PREFACE

My interest in Sierra Leone arose as a result of my childhood and youth activity in The United Methodist (then the Evangelical United Brethren) Church, through which the names of African and missionary leaders of the Sierra Leone Conference became familiar to me. After graduation from college, I traveled in West Africa for about three months in 1960-1961 and awakened to the intricacies and depth of African culture. This awareness was heightened in courses at Evangelical Theological Seminary under the late Wilbur Harr, Professor of Christian Missions. In 1966, I enrolled in the doctoral program in Social Ethics and Sociology of Religion at Boston University, and was very pleased to find that courses in the social sciences from the African Studies Center were applicable to the degree requirements in social ethics.

It seemed both interesting and logical to pursue some problem in African social history for a dissertation topic, and I was encouraged to do so by advisors. Paul K. Deats, Jr., Professor of Social Ethics, and Daniel F. McCall, Professor of Anthropology, served in that order as first and second readers of my dissertation, which was approved in 1970 under the title, "A Socio-Historical Analysis of Modernization and Related Mission Influences in Two Chiefdoms in West Africa, 1875-1940."

The Institute of African Studies at Fourah Bay College, the University of Sierra Leone, received me as a Visiting Research Fellow for a year of field study during 1968-1969. Principal Harry Sawyerr of Fourah Bay College was instrumental in arranging facilities and hospitality. J. K. Edowu Hyde, Esq., Secretary of the Institute of African Studies, provided valuable assistance in arranging introductions and in many other details. Michael Jolliffe, Esq., Librarian at Fourah Bay College and Acting Government Archivist, provided study space and orientation to the Sierra Leone Government Archives. S. J. A. Nelson, Esq., Chief Cartographer Technician of the Geography Department, prepared the original of the detail map of Sierra Leone included with the text. Some of my fellow researchers at the institute were very helpful in orienting me to sources and issues, and in giving me impetus to get on with the work.

Missionaries, pastors and members of The United Methodist Church
in Sierra Leone, especially the Rev. Clyde Galow, Field Representative of the Board of Missions, were unfailing in providing access to rare printed materials and in making many practical arrangements. Dr. John Ness, Jr., Executive Secretary of the Commission on Archives and History of The United Methodist Church, was a source of encouragement and of archival assistance.

I wish to emphasize my appreciation of my informants and other interested parties, including Daniel Sam of Taiama, C. Myers of Rotifunk, and S. H. Thomas of Taiama (my primary translators), hundreds of villagers, chiefs, church workers, traders, school teachers and others. They gave much to this study—oral information, directions along bush paths, food, friendship and humor—and allowed me to merge into the richness of their lives for a time.

Those who were closest to me during the entire period, particularly my wife, Lucille, but also other relatives, bore many of the practical and mundane burdens willingly. I am pleased to be able to dedicate the book to Lucille.

All of the foregoing assisted with my dissertation work. Chapters two, three and four of the present text are substantial revisions of parts of the dissertation, and my colleagues in the departments of religion and sociology at the University of Puget Sound encouraged me with the rewriting. Mrs. Phoebe Miller, Associate Professor of Anthropology, was especially helpful in editorial and conceptual suggestions for chapter four. Chapter five is based on the research done for the dissertation, but was written later. Chapters one and six are freshly conceived and written.

The relationship between this book and my dissertation should be specified a bit more. The dissertation is longer; the book omits much of the technical discussion of modernization theory and some empirical data. Readers interested in that sort of detail should read the dissertation, available from University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, Michigan. The book emphasizes an interpretation growing out of the dissertation, namely, the continuing vitality and strength of African traditional culture and religion.

Research and writing goes slowly and takes funds. The receipt of a Rockefeller Doctoral Dissertation Year Fellowship, awarded by the Fund for Theological Education, Princeton, New Jersey, was a major factor in making the year in Sierra Leone possible. The Oral Data Committee of the African Studies Association made a grant in aid to assist with the preparation of the manuscripts of
my interviews. Additional grants from the Faculty Research Committee of the University of Puget Sound were helpful in meeting expenses connected with the preparation and publication of the book manuscript.

To the foregoing persons and institutions I offer hearty thanks. I hope that their participation in the process will be rewarded. They all share credit for any success, though responsibility for error is mine alone. I wish to thank the editors of Geneva-Africa, International Journal of African Historical Studies, and The Muslim World for permission to reprint material which earlier appeared in those publications, MacMillan Publishing Co., Inc., for the quotation on page 60, and Oxford University Press for the quotation on page 50.

In 1910, E. H. Blyden wrote, in editorial correspondence to the Sierra Leone Outlook of the West African Conference of the United Brethren in Christ,

A wide, a varied, a necessitous, a difficult field confronts the earnest worker in this country. The situation demands less of Europe and more of Africa; less of the letter and more of the spirit; less of theology and more of religion; less of dogma and more of Christ.

I understand the present book to be a response to the spirit of Blyden's challenge.

1 See Reeck, 1971.
2 Chapter two originally appeared in International Journal of African Historical Studies V, 4 (1972); chapter three in Geneva-Africa XI, 2 (1973); and chapter five in The Muslim World LXII, 3 (1972.)