

Anglicanism in Smyrna (1815-1923)

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Abstract

This article traces the history of Anglicanism in Smyrna (Izmir in modern-day Turkey), focusing on the period from 1815-1923. The author provides background information on the rise of the Ottoman Empire, the *millet* (minority religious community) system, and Anglicanism within Smyrna, including its flourishing (1870-1913) and rapid decline (1913-1923). The author describes the Anglican communities in Bournabat (Bornova in modern-day Turkey) and Boudjah (Buca in modern-day Turkey).

Keywords: Smyrna, Izmir, CMS, Turkey, missions, Anglicanism, Ottoman Empire, millet, Constantinople, tanzimat Bournabat, Boudjah

Smyrna is affectionately known as “The Pearl of the Aegean Sea”.² Her deep, tranquil, and protected harbor, surrounded by majestic mountains on three sides, is the envy of Asia Minor. A center of bustling mercantilism and commerce for much of her 5,000-year inhabited history, Smyrna is also one of the notable recipients of St. John’s apocalypse, *The Book of Revelation*, and eyewitness to 2,000 years of continuous Christian presence. Yet for all her accolades, periods of Smyrna’s Christian history have concluded with both turmoil and tragedy. This article will survey one such period, the history of Anglicanism in Smyrna from 1815 to 1923.

The logic for considering 1815 as the terminus ad quo is obvious: the conclusion of the Napoleonic Wars and the arrival of the first CMS Anglican missionaries to Smyrna both occurred in 1815. From 1815 until World War I, Anglicanism in Smyrna was filled with growth, vitality, and missionary activity. However, Smyrna’s Greek and Armenian quarters were completely burned down in 1922, and in 1923 the Republic of Turkey was established. These two events precipitated a massive exodus of Anglicans to other countries, with the result that the active Anglican community in Smyrna today tallies no more than fifty people. Before we examine this fascinating and complex period of Anglicanism’s history in Smyrna, a brief review of *both the Ottoman Empire and British commercialism in Turkey is in order*.

The Ottoman Empire and British Commercialism (1299-1814)

The Ottoman Empire, founded in 1299 by Osman I when he declared his independence from the Turkish Selcuk Empire, sent shock waves throughout Europe after it surrounded and captured Constantinople in 1453. It achieved its greatest glory under Suleiman the Magnificent (1520-1566), who advanced to the gates of Vienna in the heart of Europe (1529), only to be

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² Smyrna was renamed “Izmir” in 1930; today it is the third largest city in the Republic of Turkey

defeated by a coalition of European states. Soon afterwards the Europeans decimated the Ottoman Empire's navy in the battle of Lepanto (1571). However, because of European internal strife (due to the Wars of Religion) and because of the discovery of the New World—which diverted European resources away from Europe—the Ottomans continued their territorial expansion, albeit slowly, until their second defeat at Vienna in 1683. Subsequently they entered a period of prolonged stagnation (1683-1827) and minor, though continuous, territorial loss. During this period of stagnation, they were no longer able to impose their agenda upon Europe; instead, they were forced to learn the art of diplomacy with a plethora of “infidel” nations.

The English formed the Levant Company in 1581 over the objections of the Bishop of London, who argued that increased traffic in the Mediterranean would lead to further capture and enslavement of Englishmen by Barbary pirates.³ In 1583 the English merchant William Harborne visited Constantinople and became England's first diplomatic representative there.⁴ Soon afterwards the Levant Company also developed a presence in Smyrna and Aleppo. The principal goods the Levant Company exported from Smyrna were cotton, Persian silks, wine, and turpentine. By 1649 the volume of English trade from Smyrna had even surpassed that of Constantinople!⁵

The first chaplain of Smyrna was the Rev. Thomas Curtys (1636-1639), who, along with all subsequent chaplains until 1899, celebrated liturgical services at the British consulate. The consulate was equipped with a small chapel until 1843, when a bigger chapel named St. John the Evangelist was constructed on Consulate premises.⁶ The mission of the first British chaplains in Smyrna was to provide for the spiritual needs of the British personnel stationed there; ministry among either Ottoman Turks or other ethnic groups within the Ottoman Empire, called *millets*—whether Christian, Jewish, or Alevi Muslim⁷—was not undertaken.

Eighteenth and 19th century Smyrna was one of the most cosmopolitan cities in the Ottoman Empire, a detail we must not overlook in considering Anglicanism's presence there.⁸ The largest *millet* residing in Smyrna was the Greeks, who had maintained a continuous presence

³ S.W.H. Bird, *And Unto Smyrna: The Story of a Church in Asia Minor*. (London: James Clarke and Co., 1956), 46.

⁴ “History of the Bilateral Relations Between Britain and Turkey,” The British Embassy in Turkey, <http://www.britishembassy.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1053446568285> (accessed February 27, 2006).

⁵ *And Unto Smyrna: The Story of a Church in Asia Minor*, 47.

⁶ St John the Evangelist Church, Alsancak, Izmir, <http://stjohnsizmir.tripod.com/aboutme.htm> (accessed February 27, 2006). St. John the Evangelist is technically a chapel and not a church because the Anglican parish system didn't exist in the Ottoman Empire. As such, in this essay I will consistently refer to St. John the Evangelist, St. Mary Magdalene, and All Saints as chapels, not churches, even though they are frequently referred to as churches by other sources.

⁷ Alevi Muslims are non-Sunni Turkish, Kurdish, Turkmen, Zaza, and Azeri Muslims who reside primarily in the Eastern half of Turkey, but also in Northern Iraq, Iran, and Turkmenistan. There are between 14-21 million Alevis in Turkey and perhaps 3 million residing outside of Turkey. Alevism is an offshoot of Shiite Islam: it recognizes only the Shiite caliphs, and generally espouses a looser and more humanistic interpretation of the Koran. Alevis reject polygamy and worshiping in mosques. Instead, they prefer worshiping in their own *cemevis* (gathering places). Alevi Muslims in Anatolia have been traditionally despised and persecuted by the Sunni majority.

⁸ Although I haven't come across eighteenth century figures, a Dutch study of Smyrna's demographics concluded that in 1910 215,000 people lived in Smyrna: 107,000 Greeks, 52,000 Turks, 25,000 Jews, 12,000 Armenians, 6,500 Italians (how many belonged to Genoese and Venetian origins is uncertain), 2,500 French, 2,200 Austrians, 1,500 British, a few hundred Dutch, and a few thousand from other nationalities. Craig Encer, “Brief History of the Boudjah Church,” *Levantine Heritage: The Story of a Community*, <http://www.levantine.plus.com/histor2.htm>, (accessed May 11, 2006).

in Smyrna from 700 BC onwards. A small Armenian population, attracted to Smyrna from impoverished Eastern Anatolia due to its economic and educational opportunities, grew slowly yet steadily throughout the 18th and 19th centuries.⁹ The Jewish *millet* was also quite sizeable; approximately nine synagogues still stand today and as many as six are used regularly.¹⁰ Although the Turks constituted the second largest ethnic block in Smyrna, as the decades and centuries rolled on, they became progressively poorer in relation to the other *millets* because they didn't economically or educationally benefit from Westerners' presence. Ultimately, they became marginalized and spurned by both Westerners and non-Muslim Ottoman *millets*.

As the 18th century wound down and the Ottoman Empire's prolonged stagnation (1623-1827) accelerated into cataclysmic decline (1827-1908), England became convinced that the Ottoman Empire's territorial integrity was in her vital national interests. "The Sick Man of Europe" counteracted increasing Russian southward expansion, acting as a buffer between Russian military forces and her own geo-political interests in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea. And so, for most of the 19th century London became Constantinople's reluctant bedfellow, propping up the "Sick Man of Europe" and postponing her ultimate death.

Anglicanism in Smyrna (1815-1870)

In 1815 William Jowett and Josiah Pratt of the Anglican Church Mission Society (CMS) established a CMS base for printing Bibles and Christian literature in Malta, which was then a British territory. Malta was a strategic and ideal location for the CMS's printing facilities, because foreigners needed permits (known as "capitulations") to work and reside within the Ottoman Empire. Having the CMS printing headquarters based in Malta protected CMS publications and property from interference and confiscation by the Ottoman Padishah.¹¹ That same year both Jowett and Connor also visited Smyrna, yet elected to settle in Constantinople in 1816.¹²

The purpose of their 1815 Smyrna visit was to form a Bible Society in Smyrna, which they did with the full approval of the Greek Bishop. Partially funded by the Russian, Dutch, and British Consuls, the goal of this CMS initiative was "to further Christian education, schools and missionary endeavour".¹³

And so, from its genesis, the CMS viewed its mission to the Ottoman Empire as that of both cooperating with and reviving the ancient Greek and Armenian Churches. CMS missionaries saw it as not only their duty—but also as their privilege—to assist these historic churches regain the vital and transforming life of Jesus Christ. They envisioned re-evangelizing and re-educating these ancient churches so that they could in turn—when the window of

⁹ European merchants in Smyrna conducted their commerce with Greeks, Armenians, and Jews, but not with Turks. Moreover, missionary educational initiatives were aimed exclusively at the minority Christian populations. Thus Smyrna, like Constantinople, became a magnet for poverty-stricken Armenians in the 18th and 19th centuries, who sought to improve their economic and educational conditions through contact with Westerners.

¹⁰ The Rev. Geoffrey Evans, chaplain of St. John the Evangelist from 1973-1994 (Interview on May 9, 2006).

¹¹ "Sultan" an Arabic word meaning "strength", "authority" or "rulership" was used as the title for the supreme Ottoman ruler as well as "Padishah", a word of Persian derivation. This article will continually refer to the supreme sovereign, or king, of the Ottoman Empire as "Padishah".

¹² Kenneth Cragg, "Being Made Disciples—The Middle East," *The Church Mission Society and World Christianity 1799-1999: Studies in the History of Christian Missions*, ed. Kevin Ward and Brian Stanley. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 121.

¹³ *And Unto Smyrna: The Story of a Church in Asia Minor*, 66.

opportunity opened—evangelize the Turks.¹⁴ In this regard, they printed tracts, books, and Bibles not only in Ottoman (the language which predates modern Turkish), but also in Greek, Armenian, Arabic, and other languages.

Unquestionably, Jowett, Pratt, and the CMS influx into the Ottoman Empire were influenced by the godly and industrious life as well as the premature death of Henry Martyn.¹⁵ Martyn had died in 1812 in Tokat (in the north-central region of modern-day Turkey) on his way back to England for medical leave at the age of 31. While in India he had translated the New Testament into Urdu, and facilitated its translation into Arabic and Persian. CMS missionaries and Anglican clergy were inspired by his godly life, his tragic and premature death, and his overall vision to reach Muslim peoples.

Here a bit more must be said about the Ottoman *millet* governmental system, which thwarted effective missionary outreach to Muslims and propelled missionaries in the Ottoman Empire to concentrate upon minority Christian peoples. The Ottoman Empire divided its subjects into different ethnic and religious groups (*millets*) for greater convenience and effectiveness in government. Each *millet* had its own leader who reported directly to the Padishah. For example, the leader of the Greek *millet* was the archbishop of the Greek Orthodox Church.

Under Islamic Shari'a law, all Muslim males benefited from the principle of legal and religious equality. However, males from the various *millets*—whether they were Jewish, Greek, Armenian, or Slavic—were discriminated against for the Muslims within the Ottoman Empire to maintain their political, economic, and sociological advantage. Two of the more pronounced forms of Ottoman discrimination against these *millets* were “the *jizya*, or poll-tax, which had universally been imposed by Muslim governments on tolerated non-Muslim subjects, and the ban on bearing arms, a restriction of almost equal universality and duration”.¹⁶

The *millet* system was also designed to preserve the cultural and religious identity of the various ethnic and religious groups that co-existed in the Ottoman Empire. The Padishah's responsibilities included not only maintaining a peaceful and harmonious atmosphere for these *millets* to interact with each other, but also protecting all Muslims from the Jewish and Christian religions. For a Muslim to become a Christian would not only alter the delicate and precarious balance of the Ottoman system, but also disgrace the Padishah for failing to exercise his God-ordained responsibility of protecting Muslim citizens from the infidel. Penalty for Muslims converting to Christianity or Judaism was immediate death.

However, in part due to a genuine desire to reform his decaying empire, and in part due to outside Western pressure, in 1839 Padishah Mahmut II ushered in the *Tanzimat* (reorganization) era with his promulgation of the *Hatt-i Sharif* (Noble Edict), the earliest Islamic constitutional document ever written. Although open to a wide array of interpretation, in principle it gave all *millets* equality before the law. It granted

freedom and security of life, honour, and property; a regular method of assessing and collecting taxes and the abolition of tax farming; an equally regular method of levying and recruiting the armed forces and fixing their duration

¹⁴ Ömer Turan, *Avrasya'da Misyonerlik*. (Ankara: Avrasya Stratejik Arastirmalar Merkezi Yayinlari, 2002), 147.

¹⁵ Graham Kings, “Foundations for Mission and the Study for World Christianity: The Legacy of Henry Martyn,” *The Henry Martyn Centre*, <http://www.martynmission.cam.ac.uk/CLife.htm> (accessed February 27, 2006)

¹⁶ Bernard Lewis, *What Went Wrong? Western Impact and Middle Eastern Response*. (London: Phoenix, 2002), 93, 101.

of service; finally, fair public trial under the law, and no punishment without legal sentence.¹⁷

Cautious optimism began to rise in Europe that perhaps the Ottoman Empire was indeed reforming itself. The Hatt-i Sharif precipitated a great influx of entrepreneurial Europeans (English included) settling in the Ottoman Empire to seek out economic prosperity.¹⁸

Interestingly, this 1839 reform post-dated the closing of the Levant Company by only fourteen years. In 1825 the Levant Company had surrendered its charter; all its consuls were taken over by the British government. Its void in Smyrna was quickly filled by bold, industrious, and entrepreneurial English citizens hoping to make money in Smyrna. This English influx into Smyrna, which brought fresh vitality and activity into the Anglican Church of Smyrna, only increased after the Hatt-i Sharif in 1839.

In the 1820s and 1830s both wealthy British merchants and British railroad workers began building summerhouses on a plateau five miles outside of Smyrna, named Boudjah (the modern spelling is “Buca”). As increasing numbers made Boudjah their year-round home, they felt the need for an Anglican chapel, which they built and consecrated in 1835 (All Saints’ Chapel). From 1835-1839 the Anglican priest at Smyrna traveled to officiate at their services. In 1839 their first chaplain, The Rev. John Andrew Jetter (a CMS missionary), arrived at Boudjah and began to minister at All Saints’ Chapel.

Due to continuous growth and an open, welcoming policy to European Christians whose denominations weren’t represented in Smyrna, All Saints’ continued to grow so quickly that a bigger facility was needed in the 1860s. In 1865 All Saints’ Chapel was completed; one year later the Bishop of Gibraltar, the Rt. Rev. Walter John Trower, consecrated it. (Remarkably, according to the plaque at the entrance of this church, the Padishah himself even gave a small donation for its construction). The architecture of All Saints’ is quite fascinating and therefore warrants extended comment:

The shape of the building is based on a classic cross shape, possibly to mirror the nearby ruins of one of the first churches of Christendom, that in Ephesus/Selçuk. The ‘All Saints’ church building possesses a conical tepee style roof rare even in the west. Possibly the plans for this church were inspired by a similar church in Britain. The long support beams of the roof abut on the short cylindrical stone columns, spreading the load. The attractive green stone [serpentine] of these columns is the same as the material used by the British in the railway lodge and main building at Boudjah . . . The roof is covered in slate, an unusual material to use in Turkey, thus probably imported from Wales, possibly symbolic of the roots of an important benefactor family of the time, the Rees’es.¹⁹

A graveyard surrounds all Saints’. One hundred people can comfortably be seated in its nave.

Boudjah wasn’t the only alternative for Europeans living in Smyrna. The village of Bournabat (the modern spelling is Bornova) also developed as an ideal location for summerhouses because it is situated only three miles from Smyrna on a lush and fertile plain. In

¹⁷ Lord Kinross, *The Ottoman Centuries: The Rise and Fall of the Turkish Empire*. (New York: Morrow Quill, 1977), 474.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Craig Encer, “Brief History of the Boudjah Church,” *Levantine Heritage: The Story of a Community*, <http://www.levantine.plus.com/histor1.htm> (accessed February 27, 2006).

the 1830s English merchants soon began building permanent houses (in some cases mansions) in Bournabat. The quintessential example of this is Charles Whittall. Born in 1791 in Liverpool, he sailed to Smyrna in 1809 to seek his fortune, and founded *C. Whittall and Co., Smyrna* in 1811. In 1813 he married Magdaleine Giraud, the daughter of a prominent Levantine²⁰ mercantile family of French origin.²¹ Exactly twenty years later Whittall purchased a colossal structure known as “The Big House”, which had been originally used as either a monastery or convent.²² He then had the privilege to host King Otho of Greece at his new house the same year.

Sensing the need for an Anglican chapel to be located in Bournabat, in 1857 Whittall built a chapel and a parsonage immediately behind his house, entirely from his own funds.²³ The chapel was consecrated in 1864 by Bishop Trower and named St. Mary Magdalene’s Chapel—perhaps deriving its name after Charles Whittall’s wife, Magdaleine. The architecture of St. Mary Magdalene’s Chapel is eclectic, possessing elements of gothic, romanesque, and baroque styles. Many of its stained-glass windows were replaced in 1909 and 1913 with windows produced by Kempe Studios. The St. Mary Magdalene chapel comfortably seats seventy-five people.

In 1863 the Turkish Padishah Aziz, returning from Egypt, stayed with the Whittall family for a night. Amazingly, the next day he entered St. Mary Magdalene’s Chapel and took off his Islamic head garb, an astonishing gesture of both humility and respect.²⁴ In his living will Whittall decreed that a member of his family should always oversee St. Mary Magdalene for the benefit of Protestant community in Bournabat:

I desire that for the superintendence of the said church or chapel and the several requirements connected therewith, the eldest male member of my family resident at Bournabat together with one such other person as by the congregation shall be chosen for that purpose shall stand and be elected Overseers or Church Wardens . . . as soon as the said Protestant Community shall cease or neglect to defray any of the above mentioned several expenses connected with the said Church or Chapel and ministry thereof, then and in such case the said church or chapel with its appurtenances shall be sold.²⁵

Political Events in Constantinople (1846-1876)

Both All Saints’ Chapel in Boudjah and St. Mary Magdalene’s Chapel in Bornova obtained imperial edicts for their construction—and subsequent favorable treatment from the Ottoman governor in Smyrna—due to the remarkable political events that were occurring in Constantinople in the late 1840s and 1850s. To begin with, the first Armenian Evangelical Church in Constantinople was founded in 1846, and in 1850 Padishah Abdul Medjid granted an

²⁰ The term “Levantine” is used to denote Westerners (and their descendants) who settled in the Ottoman Empire for diplomatic or commercial purposes.

²¹ Mark Humphrys, “Whittall Family Tree,” <http://humphrysfamilytree.com/Maltass/whittall.html> (accessed April 18, 2006); Mark Humphrys, “Giraud Family Tree,” <http://humphrysfamilytree.com/Maltass/giraud.html> (accessed April 18, 2006).

²² “Whittall Family Tree.” Currently “The Big House” is the Chancellor’s Building for Aegean University.

²³ Charles Whittall’s will, found in St. John the Evangelist’s archives.

²⁴ *And Unto Smyrna: The Story of a Church in Asia Minor*, 73.

²⁵ Charles Whittall’s will.

independent *millet* status to Armenian Protestants!²⁶ This was heralded as miraculous news by not only Anglicans, but by the missionary community throughout the Ottoman Empire.

Moreover, the Crimean War (1854-1856), which pitted southwardly expanding Russia against the Ottoman Empire, France, and England, forced the Padishah to become even more conciliatory towards and protective and supportive of English political and religious interests within his empire. In 1858, shortly after the war, the Crimean Chapel was constructed upon land donated by the Padishah himself to honor the Englishmen who had died in the conflict. The Crimean Chapel has a neo-gothic design and is the largest Anglican Chapel in modern Turkey, with a seating capacity of 150 people.

From the missionaries' perspective, the most inspiring and providential development during the *Tanzimat* era was the *Hatt-i Humanyan* (Imperial Edict) that was part of the 1856 Treaty of Paris between Russia, France, England, and the Ottoman Empire. In it Padishah Abdul Mejid continued the reorganization and reforms begun under Mahmut II, promising "equality in education, government appointments, and administration of justice to all *regardless of creed* [italics mine]".²⁷ Soon afterwards Turks began buying Bibles and Christian books, including the Ottoman translation of *Pilgrim's Progress*.²⁸ In Constantinople small numbers of Turks, a few government officials, and even one imam (religious leader) became Christians.²⁹ Jeremy Salt writes, "Missionaries approached Muslims directly and even baptized the small number of them willing to convert, in the full knowledge that within the previous 20 years, Muslim apostates had been executed in the Ottoman Empire".³⁰

In 1856 the CMS, sensing that the political and religious climate in the Ottoman Empire had changed, began a mission in Constantinople to reach the Muslim population with the Gospel. (Hitherto their efforts had been exclusively aimed at only the Jewish and Christian *millets*.) To lead this pioneer effort, they called upon two experienced German missionaries working under their auspices: Dr. S. W. Koelle (who had worked in West Africa) and Dr. Karl Pfander.

Born in 1801 in Germany, Pfander's life ambition was to lead Muslims to Christ. After he studied at Basel (1820-1825), Pfander ministered in Transcaucasia (1825-1829), Baghdad (1829-1831), and in Shusha (1831-1835). Because Pfander believed it more advantageous to work under English auspices, he joined the CMS, with the full consent of his Basel Mission Society, in 1840.³¹ He worked in Agra from 1841 to 1855 and in Peshawar from 1855 to 1857. In 1858 he arrived in Constantinople where he ministered until 1865, the year he died.³²

Pfander was both a brilliant linguist and an indefatigable apologist. In 1829 he wrote *Mizan-al-Haqq* (*The Balance of Truth*), which is "a cogent and incisive attack on

²⁶ Jean Hatton, *The Light Bearers: Carrying Healing and Hope to the Middle East Battleground*. (London: Monarch Books, 2003), 29.

²⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hatt-i_H%C3%BCmayan (accessed April 18, 2006.)

²⁸ *The Light Bearers: Carrying Healing and Hope to the Middle East Battleground*, 29.

²⁹ Jim Romaine, "Towards a Culturally Relevant and Practical Church Planting Strategy for Use in Istanbul, Turkey" (D. Min thesis, Columbia Graduate School of Missions, 1993), 355.

³⁰ Jeremy Salt, "Trouble Wherever They Went: American Missionaries in Anatolia and Ottoman Syria in the Nineteenth Century." *Muslim World*, Fall 2002, Vol. 92 Issue ¾, <http://search.epnet.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=cookie,ip,ul,uid&db=rh&an=9083187> (accessed January 10, 2005)

³¹ "Pfander, Karl Gottlieb," *Christian Classics Ethereal Library at Calvin College*, <http://www.ccel.org/s/schaff/encyc/encyc09/htm/ii.xii.htm> (accessed February 27, 2006).

³² Pfander ministered in Constantinople between 1858-1865, but died in 1865 in England while on furlough.

Mohammedanism and an explanation and application of Christianity, written in simple language but with deep conviction and ample knowledge”.³³ From 1858 onwards he and other CMS missionaries sold for a minimal price not only *The Balance of Truth*, but also portions of Scripture in the Islamic quarters of Constantinople. Eugene Stock writes:

Quietly and perseveringly, by distribution of the Turkish Scriptures, and by personal conversation, the knowledge of the Gospel was disseminated; and the *Mizan-al-Haqq* itself was actually sold in the precincts of the Mosque of St. Sophia, the once-famous church whose walls had heard the eloquence of Chrysostom.³⁴

On Easter Day in 1862 the CMS baptized its first Muslim convert. In 1864 a CMS missionary wrote: “We have had a visit from the Bishop of Gibraltar, who confirmed many Turks [some of them S.P.G. converts]. Our rooms are crowded with those who are willing to hear the Gospel.”³⁵ According to the Rev. Alexander Thomson, a missionary in the British and Foreign Bible Society, an average of 6,000-7,000 Turkish Scriptures—either the entire Bible or portions—were sold annually in Constantinople from 1858 to 1864.³⁶ The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions even reported that missionary book depositories, which had previously been confined to the Christian quarters of Constantinople, were moved into the Golden Horn, the section where Muslims resided.³⁷ By all accounts it appeared that both Anglican and non-Anglican missionaries were set to reap a bountiful harvest among Muslims.

However, their hopes were dashed on July 18, 1864. Turkish authorities attacked the CMS, the SPG, and the Bible Society’s premises, closing them down, confiscating their books, and throwing their converts into prison. Many Turkish Christians were eventually released; however, many converts simply disappeared. Because the British Government was not prepared to risk “international complications” over the Ottoman’s reneging upon the *Hatt-i Humanyan* (Imperial Edict), missionaries of all denominations were dealt a permanent blow. Muslims were now petrified of attending any type of missionary meeting whatsoever because of the crackdown and because missionary meetings were henceforth infiltrated by Ottoman governmental spies. Thus, Anglican outreach to Muslims in Constantinople—and throughout the Ottoman Empire as well—came to a standstill.³⁸

Despite this setback among Muslims, the 1850s, the 1860s and the early 1870s nevertheless represented real gains for the general missionary effort in Turkey. Handfuls of Muslims had become Christians, an Armenian Protestant Church was beginning to emerge, Christian literature in numerous languages was being widely disseminated, missionary-sponsored schools continued to be constructed and filled with students, and the Ottoman Empire was incrementally implanting reform—albeit at the insistence of its Western big brothers. But when

³³ Pfander, Karl Gottlieb,” Christian Classics Ethereal Library at Calvin College.

³⁴ Stock, Eugene. *The History of the Church Missionary Society, Its Environment, Its Men, and Its Work, Vol. 1.* (London: Church Missionary Society, 1899), 154.

³⁵ Stock, 154.

³⁶ Johnston, James, ed. *Report of the Centenary Conference on the Protestant Missions of the World Held in Exeter Hall (June 9th-19th), London, 1888, Vol. 1.* (New York: Fleming Rebell, 1888), 319.

³⁷ Strong, William. *The Story of the American Board: An account of the First Hundred years of the American Board*

of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. (Boston: Pilgrim Press, 1910), 200.

³⁸ Stock, 154-155.

Padishah Abdulhamit II ascended the throne in 1876, the *Hatt-i Humayun* (Imperial Edict) of 1856 was dealt a death blow. Jeremy Salt comments,

Sultan Abdulhamit observed, “The public appearance of a converted Mussulman [Muslim] might lead to serious disorders and even a massacre or persecution for which he and his government would be held responsible.” His ministers also vehemently rejected the “pretensions” of the missionaries regarding the Hatt-i Humayun which in their [the missionaries’] interpretation ensured the right of each individual to profess his own religion without impediment.³⁹

Furthermore, Padishah Abdulhamit viewed the ascending tides of Armenian nationalism as a precarious threat to the unity, stability, and cohesiveness of the Ottoman Empire. Thus, he began a systematic and sustained campaign of violence against the Armenians who lived in Eastern Anatolia, the frontier of his shrinking empire.⁴⁰ However, he refrained from action against Armenians in Constantinople and Smyrna because of these cities’ sizable Western diplomatic presence. Therefore, the Anglicans in Smyrna (as well as the greater Christian community in Smyrna—including Armenians) were spared from the chaos and lawlessness that occurred in Central Anatolia in the late 1800s.

4. Anglicanism Reaches Its Greatest Extent in Smyrna (1870-1913)

1870-1913 continued to be a period of growth and expansion for the three Anglican communities in Smyrna, Bournabat, and Boudjah. Many of their chaplains were CMS missionaries, and perhaps the most noteworthy was the Rev. John Theodore Wolters, who served at Boudjah (1842-1877) and temporarily as the first chaplain of Bournabat (1859-1861), until a permanent chaplain for Bournabat arrived. His sacrificial service is commemorated in a plaque on the western wall of the St. John the Evangelist’s Chapel in Smyrna (built 1898-1899 and consecrated in 1902). The plaque reads:

The Reverend John Theodore Wolters, 47 years as a missionary, 27 in Smyrna until CMS discontinued their work in 1879. Deeply interested in the spiritual welfare of the English and German communities of Boudjah and Bournabat, going to Sunday service for many years. The communities of Bournabat, Boudjah, and Smyrna erected this tablet.

Wolters and his wife are buried in the graveyard adjacent to the Boudjah chapel.

Wolter’s plaque mentions Anglicanism’s inclusive, warm, and welcoming spirit towards non-Anglican German Christians. This same spirit towards non-Anglican Christians was also exhibited in the Rt. Rev. C. Waldegrave Sandford, Bishop of Gibraltar (1874-1903), under whose jurisdiction Smyrna belonged. He visited Smyrna three times (1879, 1895 and 1902), the second visit meeting personally with the Armenian Archbishop to express his deep sympathy

³⁹ “Trouble Wherever They Went: American Missionaries in Anatolia and Ottoman Syria in the Nineteenth Century”.

⁴⁰ The Turkish government and most Turkish scholars (including Yusuf Halacoglu, who is the current president of the Turkish Historical Society) maintain that Turkish-Armenian atrocities were two-sided. They purport that Turkish aggression against Armenians began *only after* Armenian extremists initiated guerilla warfare against eastern Turkish military units in their quest to form an independent Armenian nation. However, the numerous Western missionaries who were interspersed in Eastern Anatolia recount that while localized Armenian aggression indeed existed, the Turks incited Kurdish tribal leaders to maraud and massacre Armenian villagers.

with the Armenian people for their harsh treatment at Turkish hands.⁴¹ His final visit in 1902 was to consecrate St. John the Evangelist's Chapel.

From 1843-1898 the location of St. John the Evangelist's Chapel had been on the premises of the British Consulate. But when British government decided to construct a new consulate without a chapel on its premises, the Anglican laity in Smyrna readily and swiftly donated the money to construct St. John the Evangelist's Chapel. This gothic style chapel possesses a nave, chancel, and sanctuary (each distinctly demarcated from each other), as well as the typical gothic vaulted arches. There is a list of all the Anglican chaplains who have ministered in Smyrna from 1636-2000 in the porch of this chapel.⁴² A baptismal font is positioned in the back of its nave.⁴³ The seating capacity of St. John the Evangelist is about one hundred and twenty-five people.

Hung on the southern wall of Collins Fellowship Hall is a copy of the Ottoman imperial edict which authorized the construction of St. John the Evangelist. It was written on February 2, 1898. In it Padishah Abdulhamit II instructs the vizier of the province of Aydin (of which Smyrna was a part) to allow construction of St. John the Evangelist, whose dimensions are to be 15 meters wide, 34 meters long, and 10 meters high. The Padishah notes that approximately 1,000 British citizens reside in Smyrna. He emphasizes that the location chosen for construction is suitable because "the neighborhood is not Islamic; there is no mosque in the vicinity, and the city government, police, and military have no objection to the building of the church." This letter reflects Ottoman practice of geographically separating *millets* (even though they resided in the same city), to reduce the chances of possible conflict between them.

The stained-glass windows above the sanctuary in St. John the Evangelist's Chapel were crafted by Kempe Studios in 1905. The base detail of the central window states the following: "Here the holy Ignatius on his way to martyrdom through the city of Smyrna is welcomed by S. Polycarp the Bishop who kisseth with reverence the martyr's chains". This stained-glass window vividly displays the scene of the kneeling Polycarp kissing Ignatius' chains with Roman guards surrounding them both; it epitomizes the profound appreciation Smyrnian Anglicans had for the sub-apostolic Christian history that transpired in Smyrna.

While visiting Smyrna for the consecration of this chapel, Bishop Sandford felt the need to write a pastoral letter to the chaplains of all three of Smyrna's chapels. (This letter is now framed and hung on the back wall of St. John the Evangelist's Church.) In this letter he outlined geographical regions that each chaplain was to be responsible for. None of the three chaplains was to exceed his geographical boundaries in ministering to the roughly 1,000 British citizens residing in Smyrna and its vicinity. This letter also reaffirmed the Anglican practice that baptized Christians, whose own denominations weren't represented at Smyrna, were welcome to receive the Eucharist in the Anglican Chapels of Smyrna.

Bishop William Edward Collins (1904-1911) succeeded bishop Sandford. Tragically, Collins' second pastoral visit to Smyrna would be his last pastoral visit—ever! He died as his ship was entering the port of Smyrna in March 1911. Buried under the vault at the western end of St. John the Evangelist's Chapel, his funeral testified not only to his amiable spirit and his esteem for the catholic church, but also to the admiration Anglicanism had earned from the

⁴¹ *And Unto Smyrna: The Story of a Church in Asia Minor*, 74.

⁴² Their names, along with the names of the chaplains of St. Mary Magdalene and All Saints, are listed in the appendix.

⁴³ St. Mary Magdalene's still retains its baptismal font. According to Geoffrey Evans, the baptismal font of All Saints was most likely sent to the Anglican chapel in Ankara when it was closed down in 1961.

greater Christian community of Smyrna. Present at his funeral was “the Greek Archbishop (who gave the address), the Bishop [Greek] of Tralles, many Greek priests, the Armenian Archbishop, French and German Pastors, representatives of the American Mission, and most of the British Community”.⁴⁴ Two years later (1913) the growing Anglican community built a fellowship hall just north of the chapel. They dedicated it to Bishop Collins. The building of the Bishop Collins Fellowship Hall represents the period of the greatest influence and vitality of Anglicanism in Smyrna, a period in which five Anglican chaplains were stationed in Smyrna.⁴⁵ However, due to the outbreak of World War I, Anglicanism’s dynamism and strength quickly and drastically declined.

5. The Rapid Decline of Anglicanism in Smyrna (1914-1923)

With the British Empire fighting against the Ottoman Empire in World War I, British Levantine Anglicans found themselves in the awkward position of being *de facto* enemy combatants. Many British youth in fact left the Ottoman Empire to enlist with British forces. The panel at the back of St. John the Evangelist’s Chapel commemorates a dozen Anglicans of Smyrna who died in service for England. When the son of the rich railroad man Thomas Brees returned home safely after World War I, Brees donated an ornate organ that he had shipped from London to the All Saints’ Chapel in Boudjah, in which it remains to this day (though it is at present broken and unusable).

After the Ottoman defeat, the victorious nations met at Versailles in 1919 to discuss the terms of the treaty they would impose upon the dismantled Ottoman Empire. Although the final terms of peace weren’t signed until the Treaty of Sèvres in 1920, it was agreed at Versailles that “Smyrna and the adjacent regions of Anatolia would nominally remain Ottoman but would be administered by Greece for five years, after which a plebiscite would determine whether it would be Turkish or Greek”.⁴⁶ Accordingly, Greece occupied Smyrna on May 15, 1919, with an army of 20,000 soldiers, a maneuver that led to 350 Turkish casualties. In the ensuing months the size of the Greek forces only increased, and by 1920 the Greeks had pressed nearly 550 kilometers inland towards the modern-day Turkish capital of Ankara.⁴⁷

However, in 1920 when the Greek Prime Minister, the main protagonist and architect of the Greek occupation, failed in his reelection campaign, and when the Greek King Alexander accidentally died from a pet monkey’s bite, it seemed that fate had turned against the Greeks. Alexander’s father Constantine immediately scrapped his Greek military officers in Anatolia, “from the commander-in-chief down to platoon commanders”.⁴⁸ The subsequent display of military incompetence was stunning; Ernest Hemingway even reported that the replacement Greek artillery officers’ killed their own infantry.⁴⁹

Meanwhile, Turkish nationalism was on the rise. Mustafa Kemal (who was later given the name “Ataturk”, which means “Father of the Turks”) was a successful Turkish lieutenant colonel during World War I. From 1919-1923 he led a resistance movement to expel occupying foreign forces from no longer Ottoman, but *Turkish*, territory. In August 1920 the Turks had

⁴⁴ *And Unto Smyrna: The Story of a Church in Asia Minor*, 78.

⁴⁵ In addition to Smyrna, Bournabat, and Boudjah, there was a CMS chaplain and a chaplain from the London Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews. Geoffrey Evans, interviewed on May 9, 2006.

⁴⁶ Matthew Stewart, “Catastrophe at Smyrna,” *History Today*. July 2004, Vol. 54 Issue 7, <http://search.epnet.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=cookie.ip.url.ui> (accessed March, 2005).

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

amassed sufficient forces near Ankara to begin a counter-offensive against the Greeks. The incompetent and under-supplied Greek army engaged in a thunderbolt retreat towards Smyrna, burning everything in the Anatolian countryside as they fled. The entire Greek army managed to board their vessels in the Bay of Smyrna and escape into the Aegean Sea before the Turks arrived. However, few of the Greek or Armenian civilians of Smyrna were allowed to board with them.

The Turks entered Smyrna (the modern name is now “Izmir”) on September 9, 1922. No one knows for sure who started the fire, but the whole Greek and Armenian quarters of Smyrna were burned to the ground. Tens of thousands of Greeks and Armenians were killed. Generally speaking, the Europeans and their living quarters were spared. All three Anglican Chapels were also spared, even though St. John the Evangelist’s crypt harbored thirty fleeing Greeks for a few days.⁵⁰ Before the great fire Smyrna had been home to more Greeks than the city of Athens.⁵¹ Now, however, the Greek and Armenian populations were decimated, and Turkish nationalism was mounting. Unfortunately for them, several Anglicans families—including the rich and prestigious Whittalls, Reeses, and Maltasses—had supported the Greeks. Therefore, after the Turkish victory many of these Anglicans were forced to abandon their houses, factories, and companies, and leave Turkey altogether.

Epilogue: 1923-Present

Despite the English exodus from Smyrna in the early 1920s, a small English population was nevertheless allowed to remain to operate the two railroad lines that British companies had constructed in the Aegean interior in the late 19th century. But when the railroads lines were nationalized in 1935, even these once profit-making ventures turned sour and the need for British expertise became obsolete.⁵² And so Smyrna, the active, profitable, and burgeoning center of British commercialism in the Eastern Mediterranean since 1636 had now—299 years later—finally become a dried-up oasis.

Because of the dwindling Anglican presence, Anglicans placed the care and maintenance of their All Saints’ Chapel in Boudjah into the local municipality’s hands in 1961. All Saints was used as a cultural center until 2001, when a Turkish Baptist Christian was allowed to lease this chapel indefinitely, provided he would pay for all upkeep and maintenance of the facility. As for St. Mary Magdalene’s Chapel in Bornova, the Levantine Anglican community is now negligible. No vestry exists, but the chapel is occasionally opened to the greater Christian community in Izmir.

The Anglican congregation of St. John the Evangelist averages less than fifty people for its Sunday service. Once the choice of the expatriate English-speaking community during the 1980s and 1990s, the Lighthouse International Church, which opened in 1995, drew almost all the Evangelical and Pentecostal English-speaking congregants away from St. John the Evangelist. However, after the turn of the millennia, the Lighthouse International Church began renting St. John the Evangelist Church on Sunday afternoons. Today, hundreds of Christians, both indigenous and ex-patriate believers, worship there.

⁵⁰ *And Unto Smyrna: The Story of a Church in Asia Minor*, 99.

⁵¹ The Rev. Geoffrey Evans.

⁵² “Brief History of the Boudjah Church,” *Levantine Heritage: The Story of a Community*.

From the time St. John wrote his Revelation until today, there has been a continuous Christian presence in Smyrna (Izmir), the only such example among the seven churches of Revelation. The indigenous Turkish Church in Smyrna continues to grow, albeit slowly, in both numbers and in depth.

Appendix

Chaplains of St. John the Evangelist

1636-1639	Thomas Curtys, M.A.	1817-1820	Charles Williamson
1640-1642	William Gotbed, M.A.	1820-1821	Edward Bellamy, B.D.
1645-1651	Nathaniel Durant, M.A.	1821-1840	Francis Vyvyan Jago Arundell, M.A.
1652	Eleazar Duncone, D.D.	1840-1868	William BUCHNER Lewis, M.A. (Acting from 1833.)
1652-1653	Thomas Browne, LL.D. (Appointed but never went.)	1868-1870	Charles Constantine Hanson
1654-1660	Robert Winchester, M.A.	1870-1880	James D'Ombrain, M.A.
1660-1662	John Clarke	1880-1890	John Bainbridge Smith, M.A.
1662-1664	John Broadgate, B.D.	1893-1894	William Edward Douglas
1664-1669	John Luke, D.D.	1894-1895	James Wilson, M.A.
1670-1674	Philip Traherne, B.D.	1895-1897	Charles Fillan Bellot, B.A.
1674-1683	John Luke, D.D.	1897-1900	Alfred Hitch Ellis, B.A.
1684-1689	Thomas Smith, M.A.	1900-1908	Arthur Smythe Hichens, B.D.
1689-1692	Edward Smyth, D.D. (Later Bp. Down & Connor.)	1900-1909	1909-1919 William Henry Brett, O.B.E.
1692-1697	Thomas Rawlins, B.C.L	1909-1922	Lucius George Pownall Fry, M.A.
1698-1701	Edmund Chishull, B.D.	1922	Charles James Hamilton Dobson, M.C.
1701-1710	John Tisser, M.A.	1925-1930	William Henry Edgell (From 1925 onwards one chaplain served at all three chapels)
1710-1716	Samuel Lisle, D.D. (Later Bp. of Norwich.)	1930-1931	Philip John Coleman, A.K.C. (temporary chaplain).
1716	Thomas Owen, M.A. (Died be- fore going to Smyrna.)	1932-1947	Arthur James Wescott, D.D.
1717-1724	Bernard Mould, M.A.	1947-1949	Bernard Sydney Hewitt, B.A.
1724-1751	Charles Burdett, D.D.	1949-1958	Samuel Walsh Harold Bird, M. A. Hon. C.F.
1752-1761	Philip Brown, M.A.	1959-1973	Noel Andrew Seymour Tupholme, M.A.
1762	John Forster. (Appointed but never went.)	1973-1994	Geoffrey Bainbridge Evans, M.A.
1762-1763	Daniel Shipton, M.A.	1994-1996	Jack Chapman White, Ph.D
1766-1772	Beveridge Clendon	1996-2000	Ron James Rodgers, M.A.
1772-1773	Robert Marris, B.D.		
1776-1777	John Faithfull, M.A.		
1778-1790	Robert Foster, B.A.		
1791	Edward Nankivell, B.A. (Ap- pointed but never went.)		
1791-1797	Peter Cunningham		
1799-1808	John Frederic Usko		
1810-1814	George Cecil Renourard, B.D.		
1815-1817	William Sneyd		

Assistant Chaplains

1860-1863 Rowland Richard Cousens, B.A.

1887-1889 Robert Wakeford, M.A.

1905-1906 William Davin Barber, M.A.
(Seaman's Mission)⁵³

⁵³ *And Unto Smyrna: The Story of a Church in Asia Minor*, 120, and Plaque in the Porch of St. John the Evangelist's Chapel.

Chaplains of Boudjah

- 1839-1840 John Andrew Jetter (C.M.S.)
1839-1868 William Buchner Lewis, M.A.
1842-1877 John Theophilus Wolters
(C.M.S.)
1867-1855 John Moses Eppstein (L.J.S.)
187?-1885 William Charteris (C. of S.)
1885-1898 Louis Le Bouvier (French Re-
formed Church.)
1898-1925 Robert Pickering Ashe, M.A.⁵⁴

Chaplains of Bournabat

- 1859-1861 John Theophilus Wolters.
1862 Rowland Richard Cousens, B.A.
1863-1868 William Buchner Lewis, M.A.
1869-1871 John Moses Eppstein (L.J.S.)
1871-1880 James D’Ombrain, M.A.
1880-1890 John Bainbridge Smith, M.A.
1890-1895 Charles Fillan Bellot, B.A.
1895-1914 Reginald Allen, M.A.
1919-1922 Lucius George Pownall Fry,
M.A.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ *And Unto Smyrna: The Story of a Church in Asia Minor*, 120.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 121.