issue of slavery and saw it as a sinful institution which could not be supported by Christians. However, it is important to say that not only the Southern part of the United States had slaveholders but also the Northern part. James Loewen, in his book *Lies my teacher told me: everything your American history textbook got wrong*, points out some mistakes in American history which the school books perpetuate. He presents a long discussion on the incorrect concept that only the South had slaveholders. Loewen presents the fact that even Thomas Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln were slaveholders. The discussion here is not connected with the political problems between North and South. One cannot simply discuss who in the society was against or in favour of slavery, the discussion here is about who was against or in favour within the Baptist denomination. This question has an implication in the fact that a part of the Baptists (as Christian) was in favour of an unjust system which made people captive without any guarantee of freedom.

These questions were being discussed in the Triennial Convention; the Baptists in the North, where the majority of the States had already abolished slavery, held the point of view that slavery was not compatible with Christian life and practices, but the Southern Baptists defended the idea that slavery was a very important and tolerable institution. The Southern leaders did not agree that the slavery issue should be discussed in the Triennial Convention. It is clear also that the system of slavery was already part of the lifestyle in the South and important for the economic system of the society and for the survival of an agricultural economy. But the claim here is about the position of a group of Christians which could not ignore the situation of injustice in the slavery system. They were talking about the missionary enterprise which was set up to send missionaries to other countries to spread the Gospel and promote "salvation" through Jesus Christ, but they could not see that they themselves were promoting death through the slavery system. The question about the differences between Northern Baptists and Southern Baptists lies in the fact that the former did not take long to recognize that slavery was sinful but the latter group took a long time to recognize the sinfulness of the system. Exactly 150 years after its foundation the Southern Baptist Convention asked the black people to forgive the mistakes of the past, not only the mistakes related to the slavery issue but also mistakes related to the issue of the Civil Rights Movement in the United States, when once more the Baptists in the South did nothing to help or to act in favour of the black people. In 1995, one week after the Southern Baptist Convention asked the blacks to forgiveness, *Time Magazine* reported the fact with the following words:

And lo, it came to pass last week that 219 years after the Declaration of Independence proclaimed that all men are created equal, 132 years after Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation, 41 years after the Supreme Court struck down segregation and three months after Mississippi ratified the 13th Amendment, the Southern Baptist Convention finally got around to admitting that slavery is sinful and asked forgiveness from blacks for its historic role in defending segregation... Forgive me for being underwhelmed by this astonishingly belated act of contrition from the nation's largest Protestant denomination. Like most African Americans, I would have been more impressed if the revelation had come a generation ago, when prominent Southern Baptists like George Wallace were standing in the schoolhouse door and never-miss-a-Sunday Ku Klux Klansmen were murdering fellow Christians who believed in civil rights. Instead the message from many Southern Baptist pulpits was that God himself had ordained the separation of the races and that to tamper with it was to go against his will. "Just think of all the violence and bitterness we might have been spared if the Southern Baptists had repudiated racism sooner." says C. Eric Lincoln, a retired professor of religion at Duke University. "The country would have been 100 years ahead of where it is today in race relations."²¹

Around 1840 the Baptists started to discuss the issue of slavery with passion. The South always tried to make their point that the Triennial Convention existed mainly to promote missions in the world and this did not include discussing social issues. The fact was that the Baptists in the South really believed that slavery was a system created by God and they had to support such a system. Richard Furman, Pastor of the First Baptist Church in Charleston and President of the Baptist State Convention of South Carolina, made a classic religious pro-slavery argument in which he spoke for the majority of Baptists in the South. The general idea of his sermon was that God himself

21 Jack E. White, "Forgive us our Sins", (*Time Magazine*, July 3, 1995 volume 146, No. 1).

commissioned Christians to support slavery as a biblical commandment.²²

Part of the Baptists in the North tried to convince their brethren in the South about the sinfulness of the slavery system by organizing the "American Baptist Anti-Slavery Convention". This new organization challenged the Baptists in the South to change their minds about the question. They said that the Baptists in the South must "confess before heaven and earth the sinfulness of holding slaves; admit it to be not only a misfortune, but a crime". The petition also stated that in the case of the Southern Baptists ignoring this, then, "We cannot and we dare not recognize you as consistent brethren in Christ."²³ The Baptists in the South decided to ignore the warning from the Convention in the North and on the 8th of May 1845, the "Southern Baptist Convention" was organized.

Thus Southern Baptist Convention was born. In the North the Baptists went ahead with the Missionary Society; later the Northern Baptists organized a Convention that is now called "American Baptist Churches in the USA". The new Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), became immediately involved in missionary work. The missionaries who belonged to the old Triennial Convention were given the opportunity to choose in which convention they wanted to stay. Only one missionary decided to change his affiliation from the Northern Convention to the Southern Convention and that was John Lewis Shuck who had been in China since 1836.

22 Brackney, p. 219-220.

23 Mcbeth, 384-385.

Some present day historians want to make the SBC free of the idea that slavery was the main point which brought the Baptists in the South to the point of organizing their own Convention. William R. Estep in his book *Whole Gospel Whole World* traces the history of the Foreign Mission Board of The Southern Baptist Convention. He tries continuously to show that the SBC was organized because of a deep preoccupation with the missionary enterprise. He says: "While it is apparent that the slavery issue had shattered the fellowship of the Nation's Baptists before 1845, it was the missionary imperative that precipitated the call for a consultative convention in Augusta, Georgia."²⁴ It is very interesting to see how Estep uses the word "apparent" in his description of the schism, with it he tries to give a second connotation for the real problem which was in focus. The problem of slavery was not "apparent" but was clearly the central issue for the schism. The Southern Baptists organized their own Convention not because they were deeply concerned with missionary work but because they had an interest in maintaining the slavery system in the life of the South. It is a known fact that the trouble emerged in the Triennial Convention when it refused to appoint slaveholders as missionaries. Although the Baptists in the South say that they had a "high proposal" in organizing the SBC, the reality will be always that they were organizing a sort of "Pro-Slavery Convention". James Loewen says that the southerners always try to put a different emphasis on their faults, and that for a long time the history text books used at schools in the United States never admitted clearly that slavery was the central issue which brought the country to the Civil War. He says that "...before the civil rights

²⁴ William R. Estep, *Whole Gospel - Whole World: the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1845-1995*, (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1994), p. 55.

movement, many textbooks held that almost anything else -- differences over tariffs and internal improvements, blundering politicians, the conflict between the agrarian South and the industrial North -- caused the war. This was a form of Southern apologetics".²⁵

So, the Southern Baptist Convention also wanted to find a way of covering the real point of division among the Baptists in the United States. But, let us think about the possibility that the SBC had first a missionary desire instead of a desire to continue to support slavery; if this is true, then the Baptists in the South were completely out of the spirit and proposal of the missionary enterprise.

The Baptists consider missions as an important and serious commandment from Jesus. Matthew 28.19-20 is the central biblical text in the life of the majority of Baptist Churches in the world, and is the commandment where Jesus stated the responsibility of the disciples to go and preach the Gospel. The Baptist Church made a change in the importance of the commandments from Jesus' perspective. We can see that the most important commandment is not to go and preach the Gospel; this is important but is not the first one. The most important commandment is love for God, for humankind (or neighbours) and for ourselves (Matthew 22.34-40). When the Baptists put the commandment (or commission) to preach the Gospel in first place, before the commandment of love, they are doing missionary work without love. This is an action which shows love for the word of Jesus but does not necessarily show love for the

25 Loewen, p. 134.

person, for humankind. The action of going should be a reaction of love. "Go and preach the Gospel" has to be seen as an attitude of love, an action and reaction of love. Love cannot happen only in the far distance. Love has to meet, to promote a living together, even if this is happening in a diversity of colours, creeds or social classes. The Southern Baptists believed it to be normal to hold slaves. They were sending missionaries far away, even to Africa, in demonstration of an impulse of love. On the other hand, they could not live together with blacks in the same town or in the same congregation. This is a clear case of double standards: concern for the welfare of the black people in Africa, but slavery at home. The Southern Baptists had different standards for their love, for them love was applicable only in the "far places of the earth", but not at home. In this case, if unconditional love could not be demonstrated to everybody and everywhere, then Jesus' commission on mission became totally without value. Love has no double standard.

"The barbarous Negro of Africa, and the enlightened white man of America, are endowed with a common human nature. Although in different degrees of development, they both have the same good and evil propensities, the same hopes and fears, the same instinctive religious yearnings, and the same capabilities. It follows, then, that the Gospel is adapted to both."

(Bowen, *Central Africa*, p. 321)

3. PERCEPTION OF THE OTHER, MISSION AND COLONIZATION IN AFRICA

After the above chapter about the controversial problem of slavery among the Baptists in North America, it is our interest to look in the direction of how Africa was seen by North Americans (and also the Europeans). The well-known North part of Africa with its old civilizations (i.e. Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan) presents a contrast with the lands in the Central and South which were not so well-known at the time of the colonization expansions in the continent.

Africa is this huge continent which brought about curiosity and imagination not only in ordinary people but also in the heads of the scientists. In this context we find more and more Europeans travelling through Africa with different interests such as “discoveries”, explorations and the cruel slavery trade. The narratives of these travels were read with great interest by the people who wanted to know something more about the situation and reality in Africa.

The imagery was of a “wild Africa” where men/women were identified with wild animals and, in many cases, were not seen as humankind but, compared to the standard of European “Civilization”, as savage, inferior creatures.

Africa was immediately viewed as a “dark continent” in the sense of the dark skin colour of its people and in the sense that it was in the darkness of pre-civilization. In the religious field this darkness could mean that Africa was separated from the benefits of the Christian faith, remaining in a “darkness of evil” through superstitions and devil

worship. These views and interpretations of the different brought several consequences to Africa which affected directly the life of its people.

The image of an inferior people with a dark skin played an important role in the idea of slavery and fed the minds of the people with the possibility of a slavery system which could bring about an opportunity for cheap workers for the development of Western civilization. It also presented the idea of "saving" Africa from the darkness in which its people were involved. Quickly it became a key point to keep the slavery system, and an ideological issue involving political and economic approaches. Every part of society was involved in the process of emphasizing the inferiority and needs of "salvation" for Africa. Later in this chapter we will see that the Christian Church came up with the idea that the phenomenon of a dark skin was a proof of God's curse. Many of the ideas about mission in Africa at that time included the thought of a cursed people who needed "salvation" which could be brought only through the Christian Europeans, but this European view was much more concerned with the economic possibilities of having cheaper labour to develop its economy. Africa was a "perfect" place where the European ideas could be spread and the process of enslavement could be a reality. The process of denying Africa and its people of their humankind had the objective of making the process of enslavement easier.

Africans deserved to be enslaved because they were without rational souls, were sinful, were black; that enslaving them was indeed an act of humanity, that God brought them to America to save much people alive; black man was deprived of his liberty, of the fruit of his labours, of his dignity, of delights of family life, of his identity and manhood in order to make him acquainted with the

gentle Jesus.²⁶

The missionary movement in Africa had not an interest only in propagating the Gospel of Jesus Christ but also in making an effort to bring “civilization” through the annihilation of the “savage” attitudes in the life of the African people and to help keep an idea of inferiority.

3.1 Perception of the Other

It is a long process to construct a view about somebody or something. This view can bring the most diverse attitudes through our relationship with the other. The way we see the other will determine how our relationship will be with her/him, we can build a healthy or a negative relationship with the other according with what we have seen.

To see Africa by the Western culture brought a negative view of the continent which is somehow still present in our days. People who travelled in Africa, making contact with its people, built up a completely negative view.

To see the other is an important process which is not only connected with the psychological side of the process itself, but is also connected with the ideological meaning which this view will bring to the future relationship with the other. The eyes of the Europeans and North Americans brought a view of Africa which involved each part

²⁶ F. Okoye, *The American Image of Africa: Myth and Reality*, (Ph.D thesis. University of Los Angeles, 1969), p. 75.

of the society in the negative sense. It was a vision of the “conqueror” over the “colonized”, a view which involved not only a direct relation between humankind but also a relation of power and submission. On the other hand as Berger says: “these relations between conqueror and colonized tended to be self-perpetuating. The sight of the other confirmed each in his inhuman estimate of himself. The way in which each sees the other confirms his own view of himself.”²⁷ It is like saying that when the conquerors saw the colonized they did not like what they saw.

The way in which we see things or people is directly connected to what we know or what we believe. The other is there in its way of life. This is totally involved with the concept of prejudice which is something that one can build before seeing or knowing the other in truth. Africa was represented as other with strong justifications for slavery, the economic interests required a theory of inherent inferiority.²⁸ We will have a look at the building of this theory of inferiority in the African context of colonization through the eyes of the Europeans and North Americans.

One of the first “problems” which the Europeans met in Africa was the question of the colour of the skin of its people: black. The idea around this was an exercise of fertile imagination to justify what is a natural phenomenon with different theories, trying to emphasize a possible ugly view about the black skin. It is clear to us that the question of ugliness is a very relative issue and is not an established sense, but this was one of

²⁷ John Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, (Harmondsworth: Pelican, 1972), p. 96.

²⁸ Miles, p. 27.

the most important questions which connected Europeans/Americans with the vision of the others: why are Africans black? Not only science tried to give answers to this question but also the Church through a theology which tried to prove that God had an interest in the matter, not as a creator, but as a provider and supporter of a race suitable for slavery.

These questions started with the contact of Europe with the non-European world. It was an attempt to explain the differences in the other, an attempt to explain the superiority of one race. There was clearly a difficulty in accepting the different and the possibility that this different could be on the same level despite diversity of context. The meeting between Europe and the other with its differences was a traumatic one in which the Europeans demonstrated that they were not prepared for. One of the answers for the "problem" of the African skin colour was that the action of the sun produced the dark skin. According to Comaroffs, in 1778 science agreed that the natural colour of man is white and black is the lowliest deviation from the most beautiful Caucasian type.²⁹

In the 18th century part of the scientific world was involved with this question about the skin colour of Africans, but the difficulty was to prove why blacks who settled in others parts of the world (i.e Europe) did not become whites or why Europeans in Africa did not turn black. Natural science tried to connect Africans with the apes. The "natural" view was that the Africans were much more closely connected with the apes than any other species, so life science started to give proof about this by comparing Africans

²⁹ Jean and John Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution*, (Chicago: University Press, 1991), p. 99.

with animals, not only regarding the colour of skin but also along supposed physical similarities. The “normal” conclusion on this point was that Africans were not totally humans but were animals, or a kind of more developed animal which could be used for forced work and could learn the benefits of civilization. However they could never be on the same level of culture and intelligence of the Westerners.³⁰

This kind of scientific interpretation can easily be called “scientific racism” which was also doing its part in the huge plan to make and contribute to a slavery system based on supposed superiority and inferiority of races. The Comaroffs gives us an example of the scientists’ attitudes in trying to prove and build a solid argument for the African inferiority:

One item among the potpourri of curiosities in the ‘animal kingdom’ was a description of the ‘Hottentot Venus’, an ‘essential black’ from the Cape Colony. The unfortunate ‘wild’ woman of khoi ancestry had been taken to Europe and made into a travelling exhibit, shown first in England and then, by an animal trainer, in France. She died in Paris in 1815 after European audiences had gazed in fascination at her for some five years - and promptly ended up on Cuvier’s dissecting table - ... autopsy ... it centred on the anomalies of her ‘Organ of generation’, which its excessive development of the ‘labia minora’, was held to set kind apart from other human beings. Barrow, too, had written of the genital aberrations of Khoisan woman, and a host of anatomical reports were to follow Cuvier in focussing on the exotic, simian qualities of black female reproductive organs. A barely suppressed infatuation of the torrid erotism of Africa made

³⁰ For more about this pre-Darwinian anthropology see Andre Du Toit, "No Chosen People: The Myth of Calvinist Origins of Afrikaner Nationalism and Racial Ideology", *The American Historical Review*, 88 (October 1983), pp. 920 - 952.

itself respectable as biological inquiry.³¹

This kind of analysis was not an isolated fact in the way of seeing Africa as other. Life science was able to convince people about the African differences not only in skin colour but also in the constitution of their organs and their nature.

Christianity also gave its contribution to the discussion of the African's skin colour. The Church, in the general sense, had the same problems as science in seeing Africans as other. It is important to state that the meaning of the word "Church" here is in reference to the Christian Church as a whole, a reference to the Christian faith and its influence on the mind and belief of Europe and North America. There is not an intention to detach a particular group. In fact, the Church believed that Africans were creatures of God because they were created by God, but this view included the idea that Africans were created inferior.³²

This kind of interpretation needed theological support on which it could be based. The theological proclamation was that Africans had a curse from God and the dark skin was seen as enough proof of this.

31 Comaroff, p. 104.

32 Jordan, p. 17f. This whole section is based in Jordan. He presents a lengthy discussion on the question of the colour of blacks, which involves also this interpretation of the biblical text for the Christian Church as a general term.

The first attempt by the Church in this regard was to think (and to act) that Africans had no soul. Certainly this was perfectly connected with the idea that blacks were “wild” creatures or simply a more developed kind of ape. At first the meaning was that Africans were not created in God’s image.

Then there came a conclusion: blacks were blacks and must be enslaved not because the society had a cruel ideology and economic system to support, but because God had given them a curse. So, because they did not want to go against God, the better way was to support the idea of the inferiority of blacks and agree with their enslavement. Somehow this was also an alternative to explain the darkness of Africans. But let us see what the curse is and if this really has a biblical base concerning Africans.

The biblical text about God’s curse which has been used in regard to blacks is found in the book of Genesis 9. 18 - 28. This text deals with Noah’s sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth. After the flood Ham had looked on his father’s nakedness when Noah was drunk and lying in his tent, but the two other sons had covered their father without seeing his nakedness. When Noah awoke he knew what had happened and cursed Canaan, son of Ham with the following words: “Cursed be Canaan! The lowest of slaves will he be to his brothers” (V 25). To the other sons Noah said: “Blessed be the Lord, the God of Shem! May Canaan be the slave of Shem. May God extend the territory of Japheth; may Japheth live in the tents of Shem, and may Canaan be his slave.” (v 26-27).

It is true that the text really does mention slavery as a curse upon Canaan; the text implies slavery in a relation which can be a symbolic relation where each son of Noah can mean descendants or successors or maybe nations. There are no doubts about the question of slavery in the text. The problem with the use of this text to support the slavery system and on which to base the argument that blacks are descendants of Canaan (or Ham) is the fact that the text says nothing about skin colour. It is certain that a new interpretation for the text was given. It seems as if the theologians were re-writing the text in the following way: 'Cursed be Canaan! The lowest of slaves will he be to his brothers and his skin will be black and every black has to be a slave.'

Christianity also did not know how to deal with the other, with the different. It is certain that the theologians could do a much better and more simple theology if they merely defended the idea that blacks are blacks because God likes variety, God is not monotonous. This could be a more Christian theology that respects the other.

With this kind of vision borne out of natural science and theology, the ordinary people could have no other imaginary vision about Africa and its inhabitants. But not only ordinary people had such a vision and interpretation of the case. Thomas Jefferson was the third President of the United States and although he brought to the country a sense of liberty for all men and women, this excluded blacks. He also had a strong feeling about the inferiority of blacks and he left enough examples of his thinking. It is important to talk about Thomas Jefferson here because his writing and thinking was widely spread in the United States and he was an important political figure in the context of

those days. The writings of Jefferson about the blacks in the United States became a point of reference and influence for the whole of the United States and even other countries. To see his opinion here is important in order to understand how the country, where Bowen came from, built its ideas about blacks. Jefferson wrote only one book, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, where he also talks about the Negroes in America. This book was more widely read than any other until the nineteenth century.³³ Thus, Thomas Jefferson had an important influence over the minds of the people in building an image of Africa and blacks.

In this book Jefferson presents a project for the colonization of Africa through the free blacks in America. We will discuss this topic about colonization and Africa later in this chapter, but we can say now that Jefferson had the idea of giving education to the children of slaves, later sending them back to Africa with a plan to colonize the continent.

Thomas Jefferson also gave his views on the black skin “phenomenon” to show the differences between blacks and whites and to support his point of view that the Negroes had to go back to Africa and could not stay in the United States after receiving freedom. The colour of skin was still a “problem” which attracted great attention and many different explanations. Jefferson took this question because he wanted something on which to base his position that this difference between blacks and whites, among other differences, was the determinant factor for a non-construction of a mixed

³³ Peter Kent Opper, *The Mind of the White Participant in the African Colonization Movement, 1816-1840*, (Ph.D thesis, University of North Caroline, 1972) p. 429.

society. Once more he came up with a weak argument:

Whether the black of the Negro resides in the reticular membrane between the skin and scarf-skin itself; whether it proceeds from the colour of the blood, the colour of the bile, or from that of some other secretion, the difference is fixed in nature, and is as real as if its seat and cause were better to us. And is this difference of no importance? Is it not the foundation of a greater or less share of beauty in the two races? Are not the fine mixture of red and white, the expressions of every passion by greater or less suffusions of colour in the one, preferable to eternal monotony, which reigns in the countenances, that immovable veil of black which covers the emotions of the other race? Add to these, flowing hair, a more elegant symmetry of form....³⁴

Thomas Jefferson could see only one aspect where blacks and whites were equal: the faculty of memories, reason, and imagination.

This kind of comparison made by Jefferson emphasized the idea of beauty as a standard for superiority, even if beauty is relative according to different judgments. One might have a conception of beauty which will differ tremendously from that of another. According to the particular judgement of one or another, beauty and ugliness can be found in any race, but the Europeans and North Americans wanted to invent a standard for beauty or ugliness in order to have one more argument in their struggle for a superior race. But Jefferson says: "The circumstances of superior beauty, is thought worthy attention in the propagation of our horses, dogs, and other domestic animals; why not in that of man?"³⁵ That was how he saw blacks, a view of an ugly people. But

³⁴ Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), p. 133

³⁵ *Ibid.*

in truth he was afraid of having a nation where the blood of one and another could be mixed. He went on by saying that black slaves had no talent for art, poetry or oratory, blacks are totally incapable of art. He said that the only thing that blacks could do better than whites is to sing (in the sense of having “accurate ears for tune and time”). He emphasized that the inferiority of blacks was not because they were living in miserable conditions of life under the slavery system, for him, to be inferior was a natural process for blacks. He took a particular view of his culture and expected that everybody in the world should do the same according to his standard, even if the other was not in a situation of freedom for his/her own expression. In this context he compared the art of slaves in other situations (i.e. the Roman Empire) with the situation of blacks in the United States. He concluded his view about blacks with the well-known conclusion to this question: blacks are inferior to whites, not only in the matter of colour but also as regards their minds and capacities.

From the time of early contacts between Europeans and Africans, Europeans noted the African skin colour and nakedness in order to signify difference. Africans were also not Christian believers, so they were defined as simultaneously physically, culturally and spiritually different. So, everything together contributed to the conclusion that Africans were inferior creatures.³⁶

The situation as explained above was the main view of Africa and its people, a view that

³⁶ For more about Thomas Jefferson and his ideas on blacks in America see Norman K. Risjord, *Thomas Jefferson*, (Madison: Madison House, 1994). See also: Merrill D. Peterson, *Thomas Jefferson and the New Nation - A Biography* (New York and Oxford: University Press, 1974), pages 247 - 65 present a critique about Jefferson's book *Notes on the State of Virginia*.

was always looking for inferiority in blacks. It is important to say again that this kind of mentality had the idea and objective of constructing an ideology in the minds of the European people against Africa and its people. To build this kind of ideology every single thing had to be used and in the case of Africans it was not only the colour of the skin but also the fact that, for the judgment of the other, they should be slaves because they were “ugly”. It may come to our minds now as a big joke, but this was reality and many people suffered under this kind of ideology. Okoye says that to create this kind of mentality is not difficult when the history of a nation or people is written by the dominant class.

Africa can not be validly treated merely as the space in which Europe swelled up... Our history needs to be written as the history of our society, not as the story of European adventures. African society must be treated as enjoying its own integrity; its history must be the mirror of that society and the European contact must find its place in this history only as an African experience, even if as a crucial one.³⁷

3.2 Mission and Colonization

Mission and colonization in Africa walked together. The idea that Africa should be colonized and Christianized was a strong idea. The missionaries had the idea of bringing the Gospel to Africans as well as a plan for colonization of the continent. Mainly, the colonization project had the objective of providing a space in Africa where

³⁷ Okoye, p. 13.

free Africans could be allocated. These colonization movements were a face of the abolitionist movement with different ways of thinking and objectives. It is certain that abolitionism was part of a debate of great interest which raised many issues between Europeans and others, those of freedom, slavery and economy. The Comaroffs say:

... we interpret the rise of abolitionism not as a simple function of capitalist self-interest but as one element in a complex process; namely, the thoroughgoing reconstruction of culture and consciousness entailed in the industrial revolution. Above all, antislavery rhetoric gave voice to the notions of value and interest, humanity and society, civility and nature - in short, the ontology - integral to the triumph of capitalism. ... the movement was more than just the vehicle for a new hegemony. It was a major site for the symbolic production of that hegemony; part of a general revolution in meaning that cannot be tied neatly to the unprofitability of plantation production... Like other formulations of popular ideology at the time, abolitionism arose in the context of a vigorous argument about productivity, property, human rights, and national interest. And from this perspective its liberal values appeared contradictory in one vital respect: the call for universal liberty and self-determination was not easily reconciled, in a world haunted by the spectre of inequality and revolution, with the demands of social order and authority. ³⁸

The Comaroffs also point out that the mentality of missionaries in Africa was that Africa could not be "civilized" only with the introduction of agriculture or trade, the thought was that Africa needed also a strongly Christian influence and action to transform the situation from a pagan to a Christian society.³⁹ Martin defends the idea that because Euro-Americans professed Christianity, and believed themselves to be a Christian

38 Comaroff, p. 120.

39 Ibid, p. 122.

civilization, they felt that all others should be shaped according to their standards. “beginning with the colonial times, Americans would especially begin to look upon their country chosen beyond all other nations of Christendom.”⁴⁰

The Baptists also entered Africa not only with the belief that they had a message from the Gospel but also with the aim of establishing a Christian civilization. The problem with this is the fact that the Western culture and its form of Christianity was seen as the only acceptable culture. Christianity and Western culture were completely connected. Thus to bring the Gospel signified also to bring the Western culture. It is a kind of “holiness” culture. Culture and Gospel were seen as a unit. To be a Christian meant to have a Western culture. No space was reserved for a manifestation of the Gospel in each particular culture. The culture of the other was seen as an “evil” culture.

The American Colonization Society was one of the first organizations to link missionary work with colonization. The real name of this society was “The American Society for the Colonizing of Free People of Colour”. This society was founded in 1817, one of its strong leaders being the Presbyterian minister Robert S. Finley. Different peoples and interests were among the ideals of the American Colonization Society. Some of the people who gathered there had the idea of giving the free blacks the opportunity of rebuilding their lives back in Africa.

⁴⁰ Sandy Dwayne Martin, *The Growth of Christian Missionary Interest in West Africa Among Southeastern Black Baptists, 1880-1915*, (Ann Arbor Mich.: University Microfilms International, 1981), p. 5.

Others in the American Colonization Society were more preoccupied that blacks should leave the country after getting their freedom because they did not want a mixed country. They believed that this was not a threat to the slave system because only free blacks should be repatriated, and this could prevent future problems between the free blacks and the slaves. But the American Colonization Society is to be seen as an organization which hid its real feelings of racism. The Society was in truth an anti-black society in all senses.

One of the main problems with the idea of repatriating blacks to Africa was that the Africans had been in North America for a long time; when the American Colonization Society decided on its plan in 1816 almost six generations of blacks had existed in the country, so most of the free blacks were not Africans but Americans. But the thinking was that Africa was the real home of these people and not America. Finley was one of those who believed that blacks belonged to Africa because America, the United States, was a white man's country.⁴¹ Ironically, Finley and others did not know about the history of the United States and the reality that the country was never originally white, but he and others had a great interest in the question. They really believed that the nation was a "promised land" for white Americans.

It is in this context that the American Colonization Society is to be seen as an anti-Negro organization. The general idea was that freedom did not make a black man equal to a white man. Peter Opper agrees with Okoye in this point. He criticizes the idea that

41 Okoye, p. 143.

the Society did not want to discuss the issue of slavery, their only concern being with reference to the free blacks. He says that the society still supported the slavery system.⁴²

The American Colonization Society cooperated with the Baptist Church in its missionary work in Africa. The first Baptist missionaries to Africa were sent with the cooperation of the Society, black Baptist Churches and white Baptist Churches.⁴³ McBeth tells us that the black Baptists formed the African Baptist Society in Richmond in 1815, and in 1821 they sent missionaries to Africa. The African Baptist Society received cooperation from the American Colonization Society and the Triennial Convention. The first missionaries to Liberia were Lott Cary and Collin Teague. Before this time the Triennial Convention had sent several white missionaries, most of whom died within the first year. Collin Teague and Lott Cary were slaves who had become skilled craftsmen and had earned enough to purchase their own freedom and that of their families.⁴⁴

Black Americans had an important role in the missionary task of all Baptist missionary boards (black or white). Even the Foreign Mission Board from the Southern Baptist Convention formed in 1845 had, by 1849, about thirteen American black missionaries

42 Opper, p. 1.

43 It should be made clear here that the Baptist Church was not the only Christian Church to enter Africa in the nineteenth century. Different denominations were in Africa doing missionary work. For more details about the missionary work from various denominations from different countries, with particular regard to Nigeria, see Ayandele, E. A. *The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria, 1842-1914 - A Political and Social Analysis*. See also: Ajayi, J. F. Ade, *Christian Missions in Nigeria, 1814-1891: The Making of a New Elite*.

44 McBeth, p. 419, 781.

working in Liberia.⁴⁵ This came from the idea that Afro-Americans were much more resistant to the African conditions than white missionaries. Martin gives us some other reasons why the board sent Afro-American missionaries:

(1) The negative and racist concepts of Africa and its people perhaps played a role in determine missionaries for the field. (2) Significant Baptist forerunners in foreign missions, William Carey in England and Luther Rice and Adoniram Judson in America, had set precedents for work in Asia. (3) Most whites operated from the unscientific and racist assumptions that (a) climate caused the death of white missionaries in West Africa, and (b) Afro-Americans, as African descendants, could more ably survive. Actually, it was malaria carried by mosquitoes which caused the deaths as was discovered at the turn of the century. Secondly, blacks from the US succumbed to the fever in the same proportions as their white missionary counterparts.⁴⁶

The strategy then was to give training to the black missionaries and hope they would spread the Gospel and the “benefit” of Western civilization.

This does not mean that the black missionaries were not connected with the colonization idea. Blacks also were concerned about the project and many of them liked the idea of having a new land where they could build a new nation according to the standard of Western culture. It is not fair to give here the impression that the blacks always had a pacific attitude towards the problems they were concerned about. Blacks also gave opinions on the different questions and many of them strongly believed that the colonization project was a revolutionary project for Afro-Americans. The problem

45 Ibid. p. 419.

46 Martin, p. 21.

of the American Colonization Society was the mentality that blacks could be allocated only to Africa and that they were not allowed to stay in America after getting their freedom. Many of the blacks, however, were born in the United States and had developed a particular culture in the context of the country, so to send them to Africa became the same thing as sending them to a foreign part of the world.

The Southern Baptist Convention, particularly, had an interest in the project of sending blacks back to Africa. One of the most important leaders in the new Convention was William B. Johnson, who was its first President. He was an ardent defender of the slavery system. He was also one of those who strongly agreed with the project of a union between mission and colonization. It is not wrong to wonder why the Southern Baptist Convention had so much interest in the evangelization of Africa. Martin has some answers to this question. She says: "By supporting the colonization of blacks in Africa, specifically Liberia, white Baptists and other Christians could feel that they were alleviating the conditions of blacks in this country and by means of the black emigrants, performing their missionary responsibility of spreading Christian religion and western culture to Africans."⁴⁷

Thomas Jefferson Bowen was not a missionary with a different opinion or belief, as we will see later. Nevertheless, although he also had a "civilization project to Africa", he was really interested to learn about the African culture. Something that was different about Bowen was his desire to go to Brazil and to continue his work with slaves there,

47 Martin, p. 12.

something which was much more connected with the missionary task than with colonization, even if we know that Christian mission and the spread of Western mentality were projects which always walked together.

**“I cannot express what I feel when I find
from day to day, as it were the
germs of vigorous Christian characters among the people to whom I preach.
Tell me not of their sins, their ignorance, or their barbarism. They are more
virtuous, more intelligent and civilized than many suppose. I feel myself
authorized , by substantial facts, to believe that our
labour shall ultimately be eminently successful.”**

(Bowen, *Private Diary*)

4. THOMAS JEFFERSON BOWEN IN AFRICA

Bowen had previous knowledge about Africa. There is evidence that he had read several books about Africa and also that he knew what were the ideas about Africa. One might imagine that he had possible conversations about the continent with blacks in his town. We can still put emphasis on the fact that Bowen changed most of his opinions about Africa once he started to contact Africa. It is true that the only sources available about Africa and Africans were those with views about the continent which were greatly affected by prejudice and racism. With the publication of his book *Central Africa*, he was able to show that the Africa which he saw was very different from the Africa about which he had read.

Bowen decided to ask the Mission Board to send him to Central Africa where he could open a new mission. It was a pioneering mission. It was a mission with a lot of risks, but he was also convinced that Africa was a place totally suitable for evangelization and civilization. He was opposed to the idea that Africa could not be civilized. He had the same vision as his contemporaries. He believed that evangelization and civilization had to walk together, but he also believed that Africa had to find its own way of being civilized and it could not be simply putting the Western civilization in Africa.

He was convinced that his work as a missionary consisted of the responsibility to spread the Gospel in Africa and to prepare others in Africa do to the same and so on.

In October 1848, the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention

received a communication from Bowen in which he suggested the establishment of a mission in Central Africa (today Nigeria). His request was approved in January 1849 and he was appointed missionary after his appearing before the Board.⁴⁸

Bowen then started to look for people who could go with him to Africa. This was not an easy task because people believed that Africa was a place to die, "the white man's graveyard". After a long time looking for companions he found two men who wanted to go with him: "Harvey Goodale, who was under appointment for China, was transferred to the proposed mission in Central Africa" and Robert F. Hill, "a young coloured man."⁴⁹ Hill decided to stay at Monrovia where he became pastor of two Baptist Churches made up of repatriated American slaves and when Goodale died later, Bowen wrote: "Almost everyone knows what it is to mourn the death of a friend, but there are not many who can fully appreciate the sorrow and loneliness of a man who buries his beloved and only companion in the wilds of Africa."⁵⁰

We begin here to see the work of Bowen in Africa according to his book *Central Africa*. At the first reading we can conclude that the main reason why he went to Africa was the desire to evangelize the continent. However we cannot deny that he also had the idea of colonization, although in his book he left his proposal: "The object of the following

48 I. N. Patterson, Thomas Jefferson Bowen: Heroic Pioneer. (*The Commission, Missionary Magazine of the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention*, June 1953) p. 6.

49 Thomas Jefferson Bowen, *Central Africa. Adventures and Missionary Labour in Several Countries in the interior of Africa from 1849 to 1856*, (Charleston: South Baptist Publication Society, 1857), p. 25 and 26.

50 Ibid, p. 79.

pages is to show what has been attempted and accomplished in pursuance of this design; and to acquaint the public, especially those who are interested in this attempt to evangelize Central Africa, with the countries and tribes which have been seen by the writer." ⁵¹ . Bowen was in Africa for eight years as a missionary and was preoccupied to learn as much as possible about the life of the Africans and to get involved with its people's life.

4.1 A Profile of Thomas Jefferson Bowen

Thomas Jefferson Bowen was a pioneering man. He was the first Baptist missionary not only in West Africa (actually Nigeria) but also in Brazil. He experienced his conversion in the Baptist Church in 1840. From this time he started to think about missions, wanting to work especially with black people in Africa, but Bowen's life did not start in 1840 with his conversion. He was born on January 2, 1814 and died on November 24, 1875. Between these two dates there is a life of joy, idealism, suffering, dreams, dedication, mistakes and hopes. We can see in many ways that Bowen was a man with exceptional courage and intelligence. We do not have much about his education but we know that Bowen had enough discipline to study for himself. There is some evidence that he studied medicine, which was tremendously important for his period of work in Africa. Bowen also concluded his Masters in Arts at the Mercer

51 Ibid, p. 26.

University.⁵² He was a man who loved to write. He wrote such a beautiful book about Africa and its people. He also wrote a grammar on the Yoruba language, many articles in mission magazines and many letters to friends, family and to the Mission Board.

Before he started his work as a missionary of the Southern Baptist Convention he was an active participant in many fights which shows how he was idealistic in his life. We can say that he was searching throughout his life for something which could give him the satisfaction of a good ideal. He found this in the missionary work and made this the most important thing in his life.

The life of Thomas Jefferson Bowen was deeply connected with the events of war. The records says that when he was twenty-two years old he was elected Captain of "a volunteer company of mounted soldiers from Jackson County to repel the Cherokee Indians from raiding the settlements."⁵³ He participated in many fights against Indians. Bowen was taking the part of the colonizer in these fights against the Indians. He believed that the land belonged not to the Indians but to the "Caucasians" who settled on the Indians' land. It is not our topic here to discuss the question of the Indians. But, it is important to register that he was involved with this ideology of land. One can do a deep study about the land situation in Bowen's time and it is certain that we will see once more the tragedy of the colonization policy against the natives. Unlike Roger

⁵² Betty Antunes de Oliveira, *Centelha em Restolho Seco*, (Rio de Janeiro: Edicao da Autora, 1985), p. 68-69.

⁵³ Cecil Roberson, *Bowen or An Evidence of Grace*, (unpublished work, 1969) p. 4.

Williams, Bowen was involved in many wars against the Indians. It is important to see here that he was not the perfect person who was deeply involved with the problems of the oppressed, because at this time in his life at least, he was totally involved with the interest of the rulers and the interest of his race. Because of this same interest, he was fighting from 1837 to 1838 for the independence of Texas, during which he was also appointed as a Captain.

At least later Bowen admitted that in those days he was a "wicked young man."⁵⁴ We can see the change in his life when later he was fighting in Africa against the slave trade in Yorubaland. In that situation his point of view and his interest changed. There he knew the life of an oppressed people, he met the people who suffered because of the slave trade.

Bowen was a teacher for children in a school of his town. It was his main job besides being a missionary. When the financial situation was not very good during the time when he returned from Africa and later from Brazil, he earned some money working in schools. Certainly his project to open a school to teach blacks came from his vision as teacher. He knew that he could be more useful using his profession to promote teaching. His intention was to connect teaching with the training of blacks and to send them as missionaries to Africa.

Bowen was quite convinced about the idea of colonization and missionary work. He

54 Bowen's private diary (Bowen Papers, section four, nr. 74)

believed that Africa could have a different kind of trade instead of the slave trade. We will see later in this chapter more about this topic, but for now it is important to say that he used all the capacities which he had accumulated in his younger days in the missionary work, helping people find a better way of life.

After his conversion in the Baptist Church, he was baptized, according to the Baptist tradition of immersion, by elder John Raspberry in October, 1840.⁵⁵ Immediately after his conversion Bowen started to preach and was ordained pastor. He believed that he had found the most important thing in his life.

Bowen's life was full of exciting facts. He was a very interesting character for his time. He was beloved by some as he was hated by others because of his position and insistence about the African issue.

4.2 Africa Through Bowen's Eyes

Thomas Jefferson Bowen wrote two important books: 1) A lexicon and grammar of the Yoruba Language: *Grammar and Vocabulary of the Yoruba Tongue*, published in 1858 in Washington by the Smithsonian Institution; and 2) A book about his work in Africa: *Central Africa. Adventures and Missionary Labours in Several Countries in the Interior of Africa from 1849 to 1856*, published in Charleston by the Southern Baptist Publication Society. Both books became a reference. The second book was very well

⁵⁵ Bowen, *Central Africa*, p. 6.

received by the people who wanted to know more about Africa. The fact that Bowen presented a very different view of Africa made the book more interesting. He was not interested in the strange and bizarre things but he gave a clear view of the continent concerning its people, climate, vegetation, perspectives and future. Davis says: "By carefully noting various aspects of Yoruba culture in his book, Bowen attempted to correct the pre-conceived and erroneous ideas that most people held concerning Africa."⁵⁶ Despite the fact that he was very sick, he wrote the two books immediately after he came back from Africa. Maybe Bowen thought it would be possible to return there after a time of rest at home, but he never went back.

Bowen went to Africa already knowing something about the continent, possibly he read many books of experiences from travellers in Africa and also of its history. Yet, there is no doubt that he wrote the kind of book which had the intention of answering as many questions as possible about the situation in Africa. His book is full of details about many things that apparently are not so important but which showed the day-to-day life in Africa. It is as if he wanted to show that in Africa life went on as normal. One of the curiosities in his book is the fact that he not only included a view about the soil and the variety of products in Liberia and Yorubaland but he also gave some recipes on how to prepare traditional African food.⁵⁷ There is no doubt that he had the intention of showing how life can be as normal as in the United States and that people had enough

⁵⁶ Davis, p. 126.

⁵⁷ Pages 48, 49 and 50 of Bowen's book present recipes for breads, arrow roots, cassava and farina.

creativity to work with the different foods available for a rich diet.

Bowen not only knew the agriculture and climate possibilities in Africa, he also got to know the different tribes, cultures, and languages. He had a good perception when it came to languages. He could say how each language was related to the others with great precision. He always gave information about all the ethnic groups with whom he made contact. He wanted to show the possibilities of missionary work among these people and to show that they are perfectly capable of understanding the good news of the Gospel or of being civilized.

The bizarre was not the main topic of Bowen's book. But it is true that people around the world had (and still have) strange concepts and ideas about Africa. It is easy to see that people connected the African world with the bizarre, mystic and wild. He also presented some ideas which he did not invent but he heard from people. The interesting thing is the fact that he said that Africa is no more bizarre than France or any other country. Some ideas that Bowen heard were the following. 1) People in the tribe called Alabiru have tails about six inches in length. Bowen says that they are very ingenious in working with iron. They are so industrious that their towns are surrounded by iron walls. 2) The Alabiwo people have a small goat-like horn projecting from the middle of their foreheads. He says that these people are very intelligent. 3) There are other people who have four eyes or live in the subterranean.

Bowen made it clear that "These wonders were affirmed by natives and Arabs."⁵⁸ These were really strange stories and he concluded his point not by saying that he did not believe in what the people were saying to him but that maybe this could be possible because "if there are white men in France with long ears like asses, why should there not be Negroes in Africa with short tails like baboons?"⁵⁹ He refuses to see only Africa as a strange place. His view here about Africa is that it is a place where strange people can be found, as in any other part of the world. He was fixing in the mind of his readers that Africa was a place different from their own cultural way but it was not the only place in which one could find different people; he was saying that the world could be so different and yet so equal. It is very interesting to see him making, in several parts of his book, the same comparison between Africans and Caucasians. It is interesting because he did not try to fix in the mind of people wrong ideas about Africa or even to allow this people to think that they were so special because they were different. In the process of seeing the other, Bowen agreed with the fact that oneself is exactly like another.⁶⁰

Another interesting view of Africa from Bowen is his perception of the Yoruba religion. The normal idea about African religion was that it is connected with voodoo or witchcraft.

58 Bowen, *Central Africa*, pp. 201-202.

59 Ibid, p. 202.

60 See *Oneself as Another* by Paul Ricoeur

Bowen showed clear perceptions in his book about the religion in Africa with special focus on Yorubaland. This can be seen as a very strange fact because normally the missionaries had a different view of the people with whom they are working. He did not say that the Yoruba religion was "Christian" or that the Africans did not need "salvation" according to the Baptist doctrine of salvation; no, he was totally convinced that Africa was an important missionary field and Africa was still seen as deep in paganism. What was different in his attitude was the way in which he respected the African religion and the way that he could see good things related to the Africans. He did not see the Africans as idolaters. He declared:

We have frequently thought that all heathens are idolaters, but this is not the case in Yoruba. I have met with several of both sexes, who declared that they had never worshipped an idol. This is a natural result of the pure theism of their natural religion. Everybody in that country believes in one true and living God, of whose character they often entertain surprisingly correct notions.⁶¹

Once more Bowen was careful to show that even if they believed in only one God but still believed in mediators between human beings and God, this was not a problem in Africa only. He said that they were not different from any Catholic in Europe or around the world. Once more he shows that Africans are not so different from Caucasians, so they could not be seen as inferior but equal in diversity. He said, "their fetishism is precisely the same system of superstition which leads Mahometans and Catholics and many Protestants, to employ charms and amulets as a means of averting evil." He continued with his point of view, "the images made by the Negroes are only symbols. No one supposes that they are endowed with spirit, intelligence or power (...). It is

61 Bowen, *Central Africa*, p. 159 - 160.

surprising to me how Europeans, who have worshipped images and worn amulets all their lives, should so far have misunderstood and misrepresented the religion and superstition of the Africans." ⁶²

In his book Bowen gave much explanation about the Yoruba religion and its different ways. He was trying to make a connection between the native religion and the Christian religion, in this way he was ahead of his time as a missionary. He believed deeply in the truth and originality of Christianity but he tried to understand the religion of the other and make connections. One can say that he showed the religious aspect of the Yoruba people only. This is true because Bowen was working directly with the Yoruba. We can find other records about religion in other tribes in Nigeria, like the high god of the Kilba people. He is called Hyell, "which reminds a person of the Hebrew name for God, El. He had no father or mother, but had created himself. Hyell was all powerful, the giver of life, and the only one who could take life. He was the creator and upholder of heaven and earth." ⁶³

What one finds most impressive in some African religions is the close connection with Christian concepts. The above mentioned tribe had an interesting code of morals which a father and mother carefully taught their children:

1. Honour and respect your mother and father and anyone in
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62 Ibid, p. 312-313.

63 Margaret Nissen, *An African Church is Born*, (Numan, no publisher, 1966), p. 116.

Authority.

2. Do not steal.
3. Do not lie or be double tongued.
4. Do not cause strife.
5. Do not commit murder.
6. The man or woman who commits adultery is cursed.
7. Do not take the name of Hyell in vain.⁶⁴

Bowen could perceive this very clearly during his work in Africa. This kind of attitude made him to be seen as a different type of missionary and brought him problems in his relationship with his fellow missionaries. He was not only in the position of a teacher but he also wanted to learn.

4.2.1 The Slavery Issue

Unfortunately there are no records which could show Bowen's opinion on the question of the slavery issue. It is certain that he had an opinion about the topic because of the fact that he was involved with the Southern Baptist Convention which had been organized only four years after his conversion. It is difficult to say here whether he was in favour of or against the position of the Southern Baptist Convention. Another thing to be noted here is the fact that he had not been converted for long in the Church when the Baptists in America had their schism. It is easy to believe that he had difficulties in giving his opinion on the structure of the denomination. Probably he had no access to the denomination's controversies or power relations, even if in that time he was an ordained pastor. His letters and other writings show that he had no "easy temperament" in the sense that when he was against something he protested and

⁶⁴ Ibid, p. 117.

wanted to see the right thing being done. If we look at his fighting against the Indians or against Mexico for the independence of Texas, we can conclude that he possibly had had no objections against slavery in his country until he went to Africa and saw very closely what kind of problems and injustices the slave trade produced in Africa.

So far we have seen that Bowen had a deep love for Africa and its people, which increased much more with his stay in Africa. Maybe the most important proof that he had strong and different views about Africa and its people was the fact that he was involved in a fight to stop the slave trade in Abbeokuta, as we will see later in this chapter. He fought as a missionary who understood that his position was to be beside the people. It is certain that this action was not seen in a good light by the Mission Board and by the Southern Baptist Convention. How could a missionary fight against slavery if the Convention was in favour of the slave system? Was this not a fact that made Bowen different, even from the context of his denomination? What was more important for him, the racist inclination of his denomination or the freedom of that people with whom he wanted to work with? He knew what he wanted despite the contextual situation of his denomination. He had a vision for the people among whom he was working.

Bowen saw several times the experience of suffering which the slave trade brought to Africa. He saw not only cities totally empty but also families being separated. "I have counted the sites of eighteen desolated towns within a distance of sixty miles between Badagry and Abbeokuta - the legitimate result of the slave trade. The whole Yoruba

country is full of depopulated towns." ⁶⁵ He knew the history of a woman who had been kidnapped and sold as a slave. Now she was waiting to be brought to the coast and be sent to Brazil. She had a husband and three children at home, whom she never expected to see again. This woman heard about Bowen and she expected that he could buy her that she might not be sent to Brazil. ⁶⁶

The slavery trade had two cruel aspects. The first was that the Africans were taken from their families, friends, countries, and cultures. The other was that they were taken to a country where they were supposed to work without freedom and be considered as inferior creatures and not human beings.

But we cannot blame only the colonizer who came to Africa with the intention of getting people for the slave trade. Many Africans were also involved with the traffic of slaves. We can easily think that only the "white" people were involved in such a strange and cruel practice, but many towns and villages in Africa were based totally on the trade of people. As Bowen noticed when seeing towns totally desolated, the slave trade made a tremendous impact on Africa and on its culture. The well-known Atlantic slave trade lasted four centuries and linked three continents. ⁶⁷ We are not including here a

65 Bowen, *Central Africa*, p. 114.

66 Ibid, p. 148.

67 P. E. H. Hair, *The Atlantic Slave Trade and Black Africa*, (London: The Historical Association, 1978) p. 5. On the slave trade in Africa see: Robin Law, *The Slave Coast of West Africa, 1550-1750 - The Impact of the Atlantic Slave Trade on an African Society*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991) or Robert E. Conrad, *World of Sorrow: The African Slave Trade to Brazil*, (Louisiana: Louisiana State University Press, 1986). On the problem of domestic slaves in Africa see Toyin Falola, "Missionaries and Domestic Slavery in Yorubaland in the Nineteenth Century", *The Journal of Religious History* (14, number 2, December 1986), pp. 181 - 193.

discussion about the slave trade but we are only seeing how Bowen dealt with this problem in Africa. Chapter ten of his book is about this topic, "Breaking up the slave trade". Basically he presents the problems which are involved in the slave trade in Africa. He does not show his position in favour or against holding slaves, but he is directly against the slave trade, mainly because it was also a problem for the missionary work. One can see that he was deeply moved when he faced the problem of the slave trade in Africa. He recognized that slavery and Christianity are not compatible.

Bowen was actually in Abbeokuta when the war between Abbeokuta and Dahomey happened, the main issue being - slave trade or no slave trade. The country was completely divided. Later he had an opportunity to face the same problem in the United States when the country was also divided over the question of slavery and went into a civil war. In Abbeokuta he was on the side of those who did not want the slave trade. Other missionaries from different denominations (e.g Rev. Henry Townsend, of the Church Missionary Society) were also in the same town as Bowen. England, which had an interest in the end of the slave trade, was trying to mediate the question but the war was inevitable. There is some discussion about Bowen's participation in the war. This is important because it also shows that he was a missionary involved with political and economic issues in Africa, and this is a very different profile of a missionary coming from the Southern Baptist Convention. Cecil Roberson, who was also a missionary in Nigeria, said that it was not the task of a missionary to take part in the political and

economic order.⁶⁸ We can see clearly that Bowen participated in the war to end the slave trade in Abbeokuta.

Early in the morning of the 3rd of March, the scouts brought news that the army was approaching the city. I exhorted the people to stand firm, to reserve their fire, and take good aim (...) Many of the Egbas who had remained about the gate fled into town and disappeared. I attempted in vain to stop them. "Why don't you stand and fight?" said I to one of the fugitives. "Hold your tongue," he replied.⁶⁹

When the war was nearly over in favour of those who did not want the slave trade, Bowen ran to the mission station to tell the other missionaries the good news, but he was surprised to find the missionaries watching the battle through a telescope. Those missionaries did not take part in the war. After this battle, despite the fact that still several other fights took place, a treaty (the treaty of Abbeokuta) was made for the abolition of the slave trade.

The attitude of Bowen in directly taking part in the war can be seen as an important part of his views of Africa and its political situation. He was not indifferent to the facts around him. With his direct participation in the war he showed that he had consideration for the people. His action shows that he cared for the people. He was struggling in favour of the side in which he saw more possibilities for a restoration of dignity and human value. In a note in his book (p.119) Bowen says that a magazine called *Happer* had published an error which stated that he had trained the Egba army. Bowen said that this was not

68 Cecil Roberson, *Bowen or an Evidence of Grace*, (Unpublished work, 1969), p. 21.

69 Bowen, *Central Africa*, pp. 118-119.

true.

Bowen saw Africa with new eyes and this Africa, in his mind, could not bear the slave trade any more.

4.2.2 Bowen's Missionary Vision For Africa

In the process of seeing Africa through Bowen's eyes we can point here to his participation as a missionary. He was not the first missionary to Africa and he was followed by many other missionaries. He had a strong and clear perception about Africa and he had clear ideas about what should be the missionary strategy for Africa. We can say that he had new insights and attitudes about missionary work in Africa. These new attitudes towards Africa came from the fact that Bowen came to know Africa, its people, culture and language, in other words what was more important in his missionary action was the fact that he respected the people in their beliefs and in their way of living. His missionary vision for Africa was more than bringing the Gospel with words only that, in many cases, were not clearly understood. He wanted to put this Gospel into the lives of the people using their values and culture. On the other hand, he also wanted the missionary enterprise to be strongly connected with the process of civilization.

4.2.2.1 Bowen as Missionary⁷⁰

To see Africa with different eyes implies having a different missionary attitude. Bowen was deeply committed to his responsibilities as a missionary. He was sent to Central Africa to open a Baptist mission in one of the countries there. But he did not decide to open the mission on the first year of his arrival. For almost three years he researched the region, learning the language of the people, their culture and habits. However he took every opportunity to preach. He had a clear missionary strategy.

Bowen wanted, at first, to establish the mission station among the Puloh who in his mind were the most intelligent people and certainly could be prepared as good missionaries and be sent to other nations. He was in Africa already thinking about the possibility of preparing missionaries among Africans themselves. He had the idea that Africans could be the best missionaries for Africa because of their identification with Africa, their knowledge of the language and culture of the people. The native missionaries were to Bowen an important part of his missionary plan and the growth for the Gospel in Africa. He had his strategy in mind, a strategy which was not closed in itself but was flexible to change according to the situation and to the realities that he would face. For him one of the most important aspects of the missionary work was the question of language. He was completely upset about the attitude of some missionaries who never learned the language of the people, and instead would preach in English.

⁷⁰ Cal Guy's article, "T.J. Bowen - Southern Baptist Innovator on the Africa Scene", *The Baptist History and Heritage - Journal of the Historical Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention*, 1968, was very helpful in writing this section. Dr. Guy is professor of missiology at the Southwestern Theological Seminary in Forth Worth, Texas.

Preaching is too often lost to the heathen through the complicated faults of missionaries. Instead of coming pointedly to the facts of the Gospel, some of them must needs deal out their trashy ethico-metaphysical disquisitions, which are odious at home and abominable in Africa. Then they preach at the people from year to year, through interpreters, rather than undergo the toil of learning the native tongue; and finally, they utter great swelling words which the ignorant interpreter never heard before in his life. Only think of a man perforating an interpreter who can barely read English, with such phrases as "immutable principles," or "the ineffable effulgence of the celestial world."⁷¹

For Bowen this was a crucial point in the missionary work. The missionary had to speak the language of the people, this was a question of respect and consideration for the people. The problem was that many of the missionaries in Nigeria at that time preached in English. In one way we can say that this was the kind of attitude which encouraged the missionaries to think that their language was the "perfect language" and that the natives had to learn it. The missionaries made little effort to learn the language of the people. Bowen blamed them for this: "The one great fault of some missionaries is a desire to discharge their duties with the least possible trouble. They can not endure the annoyance of intercourse with the natives; they can not submit to the toil of mastering a barbarous tongue; they can not preach and talk everywhere in addition to the chapel services."⁷²

About this "intercourse with the natives" we have seen that Bowen was a missionary involved with the natives, at least he respected the context of the people. Bowen was among Africans, learning also from them. One of his missionary strategies was to be

⁷¹ Bowen, *Central Africa*, p. 129.

⁷² *Ibid*, p. 184.

a friend of the people, no matter if they accepted the Gospel or not. He had a positive attitude regarding obedience to the rules of the country, which was important to open the field for future missionary work. He knew how to behave as a missionary in a foreign country in a different cultural context. Cal Guy says that: "He had strong convictions about the necessity of people receiving the Gospel as a stewardship which called forth their own energies and their own gifts. Modern writers are reenforcing continuously the viewpoint that everybody is able to enter into Christian responsibility in terms of his own culture. Bowen enunciated this view before it was in general circulation."⁷³

Bowen had the good sense to recognize that he could make mistakes. He could look at his efforts and see the mistakes that he had made. He recognized as a mistake the fact that he did not establish the mission in Bi-olorrun-pellu where he met many people interested in the Gospel, because at that time his vision was to go to some other big town.⁷⁴ He made an honest evaluation of his work. In a letter to the Board he wrote:

We need men. Don't send us that kind of man who may be compared to those soldiers who are called 'food for powder'. I feel certain that they are not needed here. We need men of large (spirit) and mind, well trained, deeply versed in human nature who have never been guilty of that little ambition which is so hateful in a servant of the meek and lowly Jesus. We need men who would live in native houses and eat nothing but the proceeds of the country if need be. We need men who will preach all day and dream of preaching all night, who are men of prayer who cannot help but pray because they groan for the revelation of God's power. Such men are just as certain to succeed as they come. Other men are

⁷³ Guy, p. 72.

⁷⁴ Bowen, *Central Africa*, p. 161-162.

equally certain to fail.⁷⁵

This is part of the appeal from Bowen for the missionary work in Africa. Bowen also included a chapter in his book about the necessity of sending more missionaries to Africa, but missionaries who could be useful to Africa and to the Gospel.

Bowen also had a plan to structure the missionary support.⁷⁶ In that time Baptists promoted mission through an organization (the Foreign Mission Board). Bowen says that the Church itself has to promote mission and not another organization. He thought it would be better if individuals and Churches could work directly with the missionaries, this would make people more interested in mission. Each Church had to support at least one missionary and this missionary had to report only to this Church and not to a Board. He did not want end the Board's work but it would now be responsible to promote mission among the people, to motivate the people, encouraging every association and every strong Church to support a missionary. Those Churches and associations which could not support a missionary would then receive aid from the State Convention and from the Mission Board to be able to do so. The appointment of a missionary, in Bowen's mind, should be made directly by the Churches. He wanted to put more

⁷⁵ Bowen's letter to the Foreign Mission Board, October 1, 1855 (Bowen Paper, section five, nr. 381).

⁷⁶ See: Thomas Bowen, "Giants, Mission Boards, etc." (*The Christian Index*, 20 April, 1859) p. 2; "When Convention and Boards are Scriptural," (*The Christian Index*, 29 June, 1959), p.1; "Plan for the collection of mission funds", (*Christian Index*, 29 June 1859), p.1; see also Bowen Papers, section six, nrs. 51 and 577.

Church participation in the missionary enterprise: "Christ committed the work to the Churches, we have committed it to other hands, not scriptural."⁷⁷

The financial support for mission at that time was made by an agent who came to the Churches to collect money. The problem was that most of the Churches only contributed if the agent from the Board came. Bowen was of the opinion that each Church was to have an agent or local committee to promote annual fund-raising for mission. He also agreed that this collection of funds should be used not only for mission but also to help other areas of the Church's activities. The local Church could then divide up the total contributions among the various causes including foreign missions. Those Churches which did not have the financial conditions to support whole activities or to support a missionary had to send the money to the Convention and then the Convention would put together the whole amount and help weak Churches to support missionaries and to promote other activities.

It is clear that many people in the structural denomination did not agree with Bowen's ideas about missionary support. However, he was the precursor of the idea of the Cooperative Plan which the Southern Baptist Convention accepted many decades later as Roberson notes:

Almost all of the early missionaries to the Yoruba country from 1849 to 1869 were supported by special groups, mainly associations. Between 1879 and 1900 there were others, but a few were supported

⁷⁷ See note 76.

by the Convention generally. This mixture of the two practices continued into the twentieth century. As late as the 1930s Dr. Ray wrote a missionary on the Nigerian field that fifty per cent of all missionaries under the supervision of the Board in all fields were supported by groups or individuals. We might add that this situation did not prevailed during the lean times, the Nigeria Mission might have failed. The practice continues until this day. The implementation of the Co-operative Program in the 1920s virtually fulfilled Bowen's prophetic advocacy of such a program in theory.⁷⁸

4.2.2.2 Mission and Civilization

Bowen's ideas about civilization were similar to the project of the African Colonization Society. He knew about the problems of the process of colonization and the criticism that this project had received: "Many abolitionists regard the whole scheme as a dishonest device of slaveholders to rid their country of troublesome free Negroes."⁷⁹ We have already shared in chapter three few idea about this project of colonization. Bowen believed that Liberia was a good place where the project could be a successful enterprise for Africa. In his mind African colonization was important not because the United States could find a way to be free from the presence of "troublesome free Negroes", but because it was a way to spread the Gospel and improve the standard of life in the whole of Africa. He had deep convictions that this was the main reason for the African Colonization Society: "Their single objective and motive is to plant a great Negro nation in Africa, which shall be a means of diffusing civilization and Christianity

⁷⁸ Roberson, p. 64.

⁷⁹ Bowen, *Central Africa*. p. 56.

throughout the whole continent." ⁸⁰ It seems that Bowen could not see the other side of the question that really involved the interests of the slaveholders in sending blacks back to Africa, even if these blacks were no longer Africans but Americans. He could see that many blacks did not want to go to Africa and he had three main reasons for that: "the hardships incident to settling in Liberia as a new country, abundance of food and employment in America, and their own prejudices against the cause of colonization."⁸¹ Bowen, then, developed in his book ideas about why the blacks had to go to Africa. He believed that the United States would face difficulties with food in the future; according to him the growth of the population would leave less food available in America and this fact would increase the racial conflicts between whites and blacks. He defended the idea that blacks could go back to Africa and then have their own Republic where they could be free and work with the good soil where they could get food.

Bowen also attempted to explain the reasons for the slave trade in America. He thought that this was part of a divine purpose. It is always dangerous to defend an evil system by saying that it is God's purpose. Bowen, in his effort to understand and defend the colonization project, said that

the God of all the earth, without whose directing providence not even a sparrow falls to the ground, has not located so many blacks in America without a purpose. The man who looks candidly and reverently upon the principles and facts of divine government, can see more than African wars, slave-ships, and American plantations in the

80 Ibid, p. 57.

81 Ibid, p. 58.

present relation of the white and black races.⁸²

One can say that this was a strongly evangelical view about the action of God on the issue of slavery in the United States. But we can see that it could be a wrong view of God's action in history. Bowen had this argument because he thought that the Africans went to America to be civilized or prepared in order to be sent back to Africa. Did God really have such a cruel plan to colonize or to spread the Gospel to Africa? But why did God have so great an interest in the colonization of Africa? Is that God's method for every people in the world? Could Bowen not have made a deeper analysis about the real problem which involved the slave system? Was he just looking for an easy answer for his public? We can see that here he went wrong in defending his point of view about colonization. We can once more point out that Christianity and slavery are totally opposite and one cannot support the other, even if we want to see God's hands in this. Bowen expressed once more his difficulties in seeing the problem in different ways. He demonstrated that blacks are capable enough of thinking and accepting colonization in Africa itself with no need to go to another country. So how did he justify that blacks had to go to America in order to learn the "good things" about civilization? He even wrote in his book that Western civilization was not the best in the world or even was not better for Africa and Africa had to find its own way (see note 14). In other parts he said: "They, at least, according to the inflexible laws of nature, deserved a better fate than slavery... these people had a right to remain unmolested in their native land."⁸³

⁸² Ibid, p. 60.

⁸³ Ibid. p. 94.

At this point, it is important to discuss the possibility of Bowen being a racist.

One can see that Bowen made some comments which were not so different from the common view about the black race. What is fact is that in the middle of strong racist concepts he was totally different about this topic. David Davis believes that "Bowen's view of Africa was not without some distortion. He still wrote as a superior and was convinced that the black could never reach full equality with the white, no matter what opportunities he were given", and he concludes with what we are trying to say above, "Though repugnant to the modern reader, Bowen's racial ideas were liberal in that he made every effort to refuse the popular concept of the organic inferiority of the Negro."⁸⁴

Martin also agrees with Davis concerning the racism in Bowen:

Undoubtedly, Bowen held racist notions of black inferiority. The missionary believed that blacks would never equal whites in term of innate capabilities. Equally repulsive is Bowen's opinion that blacks left to themselves never made any significant advances in civilization. In line with much white contemporaries, Bowen viewed pure blacks on the western coast of Africa as a contemptible and degraded lot of people. But what is really unfortunate was the foundation he provided for that observation. In Bowen's mind one would find greater, superior societies as one ventured inland because these peoples - for example, the Yoruba, Ibo, and the Hausas - supposedly had white ancestry.⁸⁵

Unfortunately, Sandy Martin does not give us the exact reference in Bowen's works

84 David Carson Davis, *Thomas Jefferson Bowen and His Plan For the Redemption of Africa*, (Master Thesis, Baylor University, Waco, Texas, 1978), p. 126.

85 Martin, p. 31.

where she found this information. She quoted the information from E. A. Ayandele's introduction to the second edition of Bowen's *Adventure and Missionary Labours* published in 1968. The fact that she was not clear about where exactly we can "blame" Bowen for his racism makes difficult the task of answering his arguments; the fact that she uses an introduction from Ayandele instead of using Bowen's own work gives the impression that she did not even read Bowen's book. But, for sure, we have here two authors who claim Bowen's racism in relation to Africans. It is quite an important point and can not be ignored, and it is not our interest here to hide the fact that Bowen really made comments about the qualities and capacities of black people.

It is of interest to discuss here the idea that Bowen attributed "intelligence" to some African people because of their supposedly white ancestors.

Bowen made several references to this in his book. We can find at least nine references where he made such a comparison or statement. But what we do find there is that these statements about the blacks with supposedly white ancestors were directly related to the fact that some of these people, with whom he met, had white skin or were "mulattoes" (mulattos), which came about in the case of a child that was born from a mixed couple (normally a white father with a black mother).

Another idea which can be noted is the fact that the concept of the colour of the skin connected with the concept of race can be different according to the place. The word "coloured" does not have the same meaning in North America and in South Africa.

Bowen even said that this was, in most cases, the result of the intermixed relations between the Portuguese, Dutch and other Europeans colonizers and African women. He says that "the conduct of most Europeans on the coast, is not calculated to make the Negroes better", and then he shows some examples from related situations where Europeans had many women or had married by contract for one week or one month.⁸⁶

At least from nine of the references that Bowen made about the "blacks with white descendants", eight are directly related to the reality of intermixed relations between whites and blacks. Only in one reference did he relate the white colour of the skin to intelligence, but even then he did not use the word "intelligent" but "interesting". He says:

But the Pulohs (called also Fulahs, Fellahs, Fellatahs and Fullanies,) who are the rulers at Ilorin, are by far the most interesting people in Central Africa. According to their own account, their ancestors were white, and they still call themselves white men. (...) In Africa they are called red people. (...) They have the same cast of countenance as white women, and some of them are decidedly handsome, like the mulatto creoles in New Orleans.⁸⁷

In this context Bowen also made the distinction that the "mixed Africans" are more "civilized" in the use of the clothes. He made connections between levels of degradation according to the fact that a tribe did or did not use clothes.

86 Bowen, *Central Africa*, p. 86.

87 Ibid, p. 199-200. See also the following pages to find all the citations that Bowen made about the topic: pp. 14, 37, 41, 86, 94, 199-200, 209, 268 and 278-279.

Bowen shows somehow in his book that the Western civilization can have the same problems or limitation than Africa. Normally, when he writes about a negative view of Africa he also shows how the same negative side appears in Europeans or North Americans. He could say bad things about whites and blacks in the same paragraph. As an example we can quote here the following sentences from his writing about the possibilities of a civilization effort in Africa:

1. That man is everywhere capable of improvement. The most enlightened races were once barbarians, as the Greeks, Germans, French and English; and the most degraded races, as the Hotentots and the Negroes of Guinea, are now making advances toward civilization... 2. The limit of man's improvability has never been ascertained. I can easily conceive that England and America might be now considered almost barbarous, compared with the highest moral, intellectual and social excellence of which a nation of our own race is capable. We may admit, and I think justly, that the Negroes will never be equal to the whites, where the two races enjoy equal opportunities; for the white race, everywhere, under all circumstances, is endowed with characteristics which are not found in the Negroes, or in any other dark race. But this does not require us to conclude that the Negro any more than the white man has reached his maximum of improvement. There might be Negro nations fully as much civilized as we are at present, and there might at the same time be white nations as barbarous as the ancient Germans.⁸⁸

There were times when Bowen said that the whites were the most superior race, and another time he said that the whites could be totally barbarous. He addressed his book to the people in the Churches, a book which had the aim of giving the Baptist Church a report about his time involved with missionary work in Africa, and also to show that

88 Ibid, p. 62.

Africa could be perfectly suitable for civilization and mission. These people were deeply affected by negative ideas about blacks. One can see then that Bowen included some of the old, negative ideas about blacks to show immediately the positive side of the facts. The conclusion for Bowen was that Africans were barbarians as the whites were in any other time or situation.

Bowen believed that his own race could be a model of civilization. He was a vigorous defender of the idea of an African evangelization directly connected with civilization, but he did not intend to make a simple relocation of Western civilization to Africa. He said: "It is not wise, however, to commit the too common mistake of supposing that our form of civilization is the exemplar for the whole earth. It is not the best form for ourselves, and is not adapted to Africa at all."⁸⁹ He recognized that each people had its own way of being plus a cultural context which had to be respected. This meant that nobody could be superior or inferior.

Even Davis and Martin had difficulty in saying that Bowen had a total prejudice against blacks in Africa. Davis, also quoting from Ayandele's introduction of *Central Africa*, says that "compared to the jaundiced stereotypes of other works, this picture was flesh and enlightened. Bowen was truly gifted with the right instincts and an uninhibited mind that enabled him to view African civilization with new insight."⁹⁰ We can see from this

⁸⁹ Ibid, pp. 327 - 328.

⁹⁰ Davis, p. 125

quotation that Ayandele also agrees with the fact that Bowen had a very different attitude towards Africans.

It is important to state here what Martin wrote about the qualities of Bowen. She says: "Nevertheless, in Bowen's writings one can discern a degree of sympathy, understanding, and toleration of African peoples, beliefs, and customs of lacking (sic) from many other missionaries, white or black, during this time and since... Bowen demonstrated an unusual degree of comprehension and perhaps some appreciation for Yoruba religion." ⁹¹

On the other hand we cannot ignore the fact that Bowen showed in some parts of his writings negative views about blacks, but the positive views from his book, and from his life of dedication among blacks, were much more clear and had more of an effect on society. He wrote from a different point of view about blacks, and was totally convinced that the reality about Africans was completely different from what he had learned in books and from the culture of his time. He wrote: "I cannot express what I feel when I find from day to day, as it were the germs of vigorous Christian characters among the people to whom I preach. Tell me not of their sins, their ignorance, or their barbarism. They are more virtuous, more intelligent and civilized than many suppose. I feel myself, authorized by substantial facts, to believe that our labour shall ultimately be eminently successful..." ⁹², and in his book: "But we are met by the objection that the Africans are

91 Martin, pp. 31 - 32.

92 Diary of Bowen, entry for December 11, 1853 (Bowen papers, section two, nr. 100).

mentally and morally incapable of civilization. I have sometimes expressed the opinion, that while opponents are perplexing this question by vain arguments, there are other men who will solve the problem by doing the work."⁹³ One can see that in the midst of total ignorance and intolerance for the blacks, he was one who believed in their capacity.

But we are still facing the question of Bowen's prejudice in relation to blacks. The point here is that he had difficulty in dealing with the problems of black people in different ways. He could fight in favour of blacks in Africa but he did not have the same posture with the problem in his own country. It is not clear enough to say that Bowen was simply contradictory. In this matter what happened was that his consciousness of the black people's oppression was inchoate, in other words all his ideas, feelings, and sensations about the black people's oppression was just beginning.

A important point to be put here in this discussion is the idea of consciousness from Comaroff:

Between the conscious and the unconscious lies the most critical domain of all for historical anthropology and especially for the analysis of colonialism and resistance. It is the realm of partial recognition, of inchoate awareness, of ambiguous perception, and, sometimes, of creative tension: that liminal space of human experience in which people discern acts and facts but cannot or do not order them into narrative descriptions or even into articulate conceptions of the world; in which signs and events are observed, but in a hazy, translucent light; in which individuals or groups know that

⁹³ Bowen, *Central Africa*, p. 61.

something is happening to them but find it difficult to put their fingers on quite what it is. It is from this realm, we suggest, that silent signifiers and unmarked practices may rise to the level of explicit consciousness, of ideological assertion, and become the subject of overt political and social contestation -- or from which they may recede into the hegemonic, to languish there unremarked for the time being. As we shall see, it is also the realm from which emanate the poetics of history, the innovative impulses of the bricoleur and the organic intellectual, the novel imagery called upon to bear the content of symbolic struggles.⁹⁴

On the other hand we can clearly see that Bowen had no intention of being against the blacks in his apologies for colonization. He thought that the better way for blacks was to leave the United States and go to Africa because he thought that in America the situation for blacks would never be a proper situation for men or women. He expected that the nation would increase in its prejudice and racism. He believed that in Africa blacks could find a home and become an "independent republic." Certainly this was the way for Bowen to explain how free blacks could avoid economic competition with American whites in the future.

Bowen did not intend a colonization process where Americans would take over the country. He was thinking about a situation where the Africans could develop the countries and find ways to spread the Gospel. He had no interest in commerce for himself or for the United States, he was looking for a substitute for the slave trade in Africa and the development of its people. In several parts of his book we can see that he had a constant preoccupation with how the people could improve the system of production. After he reached St. Paul's River in Liberia he noticed that the river was not

94 Comaroff, p. 29.

useful for navigation, so immediately he made plans for the future regarding this river and the economic situation of the country: "Unfortunately none of the rivers in Liberia are navigable for more than thirty miles. I think, however, that an occasional short canal at the rapids, would render the St. Paul's navigable far into the interior; and the day will come when such canals will be required and opened to relieve this country of its surplus produce."⁹⁵ Here it is clear that Bowen had not only a plan for civilization but he was also preoccupied in giving Africa a good project of development. Maybe he was one of the most insistent voices about the perfect connection between Christianity and civilization. He put in his book the objectives and aims of this subject: "But our designs and hopes in regard to Africa, are not simply to bring as many individuals as possible to the knowledge of Christ. We desire to establish the Gospel in the hearts and minds and social life of people, so that truth and righteousness may remain and flourish among them, without the instrumentality of foreign missionaries."⁹⁶

It is certain that this position of Bowen did not meet support within the Foreign Mission Board. The Mission had only an interest "to bring as many individuals as possible to the knowledge of Christ" and was not interested in doing any development projects in Africa. Bowen, in this regard, was a man of dreams and hopes about a Christian action which never existed in reality. The political issue was never important for the missionary mentality of the Southern Baptist Convention and Bowen got a lot of problems and sorrow in his life with regard to his effort for Africa.

95 Bowen, *Central Africa*, p. 69

96 *Ibid*, p. 322.

On the other hand we can conclude that Bowen was fairly ingenuous when he decided to work with blacks. He was really optimistic about the possibilities of work in Africa and in Brazil. It is certain that he faced opposition when he decided to promote his training project for black people. In his diary he registered the possibility of going to another denomination because of the fact that his denomination (The Southern Baptist Convention) did not understand his work and effort. Despite Bowen not making it clear what kind of problem he had with the denomination we can easily relate this problem to his work and his projects with blacks. He wrote in his diary: "I will record one important fact for the first time."⁹⁷ Probably he faced the reality about how the SBC saw black people, because he had considered many times leaving the denomination. In this page of his diary he says that this kind of thought had been with him already for 20 or 25 years. With no doubts he also had conflicts with the Southern Baptist Convention because of his missionary plan.⁹⁸

Bowen's plan was simple and consisted of training blacks according to his view of evangelization and development. He had the idea of establishing a school in Yorubaland for the training of immigrants as teachers, preachers, interpreters and in other capacities in missionary work. He faced a lot of opposition to his plan, mainly from his fellow missionaries in the field. They could not understand the fact that he wanted to be busy with teaching the blacks when the white missionaries could do the

97 Diary of Thomas Bowen, entry for 27th of May 1858 (Bowen Papers, section two, nr. 122).

98 Betty Antunes de Oliveira also confirms in her book that Bowen had opposition in his country about his intent to create a school for blacks, see p. 70.

work. But he was always of the opinion that the natives could do much better work in Africa than the whites. Cecil Roberson presents us with what Bowen set forth in describing his vision for the school:

1) it was to be for Africans and American Negroes, and would instruct in reading, writing, arithmetic, grammar, geography, history, practical duties and the Bible. 2) The Yoruba Mission organization would function as a board of trustees. 3) American Negroes to be fifteen to twenty years old, free, pious and free from vanity and lightness. 4) Let expenses be light. Five hundred dollars yearly for ten students suggested cost. 5) Students to be under the direction of missionaries in their work. 6) Let dress be plain and cheap. Humility was to be exemplified, without creating a sense of degradation.⁹⁹

Bowen was working hard to get the idea of his school accepted wherever it was possible. It was not possible in Yorubaland, nor was it possible in the United States because of the opposition to him and his whole missionary plan which included development. Later, he went to Brazil still searching for the possibility of finding a way to work with blacks and to train them for missionary work, but also in Brazil this proved to be impossible.

⁹⁹ Roberson, p. 40.

**"My strongest reasons for wishing to labor in Brazil
is the hope of educating coloured preachers."**

(Bowen in letter to the Mission Board)

5. THE END OF A DREAM

In 1856 Bowen and his wife returned to the United States of America. They left behind the dreams about Africa, the work among the Yorubas in three Baptist missionary stations. The condition of their health was not good at that time. They could easily look back and see how much they had lived in their experience in Africa. They built houses, they learned the native language (which they even spoke at home), they preached the Gospel, they faced suffering, they even lost a daughter (Mary Yoruba Bowen) who died at the age of three months. With this context the Bowens returned home, certainly hoping to be back in Africa soon after recovering their health and raising money for the new project of the Missions station. Bowen's state of health is always presented as a main factor for not returning to Africa. On this topic a question can always be asked: if his health conditions were not good enough for him to return to Africa, why did the Mission Board send him to Brazil? We can find some answers to this question. In this chapter we will analyse the work of Bowen in Brazil and the facts surrounding this. His stay in Brazil was short, eight months and nineteen days.¹⁰⁰ It was a very short time to build a mission there, but his stay was full of significant facts regarding the relationship between the missionary and the Board. His ideas about missionary methods in Brazil were important to guide missionaries in the future.

100 Oliveira, *Centelha em Restolho Seco*, p. 82.

5.1 Bowen's Interest in Brazil

Bowen knew Brazil already through the people he had met in Africa. He had knowledge about the slave trade between West Africa and Brazil. He saw many desolated towns where whole populations had been taken to Brazil as slaves. He even met some of the Brazilians (or Portuguese) who worked in the slave trade to Brazil.¹⁰¹ Brazil was one of the biggest slave trade countries in the world. It has been said that "during the course of the transatlantic slave trade...about 3,647,000 men, women and children were imported into Brazil."¹⁰² Bowen certainly had a clear understanding of the fact that Brazil was receiving a great number of the Yoruba speaking people from Africa and this would also be important for his work and missionary interest.

It is important to point out here that Bowen's main interest was, without a doubt, Africa. His interest for Brazil only came up because it was impossible to go back to Africa to continue his work there, even if he was the right missionary to be in Africa because of his perception and interest in the well-being of the people. It is certain that health conditions were not the only problem that caused Bowen not to return to Africa. Somehow we can say that he was already used to the diseases in Africa. He had already had malaria several times and knew very well about this situation, having

¹⁰¹ One of the interesting meetings between Bowen and ex-slaves in Brazil was when he met a young man who had been in Brazil as a slave. He came with great joy to Bowen because he was told that Bowen was Brazilian. The man started to speak in Portuguese and was disappointed with the fact that Bowen could not speak Portuguese. Bowen wrote: "He had been a slave in Brazil, and the ardent affection peculiar to his race could not forget his former country, although in that country he had been a captive and slave." (*Central Africa*, p. 143).

¹⁰² Anani Dzidzienyo, *The Position of Blacks in Brazilian and Cuban Society*, (London: Minority Rights Group, 1979), p. 2.

learned many new things about diseases and cures from the natives. It is true that Bowen could become sick and could get new diseases but, in general, any missionary in Africa was under the same risk as him. But he had other opposition in relation to his return. He was really a man who stated his point of view. We can clearly see that in one of the letters that Bowen wrote, unfortunately, this letter was never sent and it is not possible to identify to whom he intended to address it. However it is quite clear that he wanted to send it to a member of the Board, probably its President, Dr. James B. Taylor.

So my missionary career is ended. God only knows how I have suffered. (...) I am conscious of faults and defects, but my dear Bro., you know as well as I do that there is prejudice against me where it should not exist. So I must be sacrificed. And why? Because I have resented aggression and insults on my rights. (...) More than once I have been regarded with patronizing superiority by brethren who are my inferior fact for fact in general and special knowledge. I care but little for that, but when a false intruder stifles me and deprives me of the power to work, when my labours are repaid by half the salary paid to others, when my propositions are set aside for a policy which retards the progress of the work, this accumulation of disrespect, and inability to work is surely enough to boycott me from the field. I know, at least I fully believe, that you are not aware of all the insults and wrongs to which I have been subjected, but you are at least aware that I have grounds of complaint. You have regarded me as an inferior sort of man who demands more than his due. Perhaps you are right. If so I have done well to retire from the work. (...) If the Board are my fellow servants, they have seriously erred in the sight of heaven by assuming the office of a master, and preaching terms which the self-respect even of a Paul, with all his holiness, would not subscribe. (...) I retire from the field in silence.¹⁰³

The first topic that put Bowen in conflict with the leadership of the Southern Baptist

103 Bowen's letter, August 8, 1859 (Bowen Papers, section five, nr. 490)

Convention was the fact that he did not agree with the structure of mission under a board as we have seen in the previous chapters. He believed that a structure board was not right in the biblical view. It is the kind of thing that brings many conflicts between the leadership, despite the fact that others also had the same thought as him. He was one to give strong support with his ideas to an already established group which wanted a change in the denominational structure. With this position, Bowen lost some support in continuing to lead the mission in Africa.

The Mission in Africa also became a strong opposer to Bowen's return to Africa. Cecil Roberson points out that Bowen had conflicts with the missionaries there. We have already seen his concern about the position and action of a missionary in Africa. He idealized a missionary totally involved in the context of the people, and also being able to speak the native language. Beside this he had conflicts with the other missionaries in the Yoruba station because he was insistent on building a school for the development of blacks and many of the missionaries there were totally opposed to that. He was also against some missionaries' practices in trying to change some of the customs of the natives. In one of these questions he was involved in a discussion about the issue of polygamy.¹⁰⁴

Bowen believed that "polygamy is repugnant to the feelings of the enlightened man" but he realised that even the Bible did not condemn polygamy. Bowen, then, defended the idea that the converted polygamous in Africa should be baptized in the Church and

104 Roberson, p. 55-56.

he saw no need for the man to dismiss his wives.¹⁰⁵ He understood the contextual situation of polygamy in Africa and he saw no way to change this quickly in the life and customs of the people. The other missionaries believed that polygamy was something totally against the Gospel and they refused to baptize the polygamous, so Bowen was in direct conflict with these missionaries over this question.

Looking back at Bowen's position from today's stand point we can say that the question of polygamy brings up an important point about the missionary and the change of the culture of the natives. Many of the concepts present in the native culture can be seen as "strange" to the Western interpretation of the Gospel. But what we can conclude from missionary work among other cultures is that, normally but not generally, the missionaries mix up the teaching of the Gospel with their own culture. It is no surprise to find a missionary teaching much more about his culture than the Gospel itself. The missionary can identify his own culture with the Gospel and in this process condemns the native culture because he does not identify the culture of the other as something important or "holy" but much more evil and "devilish". We can see that Bowen knew how to understand the context behind different customs, practices and cultures. He also knew that the natives would be much more open to the Gospel if the missionary knew how to respect them as they are. We can learn from history that Bowen was totally right in his position and other missionaries were wrong. It is Ayandele who records:

¹⁰⁵ Bowen, "Should Missionaries Baptize Polygamists?" In: *The Christian Index*, 16 June 1858, p. 2 (Bowen Papers, section six, nr. 566).

In Ogbomosh, further in the interior, where the Southern American Baptist Mission had established a station in 1855, the political and social results of missionary activity began to disconcert the traditionalists. For Barika, the first convert began to defy the Bale, the chief of the town, over whom he began to assert superiority. The hostility of the traditionalists against the Christians developed into physical violence against the latter in 1879 when they attempted to bury a convert in the bush, and not in the house as was customary. According to the new-fangled Christian teaching, burial in the house was 'heathenism' and unhygienic, but in the traditional concept the proper place where a man's soul was to reach out to those of his ancestors was in the house. It was only criminals who were buried in the bush. All the Christians were expelled from the town.¹⁰⁶

The missionaries after Bowen did not learn as well as he did the correct way to work with the natives. Otherwise the mission should not have been in such difficulties of relationship with the town. He once more showed that he was a missionary many years ahead of his time, even ahead of our time because many missionaries today still have the same way of thinking about mission as their fellows in the past.

The above situation, when friends, denominational power, and structure were against him as part of a "supposed plan" to put down his influence in the African mission, caused Bowen to inform the Board that he was not able to return to Africa. It is true that his health was not at its best, but we can conclude that health was probably the last thing that Bowen was thinking of at that moment. He knew that diseases were much easier to overcome than the problems he had with the denominational politics. It is important to point out here some thoughts about the way in which the Baptist leadership

¹⁰⁶ E. A. Ayandele, *The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria, 1842-1914 - A Political and Social Analysis*, (London: Longman, 1966), p. 14.

often eliminates any voice which goes against them. Every Baptist can testify about the structures of the denominational body. The Baptists are far away from the image of a body without political action (and it should be clear that politics is part of any organization), but the problem with the Baptists here (and in particular the Southern Baptists) is personal interest for power and intolerance for those who have different thoughts about the structure. The Baptists have for a long time criticized the Catholic Church with its structural and political power, but the Baptist structure is deeply fascinated by power and can use any method to "eliminate" somebody who cannot agree with injustice and clear mistakes inside the Baptist family. We can make here a very cruel statement that the Baptist denominational structure with its strong and conservative leadership in Bowen's time in the United States or today in Brazil, can easily be identified as a pharisee structure.¹⁰⁷

Bowen wanted to continue his work as a missionary. His idea was then to go to Brazil to work with the Yorubas there and possibly open a school for training blacks. He was a persistent person and tried any way to promote mission among the Yorubas according to his missionary method. He believed that the best missionaries to the field would be the natives. He wrote to the Board:

¹⁰⁷ For more studies about the denominational structure and its way of working with differences see the following works: Farnsley II, Arthur Emery, "Southern Baptist Politics: Authority and Power in the Restructuring of an American Denomination", *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 1994, Vol. 33, number 4, p. 394; Cothen, Grad C." What Happened to the Southern Baptist Convention: A Memoir of the Controversy", *Journal of the Scientific Study of Religion*, 1994, Vol. 33, number 2, p. 188; Ammerman, Nancy Tatom. 1990. *Baptist Battles: social change and religious conflict in the Southern Baptist Convention*, New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

... Hence the double necessity of educating black men for our African Missions. If we neglect to do this we cut off the right hand of our power. My strongest reasons for wishing to labour in Brazil is the hope of educating coloured preachers. I tried to find a location for this purpose in the Creek nation, but I have failed. The responsibility is not on me. God knows, and will always remember, that I have done all I could to promote African Missions. I have a standing offer to anybody who will employ me anywhere to educate black preachers. If my offer be rejected I am clear. But my being clear does not promote the work. May the Lord cause it to be done.¹⁰⁸

However, in this matter, it would seem that Bowen did not have a clear idea about the situation of the slaves in Brazil. He certainly thought that it would be possible to preach to slaves there in the same way as he had done in the United States, and he really wanted to go to Brazil to work with slaves.

Probably Bowen got information about Brazil through a very well-known book of his time called *Brazil and the Brazilians*. He was looking for information about Brazil and one of the books available was that one. It was written by the Rev. Daniel Parish Kidder with the collaboration of the Rev. James Cooley Fletcher and was published in 1857. Daniel Parish Kidder was a Methodist missionary of the American Bible Society. He sailed to Brazil in 1837 to work of the distribution of Bibles, which gave him the opportunity to visit different parts of the country. He returned to the United States in 1840 when his wife died.¹⁰⁹ Probably Bowen read the Kidder's book and supposed it possible to work with slaves in Brazil or to be a missionary there without problems with

108 Bowen to A. M. Poindexter, October 11, 1859 (Bowen Papers, section five, nr. 493).

109 Daniel Kidder, *Reminiscencias de Viagens e Permanencia no Brasil (Rio de Janeiro e Provincia de Sao Paulo)*, Translation of Moacyr N. Vasconcelos, (Sao Paulo: Livraria Martins, no date) p.l.

the Catholic hierarchy. Perhaps he was hopeful about working with slaves because of the following words from Kidder and Fletcher:

In Brazil every thing is in favour of freedom; and such are the facilities for the slave to emancipate himself, and, when emancipated, if he possess the proper qualifications, to ascend to higher eminences than those of a mere free black, that *fait* (sic) will be written against slavery in this Empire before another half-century rolls around. Some of the most intelligent men that I met with in Brazil -- men educated at Paris and Coimbra --were of African descent, whose ancestors were slaves. Thus, if a man have freedom, money, and merit, no matter how black may be his skin, no place in society is refused him. It is surprising also to observe the ambition and the advancement of some of these men with Negro blood in their veins.¹¹⁰

Bowen would have been impressed by these words. His desire was always to meet "intelligent blacks" to start his educational projects among the Africans. Kidder in his book presented an incorrect idea about Brazil. He wrote as if blacks had a very good life and it was only a matter of having some money to purchase freedom. He did not even consider the question of the relationship between the slaves and the masters. One can read Kidder's book and think that slavery in Brazil was a very good institution where masters and slaves lived in total harmony and happiness. Kidder gave the impression

110 Daniel P. Kidder, *Brazil and the Brazilians*, (Philadelphia: Childs & Peterson, 1857), p. 133.

that society was very pleasant for those who could have "freedom, money, and merit" but he forgot to say that for slaves in Brazil these things were completely out of reach and were not possible for the majority of the blacks. But Kidder was talking about the flexibility of the laws in Brazil concerning the slave issue, but Brazil was not this "paradise" that can be seen in Kidder's words. He wrote his book in 1857 and Brazil only abolished its slavery in 1888 after international pressure and after three hundreds years of oppression of blacks.¹¹¹

Another aspect in Kidder's book that probably gave a wrong impression about Brazil to Bowen was the reference to religious matters.

The 'Roman Catholic Apostolic' is the religion of the State in Brazil; Yet, by the liberal Constitution, and by the quasi-liberal sentiments of the Brazilians, all other denominations have the right to worship God as they choose, whether in public or in private. (...) It is my firm conviction that there is not a Roman Catholic on the globe where there prevails a greater degree of toleration or a greater liberality of feelings toward Protestants.¹¹²

Bowen took these two pieces of information and probably thought that Brazil really was the right place to put his project into action. Later he discovered that it was not possible to work with slaves and the religious intolerance was much greater than he had ever thought. About this he later wrote from Brazil:

111 See the book of Robert Edgar Conrad, *World of Sorrow - The African Slave Trade to Brazil*.

112 Ibid, p. 140 and 143.

... You will be surprised to hear that, after all that we have heard, the laws of Brazil denounced the preaching of the pure Gospel as a "crime against religion." Yet such is the fact. Foreigners may worship as they please, only are not permitted to build their meeting houses in the form of a Church. But if any missionary shall preach to a congregation of Brazilians, the penalty is dispersion by a justice of the peace, and a fine for each person assembled of not less than one dollar, nor more than six dollars, for each "offence." Public opinion is even more intolerant than the law. (...) My opinion is that our informants, who have told us that we may preach freely in Brazil have never seen the laws. They have merely taken the word of Brazilians for it that the laws are tolerant. I had been here three months before I obtained a copy of "the criminal code", and read for myself. If I had know all this in time I think it probable that my knowledge of romish bigotry would have deterred me from attacking it, when thus armed with the authority of the State. ¹¹³

The ideas that Bowen had about Brazil and the problems with his denomination brought serious problems to him during his stay there, yet on the other hand it was an interesting adventure for him and for the history of the Baptists in Brazil.

5.2 Bowen in Brazil

Bowen and his family (his wife, Lurena, and his daughter, Lula) sailed to Brazil on March 3, 1860 after his appointment as a missionary to that country. They arrived in Rio de Janeiro on May 25, 1860. The family was finally in another missionary field with the hope of spreading the Gospel and with many expectations about a new country. Bowen had been out of Africa already for a long time and it was natural that he was excited about the possibility of talking, preaching and making contacts with the Yoruba people. This was one of the first things that he did when he arrived in Brazil. He immediately

113 Bowen to Rev. A. M. Poindexter, October 10, 1860 (Bowen Papers, section five, nr. 526)

made contact with the Yorubas who were working in the port.¹¹⁴ It was a great surprise to the slaves there that a white man could talk their language very well. They were happy to talk with somebody who knew their country and possibly could bring some news about the situation of the country and maybe some of them had the hope of hearing about their families and friends. For Bowen certainly it was also a great joy because he could feel strong again doing something to which he had devoted his life and his hopes; he immediately knew that he was in the right place to continue his project of missionary work. He wrote: "There are thousands of Yoruba people here. They swarm around me like bees and seem delighted that I have come to teach them. I have forgotten little or none of their language."¹¹⁵ He was happy and hopeful about prospects of his new work. In another letter to the Board he wrote: "I am now, I think, in my last scene of labour. I am impressed with the conviction that I shall finish my course among the Catholics, and heathen & Mohammedan Negroes of South America. If I live for twenty years, I expect to be laid to rest in Brazil or some adjoining country."¹¹⁶

What Bowen did not expect was that he could have problems so quickly by talking with the slaves. On May 26, 1860 the daily newspaper *Diario do Rio de Janeiro* published a note about the "suspicious" talk between Bowen and the blacks. The newspaper said that one American pastor recently come from Richmond, had the intention of converting the astray soul to the sect of the Anabaptist. The daily also noted that Bowen had

114 Oliveira, p. 71.

115 Bowen to the Board, May 25, 1860 (Bowen Papers, section five, nr. 512).

116 Bowen to the Board, May 26, 1860 (Bowen Papers, section five, nr. 513).

already started his work among the "pretos-minas" (slaves) and that he could speak their language very well. The newspaper called the authorities to verify the facts and certify what exactly Bowen was talking about with the slaves.¹¹⁷ The authorities were worried about the possibility that he could be an abolitionist and was talking with the blacks about the possibility of a revolution. The authorities also had problems with the fact that he was a missionary and probably want to convert the Catholic people to Protestantism. He went to the newspaper to give explanations about the facts. The daily, then, gave another note saying what he was doing in Brazil. The problem was that the new note was also full of mistakes about Bowen and his work. Probably what happened was that he had to use an interpreter who made mistakes in this translation. The new note said that Bowen could speak the African language because he learned it among the slaves in the United States and that he was in Brazil to employ some of his own slaves there.¹¹⁸

Anyway Bowen now knew that it was not an easy task to teach or preach to the slaves in Brazil. He faced a very different situation than that presented by Daniel Kidder. Kidder had been a missionary in Brazil not to the slaves but to the Portuguese there and that made a lot of difference. Bowen was very disappointed with these facts. He even discovered that he was not allowed to preach to the Brazilians publicly: "I believe that much good can be done here, but the work will be slow. As yet no attempt has been

117 Oliveira, p. 71.

118 Ibid, 72.

made by any one among the Brazilians. Missionaries are afraid to try it, lest they cause premature disturbance. If we can't preach here we had better leave; if we can, better begin, privately of course, that is, without any unnecessary display."¹¹⁹

Bowen then tried to find alternative avenues for his work. He had noticed already that it would be really difficult to work directly with the slaves. He lived with his family in a Hotel Tijuca whose owner was a Englishman called Robert Bennett. He was now trying for permission from the Board to do a different kind of missionary work.

He thought it may be possible to work in one of the German Congregations as pastor or missionary because these congregations were looking for a pastor. He also had the idea that possibly the Board could contact the Seamen's Friend Society to allow him to work with them, or even that he could change his work from the Board to this Society. He also had a plan to sell Bibles and tracts, and so spread the Word of God. He already had seen that the Brazilians had respect for and interest in the Bible.

Bowen quickly noticed that the cost of living in Rio de Janeiro was much higher than in the United States. He wrote to the Board expecting for some solutions for his financial problem. He was still living in the Hotel and having big expenses. This problem of finances was one of the main problems that he faced in Brazil. He was each day faced with the reality of no money and the expenses for the Hotel and for other needs forced him to borrow money from other missionaries (the Presbyterians, Ashbel Green

¹¹⁹ Bowen to James Taylor, June 10, 1860 (Bowen Papers, section five, nr. 515)

Simonton and Alexander Latimer Blackford) or from friends. For some reason the Board never sent his salary in time or when it was sent was never the correct or necessary amount. This was also one of the reasons why Bowen asked the Board if it would be possible to work with the Germans or with the Seamen.

During the first months in Brazil Bowen tried to find a solution for his financial problem and for his work. He wrote several letters to the Board but never got answers to his questions. The Board seemed to have forgotten him totally and was not even sending his salary. Most of the letters of Bowen to the Board were to explain the difficulties with the money and to ask the Board to help him in this matter because he could not work properly with this problem in mind. "We were in hopes of hearing from home at least once a month, but up to this date we have not received a single letter or paper from any one whatever. I presume that my letters to you have been received, but I will repeat their principal contents, and this long communication will probably suffice for preliminaries and my own personal affairs."¹²⁰

While Bowen was waiting for money and instructions from the Board about his work he drew up some ideas about what he could do in Brazil as an alternative to the work with the slaves. In a letter to the Board he once more presented the financial situation in the City and the possibility of raising funds among the Baptists in Georgia and Alabama to buy a house to establish the mission in Brazil. He then presented the following plan about his work:

120 Bowen to Taylor, August 30, 1860 (Bowen Papers, section five, nr. 520).

1. To have (as soon as possible too) a good supply of Bibles and other suitable books, with the privilege of making a few donations. 2. To rent a room for my depository, large enough to hold 30 or 40 people, and furnish it with chairs or benches sufficient to seat that number of people -- (This would be for a beginning). 3. To repair daily to my depository, to sell Bibles and to converse with all who might choose to come and talk with me about religion. 4. To have a Sabbath school, Bible class, and prayer meetings in our depository as soon as I could accomplish one or all of these objects. 5. To visit families wherever they might be willing to receive me, and to talk or pray with them &c. 6. To have a school for my wife assisted by myself, and perhaps to have a separate class or two of my own, if I should have time to instruct them. 7. To make an excursion into the country every three or four months for the purpose of selling Bibles, conversation, &c. 8. To write tracts adapted to the country and the people, setting forth the fundamental doctrines & duties of Christianity. ¹²¹

We can say that this missionary plan for Brazil was followed by the missionaries that came after Bowen. After presenting his plan to the Board he was convicted that it was the right thing to do and he insisted on this plan. Unfortunately he was ignored. The mission office acted slowly to take decisions about him and his requests.

Finally Bowen received a letter with a credit of 500 dollars. He wrote to the Board saying that the amount was not enough for the expenses that he had up to.

The result of this situation was his return to the United States. He had a very bad case of malaria and his wife was completely lost about what to do without money and any support from home. She decided for herself to pack everything. They did not even have money to pay the tickets. Lurena then took some money from friends and decided to

121 Bowen to A. M. Poindexter, October 10, 1860 (Bowen Papers, section five, nr. 526).

go back on February 9, 1861. The stay of the Bowen family in Brazil was eight months and nineteen days. Lurena Bowen wrote:

It is with much sorrow, that I hasten to inform you that we are compelled to leave our field of labour in this country and return home. (...) I trust the Board and friends at home will not blame me in this matter, and I feel sure they will not, when they learned the facts of Mr. Bowen's sickness. (...) To stay here, he would certainly lose his reason & die away soon. The effects of a colder climate and a freedom from the cares & annoyances to which he is subject here, appears the only hope of his recovery. He begs me not to tell you how bad he really is and to ask you not let our friends know, even as much as I have written, as they will be distressed & anxious until we reach them. When we see you we can explain more fully.¹²²

One could easily blame Bowen for having failed as a missionary in Brazil, but one has to see the context of his stay there. They were sent to Brazil by a Board which gave very little support for his work. He was always in contact but did not receive the necessary answer to take the decisions that he needed. It is a big mistake to say that he returned to the United States only because of his health. It is true that his health was not good at that time but he could have stayed and recovered if he had the opportunity to stay in a house without worrying as to whether there was enough money to supply his family with food and to work in his missionary projects. This was the direct responsibility of the Board.¹²³ Brazil was not an easy missionary field for protestants, but other mission boards (i.e. Presbyterians) decided that Brazil was a great opportunity for mission and they gave enough support to their missionaries there, even sending

¹²² Lurena Bowen to Taylor, February 6, 1861 (Bowen Papers, section five, nr. 538).

¹²³ See Oliveira, p. 81.

more than one. We have enough reasons to believe that the Board was not taking enough care of the Bowen's mission in Brazil. The next missionary to Brazil arrived twenty years after him and he received completely different treatment from the Board. From the above discussion we can say that Bowen was a victim of the politics of his own mission Board.

"If we die prematurely still our graves and our memory may serve to call forth better men who will carry on the power the glorious work which we have commenced in weakness."

(Bowen, *Private Diary*)

6. TOWARDS AN END

Thomas Jefferson Bowen died on November 11, 1875. He thus lived fifteen years after his return from Brazil. On his return to the United States, he had no ideas about what he would do there. His missionary project was nearly at an end and he was totally disappointed with the cruel reality that involved his denomination and some of his friends. It was not an easy time for somebody who believed in something, looked for it and could not realize his projects, not because of his own incompetence but much more because of external conflicts and denominational politics. We have no doubt that Bowen was a man with a dream who was ahead of his time. But his life was not at an end. We shall have a look through Bowen's letters to see what was his situation when he returned to the United States after his time in Brazil. His letters are an important source for this time.

6.1 The Last Years of Thomas Bowen

To be back home for Bowen was not an easy task. He continued to have problems with his health, his friends and his credibility. Since he had become a missionary of the Southern Baptist Convention he had always kept the Mission Board informed about his work. The collection of Bowen's letters are an interesting source to understand and to reconstruct his history and the policy within the Board. When he was back home he kept writing trying to solve several problems. Nevertheless, he was back exactly when the Civil War started in the United States. Once more he would see a war and now the war was inside his own country. It is interesting to note that the American Civil War was,

somehow, like the war in Yorubaland to stop the slave trade. Now the United States was also a divided country fighting over the same topic: slavery. Peter Parish says:

It was indeed the sternest test which the United States had faced from the achievement of independence down to the present generation - a test of the meaning and the very survival of the great American experiment. The institution of slavery and the problem of race posed fundamental questions about American freedom and equality; sectional rivalry and the competing claims of majority rule and minority rights posed equally basic questions about the principles of American democracy and practice of American federalism. ¹²⁴

Bowen faced another war over the issue of slavery. Now he was not strong enough to complain or to say what he thought about the issue, even if this war might bring a new reality for blacks in North America and might bring more facilities to start his educational project among blacks. But he knew that he was already in a strong war with his denomination about the issue. We can not find clear references in Bowen's letters about the Civil War. His concern was much more with the personal problems that he was having. Nevertheless there is a tradition among the Bowen family which says that he was somehow involved with the war but had to drop out because of the state of his health. ¹²⁵

The only source which can give us some idea that Bowen participated in the war, at least indirectly, is a letter which he sent to the Secretary of the Board, Mr. Taylor:

¹²⁴ Peter J. Parish, *The American Civil War*, (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1975), p. 11.

¹²⁵ Roberson, p. 71.

I have been out on horseback to the extreme parts of the country collecting money to pay for the tents &c of "the Green Rifles". The Boys are unanimous in wishing me to go with them as their chaplain. It is uncertain whether I can get an appointment; but my friends in Richmond might do me a favour by speaking to President Davis, who is now there. The case is simply this: I am going (D.V.) whether I am appointed or not, but if not appointed I shall get no pay, and no remuneration of expenses. ¹²⁶

When the Bowens returned from Brazil their baggage was detained in the Port of Baltimore. They only got their baggage back four years later when the war was nearly over. During that time Bowen was without employment because a missionary was only employed by the Board while in the field, after that he/she had to find his/her own job.

He tried hard to find a job as a pastor in several congregations in his state or even as a teacher in schools. It is hard to believe that a missionary like Bowen who had been in the field for a long time with such experience in mission was in that situation. It is true that the whole situation in the United States at that time was difficult for everybody, but the impression is that Bowen had nobody to give him any hope:

I am anxious to settle permanently as a pastor of some Church or Churches, and a support will satisfy me. I ought by all means to engage immediately as a pastor or supply, for I can not remain here in idleness. (...) Although my name is extensively known as a missionary (which of itself is no recommendation to the pastoral work), I am personally a stranger to almost everybody. Without aid in securing a location it is possible that I should be compelled after all to turn aside to some worldly employment for bread. ¹²⁷

126 Bowen to Taylor, May 29, 1861. (Bowen papers, section five, nr. 572). The precise identity of "President Davis" could not be established.

127 Bowen's letter to Taylor, June 10, 1861 (Bowen papers, section five, nr. 573).

Bowen had difficulties in finding a job as a pastor in any Church mainly because of the things which people were saying about him. It is not so clear why people started or who started to spread bad things about him. He was accused of acting strangely and of doing things which were not allowed for a minister of the Gospel. In at least two letters Bowen mentions these facts. One of them he wrote from Brazil to Rev. Taylor:

I thank both you and Bro Crawford for your kindness. I am not in the least angry with Dr. O'Keefe, not doubting the goodness of his intention but I can scarcely thank him for his scientific conclusion that my disease was the result of opium. I must respect some facts in reference to my sickness which are very painful to remember. Dr. O'Keefe saw me in one of those paroxysms of pain, or rather of agony, which no one else has witnessed excepted my own family.¹²⁸

Bowen admitted in this letter that he actually did take opium when he was in Africa to relieve his terrible pains, but he said that after a talk with a doctor he had not taken it any more. He was upset about the fact that the doctor, who could not say what his problem was, started to spread the story that Bowen was addicted to drugs and that this was the reason for his sickness. In another letter, now already in the United States, he wrote about other things that some people had started to say about him:

I was shocked beyond expression some days ago by a letter from Bro Holman to Bro Stocks stating that a man from Pensacola had passed through Ala & Mississippi to Louisiana relating a report that I had been dead drunk at Pensacola and left by the next train without explanation. We consulted Bro Crawford, and Bro Stocks wrote to Pensacola. The reply was an indignant denial & reputation of the charges by three of the principal brethren, a minister and two others, I believe deacons. (...) But no man could testify that I had drunk a drop then, or that the odour of liquor was upon me. Those

128 Bowen's letter to Taylor, December 11, 1860 (Bowen Papers, section five, nr. 533).

who desired to injure me went to the liquor saloons for testimony that I had drunk or purchased spirits, but they found not a syllable. I had preached there repeatedly to large congregations, and had attracted so much attention as an independent volunteer, come so far to the fight that almost everybody knew me. And yet the slander is more than I can bear. My entire vindication, and the indignant defence of the brethren at Pensacola can not save me either from reproach or a broken heart. How can I ever stand in the pulpit again? Were it not for one thing I could wish that I had died four years ago, and that one thing is, had it been God's will, I should not be here now to suffer shame & wretchedness. But the truth is I can hardly believe after all that things are so bad. I would not be surprised to wake up and find it all a dream. But that can not be.¹²⁹

We cannot say here exactly who had so much interest in injuring Bowen. The person with whom he was constantly talking about his problems was Mr Stocks, that is Judge Thomas Stocks, who was very involved with the Southern Baptist Convention and was even one of its vice-presidents when the Convention was organized in 1845. Stocks was also Bowen's brother-in-law. He had married the sister of Lurena Bowen. The important thing to point out in this context with Bowen is the fact that Stocks had been in strong opposition to Bowen's plans mainly when these plans came against the denomination's structure. Cecil Roberson points out that Stocks radically changed his relationship with Bowen from warm support to cool detachment and this change contributed to a great frustration and disintegration of Bowen's personality years later.¹³⁰ But one cannot deny that Bowen trusted and received support from Stocks. In another letter he stated:

129 Bowen to Taylor, June 26, 1861 (Bowen Papers, section five, nr. 547).

130 Roberson, p. 60.

I have spoke to no one about my troubles except Bro Stocks, yourself and two others. I shall say no more to any one, (...) I am greatly afraid that I shall be compelled to resort to some secular employment at last after having determined 20 years ago to live and die a preacher. It grieves me more than I could express but I submit without murmur. I can easily make money, but I would not do it if I could help it. I had far rather preach for food and raiment than to get rich. But I have said enough.¹³¹

Bowen was deeply disappointed with the whole situation around him. He could not understand what was going on. This situation and the facts involved in his life at that time made him think that he was really a mad man who did not know how to direct his own life any more, so he went, by his own choice, to the State Lunatic Asylum on November 11, 1871. He was convinced that he was a mad man with no responsibilities for his acts any more.¹³² He lived the last part of his life between the hospital and home. His attacks were always increasing. The author of the book *Centelha em Restolho Seco*, which is a history of the Baptists in Brazil, defends the idea that Bowen did not suffer from "maniacal exhaustion". Betty Antunes de Oliveira believes that Bowen suffered from malaria which was not well understood at that time. She also suffered from malaria and can identify this symptoms because of her own case and her own sufferings with the sickness. She said that he was a victim of an incorrect and unjust judgement about him because of his sickness.¹³³

131 Bowen to Taylor, July 26, 1861 (Bowen Papers, section five, nr. 546).

132 Roberson, 73.

133 Oliveira, p. 83.

Nevertheless, Bowen despite his sickness and condition continued to show great interest in Africa and the desire was still there to go back to Africa and work among the Yorubas. In a letter he shows his desire for this: "The expected return of Bro Reid to Africa fills my heart with acute feelings of mingled joy and pain. If the ability and the privilege of going with him could be purchased with money, I do not know what sum I would grudge to give for the happiness of standing once more among the people of Yoruba".¹³⁴ In this same letter he says that he is now teaching in a school and is very happy because he can now have some influence in the life of his pupils.

We can see that Bowen was not in such a situation as the medical records say. He was affected by the feelings of abandonment and disillusion because of the reaction of his friends and what had happened in his life. These things all together affected his mind and his hope. He was a man who needed to be deeply involved with some activity where he could find that he was useful. For a long time he tried to buy a farm to work on something practical but many difficulties did not permit this to happen. He tried to work as a pastor in a congregation, but things that people were saying about him prevented him from getting access to a congregation. He even tried to continue his missionary work but he believed that his health would not permit him to do so and nor would the Mission Board. He was completely out of consideration by the Board and by the Southern Baptists, but he still kept preaching when asked to do so. Despite these problems the Bowen family had a happy surprise at the birth of a daughter in 1866.¹³⁵

134 Bowen to Taylor, May 12, 1867 (Bowen Papers, section five, no. 551).

135 Roberson, p. 81.

On November 1, 1873 Bowen wrote to his wife with the return address as "nowhere". Roberson thinks that he had probably stopped by the roadside to write his letter and believed that he really did not have a place to stay.

Bowen went voluntarily to the State Hospital at Eilledgeville where he wrote to his wife: "I shall remain until I get well or die, painful as it is, for I have tried hard and often to do something."¹³⁶ He died on November 24, 1875 at the Hospital, where he was also buried.

It was the end of the dream that had followed Bowen during his whole missionary life. It was an end of the dream to see Africa with a high degree of civilization. It was a dream that certainly continued in the life of others like Richard Ratcliff¹³⁷ who had his conversion experience through Bowen's preaching. Raticliff's desire was to follow in the same steps as Bowen. He wanted to go to Africa to work among the Yorubas as a missionary and he was even appointed by the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, but the problems with the Civil War started at that time. It is interesting to see that when Bowen was in Brazil Ratcliff was ready to go to Africa. In 1867, Ratcliff and his wife sailed to Brazil and there they organized the First Baptist Church in Brazil in Santa Barbara, Sao Paulo, on September 10, 1871. It is a fact that the First Baptist Church in Brazil was organized when Bowen was still alive, and Ratcliff

¹³⁶ Bowen's letter to Lurena, January 27, 1875 (Bowen Papers, section three, nr. 206).

¹³⁷ Betty de Oliveira presents a chapter with the biography of Richard Ratcliff.

was an independent missionary to Brazil.¹³⁸

Bowen was dead but his influence continued for a long time. Ratcliff was appointed for Africa but he was never able to go there. In our minds comes the thought: why did the Mission Board not show an interest in Ratcliff later when the war was finished? Why did the Board not appoint him to be their missionary in Brazil? Did the Board have any problems because Ratcliff had been influenced by Bowen? These issues could be a topic for future research.

6.2 The Forgotten Bowen

What we particularly want here is to see the process whereby Bowen became a forgotten missionary in many ways. Basically we have an interest in rescuing him as regards his importance and place in Baptist history, mainly in Brazil and also in Africa. We can conclude that he was forgotten because he was not in the shape of the established system. He had to be forgotten because he could bring too much trouble to the kind of leadership and attitude upon which the denominational structure was built. The same thing happened with Richard Ratcliff in relation to Brazil. We can say with no fear that very few Baptists in Brazil have any knowledge about Ratcliff and the First Baptist Church in Brazil. The minds of the people are full of other names that seem to be less human and more divine according to the official story teller of our Baptist history in Brazil.

138 Oliveira, p. 100.

Thomas Jefferson Bowen stayed in Brazil for a very short time. There is no record available that shows that he had influenced anybody to conversion. His time there was not easy. The failure of the mission in Brazil was not his fault but much more the fault of the Foreign Mission Board, as we have seen in the last chapter. Bowen himself made missionary plans for Brazil, and beside the fact that he became deeply convinced that Brazil was a difficult field mainly because of the establishment of Catholic intolerance and the non-interest of its people towards religious matters, he believed that Brazil could be an important and wealthy country for missionary work. He followed his particular method of writing bad things and good things in his writings. That is what happened when he wrote to the Board about Brazil. He wrote first the bad things that he had noticed and then he started to write of his hopes and feelings about the field:

Nevertheless, I would not by any means leave Brazil without fully testing the question whether we shall be permitted to preach to the people. When we look at the law and public opinion the prospect seems to be gloomy, but I am not convinced that I have come here in vain. Many a time has the Gospel encountered and conquered greater difficulties than these. Christ is with us. When the hearts of men are touched by the power of the Holy Spirit they will follow the Saviour even amid the flames. The bigotry of public opinion and the penalties of law only increase their firmness and zeal. If the earth frowns, heaven smiles.¹³⁹

It is clear that Bowen was the first Baptist missionary to Brazil and he went there with the proposal to work with black people, to work with slaves. This is a fact about which the records leave no doubt, but why, then, did Bowen become a forgotten missionary?

139 Bowen's letter to A. M. Poindexter, October 10, 1860 (Bowen papers, section five, nr. 527).

We can understand this only through the fact that the Baptist historians in Brazil had no interests in connecting the beginning of the denomination with Bowen and his project among slaves. It is interesting to see how the Baptist history in Brazil is connected somehow with the topic of the slavery issue. First, there is Bowen and his plan to work in Brazil among slaves; second, the First Baptist Church was organized among the immigrants from the South of the United States who went to Brazil after the American Civil War; these immigrants went to Brazil where they still could hold slaves.

It is not clear the why Baptist historians decided to ignore these facts and claimed a beginning for the Baptists in Brazil in the year of 1882 when William Buck Bagby was sent as a missionary of the Foreign Mission Board.

Bagby is seen as a hero by the Baptists in Brazil. The words of James Loewen about heroification are perfectly suitable to Bagby. He says that heroification is "a degenerative process (much like calcification) that makes people over into heroes. Through this process, our educational media turn flesh-and-blood individuals into pious, perfect creatures without conflicts, pain, credibility, or human interest."¹⁴⁰ Despite the facts that Bagby was human like anybody else, his image is strongly connected with the idea of pious, perfect, without conflicts or human interest. It is not our intent here to deny the figure and the work of Bagby which was of great value. What we question here is the process of how the "official" Baptist historian in Brazil was telling only half of the history, virtually denying the figure and work of Bowen and others. There is a need to rescue

140 Loewen, p. 9.

the true facts about our history as a whole and not a history that only shows one side and only the side with denominational interest.

The Brazilian Baptist Convention accepted the history from Jose dos Reis Pereira. Pereira was deeply involved with the life and structure of the denomination. He was Director of the national Baptist newspaper *O Jornal Batista* and pastor of one local congregation. Reis Pereira published in 1982 his *Historia dos Batistas no Brasil, 1882-1982* (The History of Baptists in Brazil, 1882-1982).¹⁴¹ In this book he presents Bowen in a definitely negative light. He says that Bowen was the first missionary sent to Brazil by the Foreign Mission Board, and then merely repeats the very well-known and weak argument that Bowen had too many health problems to stay there. He says that Bowen had no idea about what he was supposed to do in Brazil, then finally he blames Bowen for giving a bad report to the Board about Brazil which influenced the Foreign Mission Board not to express interest in that country until 1881.¹⁴²

Pereira gives a completely superficial idea about Bowen's time in Brazil. It is clear that Pereira did not want to show Bowen exactly as he was. His intent was to show only negative facts about Bowen, he even said that the Board had not thought about Bowen's health and had made a big mistake in sending him. He tries to emphasize the idea that the whole problem for Bowen in Brazil was only his health. It is clear that Pereira either was hiding information or he really did not want to clarify important facts about the

¹⁴¹ Jose dos Reis Pereira, *Historia dos Batistas no Brasil*, (Rio de Janeiro: Junta de Educacao Religiosa e Publicacoes da Convencao Batista Brasileira, 1982).

¹⁴² Pereira, p. 10.

history. Bowen was the first missionary to Brazil but Pereira did not find any more information about him to publish in his book. He wrote exactly twenty-nine lines about Bowen, full of negative facts without any contextual interpretation. In the mind of Reis Pereira, Brazil took a long time to become a missionary field for the Southern Baptist Convention because Bowen failed in his mission. Pereira also denies the fact that the first Baptist Church was organized in Santa Barbara. He says that the first Baptist Church was organized only in 1882 in Salvador, Bahia.

Pereira clearly tries to manipulate history and facts. It seems that in his mind the Baptist history in Brazil could not be related with failure because of an irresponsible and sick missionary. Pereira certainly had all the documentation in his hands to write the truth and to make a clear interpretation of the historical facts and he could have written much more than twenty-nine lines about Bowen.

Betty Antunes de Oliveira, who published her book in 1985, shows a different side of the history and is careful to show the history from the beginning. She did research about Bowen and, without doubt, she is responsible for rescuing him and giving him his proper place in the Baptist history in Brazil. Betty Oliveira did not write only twenty-nine lines about Bowen but twenty-two pages and the context of his time in Brazil.¹⁴³

¹⁴³ Many of the things that we are writing here come from Carlos Cesar Peff Novaes. Novaes is a young theologian and pastor in Brazil. We are here using his work: *A Origem dos Batistas no Brasil - Uma Questao Historiografica* - This is an unpublished paper presented in 1995 to the master course seminar of the *Seminario Teologico Batista do Sul do Brasil*. This paper has the intention of presenting the historiographical problems of Baptist history in Brazil.

But Reis Pereira says in his book that he did not have enough time to write it fully as it was supposed to be ready for the "centenary" of the Baptists in Brazil in 1982. He says that he did not have enough documents and was unsure about the information.¹⁴⁴ It could be that Pereira did not have access to the primary sources from Bowen and wrote his book taking information from other historians who also had problems with Bowen. It is clear that Pereira used the book from Asa Routh Crabtree¹⁴⁵ much more than the original letters and documents from Bowen. But, why did Pereira decide to write a Baptist history of Brazil if he was not sure about the facts? He told half the history and made errors which seem to support an intention to manipulate the historical facts. But Loewen quotes some short and interesting words from Holt: "When you're publishing a book, if there's something that is controversial, it's better to take it out."¹⁴⁶

144 Pereira, 5.

145 Asa Routh Crabtree, *Historia dos Batistas no Brasil até o ano de 1906*, (Rio de Janeiro: Casa Publicadora Batista, Vol. 1, 1937).

146 Loewen, p. 264.

**"The test has come in the greatest crisis of my life.
25 years ago I devoted my time and effort to the Gospel.
I had labored long and hard. I have suffered incredibly.
Of course I am poor."**

(T J Bowen, *Private Diary* - Friday, June 5th, 1858)

7. CONCLUSION

We have tried to trace the history of Thomas Jefferson Bowen and his revolutionary project to Africa. It is Cal Guy who wrote: "Now turn to Bowen in his own right. How do you like your history? Factual or skeletal? Round and firm and fully packed? Sentimental? All of these are possibilities and it is probable that writing about missionaries has leaned toward the sweet and sticky."¹⁴⁷

One can easily think that Bowen's life was a kind of tragedy. Since the missionaries in the past were seen as heroes or people whose work had to involve a life of suffering, Bowen is a perfect example from that point of view. Personally I prefer to think that his life was not a tragedy but was a dedication. In a time when most of the white missionaries did not have an interest in Africa mainly because of the apparent difficulties conditions or health conditions. Bowen did not take these into account and decided to go despite the problems he might face. It was not a tragedy because he did stand until the last drop of strength in his body was gone. It was not a tragedy because he knew that his effort was being expended for a great cause. In truth, he had many problem with his health, but which missionary did not have health problems in Africa? How many missionaries died in their first year in Africa? The tragedy in Bowen's life was not his life itself but the treatment which he received from the mission board and some of his friends.

It is sad that the tragedy in Bowen's life comes from outside, comes from the structures

147 Guy, p. 68.

and from the way that his plan was seen.

Bowen went to Africa with the plan of conquering that land with the Gospel and the benefits of civilization. He was a different missionary because of his vision for Africa and his understanding of missionary work as a whole. He really came out of a missionary standard that took a superior view of his religion or a superior view of race. Bowen understood that the missionary had to be totally involved with the people and be, somehow, equal to the people. His ideas about the mission in Africa were radically different from the conventional idea of mission. For him the missionary had to learn and teach the people without being ignorant or forcing the people to change the values of their own culture. Bowen believed that the English language was not a "divine language" and the missionary had to learn and be able to speak the language of the people. His personal views on mission would not be a new approach for today, because these things are now present in the missionary work (at least we hope so), but his importance in this matter is the fact that he proclaimed these things when nobody was attaching any importance to them, at least among Baptist missionaries. We can say then that Bowen was a precursor of the correct missionary behaviour among Africans.

Africa was Bowen's great passion. He decided to give the rest of his life to the work among the Africans or to training others to work in Africa. Most importantly he believed that the best missionaries to Africa would be the Africans themselves.

Bowen's written work is full of appreciation for the Africans. However we can see some words that could show him as a supposed racist. But we can not deny the fact that he

was totally different in his view of Africa and Africans. His general idea about Africa was the idea of a people with potential to learn and the ability to accept and spread the Gospel. He was a missionary involved with the Gospel and its teaching.

We can also see the importance of Bowen's work in Brazil. He was a missionary in Brazil to the Africans there. His hope was that he could work with Africans and prepare them to go back to Africa as leaders of their people. We can say that Bowen was the only missionary to have a deep preoccupation with the evangelization of slaves in Brazil, but unfortunately his project failed. We can now only imagine what it would be like if Bowen had succeeded with his work among the slaves in Brazil; it is clear that the evangelical panorama in Brazil today would be very different. The first real thing that we could see if this had happened would be the fact that we would use much more of our culture in the Church and not an American culture like the other missionaries used after Bowen.

Thomas Jefferson Bowen left his mark on the places where he worked. It is very important to point out here that he was not a perfect man, he was full of mistakes but one of his great virtues was his ability to recognize that he was a man of mistakes.

The story of life and work of Thomas Bowen presented here is far from being completed. Much more could be said and researched about him. There are still many questions to be answered. The history of the Baptist Church in Brazil is still a great field for research. The question of racism in the Church is still a present and actual problem which has to be faced by the Church in Brazil or in Africa. The way some of the Baptist missionaries of today see Africa is still full of mistakes. Anyway, the task is not ended.

Bowen can still teach us much more than he already has.

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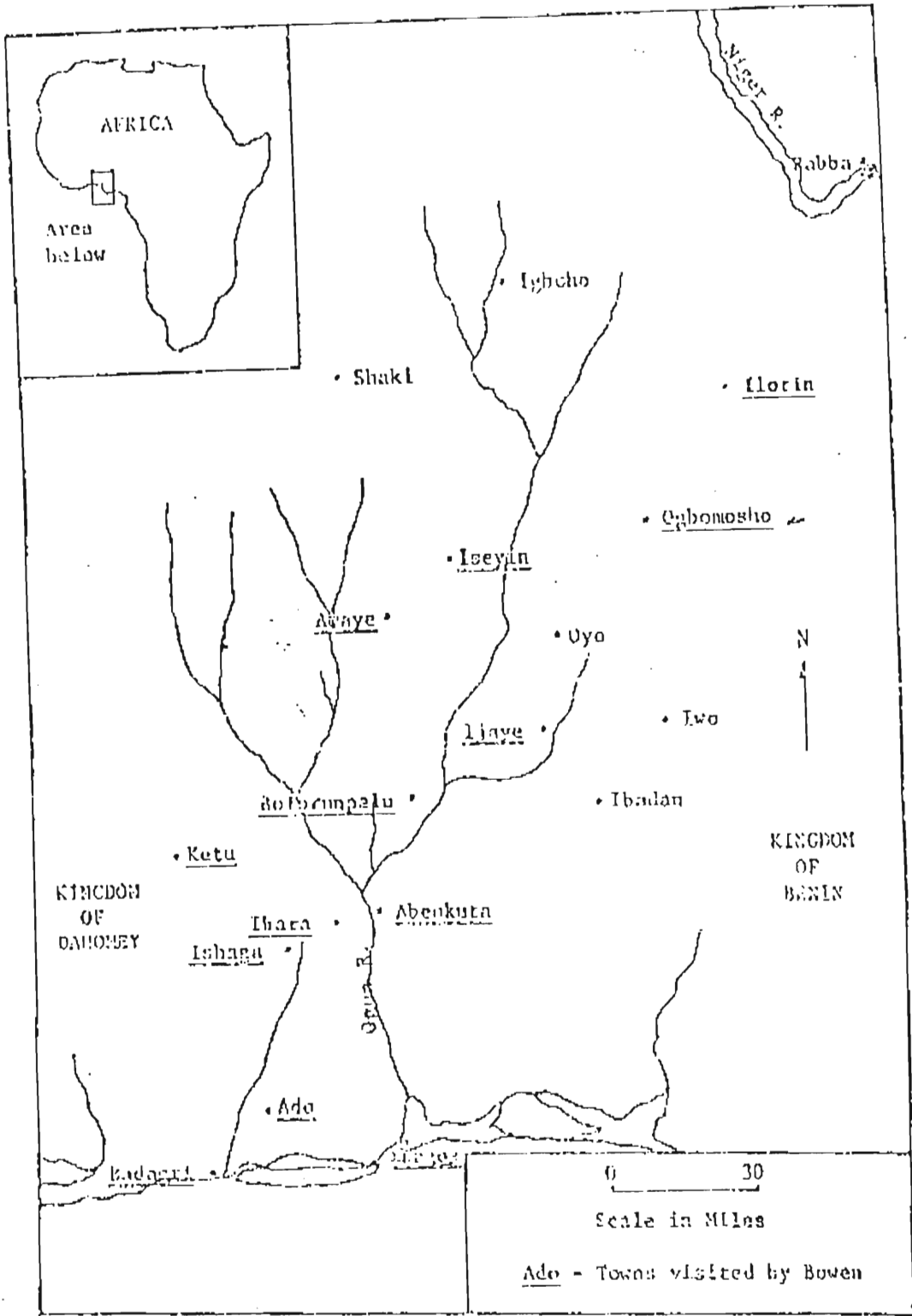
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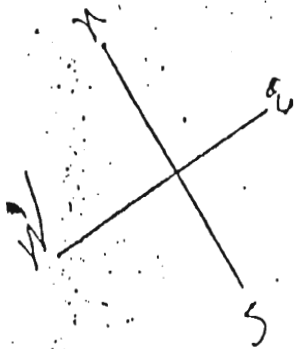
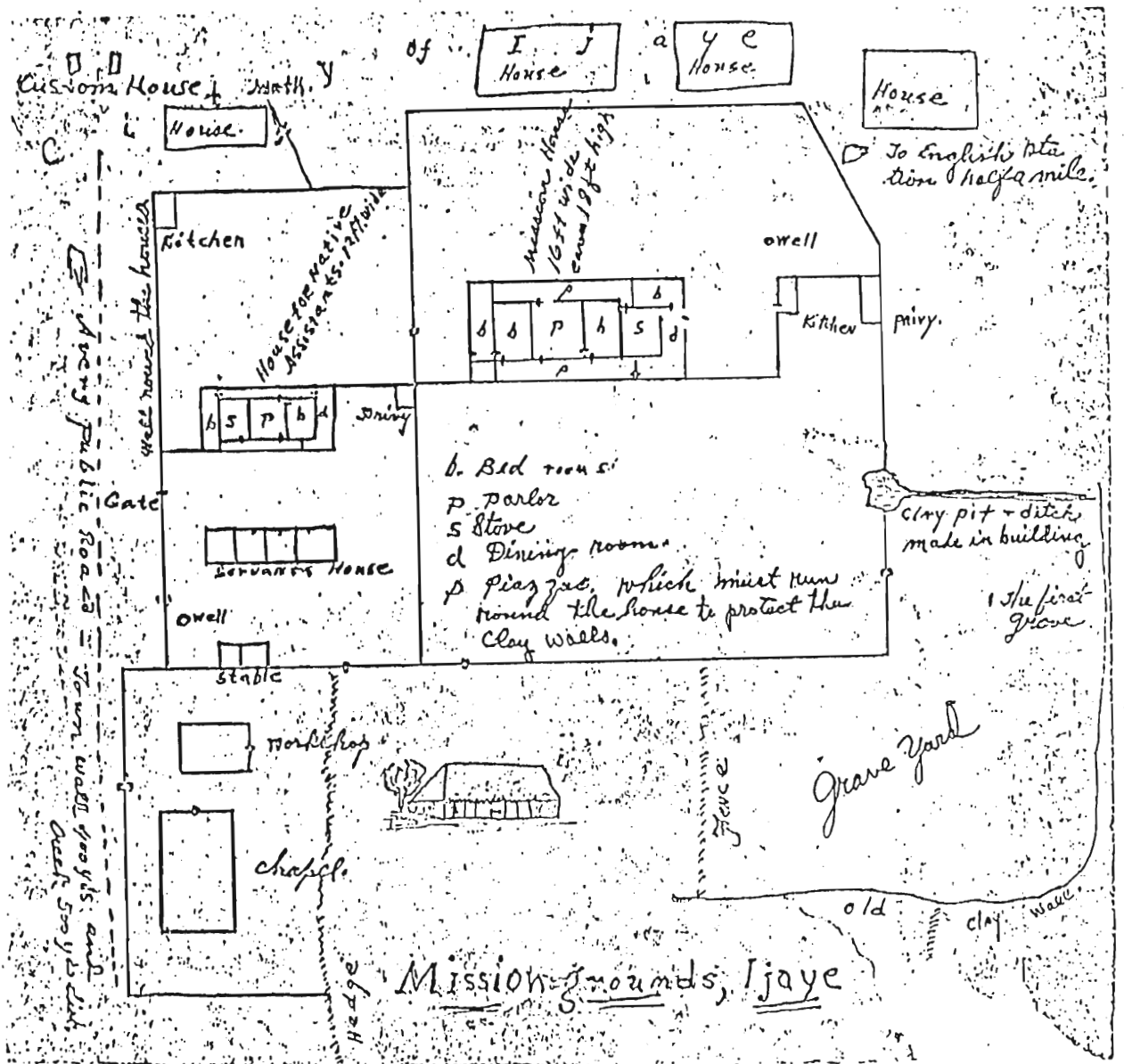
APPENDICES

1. Map of Yorubaland in the 1850s
2. Early map of Ijaiye Baptist Mission Station - Nigeria
3. Selection of Bowen's letters from Brazil ¹⁴⁸
4. Selection of letters from Bowen after his return from Brazil

¹⁴⁸ Since Bowen's time in Africa is well covered by his book these letters had the objective to show some of the documentation of his time in Brazil.



Map of Yorubaland in the 1850s



Early Map of Ijaye Baptist
 Mission Station - Nigeria -
 West Africa

Greensboro Ga, Oct 11, 1859 ¹⁴⁹

My Dear Brother

I desire to offer myself formally as a missionary to Brazil. Please inform me immediately because if I can not go to Brazil, or to some other country in the temperate zone, I wish to accept a very desirable offer to become the permanent pastor of a Church in this country. By delay I may miss this opportunity which might be to me a serious misfortune. You can ascertain by speaking to two or three brethren whether the Board will appoint me. Please write to me soon.

If the Board are willing to appoint me this may serve as my application, or I will write again. If they are unwilling, it is useless to make a formal application.

My health is better than it has been in nearly five years. I am able to do full service now, but if I should go to the tropics, I should soon fall back. Otherwise I would rejoice to resume my African labours.

Truly yrs in Christ

T.J. Bowen

To: Rev. Jas B. Taylor
Richmond

Greensboro Ga Oct 11, 1859¹⁵⁰

My Dear Brother

Although I have just written to Bro Taylor, I can not feel contented without saying a few additional words on a subject which has been much on my mind.

I have just received letters from Africa, which state that acclimation gives (goes?) particularly hard with sister Stone. I dread to hear the sequel. In fact I am very fearful that women can not live in that climate. I fear that our moral responsibilities forbid us to send them to a country where they are almost sure to die. Those lovely sister Dennard, Phillips, and Reid seem to call to us from their graves. Sisters Trimble, Cason, and Priest remain as warnings. My own wife would have been a corpse in three months if I had not left, as I did, six months before I had intended. She was already laboring under dropsy, that infallible precursor of death, and it did not give her full till 12 months after leaving Africa.

It seems to follow that the Yoruba Mission must be sustained -- for it must be sustained -- by a change of policy. Send us white men who are married. Let single men go and remain as long as they please, but if they marry, let them retire from the work.

On these terms but few will go. Hence the double necessity of educating black men for our Africa Missions. If we neglect to do this we cut off the right hand of our power. My strongest reasons for wishing to labor in Brazil is the hope of educating coloured preachers. I tried to find a location for this purpose in the Creek nation, but I have failed. The responsibility is not on me. God knows, and will always remember, that I have done all I could to promote African Missions. I have a standing offer to anybody who will employ me anywhere to educate black preachers. If my offer be rejected I am clear. But my being clear does not promote the work. May the Lord cause it to be done.

I have just received an offer to conduct a colony to the Banks of the Niger. Would that I could go! But I can - I dare not.

Truly Yours in Christ

T.J. Bowen

To: Rev. A.M. Poindexter
Richmond

150 Bowen Papers, section five, no. 493.

Rio de Janeiro May 25, 1860¹⁵¹

Dear Bro Taylor

Although I have been here three or four days I have been so very busy that I had no time to write.

The Yellow Fever is bad in the City, and there is no considerable cholera. It is the worst season for several years past.

Mr Wright has been exceedingly kind. He would not permit us to remain in the city but insisted on our going to his house. I succeeded thro his aid in getting [“] for a few days at Bennets in Tijuca. Expenses are enormous; abt double what I expected.

I am sorry I did not bring my \$300. Please remit it as soon as possible. [“] - This paragraph was deleted, supposedly by the Richmond Office, as many of the letters from missionaries on the fields were and are used in publications, necessitating the deletion of information of a personal nature.- Cecil Roberson).

I have been very much harassed & fatigued, and am so sore from head to foot that I almost fear an attack of sickness. I shall not come to the city any more for a week or so.

There are hundreds of Protestants (Germans) about Petropolis who are anxious to have a missionary. This I believe is my work at present. What a nucleus is here! But I shall make no permanent arrangements till I receive instructions, or a Carte Blanche.

There are thousands of Yoruba people here. They swarm around me like bees and seem delighted that I have come to teach them. I have forgotten little or none of their language.

Please excuse this apology for a letter.

Truly Yrs in hope of life

T.J. Bowen

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Rev. Jas B. Taylor

My Dear Brother

I am at last sufficiently rested and at leisure seems to me that the last six months have been the most strange and eventful of my strange eventful life. I have passed through a great and severe conflict of doubt and sorrow. Never before have I seem my inherent sinfulness so plainly; never before have I felt such self abhorrence, and such deep repentance both for actual and indwelling sin. At times I have been almost ready to pronounce myself not only unworthy, but utterly unfit to open my mouth as a preacher. But the in mercy has saved no righteousness of my own, but am altogether unclean, I cling to the Blessed Saviour who has graciously died and risen, and none lives to save wretched sinners who deserve condemnation . If I were called on to die I could do nothing but to cry "Lord Jesus receive my spirit"; "Lord save me or I perish"; and this is all that I can do now while alive and in health. I am like a man cut off from world. My remaining days are few at most, and I am standing on the very verge of boundless eternity. There is nothing here for me to do, nothing to hope for, except perform and to suffer the will of a God a little while longer. God's will be done. In humble reverence I bow to the decisions of my master, my king; and my Father. I feel myself to be in a new position, and in several respects I have entered on a new way of living. I do trust that I have gained much by or in my much suffering, and that I have passed through sorrows which will never assail me again. In some respects I have seen the last of this life.

I am now, I think, in my last scene of labour. I am impressed with the conviction that I shall finish my course among the Catholics, and heathen & Mohammedan Negroes of South America. If I live for twenty years, I expect to be laid to rest in Brazil or some adjoining country. I have never felt utterly helpless, and I now feel well as know that I shall do nothing good and useful unless through the direct work of God's Holy Spirit. And yet it seems as if shall not labor in vain, although I expect to labor in sorrow, and exposed to the hatred and contempt of many. I expected persecution, which is sure to come if I do any evil to Satan's kingdom. Perhaps I shall be compelled to flee from one city to another, and to labor in private, preaching by the light of midnight lamps, and baptizing by stealth in retired situations. And yet perhaps these forebodings may be idle fancies. The future is hidden. But I know that the power of Romish Hierarchy, established by law, is not small.

I have met with some pleasant little incidents during my five days residence in Brazil. Tuesday morning on board of our ship I presented a Portuguese Testament to a gentleman, with some apprehension that he might be insulted. He began to devour it like a hungry child. In two or three hours, before we reached the shore, in our boat, I

observed that he had read to the 12th Chapter of Matthew. On shore he showed his book to some others. A very respectable and intelligent gentleman sent a request that I would let him also have a testament, and soon after another made a like request.

A merchant took several tracts which I had left in a certain place for distribution, and enquired about others. All of these were evidently sincere. I fancied - & perhaps it was not fancy - that these gentlemen felt as if the moral & social atmosphere around them is dark and heavy.

I have experienced great courtesy from many both Foreigners and citizens. The exceeding kindness of Mr Wright I mentioned in my last. We find the company at Tijuca very pleasant. But we must remove just as soon as we possibly owing to the expensiveness of the place. I am afraid that I shall find it very difficult to find board at reasonable price, even in the city, or at Praia Grande. House rent is also said to be very high. I shall be content if I can live within my income and that I must do, if we live very poorly.

Today I have taken a ride among the mountains. There are many romantically and pleasantly situated cottages scattered about but I can hear of none to rent, and of no place to board except at the hotel.

We are all well, and are getting over the feeble state produced by our long voyage. Both adults and children, males and females in these mountains look extremely healthy.

Before long I wish to write something suitable for publication, but can not do it in time for the next ship.

Please send us papers every opportunity, in sealed bundles as they are apt to be mislaid and lost before they reach us.

With mingled emotions of sorrow & joy, hope and anxiety I am sincerely yours in hope of the better country.

T J Bowen

Rio de Janeiro June 10, 1860 ¹⁵³

My Dear Brother

I am more than ever convinced that so far as expenses and climate are concerned, Rio Grande, or some other place is preferable to Rio de Janeiro. Foreigners count it absurd, if not impossible, to open the sickly season in the city, except (& hardly except) a few favoured places, where expenses are high. To obtain private board is about an impossibility. Mr. Simonton tried a long time and advertised repeatedly, offering to teach in any family which would board him. At last he did obtain board at 100\$ (\$50) a month, he furnishing his own room. He and others think that I will find it still more difficult, because I have a family. At a hotel I can get board for us all (confining ourselves to our bed-room) at \$120 per month. But lights, washing, &c will be extra.

House rent in the city is high. A cottage of the cheapest kind which I can live in will cost \$500 a year at least. In the neighbouring villages, as Tijuca &c I can get rent perhaps 25 per cent cheaper but other expenses will be more.

If I remain here permanently we can save about half the annual expenses by purchasing a little farm which will cost from \$4000 to \$5000 according to the house on it. I think the brethren in S.W. Georgia & Fla. among whom I preached so long for nothing would give the Mission this amount to buy a house. I hope you will appeal to them; and the sooner it is done the better.

I am still at Tijuca, as foreigners and others are still dying of Yellow Fever in the City. But I am anxious - very anxious - to leave here owing to the expenses. I have done all I could to find a cheaper place, even in the healthier parts of the city. Within 20 days I can get a house on good terms provided the owner succeeds in selling his servants to leave for Europe in the next steamer.

There are some thousands of Germans, English & Americans (a few) in Rio, but they are irreligious and scarcely 100 of whole number attend the German & English chapels. I have met with no Christians here.

I believe that much good can be done here, but the work will be slow. As yet no attempt has been made by any one among the Brazilians. Missionaries are afraid to try it, lest they cause premature disturbance. If we can't preach here we had better leave; if we can, better begin, privately of course, that is without any unnecessary display. I would rent a preaching room & invite my friends, Catholics & Protestants to Church. But people say, "No"; let the Catholics alone."

These facts should not be published. Anything which would give offence here (it is sure to be read) should be omitted. Only too many of our own people are ready to report all they know to bigoted Brazilians. Let us work quietly & publish nothing which will give

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offence when read here.

I might do good here; 1. By preaching to the seamen; & 2. By selling Bibles tracts &c. No one as yet is doing these things. Can't you have me appointed to these works by seamen' Friend Society, the Bible ["]

Other missionaries may be right, but for me, to remain here in statu quo is intolerable. I hope they will never know that I say this. I tell them in a proper manner what I think. Some people already doubt my prudence. I have talked (not preached) once or twice, for 5 minutes to the Yoruba Negroes about the Gospel. For this one of the dailies, "The Diario do Rio de Janeiro" has attacked me vigorously. We have reason to be prudent, but not to be idle. I see signs of good on every hand. Shall I preach to the sailors & sell Bibles?

Personally I am happier than I have been for a long time. My darkness has passed away, & I am willing to do and to suffer all of the will of God. I hope, and intend, if possible, to finish my days in this work.

Please send the money I left, as I shall need it very soon.

At present I can not venture to order any papers, as I expected to need every cent I have to live on. You may send me some papers when you can. I will be thankful.

We are all well. My own health is improved, and I think I would be wholly restored if I could live at Tijuca. The climate suits me exactly.

Truly yrs in Xt

T.J. Bowen

In due time I hope to send you a long and detailed acct of matter here for private use of the Board, I have heard much of the good country further on - Monte Video, & some have urged me to see it, as every way preferable to this section.

(Some marginal notes)

1. I will send two or three communications a year to any editor who will send me his paper.
2. Since my arrival I have preached two Sundays at the Hotel. The landlord dislikes it & on the next Sunday I went to the city but could not get up a congregation.

Rio de Janeiro June 23, 1860 ¹⁵⁴

Rev. Jas B. Taylor

My Dear Brother

At least - and the time seems very long - I sit down to make my first monthly report. Many of the facts which I feel constrained to communicate are wholly unfit for publication, as it would do no good, and might to much harm to let the English speaking people of Rio know that I have told the truth. Even facts in reference to the Brazilians would be made known to them by evil disposed people who ought to be the friends of Protestant Missions. In a word a mission to civilized Catholics is a different affair in all respects from a mission to barbarians heathens.

We found Rio suffering under that truly terrible scourge the Yellow Fever. Mr. Wright insisted that we must not stop in the city, and since the places of refuge were all full he proposed to take us home with him to his cottage in Tijuca. I am now aware that this would have been very inconvenient to him, and I am glad that we succeeded in getting board in Tijuca at "Bennetts". I was much in hopes that our sojourn at a hotel where our expenses are six dollars a day for the two simple items of board and lodging; but so it is, I am still at Bennetts and there I must remain till I get into my own house. The fever is not yet extinct, but when it was so much mitigated as to be no longer "epidemic", I came down to the city in the vain hope of saving some expenses. But the hope that allured me proved to be a snare. There are so many "extras" at the city hotels that I returned to Bennetts., as the cheapest place I can find. I have made many inquiries and several visits to different places in and around Rio, but I have heard of no place where decent board and lodging can be obtained even as cheap as enormous rates I am now paying. To obtain board in private family or private boarding house is absolutely out of the question. There are only two classes of boarding places here; one extravagant (and not first rate at that) for merchants &c and one, poor and mean for sailors. Mr Simonton, the Presbyteriam Missionary, after months of inquiry and several times advertising, obtained board at \$50 a month, he furnishing his own room. Having a family, my case is still more difficult. It is needless to say that I have been perplexed. Indeed I have been exceedingly annoyed and grieved that the beginning of my mission should be so expensive.

Mr. Wright has treated us with great kindness, far more than we had any right to expect. And now he has rented me a house at the rate of \$200 a year, which would have cost me at usual rates \$500 if not \$600. The house is in Tijuca ten miles from the city and will be vacated about the first of July. For other houses not so good as this people demanded from \$50 to \$60 a month, but they are two miles nearer the city. In the city rent is still higher it is in Tijuca.

After I get my house living will still be expensive - \$15 to \$20 a month for house servants; flour and everything except sugar and coffee much dearer than at home, and

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then the expense of taking things up the mountains to my home is considerable. Clothing as I am told is from 20 to 40 per cent dearer than at home. I have found it still more on the few articles (I) have bought; for instance \$1.75 for a pair of overshoes worth \$1.00.

As for climate, Tijuca can hardly be surpassed. I feel better than I have for a long time, notwithstanding the trouble and loss of sleep consequent on my unpleasant situation.

I pass on now to my impressions in regard to the Mission; although of course my experience is too short to be worth much. Among the foreigners there might be, or should be, two species of work:

1. Among the permanent residents, chiefly engaged in mercantile pursuits. There can be no less than 3000 of this class who speaks English, including some Germans and half a dozen Americans. But they are thoroughly irreligious, retaining nothing English except their hatred of dissenters and puritanism or cant, as they call the true Gospel. Mr Graham the English chaplain has only a congregation of about 50. The German chaplain has about the same number out of 3 or 4 thousand Germans.

Is there any hope of my doing any good among these people? Still I have made several efforts to find some foot hold. At Tijuca I have preached twice, but the owner of the house dislike it. I was sorry to desist especially as two or three persons appeared to take interest in the services. If I had a preaching place there the congregation would scarcely average six persons.

2. The Sailors. If I were appointed Chaplain by Seamen's Friend Society, N.Y. and could find a preaching place I might have a congregation every Sunday, besides work on week days.

The Catholic population are inaccessible except by daily conversation, tracts and books. No missionary as yet has even attempted to preach to them. I am surprised to find that they even oppose preaching at present (a most indefinite term) because it might create disturbance. My own opinion is that we ought to preach, in a quite way; just as soon as we can get a congregation. But the Brazilians who have little or no respect for any Church or religion will not readily come to hear us preach. Public opinion is decidedly against hearing Protestants, and I doubt if any Brazilian has entered English or German chapel within ten years. Personal influence, gained by daily intercourse is the only way humanly speaking of collecting a congregation of Brazilians.

There will soon another Presbyterian Missionary here. They think that these two will be enough for Rio at present, that too many in a place would excite opposition, and that I and others would do better a retire to some large town where there is no missionary. On the subject of my location I have nothing to say having stated several months ago that I preferred the South, and that missionaries would be apt to accumulate at Rio. I leave my location wholly to the Board, and I am willing to remain here if they prefer. I might do much good here, especially if I had a stock of Bibles &c and were also appointed to labor among the sailors. But in either of these cases the Board should not

assume the extra expenses. To visit the shipping in the bay and to keep up a Bethel either ashore or afloat will cost something. For two or three years I could find work enough among the R.R. hands in the interior. (40 to 100 miles).

Possibly also I might do good among the Germans Protestants at Petropolis or some other colony where they have no pastor.

I am now in the city as I was Saturday and Sunday looking round for something to do - utterly fishing for men in turbid and troubled waters. There is many a crabe (sic) and lobster and electric eel in these waters, with now and then a serpent, but good fish are scarce.

Please send me paper by every ship. The last one brought nothing. And be sure to tie up and seal the bundle with wax, or three to one they will be destroyed. I have ordered no paper & can not while my expenses continue as they now are.

We are all very well.

Truly yours in Christ

TJ Bowen

(A marginal note)

I mean such office paper as you do not want. Even if an article has been clipped out no matter. I see no paper here. I will write for any Editor you will send me his paper thro you.

Rio de Janeiro, Aug. 30, 1860 ¹⁵⁵

My Dear Brother

We were in hopes of hearing from home at least once a month, but up to this date we have not received a single letter or paper from any one whatever. I presume that my letters to you have been received, but I will repeat their principal comments, and this long communication will probably suffice for preliminaries and my own affairs.

I have had another of those terrible attacks of excruciating pain in the limbs joints and head, which reduce me for the time to a state little short of insanity. For three days and two nights in succession I was scarcely able to fall into a doze for a few minutes, and the misery was so great that my pulse was from 15 to 20 beats lower than it usually is in health. Happily, however, these dreadful attacks, of which I have had three this year, are quite different from my former sickness; and although they appear to be almost intolerable, they have so little effect on my general system that when they subside, soon regain my accustomed strength. On this occasion the pain left me quite lame in the right foot and ankle, but this wore off in a few days, and ever since, I have felt remarkably well and cheerful. If I am not mistaken my health is now better than it had been since 1854 with the exception of a month or two in 1857. I believed that could easily walk to the city a distance of ten or eleven miles, but I am careful not to overtax my strength, although I make it a rule to take a good deal of exercise. I am now entertaining the truly delightful hope that my health is going to be better than it has been for a long time - that hence forth in general the only mention of myself in my letter may be the brief statement, I am well.

But as heaven is higher than the earth, the health of soul is superior to the body. It is not often that I speak or write of my own secret conflicts and experiences, but the events of this year have been so unusual, so exceedingly painful and so pleasant, that I must depart from my usual practice. I have never felt the loss of Christian society more than I do now and my desire to talk is one of the reasons. I have been almost half crazy at times ever since my severe sickness in 1854; and when the paroxysm of pain would pass away, it would some times leave my mind in a most wretched state of irritability and gloom. I think that I should never have lived through those awful years of wretchedness, had it not been for the restraints and support of religion. But through the mercy of God I was preserved from falling and often comforted by faith and hope. Last Fall I thought I was nearly well and was greatly encouraged, but still I could not regain the happiness of heart which I had enjoyed in former years. When I was taken sick again in the winter I was greatly dejected. I can not enter into details now as I would if we could be together, but the final result was that I awoke as it were from a dream and found myself throughly wretched. I felt utterly unworthy to live, and much

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more so to preach. No words can describe what I suffered for two or three weeks. It was then that I wrote to you wishing to delay my departure to Brazil. To have gone in that state of mind would have been morally impossible. In that dark hour it seems to me nothing sustained me but the love of Christ. I could see him, as it were, looking down upon me with pitying eyes, and yet grieved on account of my sins. Sometimes whenever I would think of him I would begin to weep with an indescribable feeling of love and self-
abhorrence. Then I saw that the worst of hell is to be banished from him who is lovely beyond the conception of men or of angels. If the Lord had then deprived me of hope I am not sure that I could have lived. Toward the end of my troubles departed and it seems to me that I have gradually grown stronger ever since. But I still feel, and hope ever to feel, exceedingly ignorant and ----(?). I believe that I may say that I have no hopes and no desire left, except those which centre in the Saviour. My last spell of sickness has only deepened and confirmed these feelings. In myself I know that I am less than nothing, unworthy of the air which I breathe, and I have no business on earth except to do, and to suffer the righteous will of God. I feel now after what I have experienced this year, that I can trust the Saviour in any future sorrow. I feel that I am not my own, that I have no property in my person or time, no right to exercise my own will or to seek my own pleasure. I will not say what I will do, for I am wholly dependent on the grace which God will give in such measure as he pleases; but I hope and believe that he will enable me to serve him with my body and my spirit more fully and devoted than I could have done, if I had not passed through the deep waters and the devouring flames. But I have written perhaps already too much. It will not be necessary to read any of this sheet to the Board, and I am sorry to consume so much of your time. But my heart is full of these matters, and I have no good and true brother here to sympathize with me in my sorrow & joys. Never have the brethren seemed so precious as now. My feelings toward them are fresh and strong as in the first part of my Christian experience.

Truly yours in Xt

T J Bowen

To: Rev Jas B. Taylor, Richmond

Rio de Janeiro Aug 31, 1860 ¹⁵⁶

My Dear Brother

I resume my letter of last night and will give you as full information as I can in regard to the expenses and proper location of our Mission.

I have informed you in previous letters that owing to the Yellow Fever I went to "Bennets" at Tijuca. There my expenses, including washing and horse hire, when I visited the city, amounted to about \$7.00 a day. I intended to remain there but a short time, but although I made many inquiries about a place to board at, and went repeatedly to the city, to Praia Grande, Botafogo &c, I could find no place where I could get private board at any price. After remaining at Bennets a month I removed to city, still at the risk of fever, charged less than Bennets. I found however that my actual expenses in the city were greater than at Bennets, because the city hotels charge twice as much for a parlour, and because every little service, as water to bathe the baby in, lights &c were "extra". As for the parlour I desired to dispense with it, but they said that it must needs go with the bed room, and I was obliged to pay for one every where I went. Finding the city more expensive than Tijuca I went back to Bennets and remained two weeks more.

When convinced that I could not board at any thing like a reasonable price I began to look out for a house to rent. For a one story cottage of five or six rooms they demanded from \$500 to \$600 a year, both in the city and at Tijuca. I went to see a number of houses, but refused to take them. In the meantime my bill at Bennets was going on, and every time I went anywhere it cost me from \$1.00 to \$1.50 for horse hire. If I went to the city my horse cost \$1.75. The R.R. fare was 90 cts (the road is 6 miles long), and my dinner, if I took it, was \$1.25. For trimming my hair I paid 75 cts. I soon found that if I should rent a house I would not be able to furnish it; and I was still more confirmed in this after happening to see a Brazilian purchase price some furniture. The price of a plain Mahogany bureau worth \$25.00 was \$70.00.

Finally I began to be uneasy. It was impossible to remain at the hotel, and so far as I could see impossible to leave it. I had written to Richmond, however, for \$300 which I had left there, and I was in hopes it might arrive early in August, and this hope gave me some consolation. But I escaped a continuance of such heavy expenses better than I had feared. A family in the valley of Tijuca were to leave a furnished cottage early in July. As the location is very remote and the house not very comfortable, I got it for six months at the very low price (for this country) of one hundred dollars. I moved into it on the 2nd of July. Although my house was finished I was obliged to purchase table and kitchen furniture &c. This bill amounted to \$102 and you would be astonished to see how little could be bought for this sum. At the same time I had to pay the duty on my books which were still in the custom house, and to employ two carts at high price, to

156 Bowen Papers, section five, no. 522.

bring my things and some provisions from more than four fifths of my money, and I had to pay cash for provisions. But I was still hoping to receive my \$300. from Richmond

That it requires a good deal of money to purchase provisions in this country will be seen from the following list of prices: Corn \$2.50 per sack, and 25 cts for the bag; coffee and sugar each 12 cts a lb; tea \$1.25; butter and cheese each 60 cts; chickens \$1.00; good laying hens \$1.50; and so on. For a quarter of lamb I had to pay \$2.60. A man who came to the door with fish to sell demanded 50 cts for a mullet about a foot long, and took it away with him. Servants' hire very high for a cook \$20 to \$30 a month; for a house girl \$12 to \$18. We have but one, an old woman of little value, and my wife is compelled to do many things which I feel is not fair.

Both you and I were deceived by our information in regard to the cost of living at Rio. But my disappointment in regard to the climate is still greater. Tijuca and Boa Vista (on the Tijuca road and adjoining the city) are both decidedly healthy, but the city itself has been very sickly every summer since 1850. All the foreigners who can, and many of native citizens, leave it in the sickly season, and it would be something worse than folly for me to attempt to remain there all the year round. At the same time it would be entirely too expensive for me to live in the city during the 7 healthy months and somewhere else in the summer. Wherever I settle, there I must remain winter and summer. And now the question is, where shall I go? - a very important question to me. I will endeavour now again, as heretofore, to give you the best information I can.

If the Board have made any arrangement for me to labor in part for the Bible Society or the Seamen' Friends Society, I ought to remain at Rio. It is also desirable to remain there on other accounts, viz. because of trade influence &c. Besides it would be troublesome and expensive to remove.

If I should remain at Rio, I think it would be very proper to live at Boa Vista, because I would there be healthy all the year round, and could still visit the city daily if I choose. The very plan of all however would be to purchase 5 to 10 acres of land two or three miles back of Praia Grande and build a cottage there. In that location I could be healthy all the year and would be near enough to walk to town, where I could take the ferry boat & go into the city. While building the cottage I could live in Praia Grande, where I can rent a house a third cheaper than in Rio, or at Boa Vista. It would cost more to build a house than at home.

Petropolis is healthy but expensive. Very possibly however a missionary might eventually be useful among the German Protestants there.

By going South we can find a very good climate, and I suppose provisions are cheaper. But everything must come down even at Rio.

There is a serious loss on American funds either coin or drafts. Mr Wright assures me that the very best remittance is California gold in bars, shipped as merchandise. It pays no duty. Consign to Maxwell & Wright. Please send my \$300 now in bank, soon.

I have spent the last cent of my money. At the end of the year I shall need to pay my

rent \$100; for servants \$50; to pay for provisions &c from now till then \$ [""] - to purchase clothing \$ [""] - and my outfit money to buy furniture.

Truly yours in Christ

T J Bowen

To: Rev Jas B. Taylor, Richmond

Tijuca Oct 10, 1860 ¹⁵⁷

Rev A M Poindexter

My Dear Brother

Your very welcome favour of July 17th, with a parcel of papers [""] came in unexpectedly a few days ago. I am also looking daily for the arrival of some vessel bringing definite instructions in regard to my location and plan of labor.

In August I had a severe attack of something rheumatism, but since that time I have been so remarkably free from pain that I am hoping for complete restoration to health. I have not been so comfortable in body and mind for seven years except for a few weeks in the summer of 1857. My wife is not sick, but appears to feel the effects of the climate, having return of soreness in the spleen and of agueish symptoms.

I would gladly respond to your request by writing frequently for publication, if I knew what to say. But where shall I find a pleasant standing place in this universal morass, or a bright spot amid the universal darkness of Brazil? Shall I tell the plain bitter truth about the idolatry and ungodliness of this professedly Christian nation? Whatever unpleasant things I may write will stand a good chance to be republished here with unfriendly comments. Still I will do the best I can. I can describe the country and people so far as I know them, and show that our prospects are not very encouraging. My first articles will be prepared (D.V.) during the present month.

You will be surprised to hear that, after all that we have heard, the laws of Brazil denounced the preaching of the pure Gospel as a "crime against religion." Yet such is the fact. Foreigners may worship as they please, only are not permitted to build their meeting houses in the form of a Church. But if any missionary shall preach to a congregation of Brazilians, the penalty is dispersion by a justice of the peace, and a fine for each person assembled of not less than one dollar, nor more than six dollars, for each "offence." Public opinion is even more intolerant than the law. In consequence of abounding irreligion, the people often contemn even their own worship, and ridicule their priests, but they are very careful to have their children sprinkled, and to call in confessor in case of dangerous sickness. Their bigotry is much more active than their piety, and they despise us as heretics. For these reasons no missionary as yet has attempted to preach to the native citizens. It is thought that such a step would soon raise a storm, which would put and end to our missions. Hence the missionaries generally propose to confine themselves to the distribution of Bibles &c., and to private conversation. No one even guesses when these difficulties will disappear.

My opinion is that our informants, who have told us that we may preach freely in Brazil have never seen the laws. They have merely taken the word of Brazilians for it that the laws are tolerant. I had been here three months before I obtained a copy of

157 Bowen Papers, section five, no. 526.

"the criminal code", and read for myself. If I had know all this in time I think it probable that my knowledge of Romish bigotry would have deterred me from attacking it, when thus armed with the authority of the State.

Shall I remain here thus opposed by public opinion, and fettered by the criminal code? This question is forced upon us, and I will express my own views candour. If I am to be useless here I desire to leave. I do not think that I have ever been so anxious to preach as I have been for several months. My improved health has brought with it a buoyancy of mind to which I have long been a stranger; and the mental exercises through which I have passed have left my heart full of desire to proclaim the unsearchable riches of grace. At the same time I literally long for the joys of the sanctuary. Never were the people of God more exceedingly precious to my heart, and never have felt a more overflowing love for the soul of men. I believe that I can say with all truth that I had rather live in the vale of the deepest poverty among Christians, than to pay a price in a land where I must be cut off from Christian society and forbidden to preach the Gospel. How often do the brethren at home fail to realize the greatness of their blessedness.

Nevertheless, I would not by any means leave Brazil without fully testing the question whether we shall be permitted to preach to the people. When we look at the law and public opinion the prospect seems to be gloomy, but I am not convinced that I have come here in vain. Many a time has the Gospel encountered and conquered greater difficulties than these. Christ is with us. When the hearts of men are touched by the power of the Holy Spirit they will follow the Saviour even amid the flames. The bigotry of public opinion and the penalties of law only increase their firmness and zeal. If the earth frowns, heaven smiles. When our foes are too strong for us, we appeal to the Almighty power of God, and with his blessing the work will go on, even if we have to preach by stealth, and to administer baptism at midnight.

We all believe that we are dependent on the Holy Spirit for success whether at home or abroad, and we have found by experience that the more fully we renounce our own wisdom and strength, the more powerfully are we aided by him. In Brazil we have but one alternative, either to trust wholly in God, or to despair of success. Thus our weakness may become strength, and the great difficulties which rise up to impede our progress may become the most powerful means of our prosperity. We are now compelled to see our dependence on Christ, and I do hope that both missionaries and brethren at home will cast themselves upon him more fully than they have ever done before. We are too often tempted to rely upon means, but in this case the ordinary means cannot be used, and nothing remains but to cry to the Lord, as the Israelites did when the enemy were behind them and the Red Sea before them.

I still think that I ought to leave Rio and settle in the South, or in the interior. Desterro or St Chaterines is probably the best location I could select. There the whole country is destitute of the Gospel and of Bible agents. In Rio there are already four preaching places, and there will soon be a second depository of Bibles. Besides it would be morally wrong to remain while the Yellow Fever is raging, and it would be far too expensive to remove to a healthy place for four or five months every year. Were it really necessary I would not hesitate to remain in Rio in the sickly season, but when I reflect

that this place is comparatively well supplied with missionaries and Bibles, and that other healthier and less expensive places are destitute, I think it is my duty to leave here.

As there is frequent and regular communication between Rio and St Catherine I would go thither immediately, were it not that the Board, after all, may desire me to remain at Rio.

Besides I have no money to pay our passage and to furnish a house. As my present house is furnished I must remain in it till I receive funds.

It would scarcely be too strong an expression if should say that I am really distressed when I think of the great expenses which I have incurred & must yet incur in Brazil. The funds already received will scarcely bring me to the end of the year. When I make out accounts I will show you what enormous, or as the Brazilians say "fabulous prices" I am compelled to pay for the necessaries of life.

At the close of the year I shall be in debt for six months house rent, and six months hire of a servant. I shall also need money to furnish my house, to purchase clothing of which I am now short, to pay our passage if we go South, and to pay current expresses for provisions servants hire &c next year. I can not yet say what our expenses will be hereafter, but of course they will be less than they have been if I can keep out the hotels. I must have a house to live in. At Rio a one story cottage of five or six rooms can scarcely be rented for less than \$500 or \$600 a year. Current expenses are at least twice as great as in N. York &c. For a servant girl I must pay about \$15 a month, and a woman who is a good cook, washes, &c i.e. a really good servant, can not be got for less than about \$20. a month. A first rate cook \$30. One of the Presbyterian brethren, Blackford, in lamenting these things remarked "I fear the brethren at home will accuse us of extravagance." For our part we have felt constrained to practice a disagreeable economy, depriving ourselves of things which we really need. I believe the brethren would even censure us for this, but in fact we can not live as we do at home without over running the boundary of our means and going in debt.

Rent is high that I think it would be economy to purchase a mission house. If we should be expelled we could sell it. I could beg the money, I think from my old brethren in Georgia, Florida and Alabama if were deemed proper to buy a house, with a little land for a garden &c. But this subject must lie over I suppose for future consideration.

What and how shall I do, if I am not permitted to preach? Of course I have thought much on this, and the best plan I can think of is about as follows:

1. To have (as soon as possible too) a good supply of Bibles and other suitable books, with the privilege of making a few donations.
2. To rent a room for my depository, large enough to hold 30 or 40 people, and furnish it with chairs or benches sufficient to seat that number of people -- (This would be for a beginning).
3. To repair daily to my depository, to sell Bibles and to converse with all who might choose to come and talk with me about religion.

4. To have a Sabbath school, Bible class, and prayer meetings in our depository as soon as I could accomplish one or all of these objects.
5. To visit families wherever they might be willing to receive me, and to talk or pray with them &c.
6. To have a school for my wife assisted by myself, and perhaps to have a separate class or two of my own, if I should have time to instruct them.
7. To make an excursion into the country every three or four months for the purpose of selling Bibles, conversation, &c.
8. To write tracts adapted to the country and the people, setting forth the fundamental doctrines & duties of Christianity.

I should not like to teach if I could fill up my time in more spiritual labors, but I desire to do everything in my power to gain influence as a missionary, and to diffuse the knowledge of Christ. And although the present prospect is gloomy, I can not help entertaining a cheerful hope of better days in the future, if the Lord spars me.

Truly yours in Christ

T J Bowen

Rev Jas B Taylor

My Dear Brother

Two or three days ago I was made glad by the unexpected arrival of your favour of Aug 22nd. It found us all well except that my wife is troubled with some recurrence of her old African symptoms, soreness in the spleen, and a disposition to ague. I have long been convinced that she is not adapted to a hot and debilitating climate. My own health I may say is good since my painful rheumatic fever in August. Little Lula is in excellent health. We thank you for kind wishes that she may be spared to us. O that we may have grace and wisdom to train her up in the nature and admonition of the Lord. Like most others of her age she is a sweet and interesting child, and her presence is a bright light in dwelling. Our love to her enables us to sympathize the more feelingly with you in the removal of your little grand daughter. She is not lost but transferred to a better home than the one where she was so tenderly beloved - escaped from all the sorrows and dangers of earth. May this precious thought give much consolation to the afflicted mother and father.

I am still feeling, more, I think, than in former years, the pain of being cut off from society of my dear brethren in Christ. Do I really love them with a deeper affection than ever before or have I forgotten how I used to feel? At least I can say that the household of faith is precious to my heart, and it seems strange to my feelings that the beloved brethren can fall out by the way and be strange as we sometimes see. Whatever is none of them but I could clasp to my bosom, as the representatives of the Saviour, and if possible more precious than kinsmen according to the flesh. I hope and pray that the Lord may give me brethren and sisters even here, that I may once enjoy the happiness of going in and out among the people of God. As you have never been an exile, I am sure you can not realize how I feel when I think of the sanctuary of the Lord, and the assemblies of the saints.

If I look to human means alone for the light of hope in regard to this mission I should left to grope in thick darkness. But I remember the power, the promises and the intentions of our Heavenly Father and thus I can hope for success when every thing around me says, Nay! Nothing is difficult to Him who has commanded us to preach, and has promised to be with us to the end. He can open a door for His Gospel where none exists, and men have decreed that none shall exist. He can send forth his Spirit and raise up faithful affectionate believers, where every heart is set like flint against His reign. O my leanness! my leanness! Would that I were worth (y) to pray and labor for the establishment of the Gospel in this seat of iniquity and kingdom of darkness! Or at least that I could only be "a good man and full of the Holy Ghost and faith," that much

people might be added to the Lord. I have much to grow if I ever attain to the stature of a perfect man in Christ. Do the brethren know how weak and worthless the poor missionaries sometimes are? Do they pray continually that the Lord would give us clean hearts and victorious faith? In a country like Brazil where everything is against us and we can see visibly our utter dependence on the Holy Spirit, how much need of prayer!

In my last letter I informed you that among other difficulties and seeming discouragements, Brazil has that mark of the Beast, persecution. I do not reproach the Brazilians, nevertheless, on the contrary I admire and praise the moderation of men from the heretic burning Peninsula who have improved so much as to substitute a fine of a few dollars for the rack and stake. But how is it that people in America, who have been here, have declared that freedom of worship is permitted to the Brazilians? I must suppose that none of our informants ever examined the criminal code of Brazil, but they were told by Brazilians that native Catholics as well as foreign Protestants were free to worship God as they please. But such is not the case. If Brazilians should meet for evangelical worship they are liable to be dispersed by and armed police, and to be fined from one to six dollars each, for time that they assemble. Unhappily the priests are less tolerant than the laws, and some of them would doubtless revive the inquisition if they had the power. Some years ago a minister at Rio was instructing some Brazilians in the way of life. If they abstained from public worship the law could not molest them, but the minister in question received anonymous letters threatening him with assassination if he should persist in his proselytizing attempts. Such are some of the difficulties which make our situation less agreeable than it would be in Africa, or any where else except among certain people who call themselves civilized. It seems that my labors will not be greatly needed at Rio since there are four preaching places there, and at least three ministers who will labor more or less for the sailors. There will also be two depositories of Bibles. In case of persecution there would be some disadvantages in being at Rio, but this should not influence me in selecting a location. I ought to visit the Protestants at Petropolis and at St Paul's and will do so (D.V.) provided I can spare the money. But my best impression is that Desterro on St Catherine's Island, abt Lat. 28o , will be the place for me to settle. It is perfectly healthy, and I suppose a cheaper place than Rio. It is also a good central position, and is destitute of missionaries, Bible depositories, &c. I am really anxious to settled somewhere, but I await the action of the Board.

By all means I trust you will have me appointed an agent of the Bible and Tracts Societies and obtain for me just as soon as possible a sufficient supply of books, for sale and to give away in a few special cases. The people ought to be supplied with Bibles to which they can appeal when the great controversy comes off between us and the priests. There ought also to be tracts specially adapted to the people and the times. We may expect stirring times if we succeed in Brazil - a great spiritual warfare. Supply us with arms and ammunition. I went to fit up my Bible room for a Sabbath School, Bible Class, & prayer meetings. It should be a room large enough to seat 40 to 50 persons, or at least 30. Three or four times a year I should visit the adjacent country with Bibles.

My wife will want a school (D.V.) and possible I should teach some also. Let us do everything in our power and leave results to the Lord. I trust that our expenses will be diminished after we are settled. A garden would aid in this. It seems to me that my old brethren in Georgia will give me a home if the appeal is made - of course to be property

of the Board - I need a good Portuguese teacher to aid in pronunciation.

Truly yours in Christ

T J Bowen

Rio de Janeiro Dec 11, 1860 ¹⁵⁹

Rev Jas B Taylor

My Dear Brother

I failed to write last month partly because I had nothing to say, and partly because one or another of us has been sick almost constantly for the last six weeks. We have had both ague and cholera morbus, but none of us appeared to be in danger except the child for a day or two. Such diseases are not unusual in some of these villages. Tijuca is an excellent retreat from the fever, but it is too elevated and too damp to be pleasant as a constant residence. At present we are all tolerably well.

I have not yet redeemed my promise to write something for publication. The articles begun in Sept. are still unfinished. In fact I don't know what to write, and spirit enough to do it, if I knew. For several months I have studied little except the language, and I never except to study as I have done. In this I follow the advice which you gave in your letter of July. Our progress in the language is very good I think considering that we see so few people. Even the baby is beginning to prattle in it. By constant reading we are laying in a fine stock of words and principles for future use.

Nothing has occurred worth repeating, only the brethren in town have discontinued their preaching for want of hearers. And yet they are surrounded by 3 or 4 thousand people (it is said) who speak English and are not romanists. Such things are truly discouraging and painful.

It is not my intention to lament and complain in all my letters, but I must tell you once more how we feel. I have been sorely tempted to regret that I ever came here. I have found nothing as our best informants led us to expect. Shunned as heretics, condemned to silence by penal laws, hated by people who are merciless in speaking evil of each other, without society or associates, and a gloomy prospect before us, we both feel that we have never been so unhappy before in our lives. You must not suppose, however, that we are in despair. It is exceedingly painful to be off from all Christian fellowship. Without even the comfort of being permitted to labor in the Lord's vineyard; but we force ourselves to hope for better times, when we shall at least be able to employ our minds in trying to do good. Every now then I build a bright castle in the air, and fancy that I shall be enabled to do an excellent work by distributing the Scripture in the Southern Provinces.

We are now packing up intending to move just as soon as we receive money. I have barely enough to keep us till Christmas although we have lived so economically in some respects that I have felt almost ashamed to know it myself. With the sole exceptions of interior grass fed beef, and black beans, every thing here cost from 7 to 10 or even 12 times as much as in Yoruba. Chickens are still a dollar a piece, mutton from 25 to 35

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a pound milk 18 to 20 cts a qt. &c. Our milk, washing and firewood cost nearly enough to pay our board in a respectable family in some parts of Georgia. But we use 1 1/2 qts of milk a day. For washing we pay from 20 cts a piece downward according to the size of the garment.

Before I received your favour of July I was under the impression that the Board desired me to remain at Rio. All my letters proceeded on this supposition, but I never complained of it, or did more than to express a desire to go South, which indeed was my first proposition. I have not visited the interior back of Rio, and I think it would be useless to spend money for such a purpose, although I should be glad to see the country. After many inquiries I am fully convinced that Desterro, on the Island of St Catherine's, but very near the coast, is the best place to which I can go. The climate is exceedingly healthy and pleasant, and since the adjacent country is tolerably well filled with an agricultural population, we may hope to live at less expenses. If houses let as well there as here, we had better build at once than to pay the price of a house for a few year's rent.

I am told that there is a depository of Bibles in the South this side of Buenos Aires. As the distribution of books and private conversation is all that we can expect to do for some years - no (one) knows how long - I will again beg you to have me appointed an agent of the Bible and the Tract Societies, and supplied with books. I would hire a suitable room and repair to it daily to sell my books, and to convince with every body who might choose to come. Such a place might become a rendezvous of serious people. I would also furnish my room with sufficient seats for a Sabbath School, a Bible Class, and a Prayer meetings. Three or four times a year I would take a lot of books and make a tour to the German colonies and other parts of the adjacent country. In this way I would disseminate the truth and form acquaintances. After a while, if I should become favourably known, I would publish tracts, &c adapted to the tastes and wants of the people, and they would read such works, because acquainted with the author. Few translated works are suitable to a country where so little is known of fundamental truth as here. Such is the plan and the hope. It is this or nothing. Whatever people have reported, the penal laws are here on the statute books, and they are not likely to be soon repealed.

If the Gospel should succeed, there must needs be great controversies here. Give the people Bibles in time that they may be able to decide between us and priests. Let no man go to the battle without a sword.

Truly your in Christ

T J Bowen

P.S. Your favour of July was so much detained that it did not reach Tijuca till sometimes after I had replied your letter of August.

I thank both you and Bro Crawford for your kindness. I am not in the least angry with Dr. O'Keefe, not doubting the goodness of his intentions but I can scarcely thank him for his scientific conclusion that my decease was the result of opium. I must respect

some facts in reference to my sickness which are very painful to remember. Dr. O'Keefe saw me in one of those paroxysms of pain, or rather of agony, which no else has witnesses except my own family. I was rolling first over the floor and then on the bed in a most extravagant manner, because it was impossible to be still. I remember his coming up but not his leaving. He was told as I learn that nothing but laudanum would relieve me. Then he went to Penfield and told Dr Crawford that in his opinion these paroxysms were caused by taking opium. Now the truth is I had suffered in this way for several years before I took any opium at all. At the time of the attack in which he saw me I had taken none for some weeks, it may be for two or three months. For a long time in Africa I was apprehensive that I should go crazy, and had only too much reason for this fear. I sometimes flogged myself severely, and even compelled my servant to flog me on the bare back as the only known means of producing sufficient nervous reaction to save me from absolute mania. Sometime after my return home I learned that laudanum would give me relief. I then began to carry it with me when I left home, as I had carried ether for a year or two before. Being very unwilling to have an attack among strangers, I used to take it to keep them off. At home, however I did not take it even in my attacks unless they became severe. Sometimes I would take none for three or four months together. In my last attack four months ago I sent for a doctor who disapproved of the laudanum, and I got well without it. Since then I have had no attack, and scarcely a symptom, either of the pain, or its substitute, which was a most alarming congestion and cramp abt the heart. I trust I am done with pain and drugs.

Tijuca Dec 19, 1860 ¹⁶⁰

Rev Jas B. Taylor

My Dear Brother

Although I have recently written to you, I drop you a line again to acknowledge the receipt of a letter of Cr. from brother E. Worthan for \$500. This letter gave me one joy and two sorrows. I am perhaps even too sorry that it requires so much money to keep us afloat in this country; and I am sorry that this amount, liberal as it is, will not enable me to pay my rent and servant hire; to furnish a house, till I receive another remittance. In speaking of expenses in my last I said that our washing cost from 30 cts a piece downward. I was mistaken. My wife told me today, when she paid her washing bill for this week, that she has to pay 60 cts and upwards for washing and ironing a white dress for herself, and 40 to 50 cts a piece for some other articles.

It seems to me that I can not stand it. As a prudent general I had better sound a retreat before I am wholly cut to pieces, unless indeed I can perform some manoeuvre to save myself. An American lady in town has informed my wife that her washing for herself, husband and child, is at least \$15.00 a month. I am really at a loss to know what to do; and I feel that it is not a worldly mind which causes me to feel this perplexity. How can we live at this rate?

There is only one plan of which I can conceive, and that is to earn something while I am paying out so much. But how shall I earn money? If I had time it would not be hard to do, but I can not spare the time.

The best plan would be to have a little farm. There is an excellent place for sale here, somewhat more convenient to town, in the midst of considerable population, and every way far superior to place where I now am, or to any place in this valley. But the price is \$4000. It is worth more, and will probably sell for \$6000 in a short time. It is now offered very cheap, because its owner is embarrassed, or broke, and has been compelled to force several places in to market. If times were not so hard at home I would be desirous to return and borrow money to purchase their place. Can anything be done? I fear not, and yet how I am to get on, buying everything and selling nothing, is a serious question. The burden is too great for the Board to bear; and besides I would be glad to have a few dollars over every year to take papers &c.

If I had the Tijuca place I could easily raise all our provisions, and have enough to spare to pay for washing &c. The place would pay for itself in a few years. But for me to buy it is out of the question unless I could borrow money, as I can not raise more than &1500 by selling everything I have. Why can't the Board purchase a cottage and a few acres of land for the Mission?

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We have a invitation to spend a week in the city. My wife has evidently suffered so much from loneliness (though she has said but little) that I feel bound to go to the city for her sake. I will then go on (D.V.) to the terminus of one or both of R Roads; for since I am not able to go South, I must look out for a place to live here. The house where I now live is not a pleasant one, being leaky and quite damp otherwise, so that we have all had ague.

But the chief reason why we must leave this valley is that there are no people here among whom we may labor. The only comfort that we have or can have at present is to work, and hence we will not remain here idle if we can get away.

Since my arrival the Board has send me \$800, on which there is very serious discount as heretofore stated. Is my \$300 for outfit, or the \$300 which I left in the bank included in this \$800? If not I might draw for \$600, and the half off this at present would enable me to remove South.

I do not know whether I should remain in Brazil or not. At least I shall never express a desire to leave, and I am willing to bear all the troubles that come upon me. I regret however that my chief design in coming has been frustrated. I was much in hopes that I could labor among Yoruba Negroes and educate missionaries for Africa. There are hundreds and thousands of Yorubas here, but it is not possible either to preach to them or educate missionaries. I have not yet informed you that my life, simply by telling the Mina Yoruba Negroes that Christ is the Saviour. I did this in private conversation sitting in the Wright's counting room. A daily paper denounced me as an Anabaptist proselyte, and also as an Abolitionist, whose influence was already dangerous. People talked about me and told lies on me up and down the streets, and one of the papers said, "the authorities" were seeking evidence against me. There are doubtless some who would hang me if they could, and yet I do not think that anybody believes me to be an Abolitionist. But the result of all that I can so very little among the Yorubas, and I would not be at all surprised if I get into trouble for talking to them. I will be just as prudent as I can, but I do not believe that I should be afraid to tell these poor people how to be saved. By the priests they are neglected. Most of them are Mohammedans, and some are heathens. I have not found one professes to be a Catholic, although the idolatry among them, bow to the papist images.

Can you tell me where to settle and how to work? Is not the plan proposed in my last the best I can adopt? And should I not endeavour to cultivate a few acres of land if possible, so as to save some expense?

I will write again (D.V.) at the close of the month and forward my accounts.

If I have any money of the \$600 above mentioned yet remaining please send it to me that I may buy some furniture & clothing and settle dons either here or in the South or somewhere else. I am very anxious to be regularly at work. Then I hope to feel better satisfied. At present I feel more feeble, ignorant and worthless than I ever did in my life. Still I am not out of heart. I believed that I can work with energy and comfort as soon as I can find anything to do.

Truly yours in Christ

T J Bowen

P.S. I have written in haste, and I am quite weary too having been hard at work for two or three days. We are all tolerably well. We are very comfortable every way except the troubles above mentioned -- After Christmas (D.V.) my letters will be of a different and a more pleasant character, relating to the country and the events of our Mission.

Rio Dec 25, 1860 ¹⁶¹

Dear Bro Taylor

A few days ago I heard that the Capt. of the Abigail had a package of papers for me. Yesterday I received it together with your letters, which has given me great relief of mind.

We came down last Friday to spend a week with a friend. It is the very cordial wish of us both never to return to that lonely valley to live. Rent excepted, it is more expensive than the city. But our chief design in wishing to leave is to be among the people.

The missionaries here have found a very desirable place 3 miles from the custom house, & quite above the region of fever. They (pay) \$50 a month for a small but comfortable house. There is another cottage a little more elevated which I could get at the same price -- \$600 a year, payable monthly. I dislike to give it.

Since it is impossible to remove South without funds, I must needs stay here. After all in a place like the one of which I have just spoken I could be healthy without removing. Possibly I shall be obliged to rent a horse here & if so I shall think less of going South.

It is impossible to ascertain facts without seeing for myself. Hence I am now about to visit the interior 30 or 40 miles to see whether I would do well to go there. I will not give \$600 for a small house if I can better by going into the interior. Will write again (D.V.) when I return.

Truly Yrs in Xt

TJB

161 Bowen Papers, section five, no. 537.

Pensacola May 7 1861¹⁶²

Dear Bro Taylor

As I can do no visible good here, and the damp atmosphere does not agree with me, and as my wife writes in a letter recd today of two or three things which call me homeward, I shall leave here this evening D.V. at 8 o'clock. I desire to meet you at Savannah late as the hour is provided I am not too much fatigued to make the trip. If I can not come from any cause I do sincerely hope that you will be able to visit us after the Convention adjourns, but if you can not come please write us some advice if you can give any as to how we may hope to get our baggage from Baltimore. I can scarcely bear the expense of going after them even if I could bring them safely with me; and it would be to us a very serious matter to lose them after losing last year and this. If Bro Crane can send them by sea to Bro J Toon Charleston, or to Bro S Landrum Savannah, or by express to me Greensboro I would be very glad to pay expenses and for trouble &c. We are needing our clothing and I can almost say without qualification that we must have them. It is impossible for me to replace them now. The books might remain rather than come by so expensive a way as express.

Do visit us if you can, for I don't know when I shall ever have another chance of seeing you.

Truly yr Brother in hope

T J Bowen

162 Bowen Papers, section five, no. 540.

Greensboro Ga May 20, 1861 ¹⁶³

Dear Bro Taylor

Since my return from Savannah I have been quite unwell and confined mostly to the house. Yesterday and today I have felt better. But I have suffered so much that I often feel a kind of dread resting on my mind. On two occasions I have fallen into a stupor or lethargy from which I could not be aroused for three or four hours, and once a similar attack extended only from the hips downward. I was standing on the floor when I suddenly found myself incapable of moving another foot. I am now cupping and blistering my spine, and have laid aside the use of coffee. I have had ague since Saturday the 11th inst.

As soon as I grow a little stronger I want to forward my accounts as exhibited on the Book of Mr. Wright and Mr Blackford of Rio. My own books are in Baltimore.

Mrs Bowen who has been corresponding with Bro Crane has requested him to forward our things from Baltimore to Richmond to your care. From Richmond they can come home as freight. To send them by express would be entirely too expensive. The boxes of books may remain in Richmond, provided you can have them stored in a safe convenient place. But if this would be any extra trouble please send them on. The trunks, bath tub, gun & other little things we need here as soon as possible.

I must beg you to draw my money from the Bank when convenient and send it to me in a draft on Augusta Charleston or Savannah if you can. Deduct enough however to pay all expenses of our baggage from Baltimore to Richmond, with all charges there.

During the voyage home my wife asked the Captain about our passage money. He replied it is alright & we supposed Mr Wright had paid it. It seems now that it was to have been paid by Mr Wright of Baltimore.

A gentleman, Mr Rae of N.Y. who was a fellow passenger borrowed of Mr Wright of Baltimore fifty dollars on my account. I knew nothing of it till I reached home here. I am anxious to have a full settlement as soon as possible.

If the Lord please to restore my health I would be glad to settle farther north in Va or N.C. as I think it would be better for my health. If I had money I would spend this summer at Va. Springs, but that is out of the question, especially as I can not leave home alone.

Truly Yours in Christ

T J Bowen

163 Bowen Papers, section five, no. 541.

Greensboro Ga June 10, 1861¹⁶⁴

Dear Bro Taylor

Since my last I have an attack of my troubles with much vertigo, but without any symptoms of delirium. I am convinced that my spine is at fault, and I have improved much in clearness and cheerfulness of mind since I began to cup and blister it. With God's blessing I shall yet be sound and happy. The Lord forgive me for having fallen so nearly into despair.

Once for all, I have resolved, with full and firm assurance that I am right, to do or attempt nothing henceforth except the daily discharge of my humble duties. I feel satisfied and happy in this solution.

But I must of necessity begin to work somewhere as soon as possible. I have almost no money, and it will not do for a preacher to go in debt; which I shall be compelled to do unless I make a living without delay. If any one believes that I can obtain help from any friend, it is quite a mistake. I shall receive none: that is a fixed fact. The detention - I hope not less - of my books and nearly the whole of our clothing in Baltimore is a great inconvenience. We are obliged to buy other clothing and have no money to do it. Nothing but the \$300 left in Richmond saves me from painful embarrassment. I hope you will send that in a sizable check as soon as you can. Georgia or S. Caroline bills would be good, if you could see a person to send them by. I suppose such bills are below par at Richmond and might be purchased at a profit. Couldn't you send the right (or left) hand end of large bills and retain the other end till you are informed that the first has been received? In that case, however, if either end was lost, I should have to advertise three months (in Ga) before the bank could pay me. Do any way you find convenient, except sending whole bills by mail.

I am anxious to settle permanently as a pastor of some Church or Churches, and a support will satisfy me. I ought by all means to engage immediately as a pastor or supply, for I can not remain here in idleness. My preference is to settle in N.C., Va., or Tenn. Can not you, or some of the brethren, who have influence and extensive acquaintance assist me in finding a place? I need help. If once settled, with such health as I now hope enjoy, I shall have no further petitions of a worldly nature to offer. Although my name is extensively know as a missionary (which of itself is no recommendation to the pastoral work), I am personally a stranger to almost everybody. Without aid in securing a location it is possible that I should be compelled after all to turn aside to some worldly employment for bread.

I wish the brethren in Africa would send me or bring me my books, at least such as none of them ever use, and pay and collect what is there due me.

Truly Your Brother in Xt

TJ Bowen

164 Bowen Papers, section five, no. 543.

Greensboro Ga July 26, 1861¹⁶⁵

Dear Bro Taylor

I write to tank you for your favour of the 17th inst. if my money is still un bank drawing interest please let it remain awhile and send me the rest in a draft on Augusta or Charleston. I shall need it all this winter. Our expenses to replace the clothing left in Baltimore will be considerable. We brought nothing but a few summer clothing.

Bro Stocks is mistaken in regard to my income. I have received nothing except the interest on 15 shares of RR stock, and have reason to believe that this is all I shall receive. Some of my hopes have been disappointed.

I will go to work (D.V.) as soon as health permits, and I wish to locate in a cooler climate. I should not remain here for several reasons. One is that the Churches are all supplied by professors at Penfield. The future is dark but I am not distressed about it as I have been. If I could sell my RR stock, (which is now impossible) I think I would go to Texas and raise cattle and sheep.

I wish that some of the brethren who are lending thousands of dollars would let me have enough to purchase 50 acres of land and two or three servants. This would make me as happy as I wish to be in this world, and I could repay the money with interest in a few years. They could lose nothing and I would receive great benefit. But I have no hope of that either.

I have spoken to no one about my troubles except Bro Stocks, yourself and two others. I shall say no more to any one, but will process as Providence may permit and circumstances may offer. I intend to visit N.C. &c in hope of finding a location, but days are past. I am greatly afraid that I shall be compelled to resort to some secular employment at last after having determined 20 years ago to live and die a preacher. It grieves me more than I could express, but I submit without a murmur. I can easily make money, but I would not do it if I could help it. I had far rather preach for food and raiment than to get rich. But I have said enough.

We are mourning the fall of Thaddeus Howell, my wife's nephew, a noble young man, at Manassas. My continual desire to be in this war almost alarms me. I forbid the feeling to arise, but it will return. We are deeply wronged as a people and many a family is robbed and will be robbed of beloved members. May the Lord open the eyes of our assailants. I wish them no wrong & no harm, if they will stay at home.

Truly Yrs in Christ

T J Bowen

165 Bowen Papers, section five, no. 546.

(Undated letter) ¹⁶⁶

Dear Bro Taylor

In reply to your kind favour I will drop a line to say that a man from whom I purchased land has failed to fulfill his obligation. It seems his brother is half owner and is not willing to sell. At present I am not at all certain where I shall go. But I must have a few acres of land somewhere, as I am still unable to bear the mental toil of teaching, and a farm is my last and only resort. Worse than all it will be difficult if not impossible to sell my R.R. stock even at a sacrifice. Prostrated in health, without home, money or friends, with nearly all our clothing & my books lost in Balt. I can truly say that I am in distressed circumstances. The brethren in Africa & returned owe me considerably for supplies & c bought by them or sold to others. I do wish they would settle up what is due there, & send the accounts against those here. Bro Clarck owes me something but can not tell how much till they forward the accounts. Bro Beaumont still refuses to pay me that order for \$112.50, alleging that the order was brought home long before he left Africa & that he received no salary. I do not know how it is, only that in all these cases, I who need the money more than every other, am the loser. Still I scarcely feel unpleasantly abt it beyond a mixture of surprise and regret. In a few years it will be all the same.

My head perspired almost incessantly and often feels large and heavy. I have cold feet and pains in the legs, &c, but nothing to what they have been. I am much improved specially in memory and general feelings. Still I think it best to stay a month or so at the Wature (?) Cure to equalize circulation, if I can spare the money.

I do not know where my P.O will be.

Affectionately yours in hopes of a better life

T J Bowen

166 Bowen Papers, section five, no. 549.

Atlanta May 12th, 1867 ¹⁶⁷

Dear Bro Taylor

I have learned incidentally that Bro Reid will soon depart for Africa. Will you be so kind as to remind him to do two things for me? 1. To send my most valuable books to I T Smith by the first safe opportunity, and especially the Church Histories left with Bro Phillips. I need them and they are not needed there. 2. To collect what is due me from missionaries there. My supplies for 1857, which arrived after I left the country, worth several hundred dollars, were old to them, and no one paid me, except W. H. Clark, who bought but little. Circumstances have prevented my attending to these things earlier.

Do you know how my S. American account stands?

My health is far better than I ever expected. I have had but one attack of ague, and one pain from the liver, since last Fall; and no prostrating sickness, except small-pox, in two years. Last Summer I thought that my mind was restored, except certain unpleasant feelings which I supposed were incurable. In the Fall I was worse-much worse for two weeks in December. I am always worse in the Fall. With the opening Spring my unnatural feelings disappeared; and I am now better in every respect than ever before since 1857, if not since 1854. If it were not for occasional slight flighty impulses, I should believed myself perfectly restored.

The expected return of Bro Reid to Africa fills my heart with acute feelings of mingled joy and pain. If the ability and the privilege of going with him could be purchased with money, I do not know what sum I would grudge to give for the happiness of standing once more among the people of Yoruba. If my health would at all admit of it and if it were not for my duties to my wife and children, I would doubtless go, were I compelled to labor there in a farm for my support. But all hope in this direction is extinct. My race is run and my doom sealed. I am in great doubt whether I should ever preach again ever in this country. It is true, that I sincerely regard myself innocent of wilful wrong. But the among of my moral guilt is not the question. The man who loses his right arm by accident is no less maimed than if he had wilfully cut it off himself. I regard my case as analogous to that of a virgin who has been brutally outraged by villains. She is innocent, but the lustre of her honour is tarnished. Some of the friends and neighbours urge me to preach, but I cannot venture to do it. It is true that I preached repeatedly and with great pleasure last summer, but I am not sure that I did right. I have known one or two ministers who dell into sin, to all appearance willfully and yet afterward were reclaimed and preached again. How they are to (????) is more than I can comprehend.

Being unable to preach, I am minded to devoting myself to teaching as the next best thing that I can do. I hope that my influence over my present pupils is decidedly good. Perhaps I shall make impressions, and communicate principles, which will be

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committee to others when I am gone, and thus perpetrate my influence for generations. I desire also to preach with the pen which I supposed will be admissible. Were it not for such hopes as these I should be wretched indeed. I expect to spend the remainder of my days in retirement - almost in seclusion - but not in idleness.

I am now teaching about three miles from Atlanta, where some of the old citizens have known me from the cradle. This is very pleasant after having been so long among strangers. My wife is in Greensboro, because I cannot make enough to support us. Times are so hard that some people cannot send to school and some who do will not be able to pay this year. We have two children, the youngest named Mary, 11 months old.

Sincerely your brother in Christ

T J Bowen