

# Focus on the world: The Keswick Convention and mission

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In a copy of Pierson's (n.d.) work, *The acts of the Holy Spirit*, presented to the hostess of Salisbury House in Keswick (UK), are the signatures of 11 missionaries from all over the world who attended the Convention in 1904. These are just a few of the many missionaries who visited the yearly Keswick Convention (KC). Many missionaries were a product of the genial spiritual climate which prevailed in England after the 1859 revival. Since 1885 the KC has been the catalyst for a fresh era in missionary work. Keswick and mission became inseparable, and the KC became a factor in the life of the universal church. Throughout the years missionary operations have been given a place in its program. So many missionaries trace back their call for mission work to Keswick and reckon the momentum of their life to be fully devoted to God, lies there. This led Keswick chairman Reverent Aldis just after World War II to say, 'I suppose the KC has done more than any other movement in the Churches to call men and women to the mission field.' In 2014 the Convention website reads: The KC is passionate about mission and has been supporting, encouraging and hosting missionaries and their families from over hundred years! We see this as a key area of Keswick's ministry and one in which many have been keen to support in their giving (KM 2014). The vision of those in the last decades of the 19th century is the issue of this article as well as the question in what way the KC is still true and faithful to that vision in the first decades of the 21st century.

In een copy van Piersons, *The Acts of the Holy Spirit*, aangeboden aan de gastvrouw van Salesbury House in Keswick (UK), staan de handtekeningen van elf zendelingen van over heel de wereld, die de Conventie van 1904 hebben bijgewoond. Dit zijn maar enkele van de vele zendelingen die de jaarlijkse Conventie in Keswick bijwonen. Sinds 1885, heeft de Conventie, door de introductie van de christelijke zending, een nieuwe tijd ingeslagen. Keswick en zending zijn sinds die tijd ongescheiden en de KC is een factor van betekenis geworden in het leven van de universele kerk. De jaren door heeft het onderdeel zending een grote plek in het programma. Dit bracht de voorzitter van de KC, Aldis, vlak na WO II er toe om te zeggen: 'Ik denk dat de KC meer gedaan heeft dan enig andere beweging in de kerken om mannen en vrouwen te roepen naar het zendingsveld.' Op de website van de Conventie staat nu: De KC is gepassioneerd over zending en heeft support, bemoediging en onderdak verleend aan zendelingen en hun families voor meer dan honderd jaar. We zien dit als de sleutelrol van Keswick en een grote factor voor velen om concreet met de zending mee te leven. Op welke wijze is de zendingsvisie van het begin leidend in de KC nu in de een en twintigste eeuw?

## Enlisted to service

For many visitors their stay at the KC became the momentum in their lives which was henceforth geared for action. Keswick stands for piety that is stamped by the life of God. The attendance of thousands looking for more intense spirituality gave a significant boost to mission work in England as well as abroad. The Keswick movement with its motto, *All one in Christ Jesus*, arose in response to a new climate of imperialism, and this movement inspired ecumenism (Rouse 1954).

The Convention speakers gave expositions from the Word of God, and spoke to people in terms that appeal to our day: urging to live the life to which sanctification introduces, namely the life of oneness with Christ Jesus, and the longing that that oneness be manifested in practical life. Hearing Christ's personal call at the Convention to obedience, and experiencing Christ's personal provision for victory, opened up for many the way to personal commission for service. When the Word of God became embedded in the heart and life of someone, Keswick attendants were summoned away from introspection or mere contemplation, and were enlisted to service. The teachings of the week found its outlet and practical application in the missionary meeting

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at Keswick. This, however, was not the way it was in the beginning of the KC in 1875. In intention the Convention was not a missionary meeting, but after some years, in the sight of many it became a meeting for 'making missionaries'.

## Growing missionary involvement

The KC has long been noted for its concern for mission. In the early years of its history, Keswick gave its attention to the promotion of holiness. It was felt that if the highest possible Christian character was developed and the message sound, then fruitful service would follow (Harford 1907:77). Mission initiatives in England sprang up since the 50s of the 19th century, but especially Keswick formed an influential meeting ground and springboard for world mission. Due to several influential preachers from America like D.L. Moody who came to Cambridge in 1883 and A.T. Pierson's editorship of the *Missionary Review*, the influence of premillennium thought spread all over the country. The expectation that the Day of the Lord was at hand had a strong mission dimension. The Scriptures were opened and explained to the people, which led to mission in the widest sense. 'Keswick does not teach sanctification and holiness as an end in themselves, but rather that His people might be fit for the Master's use' (KW 1946:229). Since the 80s of the 19th century the KC proved to be a place of sacred commissioning, obedient to the Lord Jesus' last commission to his disciples in Matthew 28:19. Entering its second decade in 1885 the presence of Eugene Stock of the Church Missionary Society (CMS) and some missionaries led many hearts 'to the needy heathen world' (Sloan 1935:32). Yet the introduction of missionary subjects had really to struggle into existence. When asked to include a missionary meeting, H.F. Bowker the chairman of the KC, replied: 'No! Missions means secretaries quarreling for collections and Keswick could not stoop to that', it would 'spoil Keswick' (Harford 1907:135; Pollock 1964:80). This was not meant to deny the serious wish of many young ones to dedicate their lives for Christ in foreign countries. On the contrary, Bowker and other Keswick leaders rejoiced that 'many young men who are now actively engaged in distant lands can date their "special call" to this service from solemn seasons of personal consecration at Keswick' (1964:80). During the first 10 years of the KC, foreign mission was not strong in the picture. Even not at the annual conferences for Christian workers at Mildmay Park in North London, held since 1856, which did give a place to missions in the afternoon gatherings. However, the majority of the agencies represented were focused on the situation in the home country (Harford 1907:133). But no moving of the Spirit of God can be contained within the compass of the personal life of the people of God. Where his sovereignty is acclaimed, his commission becomes a burning reality.

One of the early Keswick speakers was asked whether Keswick was a great missionary meeting. His answer was 'No, Keswick is not a missionary meeting. It is a meeting for making missionaries' (Barabas 1952:150). Some years earlier at a similar conference at Perth when

a young Hudson Taylor, founder of the China Inland Mission (CIM), was put aside when he wanted to appeal for China, the reply was: 'My dear Sir, surely you mistake the character of the Conference. These meetings are for spiritual edification!' In 1883 Taylor, for the first time, came to the KC. By then he had worked already for more than 20 years in China and saw Keswick as a potential for the missionary cause. For him the yearly Convention became his 'happy hunting ground' for recruits (Pollock 1964:80; Rowlandson 1997:13).

The official attitude, however, remained rigid. At the 1885 Convention, the Liverpool solicitor R. Radcliffe, a prominent evangelist, approached the Keswick leaders for organising a missionary meeting. Having got a refusal, he asked some friends to join him for a private missionary meeting in his lodgings in Station Road. Surprisingly, many attended; men like Eugene Stock the CMS secretary and historian, Barclay Buxton the future founder of the Japanese Evangelistic Band (JEB) and Archibald Orr-Ewing a respected CIM missionary in China. Few were expected, but the room was so full, that they could not kneel to pray. A special prayer was that the Lord would awaken the mission zeal amongst the Convention visitors and to lead many into the mission field. At the testimony meeting on that Friday afternoon a Cambridge undergraduate got up and said he heard God's call at the Convention to go abroad. Suddenly three young Cambridge clergymen stood together and announced their willingness to serve overseas. The growing interest in missionary work reached its greatest expression since 1886 at the large meeting in the tent on the Saturday. It is reported that 'The Missionary Meeting on the Saturday was one of the best and brightest of all the week, and its three hours were all too short' (Sloan 1935:34). Opinions changed, for the 1887 Convention was 'the first recognition by the platform of the missionary movement which was to become so important, as an integral part of the Convention' (Broomhall 1988:50; Sloan n.d.:34). The CMS' missionary Longley Hall had written from the Middle East to ask Bowker if he would appeal for 10 ladies who could go out at their own expenses under the CMS. Bowker read out the letter! In 1888 Bowker had avowed his adherence to the mission principle, as he expressed that consecration and evangelisation of the world ought to go together. In that year the daily missionary prayer meeting at Keswick began. For many years hundreds of people attended. In 1893 Taylor, for the first time, was on the list of Convention speakers (Broomhall 1988:179). In the following years, the forum of his strong spiritual influence has always been present and was a leading force in missionary issues of the KC.

## Missioners and missionaries

Due to the impetus Stock gave in nurturing the love of missions at Keswick, talking about Keswick is talking about mission. It became one of the core items of Keswick, viz. mission that should be distinctly focused on conversion. Stock was the 'virtual creator' of the missionary interest which became integral to Keswick.

Since 1887 the Convention platform has been the scene of missionaries pleading for the cause of mission and many young ones were channeled into mission enterprise. In 1890 the general committee of the Convention received a letter from the CMS – to be known as the *Keswick Letter* – for the sending out of 1000 missionaries. The influence of faith missions was also spreading more widely. Since 1887 the KC provided lodgings for tired missionaries to stay there for a while. As part of the regular program, the 7 a.m. prayer meeting on Wednesday mornings in the big tent was devoted to the subject of missions. For several years a meeting was held on the Wednesday afternoons, especially to report about deputation and missionary work connected with the Convention; the meetings on Saturday mornings were generally devoted to foreign missionary work. Most missionaries present were affiliated with the CMS and the CIM.

In the first official meeting in 1888 the chairman mentioned that £10 had been sent as thanks offering for blessings received, and to be used, if others would join, for the sending out of a 'Keswick missionary'. When the closing hymn of adoration, 'All hail the power of Jesus' Name' (KHB n.d.:113), was sung more money was given to the chairman to be used for sending out missionaries. Of the 1899 Convention is said, 'The tide of missionary influence flowed with increasing strength' (Sloan 1935:36). The Keswick experience of the unity of believers in Christ prepared the new missionaries for ministry in a complete interdenominational fellowship. The lady who spoke in the missionary meeting, Miss Lilius Trotter, proceeded to Algiers to commence her lifework there.

Many more donations were sent for the Keswick Mission Fund and before the end of the year nearly a £1000 had been received. What was to be done with the money? Keswick was not ready to send missionaries overseas, because their message primary was not one for the non-Christian world, but for the Christian church. It was decided to send men qualified to deliver that message to those in the colonies and the mission field to call Christian churches to 'practical holiness'. The first one who was sent as a Keswick representative was the Rev. George Grubb. After him many others followed; they went as Keswick missionaries, and not as missionaries (Harford 1907:138). Missioners were sent by the Keswick Mission Council to make known Keswick's teaching on the mission field. They were not expected to stay there. However, the wish to have Keswick 'missionaries' became stronger. At last it was decided to support individuals who were already on the staff of a recognised Missionary Society. So these men or women were sort of adopted as Keswick missionaries, and the money involved being paid direct to the various Missionary Societies for their support. Money given with the purpose of sending out Keswick missionaries was put in a fund for that purpose. A Mission Committee was formed, and Robert Wilson, the co-founder of the KC, became the chairman. In the first meeting it was resolved that Mr Grubb and Mr Millard would go to visit India, Ceylon, Australia and New Zealand. Their aim was to spread the message of

the Convention. They were sent forth as representatives of Keswick. So began what has become known as the 'Keswick Deputation Work'. Mr Wilson became one of the key persons in the mission enterprise of the KC, first as treasurer and from 1891–1900 its chairman. Broughton Grange's home near Cockermouth and five miles from Keswick, became a meeting place for many missionaries.

## Irresistible appeal

Keswick's growing emphasis on foreign missions was in no doubt connected to the growing influence of premillennialism within the movement. The sense of imminence was even felt on the mission field. Many Brethren were rooted in Darby's eschatology that laid the foundation for the 'dispensationalism' of the 20th century. Earlier in the 1870s and the 1880s there was a greater focus on the imminent return of Christ than on the manner by which he would return. Christ's imminent return found in premillennialism gave Keswick a strong missions impulse. 'There can be no doubt that dispensationalism was the predominant form of the advent hope by the First World War' (Bebbington 1989:192). The strong strain of premillennialism at the Convention can be seen in many hymns that are sung as well as in the prayers.<sup>1</sup> In premillennialism thinking, the Jews were central to God's purpose. The Convention could no longer continue to neglect the wish of many to send women – a question presented by the CMS (Harford 1907:135–136) – to work amongst the Jews in the Middle East. Due to the Convention's Anglican connections, it was made difficult to reject the CMS appeal. Finally, the ladies' meeting at the Convention was already orientated towards supporting overseas missions (Price & Randall 2000:107).

Keswick's mission view, arising from the holiness movements, was inclined to limit the Christian message to one of the salvation of the individual. The main concern was that those responding at Keswick to the challenge of the Lord for full consecration, or for full-time service, should be given guidance concerning the next steps of faith and surrender. The call to the entire dedication of body, soul, and spirit to the service of the Lord, which has been an essential part of the message of Keswick to the church of Christ, could not fail. Therefore it was time to send some of those that was influenced into the foreign field.

This could in the long run not be disregarded at Keswick, as was tried first. Since the first Convention in 1875, the Conventions were characterised by the same feature which had marked the revival period of 1858–1862 and the following years of the Sankey and Moody campaigns, viz. that they had scarcely any connection with, or effect upon the foreign mission enterprise.

1.Cf. Lilius Trotter's prayer at the beginning of 1901: 'What will it be before this new century closes? It is wonderful to stand on the threshold and to know that, in all probability, it will be the most solemn one that the world has known, and that Jesus will stand on the earth before it is over' (p. 82). In the KHB (n.d.:144–155) a total of 28 hymns are found under the heading 'The second Advent'.

The wish to have Keswick missionaries became stronger. At least it was decided to support individuals who were already on the staff of a recognised missionary society. So more or less these men or women were adopted as Keswick missionaries, and the money involved being paid direct to the various Missionary Societies for their support. As mentioned, the first prayer meeting had a private character, held in a house in Station Road, and although no public announcement was made, many gathered. The general spirit was that *Missions* should be on the program. What brought every morning 500 to 800 persons together for the prayer meeting? Those present were burdened with world's spiritual need and need to know whether the Lord would use them to go to the mission field. Missionaries were mentioned by name and their respective field of work. On the Friday meetings about 12 people, representing mission areas all over the world, gave a short report and they prayed together. Precedence is customarily given to the work amongst the Jews. The great missionary meeting lasted from 10 till 12 o'clock. The service opened, 'as has become traditional' (KW 1947:229), with the singing of Fullerton's missionary hymn, 'I cannot tell why He whom angels worship' (KHB n.d.:165).

Several speakers, each having 10 minutes, voiced the need of the world and the messages were irresistible in their appeal. Finally a special prayer for the missionaries, who were asked to rise, was presented that specific year, as well as a prayer for the new recruits. Then the chairman asked parents who were willing that their children should go to the mission field if the Lord asked for them, to rise. It is reported that in 1930 all the parents rose and the young people who were willing to go, were asked to rise and between 400 and 450 almost sprang up to their feet in response (KW 1930:198; 1947:232).

## Keswick Convention Mission Council

In July 1888 the formation of a council took place, especially to deal with missionary affairs. Reverents Fox, Moor, Webb-Peploe, Hopkins and Brook, together with Mr Stock and Mr Wilson (treasurer) were its members. In the November meeting that year the discussion was about the use of the money received during the last convention. It was decided that some men could go as visiting missionaries.

According to the *Keswick Convention Mission minute book* (KCMMB 1888, 29 Nov.) their goal was to visit the stations in the mission field, to sympathise with and encourage all labouring there, to confess with the missionaries and to profess Christ amongst the heathen, and to rouse them the help of God for such wholehearted devotion to Christ that might lead to greater success in the evangelisation of the world.

In 1889 it was decided that:

in sending missionaries, it was thought desirable that such should go out simply to preach Christ, and not to build up a new church or Christian body, but link the converts God might give them to the nearest native Christian community. (KCMMB 1889, 23 Apr.)

In the July 1889 meeting of the Keswick Mission Council (KMC) pioneer mission to China was discussed. There was one candidate who volunteered for this work. It was decided not to become a mission organisation for sending missionaries, but 'to follow our Masters teaching and to work with perfect harmony and sympathy with existing Evangelical missions' (KCMMB 1889, 24 July). At the end of that year four KC missionaries were sent out. Reverent Haslam, as was agreed in 1890, would visit India (KCMMB 1890, 22 June). In 1892 the KCMB sent Reverent Hopkins to visit the meetings in Paris, San Remo, Mentone (during wintertime Rev. Spurgeon resided here to regain health), Rome, Jerusalem and Smyrna (KCMMB 1892, 22 July). Special gifts to the KC were given to send out lady missionaries. In 1892 Mr Wilson read a letter to the Committee in which was stated that 'Miss Amy B. Carmichael's call to mission work was detailed and her service offered, to go to China as a missionary in connection with the Keswick Convention Mission' (KCMMB 1892, 26 July).

Carmichael was the adopted daughter of Mr Wilson, who stated in the meeting of 26 July that it was his intention of providing for her outfit and passage money to China and suggested that the KCM should then take charge. It was agreed to accept her. Previous Mr Wilson already had communicated with the CEZMS, a branch of the CMS, in order to decide to which missionary society she would be connected. He got the assurance that the CMS would accept Keswick missionaries, as full members, subject in all things to the rules of their societies. August 1892 it was read that Keswick missionaries were also welcome to work in association with the CIM of Hudson Taylor. A sub-committee was formed by Reverents Fox, Brook, Taylor and Mr Wilson. The medical adviser of the CIM, however, was not willing to pass Miss Carmichael for China. Being absolutely sure the Lord had called her to the mission field, she joined the JEB, and on 03 March 1893 sailed for Japan, to join Rev. Barclay Buxton's mission at Matsuye (Japan). Being the first KC missionary, she opened the way for many others who served as Keswick missionaries in many parts of the world. Another decision taken in 1894 was that Keswick's journal, *Life of Faith*, should be sent to mission stations abroad to receive the journal.

Very clearly it was expressed (KCMMB 1898):

We are not ourselves a Missionary Society. We work through existing Societies. We support missionaries, but we never intend to undertake permanent support. The support of ladies will cease when they marry. (7 July)

In 1901 the KCMC financially helped 221 missionaries on leave to attend the KC.

## Epiphany of women

In the 19th century the dynamic of the evangelical revival was ushered by the involvement of many women by a life of active devotedness. Keswick ministry played a significant role in many women's lives. Bebbington (1989:10–12) highlighted their role in evangelism, greater church involvement and

mission, to illustrate his argument that active involvement was one of the major evangelical characteristics. Many women of that time combined loyalty to God with support for their husbands, church- and mission work. A remarkable issue is that mission agencies were confronted with applications of many single women who wanted to go overseas. The 1851 census in the UK revealed that there were half a million more women than men in the country, and that at any one time during the later 19th century, almost a third of the women between the ages of 25 and 35 were single (Wilson 2000:186). In several local churches mission magazines were distributed and discussed by women and the women who could afford went to Keswick to hear the messages. Still uncertain about their new roles, many women were breaking fresh ground, and some were doing it consciously. Missionary support work, the Young Women's Church Association (YWCA), Christian Endeavour and the Student Volunteer Movement (SVM) all springing from evangelical soil, contributed to what one Keswick speaker called the 'epiphany of women' (Pierson 1900:13). Keswick was seen as a landmark in the emancipation of women, at least in the religious sphere (Bebbington 1989:174). The number of women going to Keswick increased over the years, and when a missionary call had first been given at Keswick, it were women who were the first to respond (1989:329).

To canalise women involvement in Keswick, Mrs Harford-Battersby saw the need of organising a ladies meeting, which became for many years a marked feature of the Convention. In Keswick in the 19th century when asked what the favourite hymn was, the answer would probably has been Frances Havergal's 'Take my life and let it be, consecrated Lord, to Thee'.

Since 1884 the meetings increased and many ladies took part; and in 1885, due to the presence of Mrs Penn Lewis – the most accomplished lady speaker associated with Keswick (Harford 1907:93) – and the missionary Miss. Lilius Trotter the meeting focused more on mission work. There were others like Misses C. May Grimes, Fanny Crosby, Charlotte Elliott and Jean Sophia Pigott who actually all came in person to the Convention.

Words of opposition were sounded too. Many disagreed with Taylor for sending out more and more young missionaries including girls, just at the time when France was declaring war on China. However, Taylor's very quiet reply was, 'I have never found in my Bible that the Lord says the Gospel was not to be taken to China when there was war with France' (Broomhall 1988:346).

The high profile that women held in the Keswick movement reflected the influence of the holiness thought. Since 1888 women had a firm and sometimes dominating place in the yearly Conventions. The address of Pandita Ramabai (India) in 1898 made the Keswick week that year memorable. She began by saying that she had come 'to speak for the 140 000 000 of Hindu women in India'. She wanted '1000 Spirit-filled missionaries for India's women' and asked for

prayer 'that 100 000 Christian women might be raised up in India to carry the Gospel to their needy sisters'. When a request was made during the meeting, that those who prepared themselves for missionary service had to stand, 'about 200 rose' (Sloan 1935:30–42). Ainger's hymn, 'God is working his purpose out' affirmed a quite widespread belief that the time was drawing 'nearer and nearer' when 'from utmost East to utmost West' the earth would be filled with his glory. Christians liked to sing this hymn and found it easy because for a number of years already their world mission spirit seemed a part of their destiny of world empire. They saw Christ working (and they were the vehicles) in areas until now without the gospel, to establish his dominion before his coming. Without exaggeration one can say, that for the CMS as well as for the CIM, it counts that these two societies saw the greatest influx of women missionaries, who at the end of the 19th century outnumbered their male colleagues, due to their close connections with the KC (Seton 2013:22).

## Representatives

Lilius Trotter (1853–1928) captures the intention of many of the KC adherents in the last decades of the 19th century. Trotter's devotion to Christ compelled her to abandon the life of art, privilege and leisure she could have enjoyed. She and others, in hearing God's call to go, all felt a tension in their thoughts between the old life (without Christ) and the new life (with Christ). This ambiguity as a battle is often illustrated by them in their writings or artistic illustrations. The act of surrendering to God and the ongoing process 'further down the road' in which God's Spirit works within the hearts, not only to do his will but to will to do it, is all that is important. The Keswick movement set little store by denominationalism. Both Trotter and Carmichael grew up in privileged surroundings, experiencing the private tutelage of governesses at home. Both reached out to women in danger and both were moved with compassion for these *lost* sheep. Both felt a call to go to the mission field and – ironically – both were not advised to go due to weak health. They gave up prospects of fame and wealth in England and followed the call. In a grand independence of the soul to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, they went to the mission field and fulfilled their life work. Trotter went to Algeria to become the founder of the Algiers Mission Band (AMB, now AWM) and Carmichael to India where she became the founder of the Dohnavur Fellowship (DF).

Trotter and Carmichael represented the missionary spirituality of that period: a romantic Victorian mood, mystical spirituality and evangelical zeal. Trotter attended the Oxford and Brighton conferences and was very active in the Moody campaigns. She was a gifted painter and could have earned a fortune with her drawings. In 1888, however, she felt a strong call to engage in missionary service. Her spirituality and mission were intertwined and she continued her artistic work to illustrate her meditative writings for children and adults. She was back in Keswick for the last time in 1924, and four years later died in Algeria.

Carmichael (1867–1951) was one of the first missionaries to be supported by the KC. She originated from Millisle (Ireland) and grew up in a solid Covenanter Presbyterian tradition. In 1888 she became the adopted daughter of Mr Wilson and due to the Quaker influence in Wilson's house and of her connections with Keswick, she 'dropped all denominational labels' (Houghton 1954:37). She served in Japan from 1893–1884 for the JEB and in India from 1895–1951 with an Anglican mission, the CEZMS in Bangalore, and since 1926 as an independent missionary in Tamil Nadu, heading the DF. Nowadays in India there are some very old people who came to Christ through her. The work she started in India is going on and many are influenced by her books and work. Her thoughts are captured in the following words (Carmichael 1999:223):

From prayer that asks that I may be ... From subtle love of softening things  
Sheltered from winds that beat on Thee, From easy choices, weakenings  
From fearing when I should aspire, ... (Not thus are spirits fortified,  
From faltering when I should climb higher, ... Not this way went the Crucified)  
From silken self, O Captain, free ... From all that dims Thy Calvary,  
Thy soldier who would follow Thee ... O Lamb of God, deliver me.

Give me the love that leads the way,  
The faith that nothing can dismay,  
The hope no disappointments tire,  
The passion that will burn like fire;  
Let me not sink to be a clod:  
Make me Thy fuel, Flame of God.

Accepted again in 1895, she stood as a CEZMS missionary together with some CIM missionaries on the platform in Keswick. Dr Lankester, Medical Secretary of the CMS was present too (Broomhall 1989:249–250). This indicates that both the CMS and the CIM approved this affiliation and also the role of the KC in this process. After a few years she settled in Dohnavur where she formed the DF to save the sexually exploited children from a life of physical misery and spiritual hopelessness. The Lord had used the challenge of the KC to initiate new missionary endeavor. Her story is that of many in Victorian style educated British women in the late 19th century that entered the mission field. For many of them Keswick became their starting point.

Another Keswick representative was J. Hudson Taylor (1832–1907) of Baptist background, and the founder of the CIM in 1865. He visited Keswick in 1883 and 1887; officially he spoke at the 1893 Convention. Of Taylor can be said that he was the exponent of the concept of faith missions, viz. interdenominational organisations whose budget depended on gifts and who were not backed financially by denominations. His presence in Keswick in 1887 did contribute to the missionary breakthrough that took place at that year's Convention. When he gave his

address on the Lord's return in 1893, he emphasised the following:

Someone spoke about it (the Lord's return) as a cutting of the nerve of missionary effort. I wish to bear testimony that it has been to me personally the greatest spur in missionary service. (Sloan 1935:41)

Taylor's mission enterprise, the CIM, as well as Carmichael's DF and Trotter's AMB run alike the same faith-mission lines. All three look upon God for provisions, accept candidates from different churches, have strong ties with KC and in their way of operation look for a Christian service similar to the Early Church. Observations of the CIM (now OMF), the DF and the AMB (AWM) show that their missiological insights were a futuristic, contextual strategic creative mission work. The pioneer lifestyle of its leaders carved out a way of mission work that is still going on. Divine guiding and empowering, with the inspiration and motivation received at Keswick gave a type of mission work that lasts till this second decade of the 21st century.

## The claim not to withstand

Salvation in its fulness means service as its outcome, discipleship implies service, was often heard at the Convention. At Keswick adjustments are made which make the appeal of God and of the world peculiarly suitable, and which must lead to a great response of life (KW 1927:159).

Many missionaries from all over the world saw Keswick as the birthplace of their mission calling. 'I would even go so far as to say that had I never gone to Keswick I might never have been a missionary', writes Alfred Tucker a Bishop of Uganda (Pollock 1964:80). The CIM missionary Margaret King (1866–1931) visited Keswick in 1889 with her grandmother. There 'both were challenged to a deeper commitment to following Jesus Christ' (Griffiths 2004:170). It is said that when Mrs Catherine Booth lay dying, she remarked that Keswick had been one of the principal means of establishing the Salvation Army (Barabas 1952:151). Donald Fraser (1870–1933), a missionary to Africa, remarks:

When I went [to Keswick] I was entirely out of sympathy with the Convention [...] On the Wednesday I was more than ever irritated by the type of preaching, but at the evening meeting a fearful sense of moral failure came over me, and when Mr. Hopkins began to expound 'where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty', light broke, and that night I gave myself to God, and believed. (Fraser 1933:24)

He volunteered for foreign service in 1891 and his talks fanned the flame of zeal which resulted in the founding of the Student Volunteer Missionary Movement (SVMM) in Scotland and England (Barabas 1952:152; Sloan 1935:38). It started in 1886 at D.L. Moody's Northfield Conference when over 6000 volunteers signed a card saying they were willing to go overseas. At the students' conference at Keswick in the summer of 1894 the student leaders of Britain, namely D. Fraser, J. Oldham, T. Gairdner, and D. Thornton, were

bowled over after Robert Speer spoke on the watchword 'Evangelization of the world in this generation'. According to his biographer it was in Keswick that Gairdner (later on missionary in Cairo) heard words spoken to himself with utterly force: 'Canst thou drink of the cup that I drink of and be baptized with the baptism wherewith I was baptized?' Gairdner knew that he must answer. He said unto him, 'I can'. Jesus said unto him, 'Thou shalt' (Padwick 1929:45). Gairdner that day wrote in his diary: 'Speer simply God-inspired. Never heard anything like it. Oldham and I walk up the road and give ourselves to God' (Eddy 1945:267–268). Both served in mission work. An old missionary from Africa said 'that the Convention at Keswick created in our colleges an atmosphere which made the SVMM possible' (Sloan 1935:38).<sup>2</sup> John Stevenson, Hudson Taylor's Deputy-Director in China (Broomhall 1919) states:

Ever since the Keswick Convention my cup has been running over [...] I have been experiencing a deeper peace and more power in my service [...] I am convinced we are about to see greater things in this country in the way of consecration and devotion to God's work abroad. (pp. 60, 61)

## Extension of the network

Parallel movements of the KC began in the 1880s in North America, displaying the same dissatisfaction with the conventional missionary methods and an anticipation of the millennium. The SVMM was such a major factor, not only in recruiting vigorously but extending its network of contacts and influence within<sup>3</sup> existing missionary borders on both sides of the Atlantic. Australia was to have its own equivalent of Keswick from 1891 onwards at Geelong in Victoria. The KC made a major impact in South Africa where Andrew Murray was a leading exponent of its teaching. In West Africa C.F Harford-Battersby worked in the mission – a son of the founder of the KC. In South India it was the CMS missionary Thomas Walker of Tinneveli, who at first was not so enthusiastic about the KC, that became a full adherent and his deep theological insight worked profoundly in South India. The KC has a legacy of Christian service. Stott (1953) observes that:

When we think of the honoured names which have been associated with Keswick like those of Handley Moule, Webb-Peploe, Andrew Murray, A.T. Pierson, we have to reckon with a movement which enlisted the support of cultured and devoted servants of Christ and one hesitates to embark upon criticism. But the cause neither of truth nor of love is promoted by suppressing warranted criticism. (p. 80)

There is a link between Keswick and the Buxton family. The family worked in mission service in Japan and Africa as well as helping to found the InterVarsity Fellowship and work amongst the students in England. All Nations Bible

2.The CMS historian E. Stock showed little regard to women's missionary input as shown in his CMS centenary history, the *History of the Church Missionary Society: Its environment, its men and its work*, published in 1899. In 1917 he corrected himself and writes: 'it is a fact little realized that there are more women missionaries in the field than men' (Seton 2013:22).

3.For the messages of the Victorious Life Conferences held since 1911, see Victorious Life Conference (1918).

College has its origins in the Buxton family and is based at the former home of that family. In 1903 Barclay Buxton and Paget Wilkes, who were ministering in Japan, were at the KC. They met Miss Estelle Edmeads, who felt being called to Japan. Her passage money and support were fixed by the evening of that day. In October that year she left for Japan and worked in the city of Kobe. Towards the end of the last century there were, according to Philip Hacking, 'still many echoes of Keswick in the evangelical ministry in that city and elsewhere in Japan'. The year 1911 was the birth of a Keswick link with South America in the formation of the Evangelical Union of South America (EUSA). This was largely through the influence of Stuart Holden of the KC Council.

The Wednesday afternoons at the KC were for the reception of all the missionaries and overseas visitors. Sometimes more than 60 different countries were represented at the receptions. For many it had been a true experience of the reality of the Keswick motto, all one in Christ Jesus to mingle amongst fellow-Christians from all parts of the globe, exchanging greetings and news concerning the work of the Lord in their respective lands.

According to custom the Friday mornings were devoted to missionary meetings. With a bird's-eye view of many sided Christian witnesses in many parts of the world and prayer, the whole morning is filled and closed with the singing of the Doxology. Closed with a united communion service for the remembrance of his death 'until He comes'. The service in 1947 opened with the Havergal's hymn, 'Thou art coming' (KW1947:228; KW 1936:51). That year about 250 young men and women attested their willingness to go anywhere for Christ. Always there was a keen sense of the present opportunities for the fulfilling of our Lord's last commission. At several meetings parents were asked who were willing that their children should go to the foreign field if the Lord asked for them. Young people present at these meetings were appealed too; those who were willing to give their lives to the Lord's service abroad were asked to rise. At the 1966 meeting almost between 400 and 450 sprang to their feet in response.

## The impact of Keswick spirituality on mission

Keswick's growing involvement with missions and its concomitant presence in many former British colonies enabled it to cross many paths with various evangelical mission agencies. In 1892 copies of 'The story of Keswick' were sent to 1773 missionaries and two years later copies of the 'Life of Faith' to 650 mission stations (Harford 1907:150).

Especially in India the influence of the KC could be seen. The remarkable growth and fascinating development of the church there is an integral strand of the remarkable shift in Christianity worldwide (Jenkins 2002:1–2). In India it eventually gained distinction during the Great Indian Revival. As the outcome of the Great Indian Revival of 1905–1907, this was not only indicative of the form of revivalism which found prevalence in Indian Methodism, but indicates

that the influence of the Holiness movement, broadly gained momentum in India. It spread all over India; from the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist mission in Khassia Hills, Assam Province, to Pandita Ramabai's Mukti mission in Kedgaon, till Bangalore and further to the south of India. The esteemed Methodist missionary Thoburn brought the holiness revivalism to the south. In Thoburn's vision the receiving of the sanctifier was more stressed than sanctification, what is also more in line with the latter Keswick thought of the emphasis on the Blesser rather than the blessing.<sup>4</sup> Keswick's growing involvement with missions and its concomitant presence in India enabled it to cross paths with several missions. Many of the Keswick mission recruits ended up in India and through their missionary societies and through the CMS and non-conformist churches gained great distinction in India and China during the last decades of the nineteenth and first decades of the 20th century (Price & Randall 2000:111–113). In 1902 the *Circle of Prayer for World-wide Revival* was inaugurated at the KC and Keswick writers such as F.B. Meyer, A. Murray and Jessie Penn-Lewis often wrote articles in the *Indian Witness*.

Christians worldwide have been inspired by Keswick for a renewed and deep Christian life. With the same burden and objectives of the KC, South India's Convention was started in Kerala at the Navayeevodayam Centre in 1964. Keswick spirituality, which emphasised winning souls to Christ by personal conversion, began shaping the self-understanding of several churches in the mission field. In India as well as in China, Keswick teaching began shaping the self-understanding of many Christians, for instance amongst the Mar Thoma Christians. Christians were encouraged to spread the gospel to people in an effort to lead them to a personal conversion to Christ. The influence of Keswick spirituality came to the Mar Thoma church through revivals promoted by CMS missionaries and missionaries who created a passion for evangelism and holy living within the Mar Thoma church. This all was in line where Keswick stood for 'personal surrender to Christ, fullness of the Holy Spirit, and a process of growth in godliness' (Price & Randall 2000:15). The CMS, inspired by the Keswick movement, began to send missionaries to revive the native Christians. The aim of the special missions was to arouse Christians to lead a higher spiritual life, a Spirit-filled full surrender to Christ, with victory over sin. The Keswick spirituality primarily aimed at reviving believers rather than evangelising the lost (Price & Randall 2000:12–15).

The mood of the St. Thomas Christians during the late 1880s was comprised of awareness of a spiritual responsibility to share the good news and a passion to lead a holy life devoid of sin. The evangelical influence of the CMS missionaries, the reformation within the St. Thomas Christians, and the availability of the Bible in their vernacular language produced for the first time an awareness amongst the Christians about their evangelistic responsibility. The evangelistic activity by individuals was a new phenomenon in the Mar Thoma

tradition. The concept of voluntarism of the CMS introduced preaching by laymen as a new evangelistic model within the church. The Mar Thoma Christians grasped every opportunity to hear the gospel by personal renewal. People believed Christ would return soon. The premillennium movements spread into Travancore too. Another wave of revival took place through the messages from the Maramon convention. Rev. Walker, a speaker in the initial stage of this convention, not only accelerated Keswick spirituality but also inspired Mar Thoma Christians to venture in their first cross-cultural mission (Carmichael 1916:231–270; 1950:67–70, 103–114). In Australia the counterpart of the KC was the Katoomba Convention which exported a profound sense of spiritual devotion and missionary enterprise. Several faith missions as the Kanaka Mission and the South Sea Evangelical Mission emerged from this Convention. The KC via Katoomba was for the majority of the missionaries an event and seen as moving quickly towards the second coming of Christ.

## When Jesus came to Dohnavur

In the middle of building up the DF, the hand of God was felt in India (Duewel 1995:214–252).<sup>5</sup> In 1891 Rev. R.J. Ward, a missionary from Madras, experienced personal renewal at the KC in England. Back in India prayer meetings were held to deepen the spirituality all across India and many missionaries were involved. In 1895 in Bombay the first Saturday of the month was set apart for prayer. In 1897 the SVM called for a day of prayer all over India, especially praying God for an awakening. By 1902 Rev. Ward started a movement of prayer for missionaries of all denominations, and soon more than 800 were praying together. All over the world prayer circulars were sent to pray for India. At 1902 5000 KC Christians agreed to form home prayer circles for the outpouring of the Spirit worldwide. On 29 June 1905, starting in Mukti (Ramabai's home town), revival spread all over India. From Madras southward revival spread fast across South India. In Dohnavur many had prayed for revival. On 22 October 1906 it is said that 'Jesus came to Dohnavur'. Duewel (1995) describes it as follow:

At the close of the morning service, Miss Carmichael was compelled to stop speaking, overwhelmed by the presence of God. It even became impossible to pray. One of the older children in the Boy's School tried to pray, but he broke down, and so did the other children. They cried bitterly and prayed for forgiveness. Their sorrow spread to the women. (p. 230)

Miss Carmichael, who for so long prayed for her children that the Holy Spirit would really work in them, writes (quoted in Houghton 1954):

It was so startling and so awful. [...] I can use no other word, that details escape me. Soon the whole upper half of the church was on its face on the floor, crying to God, each boy and girl, man and woman, oblivious of all others. The sound was like the sound of waves or strong wind in the trees. No separate voice could be heard. [...] The prayer went on for four hours. They passed like four minutes. For two weeks life was apportioned for us much as it was for the apostles when they gave themselves continually

4. For Thoburn's standard holiness biography, cf. Oldham (1918).

5. Cf. Helen S. Dyer (1907).



to prayer and to the ministry of the Word. Everything else had to stand aside. (pp. 146–148)

Concerning the revival in 1906 Rev. Walker reports (quoted in Orr 1970):

This closing year has been in a very special sense, a year of grace for India, [...] Congregation after congregation bowed before the power of the Holy Spirit in deep conviction and confession of sin. At times the solemnity and power were almost painful, and we were often in church till midnight. The people of a 'revived' congregation would follow us to the adjacent villages to give their testimonies there, and their testimonies did far more than our preaching. (p. 100)

In Dohnavur the people stood firm. Carmichael (quoted in Dyer 1907) writes:

After three months' testing, the work abides and goes on apart from us. It seems to me that is a mark of the real thing. The meetings do not depend on us at all. The thing is of God. (p. 64)

One cannot but realise that what happened in India is that God was answering the prayer first breathed at Keswick in 1898. Then Pandita Ramabai attended the Convention and they prayed for 200 000 Indian evangelists to go through the whole country, every state, every city and every village to proclaim the gospel of Christ. What happened in India happened all over the world. Therefore Diewel (1995:204) called the first decade of the 20th century 'the Revival Decade'.

## Successors

Many evangelical societies have links with Keswick. From the KC spawned in America A.B. Simpson's two non-denominational mission agencies in 1887, that merged in 1897 as the Christian and Missionary Alliance. His view of sanctification was nearly similar to the Wesleyan and Keswick views. At the Moody Bible Institute, of which so many students offered themselves for mission work, three leaders, Moody, Torrey and Gray broadcasted elements of the Keswick theology. The Africa Evangelical Fellowship sprang from the South African General Mission which had its birth at Keswick. Spencer Walton committed himself to a preaching ministry in 1882 and met Andrew Murray at the KC. Murray was already involved in evangelistic work through the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa. In 1889 Murray and Walton formed the Cape General Mission, and started an annual Convention which became known as the South African Keswick. In 1911 the birth of a Keswick link with South America occurred in the formation of the EUSA. EUSA came into being largely through the influence of Stuart Holden of the KC Council. The All Nations Bible College at Easneye (Hertfordshire) is an independent, evangelical, interdenominational mission training Bible College. The College has its origins in the Buxton family and is based at the former home of that family.

## Keswick in the new millennium

The KC is still passionate about mission and supports, encourages and hosts missionaries and their families

as they have done for over a 145 years. It is a worldwide institution vital to this day. However, it seems that the focus of the KC has changed a bit. Since the 80s of the 20th century the KC became more and more a 'preaching festival' and helped 'to glue together evangelicals from different denominations' (Bebbington 1989:258); its most influential days as the powerhouse of missionary enterprise is over. Popular evangelical mission enterprise has found more and more affinity with what became typical Keswick spirituality. The interdenominational efforts came in close contact with popular African and Indian evangelical culture, which was dominantly shaped by the continuous stream of holiness piety into the mission fields where British and American missionaries influenced the mission work of various societies. Through the KC a fresh direct missionary enterprise ushered a new phase in overseas missionary work. Congregations, as in South India, were revitalised and induced many to offer for missionary service. The urgency to belief was strong, but the aspect of the near coming of Christ was not any more mentioned so directly. The fear of being less focused on mission enterprise circulated already since the first decade of the last century. During several Conventions the fear was uttered that Keswick would lose its focus on the world. It was not only meant to strengthen Christians in their faith and to have a nice week together for a happy few who could afford one or two weeks of leisure time. In 1914, the crisis of World War I shocked Europe. It sounded from the Keswick platform as Stevenson (1963) reports:

Shall I tell you what I think is one of the dangers of Keswick? – the danger of appreciation without application, the danger of reception without reproduction; the danger of complacency without compassion [...] There is the danger of self-complacency. But if the Lord Jesus Christ is what He ought to be to every one of us, we shall receive, and then we shall pass on. (pp. 229–230)

The Keswick movement in the 20th century began to swift away from its Christ-centered and missions characteristics and began to grow introspective in its spirituality. I think the preacher himself was given too much attention; his popularity was measured and his message was to please the hearers. Preachers like John Stott, in profound expounding the Scriptures are needed nowadays, as seen in the mission field where men like Rev. Walker and Miss Carmichael fully thought along Christocentric lines in their view with an urgency for mission. The outcome of spirituality rooted on Keswick views on and as seen in many countries show a rare blend of earthliness and holiness. Speaking in the 1990 KC, Price stated that the past was more revivalistic. He boldly said that the Convention could not simply be cerebral (Price & Randall 2000:187).

The official line of Keswick and its focus since 1886 have never changed. In 2010 one of the Convention speakers asked: 'What are our priorities in Christian ministry? To live a life of mercy and to serve [...] bringing light into a darkened world' (KW 2010:143). But concerning to expound the Scriptures, one sees the focus on foreign missions changed in Christian service anywhere. Is this due to the lack of deep devotional

lives? Keswick spirituality and mission were in the early times intertwined. Mentioning George Whitefield, John Wesley and the missionaries Jim Elliot and Amy Carmichael, McQuoid states:

These men and women were also powerfully active, but their activity for God was fuelled by this deep devotional life. They walked through this dying world breathing the air of eternity. (KW 2010:177–178)

The response to Keswick teaching will not necessarily lead to the mission field, whether foreign or at home. It will rather lead to sacrificial service of some kind, even though the mission field is the kitchen, the Sunday school or the office. Christian service is seen by Keswick-goers as a debt, not as a charity. Being loyal to Christ, being his disciple implies service in his name. In the second half of the 20th century one sees two parallel traditions in mission. One, understanding mission more as a broader humanitarianism, the other, more linked to the old Keswick understanding of mission, which was more inclined to limit the Christian message to one of individual salvation. The KC which moulded much evangelical spirituality in the first half of the 20th century, was seen by preachers such as Scroggie as an event offering solid exposition and application.

It appears that the primary ministry of Keswick now is not to export missionaries, although that will continue, but to encourage national Christians to be more effective in their ministry and true to the message which has inspired the KC down the years. The last words spoken from the platform of the big tent at the KC in 2010 refer back to those of 1885 when mission came on the agenda of Keswick: ‘Think of the hundreds of missionaries all around the world, serving God right now amongst the peoples of the world, trace their call right back to this tent’ (KW 2010:197).

Our millennium rethinks their goals and objectives. Truth does not change, but truth is understood and appropriated nowadays in human and cultural context. The Convention Council has made up an agreement in what way to face the 21st century. Next to the deepening of spiritual life of individuals and church communities, a special regard is given to ‘a strong commitment to the breadth of mission in today’s world’ (Price & Randall 2000:265). The passion for mission will be quenched when we lose sight of the grandeur of the gospel; our focus always mirrors our Saviour’s.

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