

# “All We Hope is a Generous Revival”: The Evangelization of the Ottoman Christians in Western Anatolia in the Nineteenth Century

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*“Bütün Ümidimiz Cömert Bir Uyanış”: On Dokuzuncu Yüzyılda Batı Anadolu’da Osmanlı Hıristiyanlarının Evanjelizasyonu*

Öz ■ Bu makalenin konusu 1870 ve 1880’li yıllarda *American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions* adlı misyonerlik örgütünün Batı Türkiye Misyonu adlı biriminin kapsamındaki Manisa ve İzmir istasyonlarında yürüttüğü faaliyetler ve bu bölgedeki Rum ve Ermenilere İncil’in mesajını öğretme çabalarıdır. Esas kaynaklar olarak Amerikalı Protestan misyoner Marcellus Bowen’ın 1874-1880 yılları arasında Manisa’dan Boston’daki ana merkeze ve Yunanistan kökenli Protestan misyoner George Constantine’in 1880-1889 yılları arasında İzmir’den Boston’a gönderdikleri mektuplar kullanılmıştır. Bu birinci şahıs anlatımlar olguları ve olayları anında ve doğrudan yorumladıkları için çok zengin bir malzeme sunarlar. Bu çalışma, Amerikalı misyonerlerin faaliyetlerini İzmir’in çokkültürlü ve çokuluslu toplumuna uyarlama çabalarını, bölgede yaşayan Rumlara ve Ermenilere vaaz verirken ya da onlara ibadet için seslenirken hangi dilin kullanılması gerektiği konusundaki kanaatlerini ve gerekçelerini, Protestan misyonerlere muhalefet eden İzmir’deki Rum Ortodoks yüksek rütbeli ruhbanlarının başvurduğu yolları ve dini kitap satma, okul ve kilise açma/yapma eylemlerinin Osmanlı yetkililerince hangi şartlara bağlandığını ve yetkililerin engelleriyle karşılaştıklarında misyonerlerin hangi araçlara başvurduklarını incelemektedir.

Anahtar kelimeler: İzmir, Anadolu’da misyonerlik faaliyetleri, Ermeni ve Rum Protestanlar, mezhep/din değiştirme, on dokuzuncu yüzyıl.

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## Introduction

Smyrna/İzmir was the first mission station of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions in Ottoman Turkey.<sup>1</sup> Yet the British Protestants' arrival in the city was earlier. In 1815, two missionaries of the Anglican Church Missionary Society came to İzmir with the intention of forming a Bible Society. William Jowett and James Connor founded a Bible Society in İzmir with the full approval of the Greek Bishop. Their goal was to further Christian education and missionary endeavor. The two American missionaries sent by the ABCFM Levi Parsons and Pliny Fisk settled in İzmir in 1820, and began learning modern Greek from Neophytos Vamvas, the president of the College of Chios, a Greek cleric and intellectual.<sup>2</sup> In the ensuing years, the Greek War of Independence encouraged the American missionaries to undertake missionary work among Greeks hoping that independence from Muslim yoke would be accompanied by a moral and spiritual rejuvenation.<sup>3</sup> In the 1830s, in collaboration with the British and Foreign Bible Society, the Greek cleric and educator Vamvas, who had become Professor of Philosophy at the Ionian Academy on the British-dominated island of Corfu, translated the Holy Scriptures into modern Greek.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, in independent Greece, the leading statesmen showed interest in the missionaries' educational work because such institutions and infrastructure were lacking in the aftermath of the independence. Hence, the first generation

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2 Chris Royer, “Anglicanism in Smyrna (1815-1923),” [www.globalmissiology.org](http://www.globalmissiology.org). January 2018, p. 3; (Accessed on December 16, 2018).

Pliny Fisk and Alvan Bond, *Memoir of the Rev. Pliny Fisk, A.M. Late Missionary to Palestine* (Boston: Crocker and Brewster, 1828), p.116; Pavlina Nasioutzik, *Αμερικανικά Οράματα στη Σμύρνη τον 19<sup>ο</sup> Αιώνα: Η συνάντηση της αγγλοσαξονικής σκέψης με την ελληνική (American visions in Smyrna in the 19<sup>th</sup> century: The encounter of the Anglosaxon and the Greek thought)*, Athens: Estia, 2002, p. 271.

3 Joseph L. Grabill wrote that the young Greeks sent to Amherst and Yale Colleges by the missionaries, influenced some Americans to view the Greek War of Independence as a war between the cross and the crescent. Joseph L. Grabill, *Protestant Diplomacy and the Near East. Missionary Influence on American Policy, 1810-1927*, (University of Minnesota Press, 1971), p.8.

4 Georgios D. Metallinos, *Παράδοση και Αλλοτρίωση (Tradition and Estrangement)* (Athens: Domos, 2001[1986]), p. 127. See Richard Clogg, “The Foundation of the Smyrna Bible Society (1818),” *Mikrasiatika Chronika*, 14 (1970), pp. 31-49.

of missionaries dealt mainly with the translation and publishing of the Bible and religious books, and establishing schools. By the end of the 1830s, as observed by Gerasimos Augustinos, the Protestant missionaries in İzmir, besides financing the charity schools that they had opened in İzmir and neighboring towns, also were continuously producing publications in Greek, including the periodical *Apothiki* (Storehouse) or “Magazine of Useful Knowledge” which became very popular.<sup>5</sup>

The Greeks of İzmir were the most influential group in the city thanks both to their demographic and economic weight. There was a rapid process of Graecization in the nineteenth century in İzmir and along the Aegean shore, triggered by migration from the Kingdom of Greece, the Aegean archipelago, and the inner Anatolian provinces, as well as the high birth rate of the Greek Orthodox in the region.<sup>6</sup> Missionaries were not simple tools of American foreign policy, yet one should not fail to see that they largely shared the American statesmen’s and diplomats’ ambitions of acquiring power and influence in the Ottoman Eastern Mediterranean. Uygur Kocabaşoğlu has pointed to the close collaboration between commerce and missionary work observing that the missionaries shaped the lifestyles and habits of the locals and prepared them as good customers.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, one can surmise that the İzmirian Greeks’ wealth and their economically and socially advantageous position made them a particularly important target population in the view of the American missionaries.

In İzmir, Daniel Temple, Henry John van Lennep, and Elias Riggs engaged missionary work among the Greeks until 1844, the year when the ABCFM took the decision to stop working among the Greeks. Henceforth, more emphasis was given to the Armenians of the city. John B. Adger, Elias Riggs, and Rev. Joel

5 Gerasimos Augustinos, ““Enlightened” Christians and the “Oriental” Churches: Protestant Missions to the Greeks in Asia Minor, 1820–1860”, *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*, vol. 4, no. 2, October (1986), p. 133.

6 Hervé Georgelin, “Armenian Inter-Community Relations in Late Ottoman Smyrna”, in *Armenian Smyrna/İzmir. The Aegean Communities*, Richard G. Hovannisian (ed.), UCLA Armenian History and Culture Series, Historic Armenian Cities and Provinces, 11, (California: Mazda Publishers, 2012), p. 179; Vangelis C. Kechriotis, *The Greeks of İzmir at the end of the Empire. A Non-Muslim Ottoman Community Between Autonomy and Patriotism*, Ph.D. Thesis, (University of Leiden, 2005).

7 Uygur Kocabaşoğlu, *Kendi Belgeleriyle Anadolu’daki Amerika: 19. Yüzyılda Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’ndaki Amerikan Misyoner Okulları*, (Istanbul: Arba, 1989), pp.18-20.

S. Everett engaged in missionary activities into the 1850s.<sup>8</sup> By 1853, an Armenian evangelical church was formed in İzmir and the first Sabbath was held. The construction of a small chapel was completed in 1858. The American Protestant missionaries' activities were not limited to the city of İzmir; with no less enthusiasm they pursued their evangelizing endeavors in the nearby towns of Akhisar (Thyateira) and Manisa. In the 1870s, due to increasing pressure from the native churches in İzmir, the American Board transferred its base in western Anatolia to Manisa. It should be mentioned that the ABCFM organized its missionary activities in Anatolia in three major geographical mission regions: the Western Turkey Mission, the Central Turkey Mission, and the Eastern Turkey Mission. This study focuses on the missionary activities of the ABCFM in the 1870s and 1880s at Manisa and İzmir stations operating under the Western Turkey Mission. It is mainly based on the letters of the missionary Rev. Marcellus Bowen (1874-1880) sent from Manisa to the headquarters of the ABCFM in Boston, and the letters of Rev. George Constantine (1880-1889) sent from İzmir to the same destination. The Western Turkey Mission had six other stations: Constantinople/ Istanbul, Bursa, Trabzon, Marsovan/ Merzifon, Caesarea/Kayseri, and Sivas. The Central Turkey Mission included the stations of Antep, Maraş, Adana, Urfa, and Hacin, and the Eastern Turkey Mission had stations in Erzurum, Bitlis, Van, Harput, and Mardin. Until 1880, Manisa served as the center for the American missionary work in a vast region which contained cities and towns of various sizes, such as İzmir, Ödemiş, Bayındır, Akhisar, Aydın, Alaşehir (Philadelphia), Kula, Uşak, Afyonkarahisar, Isparta, Burdur, and Konya. In 1880, the central office of the Western Turkey Mission was transferred back to İzmir.

Before highlighting some elements of the broader political framework in the post-Reform Edict period, and exploring the activities in the mission stations of Manisa and İzmir in particular, I would like to provide some information on the course of the developments that led to the recognition of the Protestant *millet* by

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8 See Dilşen İnce Erdoğan, “Amerikalı Protestan Misyonerlerinin Raporlarında İzmir İstasyonu'nun Kuruluşu ve Faaliyetleri (1820-1900),” *Karadeniz Araştırmaları*, 33 (2012), pp. 97-108; Mehmet Ali Doğan, “The Missionary Activities of Elias Riggs in İzmir,” *International Journal of Turcologia*, V, 10 (2010), pp. 23-43; Melike Tokay-Ünal, “Mid-nineteenth century New England Women in Evangelical Foreign Missions: Seraphina Haynes Everett, A Missionary Wife in the Ottoman Mission Field,” *Turkish Historical Review* (2017), and see Frank A. Stone, *Academies for Anatolia. A Study of the Rationale, Program, and Impact of the Educational Institutions Sponsored by the American Board in Turkey, 1830-2005*, (San Francisco, California: Caddo Gap Press, 2006), p. 90.

the Ottoman sultan in 1850. In June 1846, Sultan Abdülmecid interfered with the Armenian patriarch's persecutions against the converts to Protestantism and bestowed government protection to his Armenian subjects who had embraced the Protestant faith. On 1 July 1846, the Armenian Evangelical Church was founded in Istanbul/Pera with a constitution prepared with the counsel and aid of the missionaries in the city.<sup>9</sup> Finally, in 1850, the Ottoman Protestants were recognized as a *millet* by an imperial decree.

After the Crimean War and the Reform Edict of 1856, the Ottoman millets underwent significant changes related to their organization and leadership.<sup>10</sup> Both in the Greek Orthodox and the Armenian Gregorian millets, lay members of these communities gained power vis-à-vis the clergy and became actively involved in matters, such as the election of the patriarch, the administration of the parishes, and education. These rising middle classes comprising bureaucrats, entrepreneurs, merchants, physicians, and journalists promoted a modernized, secular education at their community schools. Though religious instruction continued to be seen as an indispensable component of the school curricula due to its role in the construction of religious identity, ecclesiastical institutions lost their monopoly over the organization of education.<sup>11</sup> Another manifestation of this competition was arguably the emergence of a critical discourse regarding the traditions of the church, liturgical music, devotion etc. and the ignorance and greed of the lower clergy.<sup>12</sup> Protestant missionaries observed this attitude, and often exaggerated it in their accounts to justify their cause. American evangelical missionaries saw themselves as bearers of pure religion which stood in contrast to how they viewed the Greek and Armenian Churches. An American missionary provided justification for what he saw as the hopeful state of his field, Manisa: "Discontent and disgust with the national churches are undisguised".<sup>13</sup> On a similar note, in his book on his long missionary endeavor in Istanbul, Henry O.

9 Leon Arpée, *A Century of Armenian Protestantism 1846-1946*, (New York: The Armenian Missionary Association of America, 1946), pp.32-39.

10 See Roderic H. Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire, 1856-1876* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963).

11 See Haris Exertzoglou, *Εθνική Ταυτότητα στην Κωνσταντινούπολη τον 19<sup>ο</sup> Αι (National identity in Constantinople in the 19th century)*, (Athens: Nefeli, 1996).

12 See Merih Erol, *Greek Orthodox Music in Ottoman Istanbul: Nation and Community in the Era of Reform* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2015).

13 Anatolia College Archives (ACA), Papers of the ABCFM (ABCFM), Reel 590, M. Bowen's letter to Dr. Clark, Manisa 29 December 1875.

Dwight observed that the Greek higher clergy cared more about their political goals and tactics than the spiritual needs of the people, and no powerful sermons were delivered at the city’s Armenian churches.<sup>14</sup>

In addition to these tendencies within the Ottoman Christian populations, the Reform Edict of 1856 provided the American missionaries with an optimistic prospect for their future work in the Empire. They perceived the promises of the sultan as a commitment to religious liberty. In fact, they were not free at all to proselytize the Muslims and non-Muslims living in the Empire.<sup>15</sup> Ottoman local authorities thoroughly inspected the printed materials which were distributed or sold by foreigners. Also, as was the case with the Ottoman non-Muslims, foreign subjects were obliged to obtain a permit from the central government and the local authorities before constructing a church or opening a school. Nevertheless, in the era of modernizing reforms which encompassed the legal and educational spheres, missionaries were able to spread their activities to a broader geography and began to make both qualitative and quantitative impact on the Ottoman populations. Whenever they felt an obstacle on their way, they appealed to the British or the American consul, and through them reminded the Ottoman authorities of the sultan’s promise. Yet, it seems that after the Ottoman-Russian War of 1877-78, the American missionaries’ optimism was replaced by a mood of depression and resentment. Henry O. Dwight’s letter to Boston dated 15 October 1885 reporting his thoughts on the Rumelian dispute reveals how the present Ottoman administration was assessed by an American missionary:

The government has gone from bad to worse ever since the Russian war. The officials are more corrupt than ever. [...] Such a set of men have no good to offer their country, and no sense of right to which foreigners may appeal. It is such men who have undertaken to crush out Christian Moslems, and to destroy Christian books and Christian schools, because they give Christians the advantage over Moslems in the struggle for power. They attack our schools and our books not merely because they are ours. But because they are of the elevating kind that teach man to think.<sup>16</sup>

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14 Henry Otis Dwight, *Constantinople and Its Problems. Its Peoples, Customs, Religions and Progress* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1901), pp. 139-141.

15 For the Ottoman state’s response to apostasy and what it saw as the denationalization of its subjects in the nineteenth century, see Selim Deringil, *Conversion and Apostasy in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

16 ACA, ABCFM, 600, Henry O. Dwight’s letter to Dr. Clark, Constantinople, 15 October 1885.

Given the separationist challenges and the legitimacy crisis which the state faced, the Hamidian regime (1876-1909) was especially cautious about avoiding any sort of political dissidence and maintaining the public order.<sup>17</sup> Accordingly, the imperial government regarded the American missionaries and their activities connected to preaching Christianity among the empire's populations as direct threats to one of the fundamentals of the state, Islam, and the peace and order of the society.<sup>18</sup> The schools run by the American citizens came under strict control. In 1887, the American Board missionaries in the capital were informed about a set of new regulations concerning public instruction which they considered anxiously. The proposed regulation decreed that no foreigner was allowed to carry on a school in the Empire, "without an imperial firman issued in pursuance of the personal order of His Imperial Majesty, authorizing the opening of the school".<sup>19</sup> The missionaries objected to this provision which in their view was equivalent to the prohibition of foreign schools. They argued that the new regulation would make it almost impossible for an American citizen living in a distant province of the empire, to provide the means and influence to secure the personal attention of the sultan to his proposal of opening a school. Writing in the name of his colleagues, the missionary Henry O. Dwight referred to the *Hatt-ı Hümayun* of 1856 by which each community was authorized to carry on schools of science, arts and industry without the necessity of more specific authorization. He claimed determinedly that the proposed regulation was opposed to the principle of religious liberty which was a part of the fundamental law of the Empire.

Now it would be interesting and fruitful to turn to a missionary field outside of the Ottoman capital, and observe both the dynamics of a missionary station in the province and the challenges that the American missionaries met there and how they dealt with them.

### **The Manisa Field**

In early 1874, the young missionary Marcellus Bowen (minister of a congregation in Springfield, New Jersey) and his wife Flora Bowen were appointed

17 Selim Deringil, "Legitimacy Structures in the Ottoman State: The Reign of Abdülhamid II (1876-1909)", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 23 (1991), pp. 345-359.

18 Devrim Ümit, "The American Protestant Missionary Network in Ottoman Turkey, 1876-1914", *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 4, 6(1) (2014), p. 33.

19 ACA, ABCFM, 600, Henry O. Dwight's letter to O. S. Straus, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary, Bible House, Constantinople, 19 December 1887.

by the American Board to serve in Manisa and arrived at their mission field in June 1874. Bowen realized the vastness of the field he was responsible for, when he set on a lengthy tour into the interior in fall 1875. When he returned back to Manisa, he wrote to the headquarters in Boston to propose the establishment of a new, second center to provide for the places far away from Manisa at least until the railway extended to Konya. According to him, Isparta or Afyonkarahisar could serve as a second center.<sup>20</sup> Yet, the Board turned a deaf ear to Bowen’s proposal about establishing a second base in western Anatolia.

Besides struggling to convince the decision-makers at the American Board about the needs of his station, the young missionary also faced the challenges of the Ottoman local authorities regarding his missionary endeavors. As the initial step of contacting the locals, typically, the American missionaries sent native colporteurs to the towns at some distance to distribute or sell Bibles and religious tracts, and when they saw interest among the locals, they sent preachers to them and formed evangelical communities. Konya was one of the towns, along with Afyonkarahisar and Akşehir, in which the Armenians constituted the largest Christian population. There, the missionaries and the native colporteurs sold Bibles, religious tracts, and *Avedaper* (“Good news bringer”)<sup>21</sup> a weekly journal which was published both in Armenian language and in Turkish in Armenian script. As mentioned above, books and other printed materials which were sold in the Ottoman Empire by the American missionaries had to go through government inspection and the missionaries were obliged to have a permit to sell them. Despite receiving government authorization, in interior towns the arrests of book agents and seizure of their books were common.<sup>22</sup> The following episode in Konya reveals how, sometimes, the American missionaries defied the local authorities and resisted their decisions. Arguably, they were encouraged to do so at particular moments when the Ottoman government was at bay dealing with an insurrection in the Balkans or fighting a war. As mentioned in M. Bowen’s letter to Boston headquarters dated 29 December 1875, they had been selling books in Konya for several years. One day, the Governor wanted to see the book sellers, and hence

20 ACA, ABCFM, 590, M. Bowen’s letter to Dr. Clark, Manissa [Manisa], 29 December 1875.

21 *Avedaper* was also published in Greco-Turkish and it had a children’s periodical, too. See ACA, ABCFM, 600, A. Constantian’s letter to Rev. J. K. Greene, Edinburgh, 16 June 1882.

22 ACA, ABCFM, 600, Henry O. Dwight’s letter to Dr. Clark, Constantinople, 15 October 1885. In his letter, Dwight complained that the government permit to print a book was not regarded as a permit for its sale, thus rendering often the publication expenses futile, and pleaded that the American Minister in Istanbul should push for the redress of this grievance.

Bowen sent the Armenian colporteur Sarkis to the Governor for his inquiries. Sarkis was interrogated in front of a council of notables who were surprised that he sold books worth of 500 aspers for 5. Since the American missionaries had a permit to sell books, the issue was not whether Sarkis had a permit or not, but the local authorities were alarmed at the large amount of books and pamphlets sold. As a result, they requested from the colporteur a special permit from Istanbul to sell his books. Upon this, Bowen immediately interfered and declared to the Governor and the notables in the council that they would continue selling books until the American Minister at Istanbul issued an order forbidding it.<sup>23</sup>

In his first years as the head of the Manisa station, Bowen often complained in his letters to Boston that the American Board was not as generous to his station as it was to the other stations of the Western Turkey Mission. On 9 May 1878 he wrote pleadingly: "...Manissa field is new although connected with an old mission. We beg you not to place us in the same category with Caesarea, Marsovan, and Broosa [Bursa]. Give us the same opportunities that have been given them, and we may surely hope that the Lord's arm will reach all over Manisa field also."<sup>24</sup> In Manisa, Bowen collaborated with Phebe L. Cull, the director of the girls' school who had founded the school in 1871. It was not an easy task for Bowen to demonstrate to the Board that Manisa was a promising field despite being new because among other parameters, the girls' school had not achieved the expected success. In 1875, the number of students was so low that the missionaries thought of closing the school. As Bowen explained, the Protestants in Manisa were too poor to send their children to the school, and the non-Protestant parents either feared persecution or did not pay for their children when they could attend their community schools without paying.<sup>25</sup> The low number of Greek students at Protestant schools seems to be a general phenomenon. To demonstrate this further, I would like to give an example from another station of the WTM, i.e. the Bursa station.

At the missionary school in Bursa, the low number of Greek students was compensated by accepting Armenian students to the school. However, one of the major financial and organizational challenges which awaited the American missionaries was to recruit teachers and staff who were able to instruct the children of different ethnicities in a region in their own native languages. In 1881, the

23 ACA, ABCFM, 590, M. Bowen's letter to Dr. Clark, Manisa, 29 December 1875.

24 ACA, ABCFM, 590, M. Bowen's letter to Dr. Clark, Manisa, 9 May 1878.

25 ACA, ABCFM, 590, M. Bowen's letter to Dr. Clark, Manisa, 10 February 1875.

woman missionary Olive N. Twichell opened a school for girls in Bursa.<sup>26</sup> Both Greek and Armenian girls enrolled in the school. Twichell knew Greek but not Armenian. Therefore, at first she hesitated to receive the Armenian students, but later she accepted them because their parents were ready to pay full price for board and tuition, covering the salary of an Armenian teacher.<sup>27</sup> However, giving education in two different languages created overload for both Twichell and her colleagues at the school. Several months later, Twichell asked for advice from the Board about keeping the Armenian girls in the school or not because the teachers and staff of the school did not speak Armenian.<sup>28</sup> Yet, this was not an easy decision because as Twichell observed, the Armenians in Bursa had established their churches and were more organized, whereas it was not the case with the Greeks and the number of the Greek students in the school was decreasing. Eventually, three years later at the Annual Meeting of the Western Turkey Mission, to remedy the local Greeks' lack of interest in the missionaries' evangelical message, it was proposed that a Greek evangelist be sent to the Bursa field.<sup>29</sup>

When Bowen first arrived in his mission field, he observed that except in İzmir, Manisa, and Aydın, the Greeks, who constituted the majority of the Christian population, did not speak Greek but Turkish.<sup>30</sup> Since the Armenians of the region also spoke Turkish, in the inner parts of western Anatolia, both of these groups could be reached via Turkish. Hence, in the newly burgeoning evangelical communities, the Armenians and the Greeks attended the same religious services held in Turkish. However, especially in the coastal parts of Asia Minor, throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, the use of the Greek language was increasing among the Christian Orthodox populations. Bowen prophesized that since all throughout the region the Greek children were taught Greek at their community schools, in ten years Turkish would be subordinate to Greek. Consequently, he emphatically suggested in his letters to Boston that the language of the missionary work among the Greeks should be Greek. Hence, noting the necessity for having Greek-speaking missionaries in Manisa station, on 16 July 1875, Bowen wrote to the headquarters in Boston: “To myself falls the general

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26 See ACA, ABCFM, 605, Olive N. Twichell's letters from Bursa and Constantinople (1881-1889).

27 ACA, ABCFM, 605, Olive N. Twichell's letter to Dr. Clark, Broosa [Bursa], 6 March 1883.

28 ACA, ABCFM, 605, Olive N. Twichell's letter to Dr. Alden, Bursa, 12 June 1883.

29 ACA, ABCFM, 605, Olive N. Twichell's letter to Dr. Clark, Bursa, 18 October 1884.

30 ACA, ABCFM, 590, M. Bowen's letter to Dr. Clark, Manisa, 29 December 1875.

work of the station, and the more immediate oversight of our pastors and preachers who are all Armenians, using the Turkish language. This is the condition of things with us – Armenian preachers preaching in the Turkish language to congregations which are largely Greek in their composition”.<sup>31</sup>

This brings me to the topic of the language of theological instruction for native pastors and preachers. The American Board followed the policy of training them in their own vernacular languages. In the 1870s, the Greek-speaking youth of the Manisa field who wanted to receive further theological education were sent to Marsovan/Merzifon, to the only existing religious seminary close to the region. Bowen believed that the prospective Greek helpers had to be educated in their own place, rather than being sent to the Theological Seminary in Marsovan/Merzifon which was monopolized by Armenian students and teachers.<sup>32</sup> Several years later, the Greek-American missionary in İzmir, George Constantine brought the same issue to attention: “There are three or four youths who are ready to be instructed in Theology but would not go to Marsovan because there is no Greek speaking people. If we had had a strong man who could teach them English and give them their theological education in English and we help them in Greek and Turkish”.<sup>33</sup> As keen observers of the peoples they were working for, the American missionaries were able to predict the consequences of linguistic and cultural differences and alienation.

Native helpers, teachers, and preachers were indispensable to American missionary work. In 1878, a fresh graduate of the seminary at Merzifon was sent to Afyonkarahisar together with his wife. There, this young Armenian helper opened a school for boys attended by 40 students. The burgeoning Armenian Protestant community in Afyonkarahisar had a local Armenian preacher named Haritoun Seyranian.<sup>34</sup> However, the native helpers had little say in the decision-making regarding even the issues which directly affected their lives. For instance,

31 ACA, ABCFM, 590, M. Bowen’s letter to Dr. Clark, Manisa, 16 July 1875.

32 ACA, ABCFM, 590, M. Bowen’s letter to Dr. Clark, Manisa 29 December 1875: “Marsovan seems to us unable to make sufficient provision for Greek students. You are aware, probably that Pastor Apostol of Demirdesh [Demirtaş] spent a few months at Marsovan this year. The result seems to have been to confirm the impression previously entertained by some, that the education of Greek students at Marsovan is impracticable. The atmosphere there is Armenian, just as it ought to be for a healthy development, and just exactly as the atmosphere here is Greek, altho’ the one common language at both places is Turkish.”

33 ACA, ABCFM, 600, G. Constantine’s letter to Dr. Clark, Smyrna, 7 May 1881.

34 ACA, ABCFM, 590, M. Bowen’s letter to Dr. Clark, Manisa, 9 May 1878.

the American missionaries rotated the native pastors as their help was needed in other towns. In 1875, Pastor Nazar who had formerly been in Akhisar was sent to Aydın, Pastor Krikor who had been serving in İzmir was sent to Akhisar, Pastor Hagop was shifted from Manisa to İzmir, and Pastor Aristarchus who had been in Maraş was sent to Manisa.<sup>35</sup> Sometimes, the differences of views between the American missionaries on the ground and the native pastors evolved into severe conflicts. In early 1875, the young missionary Mr. Baldwin and Pastor Hagop who had extensive experience with the local Armenians were at odds to such an extent that M. Bowen reported this to the headquarters of the American Board.<sup>36</sup> The seniority and experience of the Armenian pastor had won him the great sympathy of his congregation.<sup>37</sup> This confirmed a fact which was already well-known by missionaries. Any missionary had to gain the affection and confidence of the native brethren.

In the late 1870s, along with the theme of progress of the work in the interior towns, in his letters, Bowen frequently pointed to the flourishing and positive climate for the spread of Protestantism in İzmir, and sought to convince the American Board to allocate resources for the funding of the missionary work there.

### **İzmir in the Missionaries' Gaze**

Since the eighteenth century, due to its unique geographical location, İzmir connected the three major maritime regions of the Ottoman Empire, namely North Africa, the Black Sea and the Red Sea. The port of İzmir not only commanded a huge volume of trade with the west, but it also united the interior with the coast.<sup>38</sup> İzmir was a commercial hub with wealthy and open-minded inhabitants. It had a multiethnic and multilingual population who adhered to numerous

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35 ACA, ABCFM, 590, M. Bowen's letter to Dr. Clark, Manisa, 9 May 1878.

36 ACA, ABCFM, 590, M. Bowen's letter to Rev. Dr. Worcester, Manisa, 23 April 1875.

37 How old Mr. Baldwin was then is not clear but he was much younger than Pastor Hagop. To speculate, Marcellus Bowen was 28 years old when he was sent to Manisa in 1874 accompanied by his wife Flora Bowen.

38 Elena Frangakis-Syrett, "Commerce in the Eastern Mediterranean from the Eighteenth to the Early Twentieth Centuries: The City-Port of İzmir and Its Hinterland," *International Journal of Maritime History*, X, 2 (1998), p. 132. For the role of European outsiders in the transformations which made Smyrna into a unique Ottoman port city, see Daniel Goffman, "İzmir: From Village to Colonial Port City," in *The Ottoman City between East and*

confessions. The reactions of the American missionaries, who found themselves in such an unexpected setting in a city of the Orient, varied from disapproval to wonder and amazement. As an example to disapprobation, Maria West, the American missionary and educator who came to İzmir in 1876 to establish a girls' school made negative comments on the İzmirians' pretentiousness and stylishness. "Satan seemed to reign triumphant," she wrote to the Board in Boston. "Smyrna is indeed another Vanity Fair; it worships the goddess of pleasure and fashion and Paris is its model."<sup>39</sup> Whereas Amanda S. Constantine, who came along with her husband from Athens to engage preaching for the Greek-speaking population, found İzmir as the perfect place for the success of the missionary work:

This is a large city full of business; the various costumes, languages, religions, so mixed and yet so distinct, make one feel that he is really at the centre of an immense circumference of influence. If he may only proclaim the Gospel publicly here it may reach all along these lines of trade in every direction.<sup>40</sup>

Indeed, the relative openness of İzmir's society, the free circulation of Christian tracts and newspapers, İzmir's inhabitants' good manners and hospitality made it a place where Westerners/ Christian missionaries would feel safe and at home.<sup>41</sup>

In western Anatolia, the Greeks and Armenians were the two major non-Muslim groups. The Orthodox Patriarchate in Istanbul tried to prevent Protestant missionary activity which began to acquire converts among Orthodox Christians. In 1836, patriarch Grigorios VI issued an encyclical which officially accused the Protestant missionaries of disseminating their own interpretations of the religious dogmas, and banned the Orthodox Christians from sending their children to their schools and reading their Bible translations and other printed material distributed by them.<sup>42</sup> Hence, in 1844 mainly due to the increasing

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*West: Aleppo, İzmir, and Istanbul*, ed. by Edhem Eldem, Daniel Goffman and Bruce Masters (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 79-134.

39 Giles Milton, *Not to Be Served but to Serve. A History of the American College of Greece* (Athens: Livani Publishing Organization, 2011), p. 12.

40 ACA, ABCFM, 600, Amanda S. Constantine's letter to Dr. Clark, Smyrna, 5 May 1881.

41 David H. Finnie, *Pioneers East: The Early American Experience in the Middle East*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), p. 20.

42 Kyriaki Mamoni, "Αγώνες του Οικουμενικού Πατριαρχείου κατά των Μισιονάριων (Struggles of the Ecumenical Patriarchate against the Missionaries)", *Mnymosini* 8,

control and persecutions of the Orthodox Church, the American Board ceased its work among the Greeks, whereas it continued among the Armenians. A few decades later in the 1870s, when Protestantism began to find converts among the Greek Orthodox of the region, missionaries sent by the Board faced the question whether it was worth getting their hands on the Greek work again. The head of the Manisa station M. Bowen closely observed these two ethno-religious groups and compared them in terms of being potential receivers of their messages. Following a tour into the inner parts of the Manisa field, Bowen wrote: “It was easy to see that in point of intellectual activity, the Greeks are wider awake than the Armenians. This is to be accounted for to some extent by the fact that the Greeks are in the majority in point of numbers, and as a consequence in point of aggregate influence and wealth.”<sup>43</sup>

Hence, the head of the station Bowen wrote repeatedly to the American Board about the necessity of focusing on the Greeks of western Anatolia, and even launching a distinct work among the Greeks in their own language. He commented on what he saw as the influence of Athenian culture over the Greeks of İzmir, and their intense intellectual activity and interest in learning letters and sciences. Comparing them with Armenians, he found Greeks to be more Western-oriented culturally. This, however, did not necessarily make them an ideal, easily accessible group of to-be-converts. Bowen lamented that the Greeks of the region were losing their religious faith in the grip of, on the one hand Greek nationalism, and on the other “wrong” westernization: “The Greek is too ready to ape the Frenchman”.<sup>44</sup> The increasing use of Greek among the Christian Orthodox populations of Anatolia was synonymous with increasing Greek nationalism in the view of the missionaries. According to them, the time would come when the Greeks of Anatolia would want their independence and at the same time would need a spiritual revival. The analogy is striking in the midst of the turmoil in the Balkans: “Just as Bulgaria needed its mission, so will Greek Anatolia need its mission.”<sup>45</sup>

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(1980-81), p.182. See also Stavros Th. Anestidis, “Αμερικανοί Ιεραπόστολοι στη Μικρά Ασία: Βιβλιογραφική Επισκόπηση (American missionaries in Asia Minor: Bibliographical survey”, *Deltio Kentrou Mikrasiatikon Spoudon*, vol. 11, 1995-1996, pp. 375-388.

43 ACA, ABCFM, 590, M. Bowen’s letter to Dr. Clark, Manisa, 29 December 1875.

44 ACA, ABCFM, 590, M. Bowen’s letter to Dr. Clark, Manisa, 29 December 1875.

45 ACA, ABCFM, 590, M. Bowen’s letter to Dr. Clark, Manisa, 31 May 1877.

Nevertheless, it was among the Armenians of the Empire that the Protestant missionaries gained significant amount of converts. The evangelization of the Armenians was facilitated by the fact that a number of clergymen of the Armenian Apostolic Church wanted a reform in their church and resorted to the aid of the American missionaries in Istanbul. Despite severe persecution attempts of the Armenian patriarch, in July 1846 an Armenian Evangelical Church was formed in Istanbul. Keeping in mind on the one hand, how the Protestant movement was initiated among the Ottoman Armenians and on the other, the Greek middle classes' increasing interest in secular and western patterns of education and thought particularly in İzmir, we may say that Bowen's comparison of the Armenians' and the Greeks' religious and intellectual quests was to the point:

In the main, throughout our field, the Armenians are much more ready for religious instruction than the Greeks. All see the wretchedness and worthlessness of their own churches, but the Armenian tendency seems to be towards a better church. The Greek tendency is in the direction of rationalism and infidelity.<sup>46</sup>

The American missionaries could not fully grasp the ethnic, linguistic, and cultural diversity of the different Christian groups they met in the Ottoman Empire.<sup>47</sup> In their attempt to deal with each of them efficiently and be able to argue for their needs and demands stated in their letters to the center in Boston, they sought to define their distinctive features and categorize these groups. After all, they had an ambition to create a Christian community above ethnic pretensions. One of the means they used to accomplish this was to bring together Greeks, Armenians, and Turks in churches and schools they established.

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46 ACA, ABCFM, 590, M. Bowen's letter to Dr. Clark, Manisa, 29 December 1875.

47 In his study of the American missionaries' encounter with the Arab world, Ussama Makdisi has pointed out that when they first arrived in the Middle East, the American Protestant missionaries had no idea about the coexistence of different religions and their mutual recognition. Referring to the diversity of religions in the region and the failure of the American missionaries' project, Makdisi wrote: "...this reading of the world fundamentally contradicted the idea of a voluntary, conscious embrace of faith at the heart of American Protestantism". Ussama Makdisi, *Artillery of Heaven: American Missionaries and the Failed Conversion of the Middle East*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008), p. 47.

### **Schools and Prestige: An American College in İzmir**

Constantia Kiskira has rightly noted that the educative and the philanthropic dimensions of the American Board’s missionary work became more successful in comparison to its ability to proselytize.<sup>48</sup> The Board’s rich record of publications in about 40 languages and dialects, and the longevity and the social and cultural impact of the schools opened by it demonstrate its success in the field of education and upbringing. Uygur Kocabaşoğlu has observed the emergence of a dual structure in the American missionary education process, namely the evangelical and the secular cursus. The first one comprised of the primary school, secondary school, and the theological school. Whereas, the secular cursus included the primary school, secondary school, and the college where the students received a 4-year education.<sup>49</sup> Kocabaşoğlu has interpreted the achievements of the American missionaries as the victory of secular education over religious education, an unintended consequence so to say.<sup>50</sup>

Before I move on to the foundation of an American college in İzmir, I would like to draw attention to the first college for girls’ education established by the Americans in Istanbul. American missionaries pursued the goal of advancing girls’ higher education in the Ottoman lands. Beginning in the 1870s, they established girls’ schools with outstanding educational standards in the major Ottoman cities. The first such college-type school was instituted in 1872 in Istanbul with the initiative of the Woman’s Board of Missions in Boston. The missionaries called this girls’ school in Scutari/Üsküdar in Istanbul “The Home”.<sup>51</sup> About two decades later, the president of the school and its Board of Trustees began to discuss both the school’s name and the level of education which it offered. In their correspondence it was inquired whether the school would have the status of an American college, such as Smith or Wellesley College in Massachusetts, and whether

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48 Constantia Kiskira, “Το Περιοδικό *Missionary Herald*. Μια Αθησαύριστη Πηγή για την Ιστορία του Μικρασιατικού Ελληνισμού (The Periodical *Missionary Herald*. An Unmined Source for the History of Asia Minor Hellenism)”, *Deltio Kentrou Mikrasiatikon Spoudon*, 11 (1995-1996), p. 120.

49 Kocabaşoğlu, *Kendi Belgeleriyle Anadolu’daki Amerika*, p. 155.

50 Ibid., p. 178.

51 ACA, ABCFM, 533. See also Ercan Kaçmaz, “Missionary Activities in the Lands of Ottoman Turkey: The Emergence of Robert College and the American College for Girls,” *Turkish Studies - International Periodical For The Languages, Literature and History of Turkish or Turkic*, 9, 7 (2014), pp. 379-395.

it would be appropriate to rename it as for instance “Constantinople College”.<sup>52</sup> Soon, the naming issue was finalized with an assertive choice. The President of the school Mary M. Patrick, in her letter to the Secretary of the Board of Trustees in Boston dated 4 October 1889, wrote that she was happy that the school would be named “American College for Girls”, hence indicating “the nationality of its founders and supporters”.<sup>53</sup>

As in the Ottoman capital, also in İzmir, primary and secondary schools and especially college-level higher institutions established by foreign nationals were the showcases of their own countries’ prestige. Hence in 1879, the American missionaries working in the field of İzmir proposed to the Board the foundation of an American college-level school for boys and girls in İzmir. Before proceeding with the analysis of the American missionaries’ visions for an educational institution in the 1880s İzmir and how they negotiated their project with the headquarters in Boston, let us see the American Board’s preceding endeavors regarding the establishment of schools in İzmir. In 1876, Maria A. West, a missionary from Massachusetts, arrived in İzmir to open a school for girls.<sup>54</sup> It was not her first time in Ottoman Turkey; for 18 years she had lived in Istanbul and eastern Turkey, learned Armenian and taught at mission schools. After a break in the US, she was reappointed by the American Board to the Western Turkey Mission. Miss West started a Bible class in English and Armenian. In summer of 1878, she acquired a building in İzmir’s Armenian quarter where she established her girls’ school. The majority of the children were Armenian, but there were also Greeks, English, Germans, Italians, and Turks. Miss West chose to name her school the Evangelical Armenian School, and attempted to persuade Armenian mothers to educate their daughters at her school. The school started with 7 children the number of which then rose to 30 and later to 50.<sup>55</sup> Miss West raised funds for the Smyrna work in England. She established a venue on the quay for preaching the gospel which came to be known as the ‘Coffee Room’ among the missionaries and the visitors. The American Board was satisfied with her work in İzmir since her school survived despite pressures from Ottoman authorities and

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52 ACA, ABCFM, 533, Mary M. Patrick’s letter to Ms. Carrie Borden, the Secretary of the Board of Trustees, Boston, Constantinople, 13 September 1889.

53 ACA, ABCFM, 533, Mary M. Patrick’s letter to Ms. Carrie Borden, the Secretary of the Board of Trustees, Boston, Constantinople, 4 October 1889.

54 Sue S. Horner, “American Female Missionaries in Europe 1830-1900,” unpublished paper.

55 Milton, *Not to Be Served but to Serve*, pp. 12-14.

the Orthodox clergy, and large audiences were gathering in the Coffee Room. Yet, beginning in 1879, Miss West began to be criticized by both the headquarters in Boston and the Manisa station for the way she was dealing with the financing of her work.<sup>56</sup> In 1880, she left for Istanbul to continue her work there.

As Miss West's further stay in İzmir seemed doubtful, schemes for new educational institutions appeared. On 17 June 1879, the head of the Manisa station Marcellus Bowen wrote to the Secretary of the Board suggesting the opening of a college in İzmir which would give education in English to Armenian and Greek boys and girls.<sup>57</sup> In a later correspondence, Bowen stated that Miss West would have no official connection with the school, and that the school would be established and run by two American ladies preferably from Wellesley College in Massachusetts.<sup>58</sup> According to him, both İzmir's Christians' recent interest in Protestantism and the collaborative attitude of the members of the English community towards the American missionaries signaled a ripe moment for the future of the American missionary work in İzmir. He wrote: “There is a demand in that large and flourishing city for Protestant schools and more especially for American Protestant Schools. I feel quite positive that a school conducted by competent American teachers having English as its basis, and taking a reasonable tuition might receive a large patronage from English as well as from Greek and Armenian communities”.<sup>59</sup> The proposed college would have a “direct and pronounced connection” with the mission, and along with having English as its language of instruction it would also teach Armenian, Greek, and French. Notwithstanding that Bowen was envisaging a genuine missionary school which would provide for the education of the poor children, the American college he had in mind was expected to appeal to İzmir's westernized and wealthy Christian families. Elsewhere, he noted more than once: “The elaboration of the scheme [of the college] would need to be with much care, and with special regard to the character, tastes and wishes of Smyrniotes”.<sup>60</sup> “Smyrna is a wealthy city, an aristocratic city, and while

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56 ACA, ABCFM, 590, M. Bowen's letter to Dr. Clark, Manisa, 6 March 1879. In his letter to Dr. Clark dated Manisa 5 March 1880, Bowen announced that at last Miss West would resign from her work in Smyrna.

57 For the American Collegiate Institute in Smyrna, see Brian Johnson, “Paths of Learning: A Chronicle of the American Collegiate Institute and Associated Schools in İzmir,” unpublished paper, (2004).

58 ACA, ABCFM, 590, M. Bowen's letter to Dr. Clark, Manisa, 12 December 1879.

59 ACA, ABCFM, 590, M. Bowen's letter to Dr. Clark, Manisa, 17 June 1879.

60 ACA, ABCFM, 590, M. Bowen's letter to Dr. Clark, Manisa, 2 October 1879.

we must not forget and are not forgetting the poor, is it right for us to ignore the higher classes? Such an enterprise as the one proposed would be likely to increase our influence among all classes.”<sup>61</sup>

In the late 1870s, the young missionaries affiliated with the Western Turkey Mission of the American Board saw themselves as different from the older generation of missionaries who had set up the missionary work in İzmir about fifty years ago. Notwithstanding that they sometimes resorted to those seniors’ advice, they believed that they themselves would bring about an unprecedented revival of Protestantism in western Anatolia and that theirs was the right moment. Hence, the two new projects, namely the establishment of a boarding collegiate school and the construction of a new chapel in İzmir – which will be investigated later - reflected the challenge that Bowen and his fellow missionaries took up in competition with both the older generation of the ABCFM missionaries like for instance Henry Van Lennep, and the representatives of the other Protestant and non-Protestant nations. In one of his letters, Bowen conveyed a sense of concern regarding the most recent image of Protestantism in İzmir: “Up to within a very short time ago, they found Protestantism in Smyrna represented by a dismal, nasty place, where a few people were supposed to assemble every week and hear a sermon. No school, no missionary, nothing that could be called life”. The strong sense of rivalry with other Westerners is revealing: “Schools have become a great power in this land, and we Protestant workers cannot afford to be behind others in this respect.”<sup>62</sup>

Bowen sought to persuade the Prudential Committee in Boston about the prospective American college by making the point that the existing Protestant schools in İzmir were either not successful or remote from being a real missionary school.<sup>63</sup> He speculated positively that since the British school which had

61 ACA, ABCFM, 590, M. Bowen’s letter to Dr. Clark, Manisa, 12 December 1879.

62 ACA, ABCFM, 590, M. Bowen’s letter to Dr. Clark, Manisa, 12 December 1879.

63 The Prudential Committee, which was an executive committee under the direction of the Board, was appointed during the first meeting of the ABCFM held in Farmington, Connecticut, in September 1810. See Mehmet Ali Doğan, “American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) and “Nominal Christians”: Elias Riggs (1810-1901) and American Missionary Activities in the Ottoman Empire” Unpublished PhD Thesis, The University of Utah, 2013, p.26. The Prudential Committee, among other responsibilities, took decisions about opening new missions, appointed and instructed missionaries, and responded to the proposals of the missionaries on the ground regarding the opening of new schools and churches.

been serving for the education of the English children failed, the English families would send their children to the Americans' college.<sup>64</sup> Interestingly perhaps, not only did he celebrate the sympathy of the English inhabitants of İzmir to their missionary endeavor, but also he saw them as needing the Americans' invigorating religious work due to their moral inferiority. He wrote:

I know, our main object in coming to Turkey is not to look after the English. But anyone here on the ground, who sees and realizes the disastrous influence of these degenerated English people on missionary work, especially in these parts, cannot but recognize the importance of doing something incidentally, if possible, for these people also.<sup>65</sup>

Continuing to criticize the existing Protestant schools of other nations, Bowen referred to the so called “Deaconess School/ House” in Frank Quarter which was established by a Lutheran movement based in Germany. The School was managed by nuns, and many Protestant families in the city were sending their daughters to it. He noted that the school did not have an evangelical influence since it made no provision for the education of the poor children.<sup>66</sup>

Furthermore, Bowen was optimistic that İzmir's Armenians would support the education of their children at the prospective American college. The schools which the American Board founded in Ottoman Turkey were intended to become self-supporting in a short time. Hence, regarding the college's expenses Bowen foresaw a positive development: “We expect in the course of two or three years to relieve the Board of all responsibility, as we feel confident of a liberal patronage by the Armenians of Smyrna”.<sup>67</sup> Indeed, from 1880 to 1884, when M. Bowen was the principal of the college (which was the continuation of the school that had been established by Miss West), the school continued to grow, and the three American Board teachers were joined by Miss Mary Page, who spoke Greek, and Miss Agnes Lord, a graduate of Wellesley.<sup>68</sup> After the retirement of M. Bowen in 1884, both the leadership of the Smyrna/İzmir mission and the responsibility

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64 Ibid. Bowen wrote that the founder and main supporter of the British school Mr. Perrin encouraged them about their proposed college. George Perrin (1833- ?) was an English engineer who directed Smyrna-Cassaba railway construction.

65 Ibid.

66 Ibid.

67 ACA, ABCFM, 590, M. Bowen's letter to Dr. Clark, Manisa, 24 June 1880.

68 Milton, *Not to Be Served but to Serve*, p.15.

of the college were taken over by Rev. Bartlett who expanded the institution and provided separate buildings for the education of boys and girls.

**Preaching in the Heart of the City:  
A New Chapel in the Armenian Quarter**

In July 1878, the American Board missionaries of Manisa station proposed to the mission headquarters in Boston, the construction of a new Protestant church in İzmir saying that the old chapel was remote from providing for the needs of the increasing brethren.<sup>69</sup> Thus, the head of the station Marcellus Bowen suggested having a new church on a main street at a location easily accessible by both Greeks and Armenians. In İzmir, the Armenians' demographic weight, thus their influence, was less than that of the Greeks. As observed by Hervé Georgelin, emigration to other East Mediterranean cities such as Alexandria and mixed marriages with the Greek Orthodox and Levantines affected the Armenians of İzmir demographically and culturally.<sup>70</sup> Nevertheless, everywhere in the Empire, the Armenians were more responsive than the Greeks to the call of the Protestant missionaries. Within a year after the foundation of the Armenian Evangelical Church in Istanbul in 1846, evangelical churches were organized by missionaries in İzmit, Adapazarı, and Trabzon, and in a short time the number of their members reached about 140.<sup>71</sup> Also, by and large, throughout the nineteenth century the numbers of the Armenian students were higher than the Greek students at the colleges and seminaries established by the American missionaries.

On 2 October 1879, Bowen reported to the Board the purchase of a ground 45 feet (13.72 m) by 125 feet (38.1 meters) with a large building at one end, centrally situated with an easy access to both the Greeks and the Armenians.<sup>72</sup> The lot purchased by the American missionaries was located in the Armenian Quarter in Basmane. Suggesting that the large house at one end of the lot be used as a

69 ACA, ABCFM, 590, M. Bowen's letter to Dr. Clark, Smyrna, 11 July 1878. It seems that the dissatisfaction of the missionaries with the existing chapel dated to several years back. Missionary Miss Maria West who founded a girls' school in Smyrna had demanded the improvement of the chapel. See ACA, ABCFM, 590, M. Bowen's letter to Dr. Clark, Constantinople, 1 June 1876.

70 Georgelin, "Armenian Inter-Community Relations," p.180.

71 Leon Arpée, *A Century of Armenian Protestantism 1846-1946* (New York: The Armenian Missionary Association of America, 1946), p. 39.

72 ACA, ABCFM, 590, M. Bowen's letter to Dr. Clark, Manisa, 2 October 1879.

boarding school, Bowen proposed the construction of a chapel on the same plot for approximately 300 people. However, the Board was reluctant to approve the building of a new chapel in İzmir which, according to Bowen's estimate, would cost 2000 Turkish Liras. Upon this, in his subsequent letters, Bowen emphatically argued for the necessity of a new chapel in İzmir and to strengthen his position, he claimed a revival of interest among the Armenians and the Greeks towards the Protestant faith. He wrote: “Our Armenian work is more hopeful than it has ever been in that city. Old Protestants are getting happy and say “we begin to see the fruit of 50 years labor”.<sup>73</sup> At the new chapel, as Bowen observed, the Gospel would be preached in four languages, English, Greek, Armenian, and Turkish.<sup>74</sup>

In the meanwhile, a severe earthquake struck İzmir in March 1881 and damaged the existing building on the purchased lot. Then, Bowen wrote to the headquarters in Boston saying that the building which had been intended for a boarding school was seriously damaged, and suggested that it should be demolished and constructed from scratch. In the meanwhile, the Board finally approved the construction of a new chapel on the lot. The building of the school began after receiving an official permit from the Municipality. At the same time, the construction of the new chapel also began. However, unlike in the case of the construction of the school building, the construction of the new chapel was suspended due to the requirements of the local Ottoman authorities. To illustrate the process and conditions of church-building by foreign subjects in the post-Reform Edict period, I would like to give an example from the British community of İzmir.

In the 1820s and 30s, British merchants and British railroad workers began building summer houses in Buca, a nearby district outside of İzmir. The increasing British population necessitated the construction of an Anglican chapel which was completed in 1835.<sup>75</sup> The chapel was named as All Saints' Chapel. Almost thirty years later, in April 1864, the British community wrote a petition to the Governor General of the Province of İzmir to request the reconstruction of the Protestant chapel saying that it was erected thirty years ago and at present was in such a bad condition that it was dangerous to gather in it to celebrate the religious service: “Those highlighted, the appointed members of the Committee in charge of the reconstruction of the Protestant Chapel located in the village of

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73 ACA, ABCFM, 590, M. Bowen's letter to Dr. Clark, Manisa, 5 February 1880.

74 ACA, ABCFM, 590, M. Bowen's letter to Dr. Clark, Manisa, 5 March 1880.

75 Royer, “Anglicanism in Smyrna,” p.5.

Bouja, have the honor of bringing to the knowledge of Your Excellence that this Chapel which has been elevated since thirty years is menaced by being ruined today, and is in such a bad state that it is dangerous to gather in it to celebrate the Religious Service”.<sup>76</sup> The community demanded not only the reconstruction of the chapel on the same plot but also its enlargement: “[...]That this Chapel is Twenty four architect’s cubit in length, Twenty architect’s cubit in width, and ten in height. That they propose to reconstruct the abovementioned Chapel in the same place, but giving it a length of Twenty Seven architect’s cubit, a width of fourteen architect’s cubit, a height of twelve architect’s cubit.”<sup>77</sup> The permission by the Sublime Porte dated 30 June 1864 indicates that the British community received a positive answer for its request in a couple of months. The reconstruction and the enlargement of the Protestant chapel in Buca was approved on the grounds that the chapel in question belonged to the Protestant millet since ancient times, and that other millets did not have any relation to or connection with it, and that it was not located in a Muslim neighborhood, and that the requested enlargement would be limited to the space inside the chapel’s courtyard, and that it was not the property of anyone nor was in the confines of a kind of foundation, and that the enlargement of the church would not cause inconvenience in terms of place and locality, and that it would not cause any real harm to anyone. Finally, the permit specified that the length, width, and height of the chapel be extended at a sufficient degree in proportion to the current population of the above-mentioned millet: “[...]zikr olunan kilise minelkadım millet-i merkum-eye mahsus olub milel-i sairenin alâka ve medhali olmadıği ve İslam mahallesinde bulunmadıği ve tevsii hakkında lüzumu olan mahal dahi kilise-i mezkûr havlusı derununda bulunduđu ve kimsenin mülkü ve bir gûne vakıf dahilinde olmadıği ve

76 Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi (BOA), İrâde Hariciye (İ. HR.), 208/ 11983, the petition of the Committee for the reconstruction of the Protestant Chapel dated Smyrna, (day unspecified) April 1864. The quotation in original: “*Les soulignés, nommés membres du Comité chargé de la reconstruction de la Chapelle Protestante, sise au village de Bouja, ont l’honneur de porter à la connaissance de Votre Excellence, que cette Chapelle élevée depuis trente ans menace ruine aujourd’hui, et se trouve dans un si mauvais état qu’il est dangereux de s’y réunir pour célébrer le Service Religieux*”. The petition is signed by James F. Hanson, F. (?) C. Blackler, J. F. Wolters (the Chaplain), John Fraser, and [?] J. A. Henry (Perry?).

77 BOA, İ. HR., 208/ 11983. Pic (“*mimar arşını*”) is translated as “architect’s cubit”, and 1 pic measures 75, 7738 cm. The quotation in original: “*Que cette Chapelle mesure en longueur pics Vingt quatre, en largeur pics Vingt, et en hauteur dix. Qu’on se propose de reconstruire la dite Chapelle sur le même emplacement, mais en lui donnant une longueur de pics Vingt Sept, une largeur de pics quatorze, et une hauteur de pics douze.*”

*kilise-i mezkûrun ol-vechile tevsiinde mahal ve mevki'ce mahzuru ve kimesneye dahi mazarrat-ı sahibesi bulunmadığı halde millet-i merkumenin nüfus-ı mevcudesine nisbetle tül ve arz ve kaddi zira'ları derece-i kifayede olarak tevsi'an bina ve inşası zımında ruhsatı havi emr-i ali i'tası [...]*<sup>78</sup>

Hence, the above document suggests that permission for the construction of a new place of worship was granted to a particular community as a result of that community's right to practice its own rite. In the case of the American missionaries in İzmir, probably, the Ottoman authorities did not fail to see that they were attempting at building a church with the obvious aim of doing religious propaganda among the Christians of the place. Official documentation in the Ottoman archives indicates that church construction by the American Protestant missionaries was tried to be prevented by the local Rum communities and the Patriarchate. In the summer of 1891, the Patriarchate intervened and wrote a letter to the Ministry of Justice and Sects to prevent the construction of a church and a school in Burdur, in order to cast off the threat of proselytization.<sup>79</sup> A few years later, the Greek Orthodox community in Fatsa wrote a petition to the Ministry of Justice and Sects complaining about the Protestants in the district who constructed a building and converted it to church and school without official permission.<sup>80</sup> In 1894, in Ordu, the Greek Orthodox attacked the Protestant church on the grounds that it was too close to their place of worship. This protracted conflict resulted in the Protestants building a new church in the same neighborhood.<sup>81</sup> Regarding the building of the Protestant church in İzmir, the memorandum sent to the Ministry of Justice on 3 September 1882 stated that the construction of the Protestant church was suspended because the building of a new place of worship was contingent on obtaining an imperial rescript.<sup>82</sup> Eventually, in 1883,

78 BOA, İ. HR., 208/ 11983, the permit of the Sublime Porte dated 25 Muharrem 1281 (30 June 1864).

79 BOA, Dahiliye Mektubi Kalemi (DH. MKT.), 97/4, the letter to the Province of Konya, dated 15 Muharrem 1309 (21 August 1891).

80 BOA, Sadaret Mühimme Kalemi Evrakı (A. MKT. MHM.), 700/10, the petition to the Grand Vezirate dated 9 Zilkade 1311 (14 May 1894).

81 BOA, Hariciye Nezareti Siyasi (HR. SYS.), 1782/62, the translation of the extract from the letter of Mr. Arnold, the Secretary of the Evangelical Alliance dated 24 May 1894; BOA, HR. SYS., 1782/62, the translation of the extract from the letter of Mr. Arnold, the Secretary of the Evangelical Alliance dated 2 June 1894.

82 BOA, Şura-yı Devlet (ŞD.), 2457/33, 19 Şevval 1299 (3 September 1882): “İzmir'de Amerikalı Şar Maşelos [Marcellus] Donik uhdesinde (crossed out: İzmirde Debbaghane

a Protestant church belonging to the Americans was erected on the plot whose superintendent (architect) was George Perrin (b.1833) the previously mentioned English engineer who had a collaborative relation with the American missionaries.<sup>83</sup> In the following years, the American missionaries experienced problems with the Ottoman authorities regarding this church, and ultimately the custodianship of the church was passed on to the Scottish Mission.<sup>84</sup>

### **The Graecization of the Evangelical Work among the Greeks**

On the eve of the 1880s, the evangelization of the Greeks of Aegean islands and İzmir became a topic of rivalry and controversy between the Western Turkey Mission and the Athens-based Mission. Regarding the Greek work, Bowen harshly lamented the lethargy of the Western Turkey Mission and firmly wrote to the Secretary of the Board in Boston on 12 September 1878: “[...] I wish to say just a word or two about this Greek question. It is a conviction which has grown stronger and stronger with me, that Greek work ought to be in the hands of another Board (or Mission), with its center at Athens, not Constantinople. Western Turkey Mission has not heart for this work”.<sup>85</sup> In the meanwhile, the Athens (Greece) missionaries were working on the islands close to the Asia Minor coast, namely Mytilene and Chios. This caused a conflict with the Western Turkey Mission which objected to a separation between the islands close to Turkey and the mainland. In June 1879, at the meeting of the Western Turkey Mission, two representatives of the Greek mission at Athens Mr. Sampson (Thornton Rogers S.) and Mr. Kalopothakes argued that the inhabitants of those islands were largely

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derununda bulunan) bulunan hane (crossed out: mukaddemce mekteb yapılmış ve işbu mektebin müceddiden inşası için daire-i belediyeden usule tevfikân ruhsat-ı resmi istihsalıyla inşaya bed’ edilmiş ise de yapılan binanın bir tarafında) arsasına inşasına mübaşeret olunmuş olan Protestan kilisesi inşa etdirilmekte bulunduğu muahharen tahkik kılınmış ve ma’bed ihdas ve inşasının irade-i seniyyeye mütevakkıf bulunması cihetiyle inşaat ta’til etdirilmiş olub[...].”

83 “Investigating the Perrin family from scraps of information”, <http://www.levantineheritage.com/testi64.htm>.; (Accessed on January 14, 2019). The authors of this testimony write that the Evangelical Christendom circular, by J. S. Phillips dated 1883 mentioned that the new Evangelical church “belonging to the Americans” had just been built by George Perrin.

84 “Investigating the Perrin family from scraps of information”, <http://www.levantineheritage.com/testi64.htm>

85 ACA, ABCFM, 590, M. Bowen’s letter to Dr. Clark, Manisa, 12 September 1878.

Greek and all their sympathies and yearnings were toward Athens.<sup>86</sup> Rejecting their justification, the head of the Manisa station M. Bowen supported the point that the Asia Minor or Smyrna/İzmir mission had to be responsible for the nearby islands due to the fact that those islands had close economic and cultural connections with İzmir and Manisa, and not with Athens. Furthermore, Bowen suggested the submission of the whole matter to the Prudential Committee of the American Board for adjustment with the Southern Presbyterian Board. In the meantime, he used the Athenian “threat” against the headquarters in Boston to bring Rev. George Constantine, the Greek-speaking pastor and preacher whom he wanted to collaborate with for the Greek work in İzmir and its vicinity.

Bowen’s long negotiations with the Board to get Rev. Constantine from Athens and employ him as their associate for the Greek work in İzmir and its nearby towns, gave their fruits on 20 January 1881, the day when George Constantine and his wife arrived in İzmir to settle there to engage missionary work. During his previous, occasional visits to İzmir, Constantine had been preaching at the Coffee Room on the quay. His permanent employment in the city meant that he would preach, and hold religious lectures and meetings at several locations. As soon as he arrived, Constantine began holding services in Greek on Sunday mornings at the Dutch Chapel, prayer meetings on Saturdays, and preaching on Thursday evenings at the Evangelical Hall, and holding gatherings at the Coffee Room / the “Rest”, the informal meeting place at the quay which Constantine cherished much because it allowed him to engage private and personal conversations with people. On 11 March 1881, he wrote to the Secretary of the American Board expressing his enthusiasm about the Hall which would become the major venue of his stirring sermons:

My dear Dr. Clark,

I would just drop you a line concerning the work I have been occupied since my return to this city. I found a large Hall situated in the most central part where anybody comes either for a walk or for entertainment. The most popular caffès are close by. This Hall I found having a platform, a small anteroom while the walls were beautifully decorated with texts in various colors and all languages spoken here vis. Greek, Hebrew, Spanish, Italian, Armenian, French, English, Turkish. It has seats for 225 person but more than 300 can be accommodated.

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<sup>86</sup> ACA, ABCFM, 590, M. Bowen and C. H. Brooks’ letter to Dr. Clark, Manisa, 17 June 1879.

We began services the first Sabbath after my arrival and so far we had more people than could be accommodated, we had also a good number of ladies. The audience is composed of all classes. Learned and uneducated, rich and poor, young and old and the attention is all we can desire.<sup>87</sup>

Almost two months after their arrival, İzmir was shaken by a severe earthquake which was followed by the plague and the drought. The Governor of Aydın Province Midhat Pasha “proclaimed a day of humiliation and prayer” and declared that “the earthquake, the drought and the ... were sent by God on account of the people’s sins and each religious body should confess and pray at a specified place [...]”.<sup>88</sup> Rev. Constantine’s wife Amanda S. Constantine’s letter to Dr. Clark in Boston reveals that the earthquake affected the İzmirians deeply. The natural disaster and its interpretation as a punishment for sins had become “ordinary topics of conversation” among people. No doubt that this was seen as an opportunity by the Protestant missionaries in the city to further their spiritual work to save souls. On April 27, in addition to the prayers held at the Orthodox churches, the missionaries, too, held a service for “all nations” at the Evangelical Hall. They spoke in English, Turkish, and Greek to a large audience, and as Rev. Constantine’s wife observed, “the good Spirit was evidently present”.

Constantine observed the people who came to his sermons carefully and in his letters to Boston he reported their contrition regarding their sins, their acts of restitution, and their sincere efforts to understand the Bible.<sup>89</sup> Clearly, for

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87 ACA, ABCFM, 600, G. Constantine’s letter to Dr. Clark, Smyrna, 11 March 1881.

88 ACA, ABCFM, 600, Amanda S. Constantine’s letter to Dr. Clark, Smyrna, 5 May 1881.

89 ACA, ABCFM, 600, G. Constantine’s letter to Dr. Clark, Smyrna, 11 March 1881: “Men are beginning to purchase the Bible and study God’s word with a view to know the way of eternal life”. ACA, ABCFM, 600, G. Constantine’s letter to Dr. Clark, Smyrna, 7 May 1881: “Some of the youths have begun a meeting among themselves where they spend an hour in singing and praying and reading the Bible. A large number of Bible have also been sold in connection with the services and some have gone among the want people in the city”. In the summer of 1881, George Constantine spent about a month in Constantinople where he preached at the Dutch Chapel. He thus reported the enthusiasm of one of the male attendants at his sermon. ACA, ABCFM, 600, G. Constantine’s letter to Dr. Clark, Constantinople, 19 August 1881: “An old man who often tried to enter but could not on account of the crowd at the door standing outside had heard many reflections, succeeded to enter the very last Sabbath and in going out declared to the crowd that he would shoot the first man who would speak against the service and furthermore he declared that he would give up 8 years out of a life of 10 years for the sake of such preaching”.

him, concern for one's salvation and acts of penitence indicated one's disposition toward evangelical faith which could ultimately result in one's conversion to Protestantism. In his letters, there are mentions of men who quit drinking, swearing, lying, and cheating.<sup>90</sup> There are references even to converts who had been thinking of committing suicide, but having attended the meetings and sermons, abandoned the idea suggesting both the psychological and the spiritual transformation of the person. Constantine's presentation of the converts was quite the opposite of how they were seen by the high clergy of the native churches. According to the latter, converts to Protestantism were greedy people who changed their faith in return for the money they received from the missionaries. In Constantine's letters, however, they appear as individuals who won their long struggles against the cravings of the flesh. He wrote:

One had been knowing the truth for 17 years but only now could trust Christ. Another testified that for 2 years was fighting against sins but conquered only now through Christ. For 40 years, said another deceived myself that I was better than atheis[t] but now I hate my sins. Another said five months ago I was as a wild goat, but God's Holy Spirit has tamed my heart.[...] Another 'pray for me to overcome the shame in confessing Christ. Another that he may overcome the weakness of the flesh.'<sup>91</sup>

Constantine's sermons were open to all classes and groups of people, and as a missionary he certainly wanted the attention of people of all social classes. Yet, particular groups such as (English) sailors<sup>92</sup> or Greek workers come up in the letters as the audiences of prayer meetings. Also, regarding the converts there are references to people of humble social positions, e.g. a tailor or a cake-seller. As far as the Greeks of İzmir were concerned, even though most of the converts belonged to lower social classes, there were also merchants or businessmen of various scales who turned to Protestantism.<sup>93</sup> Based on the attendants of his own sermons and

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90 ACA, ABCFM, 600, G. Constantine's letter to Dr. Clark, Smyrna, 27 June 1882.

91 ACA, ABCFM, 600, G. Constantine's letter to Dr. Clark, Smyrna, 30 December 1882.

92 The English ladies who owned the 'Rest' undertook missionary work among the English sailors. See ACA, ABCFM, 600, G. Constantine's letter to Rev. Judson Smith, Smyrna, 7/19 December 1887 and G. Constantine's letter to Dr. Clark, Smyrna, 2 November 1887. Also see ACA, ABCFM, 600, G. Constantine's letter to Dr. Alden, Smyrna, 9 September 1884.

93 A merchant from Alaçatı attended one of the services and was so much influenced by the sermon that on his way back home, he distributed religious tracts on the boat. ACA, ABCFM, 600, G. Constantine's letter to Dr. Clark, Smyrna, 7 May 1881.

meetings, Constantine reported about 20-30 converts to Protestantism in and around İzmir each year.<sup>94</sup> The low number of the Greek converts was due to the strong opposition and persecution of the Greek Orthodox Church and the fear of isolation and reprimand by one's close social circle.<sup>95</sup> Furthermore, as Constantine noted, the obligation of keeping the Sabbath, i.e. not working on Sundays constituted an obstacle for the to-be-converts.<sup>96</sup> The following excerpt testifies to the frustrating slow pace of conversions and Constantine's patient attitude toward the work in İzmir: "The work is going on very quietly? and naturally yet with much encouragement. Some seem to see the necessity of leaving the Greek Church others do not and we pray for patience and grace to do what is right and not go ahead of Providence".<sup>97</sup>

At the end of the year 1882, the Prudential Committee's decision to reduce the number of native helpers and preachers in the Manisa-İzmir region signaled bad news for the recently employed Greek preacher in Manisa and the Greek helper in İzmir. George Constantine lamented that this would be a serious blow to the movement at a time at which interest for their work among the Greeks was increasing. Thus, in order to initiate "self-supported preaching among the Greeks", he consulted with the American missionaries on the ground, and established in January 1883 "The Greek Evangelical Alliance in Turkey" to secure "mutual sympathy and help" among the evangelical Greeks in Turkey. In his letter to Dr. Clark dated 6 February 1883, Constantine clearly designated the GEA's relationship to the American Board. The GEA would receive partial financial aid from the American Board in order to support Greek preachers and teachers, and to maintain schools. He wrote:

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94 ACA, ABCFM, 600, G. Constantine's letter to Dr. Clark, Smyrna, 26 January 1886: "Fifteen persons during the year have united with the Church while five more are waiting for the next communion. It makes in all 25 additions". Of course, the number of the people who attended the services without joining the Protestant Church was much higher. Ibid.: "The Manissa services have been attended by 45 persons, the S. [Sunday] School by 38, the prayer meetings by 22 and the women's meetings by 15 at an average".

95 ACA, ABCFM, 600, G. Constantine's letter to Dr. Clark, Smyrna, 4 November 1881: "We feel almost depressed as the people around in Sabbath after Sabbath listen most eagerly but after all, they would resist the truth and become worst than before.[...] The great trouble here now is the fear of the world. Many know the Truth and accept it yet are afraid to come out and openly confess it".

96 ACA, ABCFM, 600, G. Constantine's letter to Dr. Clark, Smyrna, 30 December 1882.

97 ACA, ABCFM, 600, G. Constantine's letter to Dr. Clark, Smyrna, 27 June 1882.

“ALL WE HOPE IS A GENEROUS REVIVAL”

The Alliance proposes to collect all the contributions of its members and undertake the support of Greek preachers as far as it is able. vis that the Gospel to the Greeks should be preached by the Greeks and through the Greeks or Greek funds, looking to the Am. Board as a beloved parent for sympathy, experiments and prayers; so there is a day on each week when the members of the Alliance should pray especially for both the Am. Board and the Alliance, on Sunday.<sup>98</sup>

At the first meeting of the GEA, George Constantine was elected President and Treasurer, and George Kampouropoulos from Manisa its Secretary. Constantine was hoping to collect contributions not only from the members of the evangelical churches but also from those who, not necessarily being a member of an evangelical church, felt “an interest in the pure preaching of the Gospel” and were willing to contribute on account of seeing this as an entirely Greek enterprise. As George Constantine specified, each member of the Alliance would pay [?] to the Treasury and promise to contribute weekly to its objects. Every evangelical Christian could become a member of the Alliance, though the voting privilege was limited to the members of evangelical churches, in order that the evangelical character of the Alliance would be secured.<sup>99</sup>

By the end of 1883, the GEA was able to support two preachers in Manisa and İzmir, and one teacher and a school in İzmir which had 40-50 day pupils and two boarders.<sup>100</sup> The Alliance attached much importance to the Greek work in Manisa and when the American missionary Miss Cull gave up her supervision over the school there, the Alliance assumed its care.<sup>101</sup> In the following years, the GEA extended its supervision to the nearby towns of Bayındır and Aydın and maintained preachers and schools there.<sup>102</sup> On 9 September 1884, the first missionary sent by the GEA was on his way to Isparta with his wife and baby, a travel

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98 ACA, ABCFM, 600, G. Constantine’s letter to Dr. Clark, Smyrna, 6 February 1883.

99 ACA, ABCFM, 600, G. Constantine’s letter to Dr. Clark, Smyrna, 6 February 1883.

100 ACA, ABCFM, 600, G. Constantine’s letter to Dr. Clark, Smyrna, 28 November 1883.

The GEA paid for half of the salaries of the Manisa pastor and the Greek preacher in Smyrna. With the initiative of George Constantine, an evangelical church was organized in Manisa and a Greek pastor was ordained.

101 ACA, ABCFM, 600, G. Constantine’s letter to Dr. Clark, Smyrna, 12 June 1885: “The Manissa work is becoming more and more important and while the School care at present is a little more than we have planned yet we have accepted it as from the Lord and are glad. It will give character to the Alliance and encourage its members who are trying to do all they can.”

102 ACA, ABCFM, 600, G. Constantine’s letter to Dr. Smith, Smyrna, 22 March 1888.

that would last four days on the train and horses.<sup>103</sup> Isparta had about 3,000-4,000 Greeks and many Armenians which made the place a promising field in the view of the Protestant missionaries. A year later, however, the preacher sent by the GEA, who could preach both in Turkish and in Greek, began to meet severe measures against his service. The people who went to the services were threatened, and an Anathema was read in the Churches against them, and consequently most of those who had become interested, withdrew.<sup>104</sup>

In January-February 1885, Rev. A. N. Somerville of Glasgow visited the American Board's missionaries in İzmir, and held 60 religious services in the city and the nearby towns of Bornova, Buca, Manisa, Akhisar, Sardin, Alaşehir, and Söke. The following data from G. Constantine's report indicates the linguistic distribution of Somerville's services and of the Bibles distributed. The Greeks' interest in comparison with that of the Turkish-speaking Armenians, Turks, and Jews of the region is remarkable. In İzmir, Somerville held 17 services in English, 11 in Greek, 9 in Turkish and Armenian, and 3 in Judeo-Spanish. In the vicinity, he held 7 services in English, 10 in Greek, 3 in Turkish. Constantine noted that 4 of these services were for women especially, and 2 for children. The visiting preacher also distributed Testaments; 200 in Greek, 116 in Turkish and Armenian, about 70 in Judeo-Spanish, in total 386 copies.<sup>105</sup>

Despite all efforts, the number of Greek converts to Protestantism was increasing so slowly that the Prudential Committee in Boston and some "prejudiced" missionaries began to criticize George Constantine for his methods, and accused him of "laboring for reformation inside" [the Greek Church] rather than drawing the members of the Greek Church to their Communion. Constantine defended himself pointing out that the local Press was saying just the opposite: "I am accused for drawing members of the Greek Church to our Communion and thus unchurch and disnationalize them according to that article [in the local newspaper]. A priest for the last six months and a lay man before him have

103 ACA, ABCFM, 600, G. Constantine's letter to Dr. Alden, Smyrna, 9 September 1884.

104 ACA, ABCFM, 600, G. Constantine's letter to Dr. Clark, Sparta (Isparta), Pisidia, 3 August 1885. In 1891, Dr. Bartlett and his family met similar difficulties and even worse violent reactions from the local Christians when he attempted at building a Protestant church and a school in Burdur. See Merih Erol, "Becoming Protestant: The Greek Orthodox Responses to Conversion in Nineteenth Century Ottoman Anatolia," *ADALYA*, 21 (2018), p. 350.

105 ACA, ABCFM, 600, G. Constantine's letter to Dr. Clark, Smyrna, [?] March 1885.

been preaching against me every Sunday [...]”.<sup>106</sup> On 8 May 1885, he wrote: “In an article under the head “The Wolves” I was abused with no less than 19 vile epithets”. At the same time, the Greek Orthodox clergy was warning people to keep away from the Protestants. The new Archbishop of Smyrna<sup>107</sup> called them the sons of the Devil whose end would be like that of Judas, who for silver betrayed his master. In his letter to Boston, Constantine wrote indignantly and triumphantly:

Our enemies have been so aroused as to form a Society called “Orthodoxia” whose object will be to diminish and even destroy the influence of our preaching by employing able Preachers who will preach on Sundays and other public days at the Churches and Schools and little thinking that when the place is well supplied with gospel preaching we may go where there is none.<sup>108</sup>

As the Protestant movement gained somewhat momentum among the Greeks of İzmir and its vicinity after the formation of the GEA, the Greek Orthodox clergy, as mentioned above, first responded to it by appointing two preachers, one of whom would preach at the Cathedral on Sunday afternoons, and the other would itinerate preaching the Gospel.<sup>109</sup> Later, the Greek Church turned to a systematic and bitter opposition which caused the withdrawal of some of the interested attendants of the services.<sup>110</sup> In March 1887, violent incidents happened in İzmir.<sup>111</sup> A Smyrniote Greek woman with a preeminent social status had converted to Protestantism. Following the appearance of an interview with her in the local Press, the emotions went high and an Orthodox mob attacked the Protestant church, school, and Constantine’s house.<sup>112</sup> G. Constantine thus narrated the episode:

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106 ACA, ABCFM, 600, G. Constantine’s letter to Dr. Clark, Smyrna, 31 January 1884.

107 After Bishop Meletios of Smyrna died in December 1884, Bishop Basileios succeeded him and was enthroned in his new diocese, Smyrna, in March 1885. Basileios remained the Archbishop of Smyrna until his death in 1910. Dimitrios Stamatopoulos, “Basileios of Smyrna,” *Encyclopaedia of the Hellenic World, Asia Minor*, <http://www.ehw.gr/L.aspx?id=7381> (Accessed on January 14, 2019).

108 ACA, ABCFM, 600, G. Constantine’s letter to Dr. Alden, Smyrna, 8 May 1885.

109 ACA, ABCFM, 600, G. Constantine’s letter to Dr. Clark, Smyrna, 28 November 1883.

110 ACA, ABCFM, 600, G. Constantine’s letter to Dr. Clark, Smyrna, 5 December 1883.

111 Erol, “Becoming Protestant,” p. 354.

112 G. Constantine referred to this interview in his letter to Dr. Clark, Smyrna, 21 February 1887.

Sunday the 20 after the services at the Hall, a mob collected, shouted and became so turbulent that I was compelled to ask the aid of the Amer. Consul who gave it very promptly. The Hall is under English protection and has been closed. For seven years the Gospel of peace has been preached there and its future is problematic. The Pasha advised the English Consul to close it while the leaders of the trouble were left untouched during the following week though their names were in the hands of the Government.<sup>113</sup>

However, the worse was to come the following Sunday. Constantine wrote:

The following Sunday the 27<sup>th</sup> the mob collected around the Mission Church and abused some of the Armenians as they left the Church at 10½ a.m. when we began our meeting the whole street was crowded with wild people breathing all menaces of threats. [...] My wife being ill was not with me in church, but the messenger brought word that my house was besieged by the mob who for nearly two hours were smashing windows, trying to break open the door. [...] The windows of our Church and the Girls' School were the target for stones. The teachers and pupils were troubled in the streets and we all are now protected by guards. Through the vigorous efforts of our Consul the Government-at-Constantinople telegraphed to the Pasha here and the matter is being investigated. The excitement among all classes is very great and I have been cautioned several times that my life is in danger.<sup>114</sup>

The whole incident and the closing of the Hall demoralized Constantine a lot. Furthermore, his wife Amanda had a nervous breakdown during the violent attacks at their house and several months later, she passed away. Shortly after the incidents in İzmir, as Constantine reported, a denunciation against the Protestants was read in all the churches in Manisa and the Bible colporteurs were facing much trouble in the streets.<sup>115</sup> Nevertheless, what worried him more was that the Western Turkey Mission put up at auction "the Konak", the headquarter building of the American Board missionaries in Manisa, and the Greek bishop there was decided to purchase it, which would mean, in Constantine's view, the end of the evangelical Christians in Manisa.<sup>116</sup> On 21 February 1887, Constantine

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113 ACA, ABCFM, 600, G. Constantine's letter to Dr. Clark, Smyrna, 30 March 1887.

114 ACA, ABCFM, 600, G. Constantine's letter to Dr. Clark, Smyrna, 30 March 1887.

115 ACA, ABCFM, 600, G. Constantine's letter to Dr. Clark, Smyrna, 4 May 1887.

116 ACA, ABCFM, 600, G. Constantine's letter to Dr. Clark, Smyrna, 2 November 1887: "[...] the Greek Bishop there, hopes to accomplish, what he has failed to do through the

heralded the extending scope of the Greek work undertaken by the Alliance. He wrote: “The Greek work presents the greatest need for workers both here and at Constantinople as well as all along the coasts”.<sup>117</sup> Thus, a year later, the Athenian evangelist was on his way to the Black Sea town of Ordu, where the small evangelical community there, asked for a Greek preacher and collaboration with the Greek Evangelical Alliance.<sup>118</sup> However, Constantine’s work in Turkey could not proceed very far; probably due to his deteriorating health problems he left İzmir for England where he died in 1891.

### Conclusion

This article explored the American Protestant missionaries’ endeavors to evangelize the Greek and Armenian populations in Manisa, İzmir, and the nearby towns of Ottoman Turkey in the 1870s and 1880s. The Protestant missionaries strived to draw the native Armenians and Greeks to what they called true Christianity by holding religious services, prayer meetings, distributing or selling Bibles, and by providing educational opportunities for poor children. The major challenge to their proselytizing efforts was the native Christian churches’ opposition. Another difficulty which the ABCFM’s missionaries faced was the problem of providing the field with missionaries who possessed the knowledge of different vernacular languages. So, at places where it was possible, they offered religious services in the only shared language of the local Greeks and Armenians, in Turkish. Yet, ultimately due to the organization of the Ottoman non-Muslims in separate ethno-religious groups (the *millet*s) and the increasing role of language in the formation of national identities in the nineteenth century, distinct Armenian and Greek evangelical churches were established. As confessed by several Board missionaries, the work among Greeks was difficult. While the American missionaries had to find extra means to train and maintain Greek-speaking preachers for the Greek-speaking urban populations, they could reach the Armenian populations of Anatolia via the native Armenian helpers who preached in Turkish. Besides,

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persecutions of last spring vis [?] to exterminate the Evangelical Christians of Manissa by purchasing the Konak, he has decided to do it at any price.[...] The Konak has been the birth place and the home of the evangelical work in Manissa, the past of a long mission and of many missionaries, and now the Missionary has gone and the home is sold to the enemy. It breaks my heart to think of it.”

117 ACA, ABCFM, 600, G. Constantine’s letter to Dr. Clark, Smyrna, 21 February 1887.

118 ACA, ABCFM, 600, G. Constantine’s letter to Dr. Smith, Smyrna, 14 April 1888.

unlike in the Greek case, a Protestant movement had begun from within the native Armenian Apostolic Church in the 1840s.

Both the Greek Evangelical Church of İzmir and the Greek Evangelical Alliance (1883) based in İzmir were established by the Greek-American missionary George Constantine who envisaged that the evangelization of Anatolia's Greeks had to be a Greek enterprise and advocated the training and recruitment of Greek helpers from among the locals of a place. In the 1870s and 80s, at first the American Board's missionaries and the Turkish-speaking Armenian preachers whom they recruited, and then the Greek Evangelical Alliance became the major forces of the evangelization of the Armenians and Greeks in Anatolia. They established and maintained preaching halls and schools, sent evangelist preachers and teachers to various cities and towns in Anatolia and financed them. The American Board engaged in missionary work targeting the Greek Orthodox of Anatolia particularly in İzmir, Manisa, Akhisar, Aydın, Ödemiş, Bayındır, Afyonkarahisar, Bursa, Adapazarı, İzmit, Kayseri, Sivas, Yozgat, Konya, Isparta, Burdur, Merzifon, Bafra, Samsun (Alaçam), Fatsa, Ordu, and Trabzon. By the end of the 1880s, the increasing numbers of male and female converts, especially those with important social positions caused excommunications by the Greek Orthodox Church and triggered preaching by Orthodox priests on Sundays in competition with the Protestant missionaries.

**Abstract** ■ This article examines the *American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions'* activities in the 1870s and 80s at the Manisa and Smyrna/İzmir stations in an attempt to evangelize Greeks and Armenians living in the region. The main body of sources used in this study are the letters of the missionary Rev. Marcellus Bowen (1874-1880) sent from Manisa to the headquarters of the ABCFM in Boston, and the letters of Rev. George Constantine (1880-1889) sent from İzmir to the same destination. These first-person narratives provide us with extremely rich material, due to the fact that they comment on phenomena and events directly and immediately. This article investigates a variety of themes, such as the efforts of the American missionaries to adapt their missionary work to Smyrna's multicultural and multinational society; the missionaries' decisions and arguments regarding which language to use in their preachings or at religious services for the Greeks and Armenians of the region; the means of persecution or opposition employed by the Greek Orthodox high-ranked clergy in Smyrna/İzmir against the Protestant missionaries; and the conditions under which foreigners could sell religious books or open / build schools and churches in the Ottoman lands, and which intermediaries the missionaries appealed to when they were challenged by the Ottoman authorities.

**Keywords:** Smyrna/İzmir, Missionary activities in Anatolia, Armenian and Greek Protestants, Religious Conversion, Nineteenth Century.

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