REPORT OF AFRICAN MISSION

As your Secretary of African Missions, appointed at the last General Conference, I take pleasure in submitting this report.

Preparatory to going to Africa with Bishop W. H. Lambuth, I collected from all sources $1250.30. The expenses connected therewith for clerk hire, travel, stationary, and postage was $408.28 leaving a balance whereby to make the trip of $842.02. This amount being insufficient by $150.00 to meet the actual expenses of travel, board, etc., the deficit was generously supplied by Bishop Lambuth. In addition to this gift of his, all my specific outfit for the trip, such as a tent, hammock, medicine, clothes for the tropics, a cot, metal trunk, pay for guides, etc., were almost given me. Had I been compelled to make the trip alone, I would have needed at least $3000. I shall never cease to thank Bishop Lambuth and our white brethren.

Of the gifts by my church, those of the three conferences in Georgia amounted to most, e.g. $265.35. The remainder, except $150.00 given by the C. M. E. Church miscellaneously, was given by white friends in response to letters which I sent them. The amount was $834.95.

As aforesaid but for the generous supplement by Bishop Lambuth this trip of pioneering the work could not have been made.

I left New York, Sept. 26, 1911. Crossing the Atlantic and reaching London within seven days, I joined Bishop Lambuth there. After four days in London, we went to Antwerp, Belgium via Harwich and the Hook of Holland. Our outfit begun in London, was not completed until we were at Luebo in Congo, Belge, some 1200 miles from the coast, about four and one half degrees below the equator.

We left Antwerp, Belgium Oct. 14th, 1911 aboard the Belgium Steamer, Elizabethville. Omitting all stops on the way we went down the Scheldt river,
passed the Bay of Biscay, across the Strait of Gibraltar, out into the Atlantic on the African coast. The most important stops were at Vera Cruz, Teuritte, one of the Canary Islands at Free Town, Sierra Leone, and off the coast of Monrovia, Liberia. Nothing but French and Flemish were spoken aboard ship.

Bishop and I spent our time in reading the French Testament studying Morrison's Baluba-Lulua Grammar, and studying books on Africa, such as Stanley's, Livingstone's, Greenfell's, Bentley's and Drummond's. Three weeks after leaving Antwerp we entered the mouth of the Congo about four and one half degrees below the equator. Thence we went up the river to Matadi and via rail for 240 miles inland to Leopoldville. We stopped here at an English Mission ten days. Thence we went by very small steamers from Kinshasa to Luebo, 1200 miles inland. This is the Presbyterian Mission begun about 25 years ago by Rev. Samuel W. Lapsley of Anniston, Ala., and W. H. Sparr, a colored minister. White and colored Missionaries have from the beginning worked here side by side. The trip up the Congo with its teeming crocodiles, hippopotamuses, dug-out canoes, floating islands, whirlpools, was very perilous. It required fourteen days. We spent ten days at Luebo in the Kassar District, where two more colored missionaries. Rev. and Mrs. Edmiston were at work with other white missionaries. The Southern Presbyterians showed us every kindness. From Luebo we went afoot among wild beasts, wild men, cannibals and cannibalistic, sixty-one days covering some 900 miles. We climbed others over bridges made of vines, and crossed still others in native canoes, ate besides our canned foods, grub worms, snails, cassava, pine apples, bananas, rubber fruit, in fact anything we could get that was eatable. We preached very many times to the men of our own Caravan and to the other natives. Meanwhile I did what I could in collecting a Batetela vocabulary, formulating a grammar and writing the first Epistle to the Corinthians and the Epistle to the Romans in the Batetela language. However crudely done a beginning was made. At the end of our march which brought us 2100 miles into the interior in the Sankuru we came upon Wembo-Niami, the mighty medal chief of the Batetela tribe, a chief of 47 towns and about 250,000 men, women and children. Here we found one of the finest places in all Africa, one of the finest tribes to work among, affable, brave fine of
physique, acute mentally and responsive to the gospel. Here we obtained a concession. Here we drove down a stake in the town named Wembo-Niama after the Chief. Here the M. E. Church, South and the C.M.E. Church propose to work together, just as soon as the latter is ready. Eight white missionaries are already there, and it is to be hoped that during the forthcoming quadrennium we can send out men there. Several of our men are just waiting the bidding of their church to join their white brethren there. Your humble servant is pledged to that work just as soon as the C. M. E. Church can enter the field. Under the general cooperation between the churches plans and policies will soon be agreed upon and I confidently prophesy that it will not be many moons before we can do our part.

JOHN W. GILBERT, Secretary African Mission

Resolved that just as soon as possible the C. M. E. Church send missionaries of our church to Africa to do work in cooperation with the M. E. Church, South, under such policies as may be agreed upon by the joint Commission of both churches.

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As your Secretary of African Missions, appointed at the last General Conference, I take pleasure in submitting this report.

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