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## **Language of Instruction and Interaction with Host Communities in the Rescued Slave Schools of Zanzibar and Muscat**

**C. J. Denman, M.Ed., Ed.D. Research Scholar**

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### **Abstract**

During the mid-nineteenth century, a number of Christian missionary societies in the Western world began turning their attentions to East and Central Africa and the Arabian Gulf. They were drawn to these regions through the hope of winning converts in traditionally Arab-dominated lands and, in doing so, helping bring an end to the Indian Ocean slave trade. Two such societies that were to establish a presence in the sultanates of Zanzibar and Muscat were the Anglican Church's United Universities' Mission to Central Africa (UMCA) and the American Reformed Church's Arabian Mission. Both missions directed a good deal of their early efforts at providing education for freed slaves in the two sultanates and, as such, were among the first to establish "modern" Western-style schools in their respective regions. The level of interaction these institutions had with their host communities was related to a number of factors, with one of the most

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significant of these being the choice of language of instruction. This paper, therefore, examines the relationship between medium of instruction and interaction with host communities in two of the earliest freed slave schools in Zanzibar and Muscat - the UMCA's St. Andrew's Teacher Training College and the Arabian Mission's Peter Zwemer School.

### **Language of Instruction and Interaction with Host Communities in the Rescued Slave Schools of Zanzibar and Muscat**

The nineteenth century Christian missionary expansion into East Africa and the Arabian Gulf was represented to audiences in the parishes of the West as a necessary manifestation of the "white man's burden". In particular, the extent of the slave trade across the western Indian Ocean and its offshoots, in addition to the animistic beliefs of the tribes of the African interior, were presented as rallying points for the extension of Christian missionary enterprise in these lands. That at least the former of these two states of affair was perceived as actively encouraged by local Arab and Persian rulers added to both the challenge and necessity of bringing Christianity to the region through rigorous missionary endeavour.

However, it was also the dominance of Islam across much of these lands that lead the first missionaries to acknowledge the difficulties inherent in their proposed undertakings. For this reason, the Western missionaries that began establishing outposts in the Arab Gulf and East Africa in the mid-nineteenth century entered the field with an acute understanding that, to win converts, they must not only demonstrate the ostensible advantages of their spiritual beliefs, but also of Western technology at large.

In this regard the missionaries were aided by the imposition of colonial rule across vast swathes of Africa following the 1884-1885 Berlin Conference. As the European administrators either extended or established their control across the African continent, signs of Western military might and material advantage were never far away. However, despite a number of notable exceptions, the early colonial administrations of European Africa often paid scant regard to the education and health of their subjects.

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This proved a void the missionaries recognised and subsequently attempted to fill through the provision of Western-style schools and healthcare facilities. These institutions were often employed as central means of proselytizing local African and Arab populations, with missionary work in the sultanates of Zanzibar and Muscat being no exception.

Within these sultanates, missionary groups are often credited with establishing the first “modern” Western-style schools aimed at challenging the influence of the Quran’ic institutions dominating the educational landscape at the time. This is certainly true of two of the first missionary schools founded in Zanzibar and Muscat, both of which began with classes of freed African slaves and placed a premium on developing their students’ English language abilities. In addition to these similarities, these rescued slave schools were also formed not just out of the putatively charitable calling to care for a class of displaced peoples that local authorities often had little inclination to shelter, but also with an eye firmly fixed on the extension of their respective mission’s political and strategic goals.

This focus on expanding missionary activities across Arabia and East and Central Africa through the religious and cultural indoctrination of a cadre of African-born ex-slaves assumed to be largely impervious to the environmental dangers that undermined so much early European missionary work in the region, influenced everything from type of education provided to the choice of language of instruction. To highlight how this latter aspect of education, in particular, is related to the level of interaction these missionary schools were to have with their host communities, this paper will examine two of the earliest schools for freed slaves in the sultanates of Zanzibar and Muscat: the Anglican Church’s UMCA’s St. Andrew’s Teacher Training College and the American Reformed Church’s Arabian Mission’s Peter Zwemer School.

### **A Brief History of the Sultanates of Zanzibar and Muscat and Oman**

Despite its relatively small role in international affairs today, Oman once was an empire that stretched across vast areas of Arabia, East Africa and southern Persia. Omani power in East Africa is often attributed to a continuation of the struggle for control of coastal

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Oman itself between the increasingly powerful line of Imams known as the Ya'rubid clan, and the well-established and well-defended Portuguese. According to Isaac (2004), 1646 saw the signing of a treaty between Imam Nasir bin Muhammad and the British East India Company that granted the Omanis assistance in their struggle to free the port of Sohar in exchange for exclusive British trading rights, the freedom of religious practice for company merchants, and extraterritorial jurisdiction. Sohar was duly liberated, but Portuguese power remained along much of the length of Oman's coastline. In 1650, following the death Imam Nasir, the imam's cousin Sultan bin Saif managed to drive the Portuguese from the remainder of their coastal strongholds, with the fall of the twin forts of São João and Capitão (today known as Al-Jilali and Al-Mirani) in Muscat, in addition to the taking of Muttrah Fort, signaling the end of Portuguese domination in the country (Bhacker, 1992).

Fresh from his successes, Sultan bin Saif constructed a large ocean-going fleet to compliment the Portuguese ships captured in Muscat harbour and began harassing Portuguese possessions along the East African coast. This culminated in the fall of Fort Jesus in Mombasa after nearly three years of siege, with the Mazrui family appointed as administrators on behalf of the Nizwa-based imamate (Whelan, 1984). After Mombasa's fall, the island of Pemba, the second largest in the Zanzibar archipelago, was subsequently taken, though it wasn't until almost thirty years later that the Omanis managed to subjugate the main island Unguja itself.

Although the coming years were marked by civil war and the occupation of Muscat by Persian forces, the country's colonies were largely self-reliant and appear to have continued in Oman's sphere of influence without either serious disruptions or development. In 1741, Ahmed bin Said, who was not a member of the Ya'rubid clan but nonetheless a noteworthy candidate who had distinguished himself in the defence of Sohar from besieging Persian forces, was elected imam, thus beginning the Al Said dynasty as rulers of Zanzibar and Muscat and Oman for at least the next two hundred years.

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By 1748, Ahmed bin Said had completely freed Oman from the Persians. Upon his death in 1783, it was his son, Said, who took the title of imam. However, the new imam's son, Hamid, was appointed Wali of Oman and thus became the real power within the country (Whelan, 1984). As an indicator of the growing importance of Zanzibar to the financial and military power of the Al Saids, Ahmed bin Said's grandson, Sultan Said bin Sultan, relocated the seat of power to the island in the 1830s. This official relocation followed the successful re-imposition of control over the Mombasa Mazruis in 1828, from which Sultan Said bin Sultan proceeded to Zanzibar to reinforce his position. Five years later, Zanzibar was officially proclaimed the new capital of the Omani Empire with the sultan's son, Thwain, appointed the Wali of Muscat (Ingrams, 2007).

Despite being frequently distracted by the spectre of rebellion on the Arabian Peninsula, Sultan Said bin Sultan apparently prospered in his new capital, and by the mid-1840s he had already entered into a Treaty of Amity and Commerce with the United States and a Commercial Treaty with the French. Moreover, the sultan even began working with the British to start limiting the extent of "foreign" slavery in the region. To this end:

permission has been granted to Her Majesty's cruisers to seize any vessels carrying on slave trade, except only such as are engaged in the transport of slaves from one port to another in the Sultan's dominions (Church Missionary House, 1869, p. 121).

The sultan, according to Ingrams (2007), was a willing participant in these measures, even gifting the British the flagship he had sailed from Oman in years before, in addition to refusing compensation for 100,000 crowns he was reported to have personally lost through these restrictions on the slave trade.

Upon the sultan's death at sea on a return voyage to Muscat in 1856, however, his son Majed took control of Zanzibar, while Thwain, the Wali of Muscat, laid claim to the entire Omani Empire. As the two brothers prepared for battle, matters were made even more complex when a third brother, Turki, demanded sovereignty of Sohar, and war across Oman's dominions appeared inevitable. Within this context, the Governor

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General of India, Lord Canning, mediated an agreement between Majed and Thwain that the Sultanate of Muscat and Zanzibar should be divided (Kechichian, 1995). The 1861 Canning Agreement, as it came to be known, stipulated that Majed was to compensate his brother for Muscat's loss of income derived from the domestic slave trade. The "Zanzibar subsidy", set at a value of 40,000 Maria Teresa silver dollars a year, was to be paid to Muscat from the Sultan of Zanzibar's coffers until 1956. When Sultan Majed's successor defaulted on this payment in 1871, however, the Governor General of British India again intervened, and assumed responsibility for the debt until the terms of the original agreement were honoured.

That Lord Canning was able to intervene in what could be perceived as a domestic matter of the Omani Empire, of course, was not without precedent. For instance, frustrated with the apparent inability of Sultan Said bin Sultan to effectively end piracy in the waterways of the Gulf, the British entered a series of agreements with the ruling families of Trucial Oman (modern day United Arab Emirates) that, in effect, recognised their independence. In addition to the breaking of the country into the nine separate units of Oman, Muscat and the seven Trucial Sheikhdoms (Oran, 1961), the sultan's hands were also tied by the British in dealings with foreign and regional powers. In particular, as outlined by a 1798 treaty with Sultan bin Ahmed, the sultanate was legally bound to always side with the British in international affairs and correspondingly deny French and Dutch vessels commercial access to Oman's ports (British Embassy Muscat, 2011).

Unlike the other Gulf sheikhdoms, however, the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman was destined to remain an unofficial British protectorate, and even had its "independence" ostensibly confirmed by a 1951 treaty (Page, 2003). However, a number of indicators from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries point to a country in virtual thrall of British power. The extent of this power could perhaps best be witnessed in British-lead military and diplomatic efforts to quell the rebellion of the Imam of Nizwa from 1913-1920, and, most notably, the virtual takeover of the internal administration of

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the sultanate by British civil servants, civilians and military men following the 1958 “Exchange of Letters”.

Allen and Rigsbee (2000) state the formalised agreement outlined in the “Exchange of Letters between the Government of Great Britain and Northern Island and the Sultan of Muscat and Oman concerning the Sultan’s Armed Forces, Civil Aviation, Royal Air Force Facilities and Economic Development in Muscat and Oman” was negotiated at a time when a series of rebellions across the country combined with the end of the Zanzibar Subsidy to leave Sultan Sa’id’s reign teetering. The agreement offered the sultan financial and military aid in exchange for the re-organisation of Oman’s armed forces and the establishment of a civil development program to oversee advancements in the areas of health, agriculture, roadways and education. The department set up to oversee these developments, funded by the Foreign Office and run by British civil servants, effectively left the sultan as head of a “largely puppet administration” (Allen & Rigsbee, 2000, p. 19) in his own country. This de facto British rule of both the internal and external affairs of the sultanate was to continue until the time when Sultan Sa’id abdicated in favour of his son, the Sandhurst-educated Sultan Qaboos, in 1970.

In a similar manner, the assertion of British power in the Sultanate of Zanzibar also developed in incremental steps. Although the 1884-1885 Berlin Conference, in which Africa was divided between the European colonial powers, and the subsequent Anglo-German Agreement of the following year, apparently recognised Zanzibar’s special status by affording the sultan control of the archipelago in addition to a limited coastal strip between Tunghi Bay in Tanganyika and the River Tana in modern-day Kenya, a number of towns on the Somali coast and the islands of the Lamu archipelago (Maina, Obaka & Makong’o, 2004), the increasing amount of pressure brought upon the sultan to put a complete end to the slave trade in the Indian Ocean eventually stripped the ruler of one of his main sources of wealth. This forced Sultan Barghash, second sultan of Zanzibar and son of Sultan Majed, to begin selling off his African colonial holdings until, by the end of the nineteenth century, very little of the territory he had inherited was left. This left Zanzibar in a vulnerable position, which was further accentuated by the

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Heligoland-Zanzibar Treaty of 1890 in which, among a number of other provisions, the small North Sea archipelago of Heligoland was handed to Germany in exchange for a guarantee the Germans would not interfere with British interests in Zanzibar (Graham Fry, Goldstein & Langhorne, 2002).

With German objections no longer an issue, the British government formally declared Zanzibar a protectorate in the same year. Upon the sudden death of the fifth Sultan of Zanzibar, Sultan Hamad bin Thuwaini, six years later in suspicious circumstances, British military might was employed against the late sultan's cousin, Khalid, who was seen as an usurper due to his refusal to seek the British political resident's approval. The resultant Anglo-Zanzibar War of 1896, often cited as lasting for not quite forty minutes and thus popularly regarded as the shortest war in history, ended with Sultan Khalid fleeing to German East Africa while Sultan Hamud, with full British backing, was duly installed on the throne.

Therefore, much like Sultan Sa'id's relegation to figurehead status in the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman following the 1958 Exchange of Letters, Sultan Hamud, almost sixty years before, also found himself as a ruler whose powers became largely ceremonial in nature. In both sultanates, therefore, British influence was strong. Moreover, during British colonial dominance, one of the key policies introduced by the foreign administration was the initiation or expansion of a government school system featuring either the study of English as a foreign language or a medium of instruction. However, despite the undeniable influence these schools were to have on their respective societies during the latter years of colonial rule, in both cases they were preceded by long periods of time by missionary schools initially established as institutions for the growing number of slaves being freed by British and Arab anti-slavery action in the west Indian Ocean. Two of the earliest and most influential of these freed slave schools were the St. Andrew's Teacher Training College in Zanzibar and the Arabian Mission's Peter Zwemer School in Muscat.

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## **St. Andrew's Teacher Training College**

The presence of British Anglican missionaries in Zanzibar had its roots in the two Cambridge lectures delivered by the renowned Scottish missionary, David Livingstone, to audiences in the University of Cambridge's Senate-House and the local town hall on December 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>, 1857. The speeches are wide-ranging in scope, though contain a number of pointed observations about the salubrious environment of Central Africa's highlands and the warmth with which the peripatetic Livingstone and his message of Christian salvation were received by African tribes who had, in Livingstone's estimation, never yet before seen a white man. Livingstone ends his second speech with a reaffirmation of England's duty to Christianise the "heathen" through the bringing of commerce and the bible to the heart of the African continent, while his first is concluded with the call, "I go back to Africa to try and make an open path for commerce and Christianity; do you carry out the work which I have begun. I leave it with you!" (Livingstone, Monk & Sedgwick, 1860, p. 168).

Livingstone's lectures, according to Royer (2006), lead to the founding of the UMCA, in which the universities of Oxford, Cambridge, Dublin and Durham formed a collaboration to push Anglican missionary efforts into the central territories of Africa the Scottish missionary was reportedly the first to chart. In 1860, the first Bishop of Central Africa, Charles Mackenzie, was appointed by the mission, and, by July of the following year, he had followed Livingstone's course up the Zambezi and Shire rivers to establish the first UMCA mission in Magomero.

Royer (2006) continues that the endeavour was a "momentous failure" for, despite Livingstone's assurances of a climate that was "cool and salubrious, fit for European residence" (Livingstone, Monk & Sedgwick, 1860, p. 186), disease and famine wreaked havoc. After Bishop Mackenzie died of blackwater fever at the start of 1862, therefore, the location was soon abandoned. The next bishop, George Tozer, consequently moved the mission's location to a site around 200 miles downriver and at a higher altitude than the original outpost. However this, too, proved ill-suited for long-term habitation and was abandoned after a matter of months. In order to prevent the mission ending in utter

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defeat, Bishop Tozer realised the need to select a more favourable location from which efforts at converting Central Africa could be directed.

Although Madagascar was originally considered, Bishop Tozer eventually settled upon Zanzibar as the location for UMCA's African headquarters for a number of reasons. Allen (2008) states that foremost among these was the advantage of being "survivable" for Europeans due to its comparatively more favourable environment and developed infrastructure. Moreover, Bishop Tozer believed the island would allow, given its position on well-established trade routes, easy access to supplies that had been all but impossible to procure on the missionary outposts in the continent, while a knowledge of the sultanate's lingua franca, Swahili, would also aid in the timely conversion of Africa's tribes.

The UMCA mission under George Tozer, therefore, reached Zanzibar on the final day of August, 1864. Here, they found an already well-established French Catholic society known as the Holy Ghost Mission based in a convent house near Shangani point (Loimeier, 2009). The first UMCA property in Zanzibar was located not far from their French competitors, after Sultan Majed granted the missionaries use of a house that had previously been employed as a British naval store (Anderson-Morshead, 1897). The mission's first school on Zanzibar was started soon after when the sultan presented Bishop Tozer with five African boys who had been freed from an "illicit" slave dhow – that is, one that had not paid its dues.

By 1866, the UMCA had bought an area of land in Kiungani and was working on a "hostel for released slave boys", later to become St. Andrew's Teacher Training College and then, in its final Zanzibari formation, the Theological College. Student numbers at this school continued to swell, until, according to Royer (2006), it became more or less standard practice for the Royal Navy to release freed slaves into the UMCA's care. These freed slaves were seen by the missionaries as fertile ground for conversion, especially in light of the failure of the missions to overcome the suspicions of Zanzibar's Muslim majority.

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However, the UMCA, much like the French Catholic mission also established on the island, never lost sight of the purpose explicitly outlined in its title – converting the tribes of Central Africa to Christianity. For this reason, St. Andrew’s College was founded in 1871 with the express intent on training mainland Africans as priests and teachers to carry out the mission’s continental work. Students attending the college were either those who had been rescued by the Royal Navy from Indian Ocean slave dhows or were sent to the island from the mission’s outposts across East Africa. The curriculum these students encountered, Allen (2008) states, included religious instruction, geography, church history, English grammar, Arabic, arithmetic, geometry, music and games.

In this way, St. Andrew’s students received the kind of education that was still reserved for a select class in England. From 1873, the medium of instruction in the college changed from English to Swahili, although contemporary accounts the college describe a student body able to switch between the two languages with apparent ease. For example, a late nineteenth century history of the UMCA in Zanzibar offers the following extended description:

When we think of the material from which the boys are drawn, we are amazed at their proficiency. Nicholas, one of the boys in the second class, was twelve years old; he had been born in a slave dhow, and till four years old was with his mother at Mkunazini, when they were sent to join the colony at Masasi; and thus, three years later, Nicholas was carried a second time into slavery by the Magwangwara, but ransomed by Mr. Porter, and at nine years old sent to Kiungani. Yet we find this lad answering correctly such questions as “How was Melchizedek a type of Christ?” “What do you think of Jael killing Sisera?” “How does our Lord teach us chastity, purity, humility?” Questions were put in Church history and doctrine, and he was expected to read and compose in Swahili and English, and he obtained nearly full marks in these two. There is good material at Kiungani, for Nicholas was a very average boy (Anderson-Morshead, 1897, p. 284).

With its insistence on high academic standards through the provision of a Western-style religious education for mainland Africans, St. Andrew’s College became the most famous of the mission schools for Africans in the sultanate. Following Germany’s loss in World War I, the Treaty of Versailles divided the territories of German Language in India [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com)  
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East Africa between Britain, Belgium and Portugal. Tanganyika became a British mandated territory in 1922. The new British administration in Tanganyika, therefore, soon found itself in need of administrative support. However, it was apparently wary of the nationalist movements among the Indians under the British Raj and in South Africa, and was perhaps mindful, too, of the tensions between the Indians and the Arab elite in Zanzibar itself. In light of this predicament, Loimeier (2009) claims it was the graduates of St. Andrew's that eventually came to form the core of African employees in the new mainland British administration. Here, again, their African racial origins combined with their developed English and Swahili linguistic skills to make these graduates a logical choice for extending British rule in the newly acquired territory.

Although the British administration's reliance on the college's graduates may appear a testament to the quality of education available in Kiungani, by 1925 St. Andrew's College was relocated to the mainland town of Minaki and the school building on Zanzibar re-opened as a trade school named St. Paul's High School (Wilson, 1971). In fact, by the end of the Second World War, only four mission schools survived in the Sultanate of Zanzibar affiliated with either UMCA or the Holy Ghost Mission, with another small mission run by the Quakers on Pemba.

The end of the slave trade in the Indian Ocean, improvements in transport and communications infrastructure and the increasing availability of medical and food supplies in Africa itself, combined with the threat of imprisonment in the sultanate for converting from Islam to Christianity, to make Zanzibar a less desirable headquarters for missionary forays into Central Africa. As such, the remaining UMCA education efforts on the island were centred almost exclusively on providing for the needs of Zanzibar's Christian Indian communities, and one of the mission's goals of bringing the indigenous population to the Christian fold was finally abandoned altogether.

### **The Peter Zwemer School**

The first and only missionary school established in the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman was opened in almost identical circumstances, and with direct reference in early

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missionary papers, to Zanzibar's UMCA's hostel for released slave boys. In 1896, the American Reformed Church's recently established missionary in Muscat, Peter Zwemer, was given responsibility for between fourteen and thirty-five east-African slave boys rescued by the Royal Navy from two slave dhows off the Omani coast (DeWitt Mason & Barny, 1926; Scudder, 1998; Wilson, 1996). The boys, ranging in age from around seven to thirteen, were initially put in the charge of the British consul and political agent in Muscat, Captain F.W. Beville. However, this arrangement proved to be unsatisfactory, and Beville soon came to an agreement with Peter Zwemer that the missionary would house and feed the boys, in addition to preparing them for the demands of adult life, until they reached the age of eighteen (Scudder, 1998).

Zwemer's charge, unlike the responsibility Bishop Tozer assumed in Zanzibar some three decades before, came with a stipulation made by the mission's board that no more freed slaves would be added to his care – a condition that was ultimately changed just before the missionary's death to eventually allow for further freed slaves to compliment “graduating” members of the student body (DeWitt Mason & Barny, 1926). However, while the UMCA mission received eighteen further freed slaves as students within its first weeks of operation, Peter Zwemer was initially unsuccessful in his attempts to seek permission to expand the Muscat school. In an 1896 letter, Zwemer wrote of his disappointment with the board's decision to maintain the mission school as a temporary institution, and his resultant inability to assume responsibility for 50 suitably-aged boys freed by Royal Navy raids in the region in the first year of the school's foundation (Scudder, 1998). Despite one the stated goals of the mission being the conversion of Oman's slave population, these boys were eventually sent to institutions in Bombay which Zwemer decried as being insufficient to meet their needs.

The education the African boys received in Muscat's Peter Zwemer School was markedly different from that provided for the freed slaves of St. Andrew's College. In particular, Zwemer focused on providing his students with

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the practical skills they would need to assume independent lives once his remit expired. The most fundamental of these skills, according to an account by the missionary's older brother and fellow member of the Arabian Mission, Samuel Zwemer, was language. In particular, Samuel and Amy Zwemer (1902), Peter's Bahraini-based counterparts, state in their account for children of the mission's work in Arabia that, due to the "wild" state of the rescued slave children, they "need to learn everything, and even their language is of little use to them, as they need to learn Arabic before they can get along in Arabia. The Muscat boys first learned English from the missionary, but it was not easy for them" (p. 103).

However, despite this reference to the need to develop Arabic language skills, accounts of instruction at the Peter Zwemer School state that the local tongue was largely sidelined in the classroom in favour of English both as a subject of study and as the medium of instruction. For example, an official history of the Reformed Church's Arabian Mission activities claims the choice of English as the language of instruction was based on the desire to shelter the rescued slaves from the religious beliefs of Muscat's indigenous population. That is, DeWitt Mason and Barny (1926) state that English was chosen over Arabic as the language the children would learn in "to keep them the more separate from the Moslem religion and customs around them" (p. 91).

Zwemer and Zwemer (1902) offer an interesting account of a typical day's work at the Muscat school. First, it begins with a pre-dawn rise, followed by ablutions, cleaning the school, breakfast, then prayers, hymns and scripture. Finally,

Prayer ended we all march into another room, - you may come too, and begin lessons. The big boys are learning sentences now; the little ones are still at A, B, C, 1, 2, 3. At the end of two hours of spelling, reading and writing, a little simple drill and the morning school is ended. Some of the boys help prepare their fish and rice for dinner, and others make baskets. At three o'clock all march up again for sewing (p. 106)

The success of this school in providing the practical skills these boys needed to make their own ways in the world could be witnessed by the fact that, three years after the death of Peter Zwemer in 1898 from "repeated attacks of

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fever” (Good, 1903, p. 297) upon a return trip to the United States to restore his health, the school was closed with most students having found positions in the mission’s various stations or placed in the homes of locals or foreigners of “good character”. According to DeWitt Mason and Barny (1926), the mission continued to care for the youngest of the school’s children, while two of the eldest boys sailed from Muscat aboard the Royal Navy’s gunboat HMS Sphinx.

After being relocated to mainland Tanganyika in 1925, St. Andrew’s College was replaced by the industry-oriented St. Paul’s High School which was run, after a brief experiment with a mixed Muslim and Christian student body, as a training school for the children of local Christian Indian families. In a similar manner, the new incarnation of the Peter Zwemer School also became focused on the educational needs of the local Omani population. However, while the well-established system of Quran’ic, government and Indian schools within Zanzibar meant St. Paul’s, along with the other missionary schools in operation on the island, only ever had a minimal impact on the education of local Zanzibaris, the Peter Zwemer School could claim a degree of influence among Muscat’s Omani Arab community.

In particular, following the re-opening of the school as the Peter Zwemer Memorial School in 1904 after a short hiatus, the institution operated until 1931 as a day school for boys focusing on the very first years of primary education. Muscat, at the time, had a number of Quran’ic schools in addition to three Hyderabadi institutions operated for the city’s Indian communities (Federal Research Division, 2004). However, the first government school in the capital area didn’t open until 1940 due largely to the resistance of Sultan Sa’id who remained deeply suspicious of the implications educating Oman’s people would have for his reign (Al-Hajri, 2006). For this reason, the Peter Zwemer Memorial School was apparently well-attended and, according to DeWitt Mason and Barny (1926), even attracted the sultan’s nephews.

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Although the missionary schools of Zanzibar after 1948 were afforded government financial assistance as they qualified for granted-in-aid status, Muscat's missionary school apparently never received financial support from outside the Reformed Church itself, and thus was forced shut its doors again in 1931. The school did reopen again in 1939 as the Peter Zwemer Memorial School and then, finally, as the Al-Amanah School. By this time, the end of the slave trade in the Indian Ocean meant the new missionary institutions were firmly focused on students from the relatively large number of Arab Christian families (Boersma, 1991; UNESCO, 1972), and, therefore, are outside the scope of this paper. However, it is nonetheless interesting to note here that the Arabian Mission's other outposts in the Gulf were said to have looked upon the Muscat Christian community of converted Arabs built around the school, clinic and hospital with a sense of wonder and admiration, for its successes were never to be realised elsewhere in the region (Scudder, 1998).

### **Conclusion: Language of Instruction and Interaction with Host Communities**

The matter of language of instruction in the rescued slave schools in the sultanates of Zanzibar and Muscat, therefore, was far more than a response to the needs of students and the availability of materials and qualified instructors. It was, in many ways, a decision based primarily on the strategic goals of the missions which established these schools and may be viewed as showing little regard, at least during their early years of operation when ex-slaves and mainland born Africans formed the core of the student body, for the host communities in which these institutions were based.

For example, the choice of English as the language of instruction in the first Peter Zwemer School was made, perhaps somewhat cynically, as a way of protecting African-born students from potential "contamination" caused by interaction with the wider Arab-Muslim community. This choice was made primarily to deny these students the chance to explore the world in which they were raised and may, too, have had the effect of

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limiting their future career choice to that of mission employees in the Reformed Church's various Gulf posts. In this way, the rescued slaves of the Peter Zwemer School were earmarked, much in the same way as those early students in St. Andrew's, as exactly the kind of "indigenous" hands the missions needed to further their work: religiously indoctrinated, industrious and, most importantly, apparently impervious to the environmental demands that had killed the likes of Peter Zwemer and Bishop Mackenzie and thus made extending Christianity across the lands bordering the west Indian Ocean so difficult.

On the other hand, St. Andrew's was not in operation long before Swahili replaced English as the language of instruction. Although this change was made due to the mission's primary concern with ensuring the school's graduates could communicate fluently in East Africa's most important lingua franca, it could also be seen as an attempt to overcome the open suspicion Zanzibar's people displayed towards both English language education and the mission's work on their island. In particular, offering a Western-style education in the Swahili-language at St. Andrew's could be viewed as one way in which the UMCA tried to win converts through a demonstration of the superiority of European technology which, in this case, could be conceived as the school's Western curriculum and teaching methods and the "modern" facilities at Kiungani campus.

The languages of instruction employed at these two former slave schools, therefore, ostensibly represented widely different policies regarding potential engagement with the missions' host communities. That is, while English was used at the Peter Zwemer School as a means of keeping the school's students insulated from outside influences, the use of Swahili at St. Andrew's may be interpreted as a genuine, if ultimately unsuccessful, attempt to overcome the barriers between its classrooms and local Muslim families.

Despite these opposing policies, however, it is noteworthy that both schools featured here apparently failed in their attempts to win influence within the societies in which they operated. This is perhaps most pronounced in light of attempts by the administrators of St. Andrew's College to reach out to Zanzibar's large community of

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slaves and ex-slaves; a figure estimated at the turn of the twentieth century to be around 70-75% of the sultanate's total population (Fair, 2004). It is due to this inability to win converts within such a promising field that Loimeier (2009) claims the UMCA's educational institutions, including St. Andrew's, failed almost entirely in their missionary aims.

Of course, it could perhaps be equally well-argued that the UMCA's work in Zanzibar was so focused on its founding purpose – bringing Christianity to Central Africa – that the concept of proselytizing in Zanzibar itself was never really given anything more than lip service. This supposition may find support in the 1925 relocation of St. Andrew's to the mainland town of Minaki, and the reinvention of the once famous Kiungani campus as a trade school for Christian Indian boys. The real success of St. Andrew's in achieving its mission's goals, therefore, could be seen in the eventual influence its graduates had upon the development of the civil service and colonial society in the new British possession of Tanganyika. This degree of influence in the newly mandated British territory is perhaps best encapsulated by the widely held belief, apparently prevalent until the middle of the twentieth century, that the “best educated Tanzanians” were St. Andrew's graduates (Mojola, 2000, p. 513).

On the other hand, it is far easier to dismiss the level of interaction between the Peter Zwemer School and its host community in Muscat. In fact, the use of English as a means of limiting student contact with Islamic beliefs and Arab culture could be viewed as a rather cynical and self-serving choice, which perhaps had to do more with the personal position of the missionary Peter Zwemer himself than a clear promulgation of the mission's region-wide strategic goals. However, if it is necessary to look beyond the Zanzibar archipelago to truly understand the influence St. Andrew's and its graduates were to have on East and Central Africa, it is also useful to take a longer historical view of the achievements of the Peter Zwemer School.

For example, despite its initial employment as a means of containment and exclusion, it could perhaps be argued that it was the institution's very use of English that came to be one of its main draw cards after the Peter Zwemer Memorial School was

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reopened in 1904. For this reason, it is perhaps no coincidence that as British control of the internal affairs of Muscat and Oman grew throughout the course of the first half of the twentieth century, so too did the school's enrolments until the point when, some fifty years after its original founding, it reportedly acted as the centre of a vibrant community of local Arab Christians with a congregation numbering up to 150 members (Scudder, 1998).

Regardless of this eventual success, however, there can be little doubt that, unlike the healthcare facilities and bible shop the Arabian Mission established in Muscat and its sister city of Mutrah, Peter Zwemer saw little advantage in extending the level of interaction between his pupils or his classes and non-Christian members of the rescued slave school's host community. Moreover, even if a longer historical view is taken that moves away from the late nineteenth century era, it is nonetheless difficult to dismiss the "deep sense of failure" (Scudder, 1998, p. 227) with which members of the mission looked upon their attempts at establishing a Christian community in Muscat following the dramatic loss of devotees after the announcement of a free government school and healthcare system across Oman in 1970 and the eventual closing of the Al-Amanah school in 1984. In this lack of lasting influence among their chosen host community, the educational institutions for rescued slaves run by the Arabian Mission and the UMCA share, despite their opposing philosophies regarding language of instruction, a number of parallels.

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