

4-25-2017

I Presume You Have Heard of Dr. Livingstone

Mary Eakins
Grand Valley State University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/honorsprojects>



Part of the [History Commons](#)

ScholarWorks Citation

Eakins, Mary, "I Presume You Have Heard of Dr. Livingstone" (2017). *Honors Projects*. 604.
<https://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/honorsprojects/604>

This Open Access is brought to you for free and open access by the Undergraduate Research and Creative Practice at ScholarWorks@GVSU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Honors Projects by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks@GVSU. For more information, please contact scholarworks@gvsu.edu.



I Presume You Have Heard of Dr. Livingstone

Mary Eakins

Submitted to the Frederik Meijer Honors College of
Grand Valley State University in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Sciences

Dr. Carolyn Shapiro-Shapin, Honors Project Advisor

April 25, 2017

I Presume You Have Heard of Dr. David Livingstone

Introduction

David Livingstone is perhaps one of the most famous missionaries of the nineteenth century. During the mid-1800's he captivated the imaginations of the western world with his achievements and explorations in Africa- his walk across the continent, the infamous meeting with Mr. Stanley, and his grand funeral leading to his burial in Westminster Abbey. During his lifetime he was an explorer, an anthropologist, a botanist, a geographer, a cartographer, a doctor, and most importantly in his eyes, a missionary to the unreached people of Africa.

Before David Livingstone

Missions

David Livingstone's first trip to Africa was undertaken with the help of the London Missionary Society, but there were active years before Livingstone came on the scene. The London Missionary Society was founded on September 21, 1795.¹ The society was founded by ministers and church leaders of varied denominations from all across England and Scotland with the object "to spread the knowledge of Christ among the heathen and other unenlightened nations."² Due to the variety of denominations of congregations that lent their support to the London Missionary Society, the missionaries that were sent out by this body were not limited by the teachings of one sect of the gospel message- the most important job of the missionaries they sent out was to tell others about Christ and His love and salvation.

¹ John Rippon, *An Account of the London Missionary Society: extracted from Dr. Rippon's Baptist annual register. To which is added, the state of the religion at Sierra Leone, in Africa. From numbers 10 and 11 of the Register. With an evangelical hymn, composed in the Bengal language, 1788. By Ram Ram Boshoo, a Hindoo munshee.* (Philadelphia: Lang & Ustick, 1796), 3

² John Rippon, *An Account of the London Missionary Society*, 5.

The London Missionary Society hoped to send the gospel message all around the globe. Members and potential missionaries were implored to “Look on the terrestrial globe. Let Africa, Hindostan, and China attract your notice. Behold the astonishing clusters of the South Sea Islands.”³ As explorers traversed further and further from Europe, new lands and peoples were found that the Christian churches longed to see brought to a saving knowledge of Christ.⁴ The confluence of many denominations allowed for a greater base of financial and spiritual support for those who felt themselves called to serve as missionaries as far as boats would carry people and goods. For some, “profit and morality seemed, at the time, to demand the same action.”⁵ Many people during the early 1800’s believed that in order for Britain to gain valuable economic locations in Africa, the African peoples needed to undergo a culture change that would cause them to become more westernized. Thus, missionaries were encouraged by even those not associated with the church because of the advantages for the potential spread of economic involvement.

Medical

Europeans had been interacting with Africa for centuries by the time Livingstone made his first voyage, but people were still having difficulty maintaining permanent posts on Africa’s coast- especially in West Africa. One of the biggest deterrents to the establishment thriving trading posts on the continent in West Africa was the high death rate due to tropical diseases- especially fever. In 1807 when Britain abolished the legality of the African slave trade, merchants began to look for other ways to continue making money in Africa. Given that the age

³ Richard Lovette, *The History of the London Missionary Society, 1795-1895* (London: H. Frowde, 1899; University of Michigan, 2017), <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015052702605;view=1up;seq=12>, 1:23.

⁴ Richard Lovette, *The History of the London Missionary Society*, 1:20.

⁵ Philip D. Curtin, *The Image of Africa: British Ideas and Action, 1780-1850* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1964), 261.

of early exploration and attempts at commerce came before the knowledge of germs and microorganisms, many of the fever treatments and preventions of the late 1700's and early 1800's involved guess work based humoral science and a strong religious component.

The chief cause of the deadly fevers was believed to come from bad air. Even into the 1860's, "many British medical officers still associated malaria with low altitudes, heavy rainfall, and swamps."⁶ The understanding was that breathing bad air, or miasma, would result in the contraction of the nearly always fatal tropical fever, but no one could come to a solid agreement regarding how the miasma was best to be avoided. Every time a theory was produced as to how the miasma spread its disease, a case study would be brought forward to disprove that logic.⁷ With the wide variety in understandings about the causes of the fevers, there came an even wider range of suggested solutions for preventing and curing Europeans in West Africa.

Scientists and physicians did the best they could to treat and prevent the ailments of the tropics based on their belief that health was achieved by the balance of the humoral systems of the body. This involved techniques such as bleeding, bathing, and prescriptions of what types of clothes were best to wear to avoid perspiring. Heat and sweating were believed to be deleterious to the health because, "heat leads to perspiration, leading to a degree of liver malfunction, weakening the body, and thus preparing the way for the onset of fever."⁸ Those headed to the tropics were, therefore, told they should dress in cotton to stave off perspiration. There was also a widely held belief that tropical air had more oxygen, and thus the body needed to be bled to get rid of the blood that was produced when in Europe where the air had less oxygen.⁹ Many of the

⁶ Philip D. Curtin, *Death by Migration: Europe's encounter with the tropical world in the nineteenth century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989; MPublishing, 2017), <http://hdl.handle.net.ezproxy.gvsu.edu/2027/heb.05754.0001.001>, 49.

⁷ Philip D. Curtin, *Death by Migration*, ??.

⁸ Philip D. Curtin, *The Image of Africa*, 190-191.

⁹ Philip D. Curtin, *The Image of Africa*, 191.

cures prescribed during this time resulted in further pain for the afflicted and probably resulted in higher death rates in those who got fever.

Another common philosophy was that fever and sickness was related to immorality. This approach stated that those who chose to live contrary to the commands of God were becoming sick in punishment. For those who ascribed to such beliefs, the way to avoid getting fever was “the avoidance of alcoholic drink, sexual intercourse, and eating meat.”¹⁰ This theory and method of prevention were not long clung to in favor of more scientific findings that held more truth and were not so easily disproved.

For those headed to Africa- usually not voluntarily- such as soldiers, merchants, the odd explorer, or government officials, the contraction of fever seemed almost inevitable. Scientists came to understand that if an individual got the fever and survived, he or she was less likely to be in danger of becoming dreadfully sick again. This ‘acclimation’ was seen as part of the process of being stationed in West Africa.¹¹ Those who were able to survive, were then often required to serve for long periods of time because the likelihood of their death was dramatically decreased.

The breakthrough in fever treatment was slow in coming and once it arrived, was not quickly accepted. In 1820, quinine was isolated from cinchona bark and was shown to be an effective antimalarial drug.¹² It was not until the 1830’s and 1840’s that many militaries were instituting the use of quinine in regular doses to the troops being sent to West Africa. However, due to its bitter taste and doctors’ disbelief in its effectiveness, most troops continued to enter the continent of Africa unprotected.¹³ Thus, in the early nineteenth century, West Africa was known

¹⁰ Philip D. Curtin, *The Image of Africa*, 191.

¹¹ Philip D. Curtin, *Death by Migration*, 67-68.

¹² Philip D. Curtin, *Death by Migration*, 63.

¹³ Philip D. Curtin, *Death by Migration*, 65.

in Europe as ‘the white man’s grave’ and many were certain, the interior of Africa would be impossible for Europeans to reach for many decades to come.

Africa - Missions

The Moravian Church of Holland sent the first recorded missionary to South Africa in 1736. He set up a mission one hundred and twenty miles east of Cape Town among the Hottentot tribe. He built a home and a school that he used to teach the local tribes through an interpreter for many years. He was then required to return to Europe and was never able to go back to his mission.¹⁴ In 1792, the Moravian Church sent a group of three men back to the Hottentots to pick up where their predecessor had left off. They were well received and were able to make great progress teaching the people in the rebuilt school and spreading the gospel through church services.¹⁵ It was in 1799 that the London Missionary Society sent their first ambassadors to South Africa, who unsuccessfully attempted to start a mission further to the North and the North East of Cape Town and eventually settled in with the Hottentots.¹⁶ Though none of these men saw immense successes in their endeavors, they laid the foundation for other missionaries to follow.

With all the men who were sent by the Dutch and the English, many commonalities exist. All of the men settled in among the people they were trying to reach, building permanent structures to house themselves, their churches, and their schools. The missionaries worked to build relationships with the people of the tribes around their missions first with practical knowledge then with the gospel. Establishing schools at which the missionaries taught reading,

¹⁴ William Walters, *Life and Labours of Robert Moffat, D.D.: Missionary in South Africa, with Additional Chapters on Christian Missions in Africa and Throughout the World*. London: Walter Scott, Limited, 1882; Hathi Trust Digital Library, 2017. <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/nnc1.cu60537345>, 11.

¹⁵ William Walters, *Life and Labours of Robert Moffat, D.D.*, 12.

¹⁶ William Walters, *Life and Labours of Robert Moffat, D.D.*, 13.

writing, and modern agricultural classes allowed the missionaries to build relationships with the tribal people in order to share the gospel message. These schools were received warmly by many of the tribes' people because it was evidence that the missionaries were not looking to take away from the people of the villages, but that missionaries were different from the other white men the people had encountered and heard about.

Missionaries that struck out to build missions through the regions around Cape Town were met with a common and, often, profound distrust of Europeans. When a man from the Namaquas tribe was asked about his suspicion of the missionaries he answered, "I have been taught from my infancy to look up hat-men (hat-wearers) as the robbers and murderers of the Namaquas. Our friends and parents have been robbed of their cattle, and shot by the hat-wearers."¹⁷ The missionaries often found themselves caught in the middle of the land and resource disputes that regularly occurred between the tribes around Cape Town and the colonist farmers who were growing steadily outward. These conflicts grew more frequent and more intense as the 1800s progressed. For many of the early missionaries to South Africa, these disputes were the reason their missions saw little success and why they often had to give up before they saw their work completed.

Robert Moffat arrived in South Africa in 1817 and started to change the opinion of local tribes in the region around Cape Town. By working with the chief of a local village that was being pursued by the colonial authorities, Moffat won the favor of many of the local tribes and peoples. This allowed him to begin using his gift of learning languages to learn the local languages and dialects and begin translation of the Bible into the native languages of the people. Over his decades working with the native people of South Africa, Moffat was able to build

¹⁷ William Walters, *Life and Labours of Robert Moffat, D.D.*, 20.

strong relationships with several tribes North of Cape Town, translate the entire Bible, a book, and a hymnal into a local language, as well as having paved the way for missionaries to be able to follow and continue the spread of the gospel into the interior of Africa. On account of all his work, some say that Robert Moffat is “the father and founder of missionary work in South Africa.”¹⁸ One of his more notable additions to the mission work in South Africa is that he is the reason David Livingstone went to Africa.

Africa and European Economics

For the duration of the eighteenth century, the slave trade dominated the economic interactions between Europe and Africa. The industry in Europe used the raw materials produced via slave labor in the new world was then sent to Africa to use in exchange for more slaves to take to the colonies to increase the production of raw materials. The inhuman treatment of Africans continued into the nineteenth century but began to change after “British legislation had cut off the labor supply to the British sector in 1807, emancipated the slaves as of 1838, and tried to impede the flow of labor to the other nation sectors through the anti-slavery blockade.”¹⁹ The change in the labor force brought monumental changes to the way the system had been functioning for the decades previous. No longer was the labor of production of the raw materials free and forced. Costs increased and production decreased.

With the changes in the markets in the early 1800’s, merchants began looking for new ways to produce materials more efficiently and more places to sell their products. Africa faded in and out of the spotlight of this discussion during the entirety of the mid nineteenth century. As the 1840’s began, “the promise of cotton gave West Africa another claim to attention- something

¹⁸ Lavinia Cohn-Sherbok, “Moffat, Robert (1795-1883).” In *Who’s Who in Christianity*, Routledge. 2nd ed. Routledge, 2001. https://login.ezproxy.gvsu.edu/login?url=http://search.credoreference.com/content/entry/routwwchr/moffat_robert_1795_1883/0?institutionId=222.

¹⁹ Philip D. Curtin, *The Image of Africa*, 432.

beyond the claims on British charity or its pitifully small share of British trade- and enthusiasts for African empire were eager to exploit the opening.”²⁰ The increased hope in once again being able to rely on Africa to be a major part of the economic and trade systems caused many of the explorers and other European inhabitants to take a keen interest in the agricultural possibilities of the African lands they visited.

Africa- Geographically

Since Europe’s main connection with Africa at the start of the nineteenth century was the slave trade, and that required minimal European contact with the interior of Africa, there was very limited knowledge of what laid beyond the coastal regions. This was especially true in West Africa. The British only knew of places, geological features, and peoples of the interior by way of hearsay from the Africans they encountered. The fact that the merchants did not need to go into Africa’s interior meant that much of the hearsay went unrecorded and perceived as unimportant. The lack of need from an economic stand point coupled with the health dangers the interior promised meant there were few who chose to travel into the unknown purely for exploration.

Two of the most prominent explorers of Africa before David Livingstone were James Bruce and Mungo Park. James Bruce became interested in North African culture while traveling around Europe after finishing his study of law. This interest led him to a position as a British official in Algeria from 1762-1765. In 1768, Bruce began his explorations in what is modern day Ethiopia. His contributions include finding the source of the Blue Nile charting the Red Sea, and recovering the Book of Enoch.²¹ He is also responsible for recording what is today considered to

²⁰ Philip D. Curtin, *The Image of Africa*, 434.

²¹ Miles Bredin, “James Bruce: Charm and Courage in Abyssinia,” In *The Great Explorers*, ed. Robin Hanbury-Tenison, (London: Thames & Hudson, 2010), 121.

be accurate notes on the “history, art, geography, and political affairs” of the capital area of Gonder from 1770-1772.²² Though his discoveries were mainly dismissed during his lifetime, he is seen today as having contributed a great deal to the accurate knowledge of the world that existed in the late 1700s.

Mungo Park spent his exploration days bringing to light for the Europeans the landscape of West Africa, most specifically around the Niger River and Gambia River in what is modern day, Mali. His explorations took place between 1795 and 1806. He was funded by the African Association, a British consortium that wanted to further the explorations of Africa’s interior.²³ His goal was to reach Timbuktu and find the end of the Niger River. On his final journey, he sailed past Timbuktu, but was unable to reach the end of the river before he died of unknown causes.²⁴ His explorations helped to spark the British desire to get further inland from the coast of West Africa in order to find new trading partners to help Europe lay hold of the imagined wonders of Africa’s interior.

Even with the explorations that took place in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the contents and topography of the interior portions of Africa remained widely unknown to Europeans. There were large sections of the interior map of Africa completely unknown to Europeans and there was a growing interest to know what lay beyond the known.²⁵ In order for Europeans to know what geography, peoples, and life existed in the heart of Africa, there needed to be one who could overcome the challenges of travel during that time and who was willing to go exploring into the unknown in the name of science, or something else.

²² *The World Book Encyclopedia* (Willard, OH: RR Donnelley, 2015), 2: 648.

²³ *The World Book Encyclopedia* (Willard, OH: RR Donnelley, 2015), 15: 169.

²⁴ Anthony Sattin, “Mungo Park: Solving the Mystery on the Niger,” In *The Great Explorers*, ed. Robin Hanbury-Tenison, (London: Thames & Hudson, 2010), 134-135.

²⁵ Jonathan Kangwa, “The Legacy of David Livingstone: A Contribution to Sustainable Tourism,” *The Expository Times* 128 (2017): 211.

David Livingstone's Life and Work

David Livingstone was born March 19, 1813 in Blantyre, Scotland. He was the second child of Neil and Agnes Livingstone- poor working class people. His home was filled with learning and love, though their financial situation sent Livingstone to work in the local cotton mill as a piecer at age ten. In order to continue his education, he attended night school after a full day's work and would perform independent study while working by reading books one sentence at a time as they were propped on his machine. When reflecting on his childhood in his first book, *Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa*, Livingstone said that given the choice he would have liked "to begin life over again in the same lowly style and to pass through the same hardy training."²⁶ It was during that childhood that Livingstone gained from his father a deep appreciation for religion and missions. Livingstone's father was a traveling salesman and took stories of the gospel with him wherever he went. Livingstone's affection for reading is what brought him, at last to find peace between his love for science and his passion for God when he read books by Thomas Dick, which "enabled him to see clearly, that what to him was of vital significance, that religion and science were not necessarily hostile, but rather friendly to each other."²⁷ Several years later, Livingstone read of Karl Gützlaff who was a medical missionary in China between 1820 and 1850.²⁸ This was Livingstone's inspiration to be the hands and feet of God by serving as a doctor and a minister to those beyond the borders of Europe.

²⁶ William Garden Blaikie, *The Personal Life of David Livingstone: chiefly from his unpublished journals and correspondence in the possession of his family* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1880), 31.

²⁷ William Garden Blaikie, *The Personal Life of David Livingstone*, 28

²⁸ Jessie G. Lutz, "The Legacy of Karl Friedrich August Gützlaff," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 24 (Jul 01, 2000): 2.

Missionary Work

As a missionary, David Livingstone's goal was to be completely self-sufficient in his work, but advice from a friend led Livingstone to join the London Missionary Society. He was particularly drawn to this society because of its nondenominational nature. Livingstone believed missionaries should not be caught up in the intricacies of specific denominations when there were so many people in the world who had never even heard the basic gospel message before. In joining the London Missionary Society, Livingstone was given further theological training, financial support, and the rejection to go to China- the mission field of his first intentions. The beginning of the opium wars in China closed the door for any new missionaries to be assigned to that vast country. Instead, Livingstone met Robert Moffat- a missionary serving in southern Africa who was in England on leave from his mission post in order to garner support for his work. Livingstone's heart was softened and he set out for Cape Colony, Africa only days after receiving both his medical degree and his ordination certificate.

Upon reaching the mission at Kuruman, 700 miles north of Cape Colony, Livingstone quickly settled into his place. While awaiting specific instructions from England and the return of the Moffat family, Livingstone led sermons and bible studies as well as starting to learn the language of the local tribe. His language study was carried out by submersing himself in the language and cultures of the local tribes and interacting with his medical patients in only their native tongue as much as possible.²⁹ He felt that the gospel would best be communicated if done directly in the native tongue of the people rather than through an interpreter. Being able to speak the language of the people helped him build strong relationships wherever he went. It also

²⁹ Charles J. Finger, *David Livingstone: Explorer and Prophet* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1927), 27-28.

allowed him to continue a steady schedule of preaching in every village he stopped in.³⁰ Though it is not recorded as a regular occurrence, Livingstone's desire to spread the knowledge of his Savior led him to tell everyone he came in contact with about the love of God and his saving grace.

Livingstone's real work among a tribe did not begin until 1843 when he received a letter from the directors of the Society approving him being able to move beyond Kuruman to establish his own mission further into the interior of Africa. For the next nine years, Livingstone and his ever growing family lived in three different locations requiring the building of three different homes and schools. At each of the locations, the Livingstones' activities looked much the same. In his first book, Livingstone describes some of the daily activities as teaching the villagers, domestic and manual labor, meeting with the villagers to discuss various topics, and practicing medicine.³¹ This was the time in David Livingstone's life marked with a relatively sedentary lifestyle and a daily interaction with the peoples he was working to win for the Gospel.

This period of his life, though attached to fixed places, also included several explorations in an effort to find suitable lands for new missions in his push to bring the Gospel ever further into the African interior. The increasing pressure from the anti-Christian movements in the area and the knowledge that his family could not safely continue to traverse Africa with him led Livingstone to go with his family to Cape Town in 1852 in order to send his wife and his children back to Britain. Though this decision broke his heart, he felt it was the best way to keep his family safe while he traveled extensively in search of a new location for a missionary station.

³⁰ Charles J. Finger, *David Livingstone: Explorer and Prophet*, 28.

³¹ Mrs. J. H. Worcester Jr., *David Livingstone: First to Cross Africa with the Gospel* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1993), 23.

It is at this period in his life that the line between missionary and explorer became irreversibly blurred. From 1852 until 1856, Livingstone worked his way west to the coastal settlement of Luanda then he turned and marched east to Quilimane. On his four year trip, Livingstone had successfully traversed the entirety of the continent, located and documented Victoria Falls, and followed almost the entire length of the Zambezi River. This is the trip for which Livingstone is probably most famous and upon returning to Britain shortly thereafter, he soon realized how far reaching his fame had become.

During his two year stay in Britain, Livingstone wrote his first book, *Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa*, spoke to crowds of various sizes and purposes, attended social events, and spent a little time with his family. It was during this time that his break from the London Missionary Society was finalized. Livingstone saw his “exploration not as antithetical to mission but integral to it. He said, ‘Whatever way my life may be spent so as to promote the glory of our gracious God, I feel anxious to do it.... My life may be spent as profitably as a pioneer as in any other way.’”³² The leaders of the society, however, did not think that money should be continued to be allocated for his salary if he was going to continue with his explorations rather than with direct evangelization. It was also during this visit to Europe that Livingstone delivered the address to a group of university students at Cambridge emphatically imploring them consider the work of Africa as a worthy cause for their future.³³ His pleadings for Africa were evidence that his heart wanted little else than to return to continue his work.

Given his success in walking across Africa, Livingstone was hired as a consul for the British government and in 1858 was given charge over an expedition to chart the Zambezi River.

³² James Tengesha, “Dr. Livingstone, I Presume? The Legacy of Dr. David Livingstone,” *The Society of Malawi Journal* 66 (2013): 5.

³³ Mrs. J. H. Worcester Jr., *David Livingstone: First to Cross Africa with the Gospel*, 57.

The hope was that the river would prove to be a navigable route into Central Africa in order to establish a reliable route for trade.³⁴ Six Europeans, a steamship, and considerable provisions were sent with Livingstone to Africa where they hired a group African workers and headed toward the interior. By most accounts the expedition was a massive failure. The river proved unnavigable due to some huge rapids, the steamship was nearly useless after only a few years, and disagreements among the crew led to many of the Europeans leaving. Livingstone also suffered great loss during this trip when his wife died just months after joining him. Though Livingstone was able to chart the Shire River and Lake Nyasa, the expedition was recalled in 1864, six years after it had begun. Livingstone's return to Britain on this occasion was filled with fewer accolades and praises.³⁵ This by no means is an indication that he was shunned by the public or an outcast among intellectuals. He was still accepted and appreciated for the work he had done, however, his successes on this trip had been combined with some very staunch failures.

Livingstone once more set pen to paper to write a book during his time in Britain, this time producing a volume titled *Narrative of an Expedition to the Zambesi and Its Tributaries; and the Discovery of the Lakes Shirwa and Nyassa. 1858-1864*. He also spent time with his children and friends as well as giving more speeches and attending various social events. As proof that he had not been completely rejected by the geographical community, on behalf of the Geographical Society, one of Livingstone's closest companions and supporters asked him if he would return to Africa and help settle the dispute of the location of the Nile's source.

In 1866, David Livingstone entered Africa with a group of African porters in an effort to find the source of the Nile, spread the Gospel, and possibly determine a few optimal locations for

³⁴ Lawrence Driksas, *Zambesi: David Livingstone and Expeditionary Science in Africa*, (London: I.B. Tauris, 2010), 11.

³⁵ Lawrence Driksas, *Zambesi*, 20.

new missionary stations. Though this exploration would last until his death in 1873, the road was not an easy one. His porters began deserting him early in the adventure, one of which left with the medicine Livingstone needed in order to stave off the effects of fever. Without his medicine, Livingstone succumbed to the symptoms of fever very shortly afterward and never truly recovered. When the symptoms of the diseases and parasites from his time in Africa made it impossible for him to continue in his own strength, he was carried by some of his loyal porters until they reached Ujiji where they were forced to stop for want of supplies and Livingstone's feeble state.³⁶ It was here that Livingstone was 'discovered' by Henry Morton Stanley who uttered the now famous words "Dr. Livingstone, I presume?"

A little over a year following that encounter, after being rejuvenated by Stanley's company and supplies, Livingstone found himself being once more without medicine and being carried by his loyal African employees. The group was on their way south after another dead end in the search for the source of the Nile. They stopped in the village of Chitambo to allow Livingstone a sheltered place to rest and try to recover his strength. The morning of May 1, 1873 David Livingstone was found dead in his hut. His death was likely the result of amoebic dysentery combined with schistosomiasis, both caused by parasites commonly found in water in the areas in which he explored.³⁷ Those who had carried his body in his final days of life removed his organs to bury them and began the preparation of his body for mummification. In February of 1874, Livingstone's porters delivered his body to officials in Zanzibar so they could transport his body back to England. After positive identification, David Livingstone's body was

³⁶ Martin Dugard, *Into Africa: The Epic Adventures of Stanley and Livingstone*, (Danvers, Mass: Crown/Archetype, 2003), 254.

³⁷ Michael Barrett, "Long Walk to Freedom: David Livingstone's remarkable travels through Africa eventually killed him, but his research into disease opened the way for great scientific discovery. What is the explorer's legacy, 200 years after his birth?" *New Statesman* 142 (Feb 2013): 24.

laid to rest in Westminster Abbey on April 18, 1874 following one of the largest and well attended funerals Britain had ever seen.

Medical Work

David Livingstone attended medical school at Anderson's College in Glasgow.³⁸ Though he came from a poor family, he put himself through college by going to work at the mill between his semesters of class. At the time of his attending medical school with the intention of being a missionary, the idea of a medical missionary was still a relatively new concept, seen almost exclusively in connection with China during that time.³⁹ The rarity did not stop Livingstone's determined, self-denying path and in 1840 he received his medical license. It was with newly earned medical license and recently received ordination that David Livingstone boarded the boat for Africa's Southern coast.

Though he was not the first of medical training to go to Africa, Livingstone's arrival marks one of the first instances of a European arriving in Africa with the intent to treat the injuries and ailments of the African villagers and not just Europeans. As a result, his medical practice was widely popular across the region. While working from the missionary station in Kuruman in 1841, Livingstone writes to Dr. Risdon Bennett of his medical practice:

"Here I have an immense practice. I have patients now under treatment who have walked 130 miles for my advice; and when these go home, others will come for the same purpose. This is the country for a medical man if he wants a large practice, but he must leave fees out of the question! The Bechuanas have a great deal more disease than I expected to find among a savage nation; but little else can be expected, for they are nearly naked, and endure the

³⁸ Clare Pettitt, "David Livingstone: Africa Coast to Coast," In *The Great Explorers*, ed. by Robin Hanbury-Tenison, (London: Thames & Hudson, 2010), 142.

³⁹ William Garden Blaikie, *The Personal Life of David Livingstone*, 35.

scorching heat of the day and the chills of the night in that condition, Add to this that they are absolutely omnivorous. Indigestion, rheumatism, ophthalmia are the prevailing diseases.”⁴⁰

It was through his medical knowledge that Livingstone was sometimes able to bring peace between himself and an angry village chief. In one case, Livingstone arrived in a village to find an angry chief, Sechéle, who threatened Livingstone. However, at the same time, “it happened that his only child was ill when the missionary arrived, and also the child of one of his principal men, Livingstone’s treatment of both was successful, and Sechéle had not an angry word.”⁴¹ It was because of Livingstone’s medical knowledge that he was able to build a relationship with that chief that lasted for the rest of Livingstone’s life.

However, Livingstone was not so stubborn as to rely solely upon his European medical training, he also sought the knowledge of the African villagers in treating African diseases. In his journal about African fever he states, “I would go to the parts where it prevails most, and try to discover if the natives have a remedy for it. I must make my inquiries of the river people in the quarter.”⁴² His willingness to combine his scientific medical knowledge with the empirical medical knowledge of the peoples in whose land he found himself allowed him, no doubt, to become a more efficient medical practitioner.

During his extensive time in Africa, Livingstone was able to overcome one of the biggest obstacles to permanent European engagement with Africa- malaria. In order to accomplish this he “listened attentively to local witchdoctors, carefully documented the plants they used and assessed their activity.”⁴³ He combined this with his knowledge and previous readings about the treatment of fevers with quinine to begin a self-administered regimen. By combining African

⁴⁰ William Garden Blaikie, *The Personal Life of David Livingstone*, 66.

⁴¹ William Garden Blaikie, *The Personal Life of David Livingstone*, 69.

⁴² William Garden Blaikie, *The Personal Life of David Livingstone*, 154.

⁴³ Michael Barrett, “Long Walk to Freedom,” 26.

medical knowledge with his European training, he was able to create a treatment that kept him alive through over 30 years of living in Africa.

Though he was not able to do much else in the way of curing many of the common ailments and parasites that are still common in Africa, Livingstone's "extraordinary powers of observation ensured that he noted and described many of the medical problems afflicting Africans and attempted to consider their causes."⁴⁴ His ability to apply his careful observations with his scientific medical background allowed the common afflictions of Africa to be brought to the eyes of the world. This brought not only a cursory knowledge of the happening of Africa, but also allowed for the addition of scientific medical minds to the fight against these diseases and parasites.

Political and Economic Work

Even though slavery had been outlawed in the British Empire by the time Livingstone journeyed to Africa, the slave trade was far from over in many other parts of the world. Most notably, Arab slave traders were still penetrating deep into Eastern and Central Africa to capture slaves. Livingstone was opposed to the idea of humans being treated so horrifically even before his advent to Africa, but upon seeing the work of slavers for himself, we worked ceaselessly to bring about a worldwide ban on slavery. On each of his trips to Britain, his speeches implored his listeners to do their part in ending the British involvement with the continuation of the slave trade.

Livingstone's plan to eradicate the slave trade was to replace it with more sustainable and helpful commerce. In a letter written to the Directors of the London Missionary Society in October 1851, Livingstone says, "if we can enter in and form a settlement, we shall be able in the

⁴⁴ John M. MacKenzie, "2013: The Year of David Livingstone," *African Research and Documentation* 120 (2012), 2.

course of a very few years to put a stop to the slave-trade in that quarter. It is probable that the mere supply of English manufacturers on Sebituane's part will affect this."⁴⁵ Livingstone recognized that tribes often engaged in the trading of other tribesmen simply due to the want of European manufactured goods like guns and textiles. He believed, as others did during the same time period, that if slaves could be substituted for another good that was not harmful to other humans, the slave trade would be able to stop with minimal detriment to the economic balance.

In order to help maintain the proposed new economic balance, Livingstone suggested the integration of small European settlements among the African tribes. With the idea that "the introduction of legitimate trade through 'Christianity, commerce and civilization' would undermine the abhorrent slave trade,"⁴⁶ Livingstone hoped his settlement establishment plan would be helpful for both Europeans and Africans. He recommended that a colony be made up of "twenty or thirty families from among the Scotch or English poor."⁴⁷ He hoped that the families would be able to work together with the local villages and the two groups would work together and learn from one another. Together they would become agriculturally and therefore economically successful enough to drive the perceived necessity of the slave trade out of the area.

Geographical Explorations

In the modern centuries, David Livingstone is now best known by his contributions to the geographic knowledge of the European and American world. He is known for his precise measurements and copious observations of plants, animals, geography, people, and nature; though his education in these fields came in a bit of an unconventional way. His knowledge of

⁴⁵ William Garden Blaikie, *The Personal Life of David Livingstone*, 135.

⁴⁶ Michael Barrett, "Presumed Innocent: Michael Barrett on the Contentious Life and Work of David Livingstone, 'The First African Freedom Fighter'," *New Statesman* 131 (Jul 2002): 50.

⁴⁷ Mrs. J. H. Worcester Jr., *David Livingstone: First to Cross Africa with the Gospel*, 60.

flora and fauna came from both his extensive reading and self-education and through knowledge gained through various friendships from his days at the medical school. His ability to make such detailed and knowledgeable observations of his geographical location came from the lessons of astrological navigation given him by the captain of the boat on which he first sailed from Britain to Africa in 1841.⁴⁸ Livingstone's willingness and ability to learn new things allowed him to eventually possess skills in many trades, make advances in medical knowledge, and provided him the ability to accurately chart millions of miles of African interior.

During his life he impressed the world by "travelling 29,000 miles in Africa, adding to the known portion of the globe about a million square miles, discovering lakes N'gami, Shirwa, Nyassa, Moero and Bangweolo, the upper Zambesi and many other rivers, and the wonderful Victoria Falls. He was also the first European to traverse the entire length of Lake Tanganyika, and to travel over the vast water-shed near Lake Bangweolo, and, through no fault of his own, he only just missed the information that would have set at rest his conjectures as to the White Nile's source. He greatly increased the knowledge of the geography, fauna and flora of the interior, yet never lost sight of the great objects of his life, the putting down of the slave-trade, and the evangelization of Africa."⁴⁹ Livingstone was relentless in his desire to find a passable water route leading directly into the interior of Africa so as to link the inside of Africa with the rest of the outside world. His ultimate goal was to serve his Maker by ending the slave trade and proclaiming the gospel to those who had never heard. In order to end the slave trade, he joined in the popular thinking of that era that if other commerce was instituted in the area, the slave trade would die out on its own. Livingstone also hoped to save the African peoples he met from their perceived 'barbarism' by teaching them the principles of living a Christian life. The continued

⁴⁸Charles J. Finger, *David Livingstone: Explorer and Prophet*, 17.

⁴⁹ Mrs. J. H. Worcester Jr., *David Livingstone: First to Cross Africa with the Gospel*, 110.

exploration and detailed scientific notations were the out flowing of his plan as he believed that for “his style and type of missionary: ‘the end of the geographical feat is only the beginning of the enterprise.’”⁵⁰ By helping others to know the peoples and landscapes of the interior of Africa, he hoped to prepare an easier path for other missionaries and settlers to follow after him. Though he was never able to find the water passage he was looking for- in the Nile, the Zambesi, or the Congo rivers, his other vast geographical findings and scientific notations did lay the foundations for Europeans to follow him into Africa’s heartlands for centuries after his death.

The Legacy of David Livingstone

Missions

Due to the books produced by David Livingstone and the copious news articles written about him and his adventures, the idea of committing to mission work was implanted in the hearts and minds of people all over Europe and the United States. This effect was felt very strongly in Scotland where it can be said that “at least two generations of Scots before the First World War felt the ‘Livingstone effect’ keenly: Some traveled to Africa as doctors- particularly missionary doctors, directly inspired by Livingstone.”⁵¹ The adventures, fame, and exchanges of Livingstone’s time in Africa inspired countless others to follow in their calling, no matter what their station in life.

In large part due to the emphatic speech Livingstone gave at Cambridge, the University Mission to Central Africa was formed. In providing medical treatment and the hope for religious conversion, the mission “looked back to a doctor- David Livingstone- as its founder.”⁵² Though

⁵⁰ James Tengesada, “Dr. Livingstone, I Presume? The Legacy of Dr. David Livingstone,” 5.

⁵¹ Markku Hokkanen, “Missionaries, Agents of Empire, and Medical Educators: Scottish Doctors in Late Nineteenth-Century Southern and East-Central Africa,” *In Africa in Scotland, Scotland in Africa: Historical Legacies and Contemporary Hybridities*, ed. A. Adogame & A. Lawrence. (Leiden, 2014): 12.

⁵² Terence O. Ranger, “Godly Medicine: The Ambiguities of Medical Mission in Southeast Tanzania, 1900-1945,” *Social Science & Medicine. Part B: Medical Anthropology* 15 (Jul 1981): 261.

Livingstone was never alive to see the physical conception of the mission, the movement he stirred in the hearts of the university students lived on after his passing to continue serving Africans' medical needs with the goal of reaching their spiritual needs concurrently.

Medical

Dr. Livingstone's notations of the diseases and parasites he encountered were instrumental in helping to form scientific conclusions about how certain diseases spread and how to go about curing, treating and preventing them. He took careful notes that related the outbreak of Malaria with the presence of mosquitos, though he remained in agreement with the idea of miasmas being the root cause of the disease. His careful observations helped with the later discovery of the blood parasite that causes Malaria. Additionally, his Malaria medication regimen was also later marketed by Burroughs, Wellcome & Co as "Livingstone Rousers."⁵³ Through careful observation, willingness to learn, and reliance on scientific inquiry, Livingstone was able to create a solid medical foundation on which other doctors and scientists were able to build to continue to increase the knowledge of Africa's ailments and their treatments, cures, and preventions in all parts of Africa that Livingstone visited.

Livingstone's explorations throughout the southern portion of the African continent led to an increase in the knowledge of not only locations of people groups, but also suitable locations at which new missions could be placed. Not long after his final journey, missionary doctors began arriving in Africa in increasingly large numbers and setting up new missions that included a hospital or clinic with the goal of healing and educating the local African tribes. Due to the large European influence of the missions, "in most territories, it was the missions, not the colonial administrations, who first introduced Western education, medicine, and public health and

⁵³ Michael Barrett, "Long Walk to Freedom," 26.

initiated, for better or worse, profound changes in the organization and quality of social and economic life.”⁵⁴ The medical mission stations inspired by Livingstone’s legacy and made possible by his explorations led to epicenters of cultural, medical, economic, and sometimes religious changes. These stations are often seen as the seeds for the spread of the imperialistic grab for African territory that took place at the dawn of the twentieth century.

Africa- Commerce/Imperialism

There can be no doubt that Livingstone’s exploratory work helped to influence the flow of Europeans into Africa in the years that followed his adventures. As he traveled making careful observations, “his work in these regions revealed to the western world that Africa was rich in rivers, lakes, fertile lands and minerals.”⁵⁵ The increased knowledge in Europe of Africa’s natural riches helped influence merchants to once more pursue Africa as a place of business and colonizers to seek in Africa a new home. Though it is likely that his work helped contribute to the European ‘Scramble for Africa’ that took place at the end of the nineteenth century, it can be concluded that David Livingstone “was more of an instrument of expanding empire than its instigator.”⁵⁶ His writings show that he had nothing but the best interest for the peoples of Africa in his heart.

Livingstone treated people he encountered with respect and kindness, which included the African peoples he encountered during his treks. His ideas were in line with others of the day in believing that “African agricultural development would undercut the slave trade at its source, by providing much more profitable access to the Western manufactured goods that Africans clearly

⁵⁴ Charles M. Good, “Pioneer Medical Missions in Colonial Africa,” *Social Science Medicine* 32 (1991): 3.

⁵⁵ Jonathan Kangwa, “The Legacy of David Livingstone”, 213.

⁵⁶ John M. MacKenzie, “David Livingstone- Prophet or Patron Saint of Imperialism in Africa: Myths and Misconceptions,” *Scottish Geographical Journal* 129 (2013): 289.

wanted.”⁵⁷ His idea for integrating Europeans into Africa was to help increase the productivity of Africa in things other than humans for the benefit of all. The harsh and unjust imperialism and colonialism that followed his explorations were never his intention.

Africa- Geographically

Following Livingstone’s grand adventures in Africa, many were inspired to go themselves into the unknown regions of Africa and fill in the blanks of European knowledge. One of the more notable explorers that followed Livingstone was Henry Morton Stanley. Not only was Stanley the one who brought aid to Livingstone at Ujiji, but Stanley also picked up where Livingstone’s geographical explorations had ceased upon his death. After Livingstone’s death, Stanley wrote, “others must go forward and fill the gap.”⁵⁸ His intentions were to carry on the exploratory advances of Livingstone which he did in 1874-1877. During his trek, he walked over 7,000 miles and followed the course of the Congo River.⁵⁹ This was also the trip during which he confirmed early suspicions that Lake Victoria was the source of the White Nile River.⁶⁰ His life was afterward characterized by his less than kind treatment of his African counterparts, but his exploration to find the source of two rivers was instrumental in giving him a permanent place in geographic history and in bringing to completion Livingstone’s final quest.

Conclusion

David Livingstone is a historical figure who has at times been idolized and at other times despised. He was a man who was not perfect in all of his conducts, attitudes, opinions, or

⁵⁷ Andrew F. Walls, “The Legacy of David Livingstone,” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 11 (Jul 1987): 126.

⁵⁸ Clare Pettitt, *Dr. Livingstone, I Presume?: Missionaries, Journalists, Explorations, and Empire* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2007), 186-187.

⁵⁹ Clare Pettitt, *Dr. Livingstone, I Presume?*, 187.

⁶⁰ James L. Newman, “Henry Morton Stanley: Imperial Servant,” In *The Great Explorers*, ed. Robin Hanbury-Tenison, (London: Thames & Hudson, 2010), 161.

methods but he spent his life in Africa serving God. He did his utmost to treat all Africans he encountered with respect and kindness and worked toward the goal of helping to better their lives through the abolition of the capture of slaves, working to spread Christianity, and through his proposed settlements that would benefit both the Africans and the incoming Europeans. David Livingstone is neither all good, nor all bad, but thanks in part to his work the East African Slave trade was brought to a stop, African diseases and parasites were brought to European knowledge for experimentation to find treatments and cures, and an estimated one million miles of African landscape was added to European knowledge.

Resources

- Barrett, Michael. "Long Walk to Freedom: David Livingstone's remarkable travels through Africa eventually killed him, but his research into disease opened the way for great scientific discovery. What is the explorer's legacy, 200 years after his birth?" *New Statesman* 142 (Feb 2013): 24-29.
- Barrett, Michael. "Presumed Innocent: Michael Barrett on the Contentious Life and Work of David Livingstone, 'The First African Freedom Fighter'," *New Statesman* 131 (Jul 2002): 50-51.
- Blaikie, William Garden. *The Personal Life of David Livingstone: chiefly from his unpublished journals and correspondence in the possession of his family*. New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1880.
- Bredin, Miles. "James Bruce: Charm and Courage in Abyssinia." In *The Great Explorers*, edited by Robin Hanbury-Tenison, 121-125. London: Thames & Hudson, 2010.
- Cohn-Sherbok, Lavinia. "Moffat, Robert (1795-1883)." In *Who's Who in Christianity*, Routledge. 2nd ed. Routledge, 2001. https://login.ezproxy.gvsu.edu/login?url=http://search.credoreference.com/content/entry/routwwchr/moffat_robert_1795_1883/0?institutionId=222.
- Curtin, Philip D. *Death by Migration: Europe's encounter with the tropical world in the nineteenth century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989. MPublishing, 2017. <http://hdl.handle.net.ezproxy.gvsu.edu/2027/heh.05754.0001.001>
- Curtin, Philip D. *The Image of Africa: British Ideas and Action, 1780-1850*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1964.
- Dritsas, Lawrence. *Zambesi: David Livingstone and Expeditionary Science in Africa*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2010.
- Dugard, Martin. *Into Africa: The Epic Adventures of Stanley and Livingstone*. Danvers, Mass: Crown/Archetype, 2003.
- Finger, Charles J. *David Livingstone: Explorer and Prophet*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1927.
- Good, Charles M. "Pioneer Medical Missions in Colonial Africa." *Social Science Medicine* 32 (1991): 1-10.
- Hokkanen, Markku. "Missionaries, Agents of Empire, and Medical Educators: Scottish Doctors in Late Nineteenth-Century Southern and East-Central Africa." In *Africa in Scotland, Scotland in Africa: Historical Legacies and Contemporary Hybridities*, edited by A. Adogame & A. Lawrence. 77-89. Leiden, 2014.

- Kangwa, Jonathan. "The Legacy of David Livingstone: A Contribution to Sustainable Tourism." *The Expository Times* 128 (2017): 209-221.
- Lovette, Richard. *The History of the London Missionary Society, 1795-1895*. 2 vols. London: H. Frowde, 1899; University of Michigan, 2017. <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015052702605;view=1up;seq=12>.
- Lutz, Jessie G. "The Legacy of Karl Friedrich August Gützlaff." *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 24, no 3 (Jul 01, 2000): 123-129. <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.gvsu.edu/docview/1299979634?pq-origsite=summon>.
- MacKenzie, John M. "2013: The Year of David Livingstone." *African Research and Documentation* 120 (2012): 33- 37.
- MacKenzie, John M. "David Livingstone- Prophet or Patron Saint of Imperialism in Africa: Myths and Misconceptions." *Scottish Geographical Journal* 129 (2013): 277-291.
- Newman, James L. "Henry Morton Stanley: Imperial Servant." In *The Great Explorers*, edited by Robin Hanbury-Tenison, 158-165. London: Thames & Hudson, 2010.
- Pettitt, Clare. "David Livingstone: Africa Coast to Coast." In *The Great Explorers*, edited by Robin Hanbury-Tenison, 142-151. London: Thames & Hudson, 2010.
- Pettitt, Clare. *Dr. Livingstone, I Presume?: Missionaries, Journalists, Explorations, and Empire*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2007.
- Ranger, Terence O. "Godly Medicine: The Ambiguities of Medical Mission in Southeast Tanzania, 1900-1945." *Social Science & Medicine. Part B: Medical Anthropology* 15 (Jul 1981): 261-277.
- Rippon, John. *An Account of the London Missionary Society: extracted from Dr. Rippon's Baptist annual register. To which is added, the state of the religion at Siera Leone, in Africa. From numbers 10 and 11 of the Register. With an evangelical hymn, composed in the Bengal language, 1788. By Ram Ram Boshoo, a Hindoo munshee*. Philadelphia: Lang & Ustick, 1796.
- Sattin, Anthony. "Mungo Park: Solving the Mystery on the Niger." In *The Great Explorers*, edited by Robin Hanbury-Tenison, 130-135. London: Thames & Hudson, 2010.
- Tengatenga, James. "Dr. Livingstone, I Presume? The Legacy of Dr. David Livingstone." *The Society of Malawi Journal* 66 (2013): 1-22.
- Walls, Andrew F. "The Legacy of David Livingstone." *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 11 (Jul 1987): 125- 129.

Walters, William. *Life and Labours of Robert Moffat, D.D.: Missionary in South Africa, with Additional Chapters on Christian Missions in Africa and Throughout the World*. London: Walter Scott, Limited, 1882; Hathi Trust Digital Library, 2017. <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/nnc1.cu60537345>.

Worcester Jr., Mrs., J. H. *David Livingstone: First to Cross Africa with the Gospel*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1993.

The World Book Encyclopedia. 22 vols. Willard, OH: RR Donnelley, 2015.