



The Development of Bitlis Station: An Analysis of Annual Tabular Views for the Years 1860-1871

Bitlis İstasyonu'nun Gelişimi: 1860-1871 Arası Yıllık Tablo Analizleri

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ABSTRACT

The American Board, established in 1810, began its operations in the Ottoman Empire with the ordination of Pliny Fisk and Levi Parsons in Jerusalem in 1819. The Board designated İzmir as its headquarters and operated from there for some time. Over the years, it divided the Ottoman Empire into regions, establishing missions, stations, and outstations. The organization engaged in systematic propaganda against the Ottoman Empire through the missionaries it ordained. The Bitlis Station was founded in 1860 under the Eastern Turkey Mission. Between 1860 and 1871, local participation in the Stations' activities increased significantly, leading to a rise in the number of outstations. This included pastors and educators, allowing them to lead religious and educational initiatives. The Board's commitment to its objectives was reflected in civic contributions, such as assistance with pastors' salaries. All of this underscores the influence and capacity of the American Board in the Bitlis Station. This study aims to explore this by focusing on the development of the Bitlis Station as documented in the annual tabular views of the Eastern Turkey Mission from 1860 to 1871.

Keywords

ABCFM, Bitlis, Eastern Turkey Mission, American Missionaries, Annual Tabular Views.

ÖZ

1810'da kurulan Amerikan Board, 1819'da Kudüs'e Pliny Fisk ve Levi Parsons'ın atanmasıyla Osmanlı Devleti'ndeki faaliyetlerine başlamış ve İzmir'i merkez olarak belirleyerek faaliyetlerini bir süre buradan yürütmüştür. Yıllar içerisinde Amerikan Board, Osmanlı Devleti'ni bölgelere ayırarak misyonlar, istasyonlar ve dış istasyonlar oluşturmuştur. Örgüt, atadığı misyonerler aracılığıyla Osmanlı Devleti'ne karşı sistemli bir aleyhte propaganda yürütmüştür. Bitlis İstasyonu 1860 yılında Doğu Türkiye Misyonu'na bağlı olarak kurulmuştur. 1860-1871 yılları arasında istasyonun faaliyetlerine yerel düzeyde katılım önemli ölçüde artmış ve bunun sonucu olarak dış istasyonların sayısı da yükselmiştir. Örgüt ayrıca papazları ve eğitimcileri bünyesine katarak dini ve eğitimle ilgili girişimlere yön verilmesini sağlamıştır. Board'un hedeflerine olan bağlılığı, papazların ücretlerine yapılan yardımlar da dahil olmak üzere sivil katkılarda kendini göstermiştir. Tüm bunlar Amerikan Board'un Bitlis istasyonu genelindeki etkisini ve kapasitesini gözler önüne sermektedir. Bu çalışma, Doğu Türkiye Misyonunun 1860-1871 yılları arasındaki yıllık tablolarında Bitlis istasyonunun gelişimine odaklanarak bu durumu incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler

ABCFM, Bitlis, Doğu Türkiye Misyonu, Amerikalı Misyonerler, Yıllık Tablolar.

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INTRODUCTION

The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) constitutes a Protestant missionary organization that was established in the early nineteenth century in New England, United States. Although it was formally founded in 1810, the origins of the American Board extend beyond this date. It emerged from the evangelical awakening of the early nineteenth century, with the aim of disseminating the Bible and Christian doctrines through three primary phases: preaching, translating and distributing the Bible, and promoting Bible study. Missionaries were dispatched to achieve these objectives, attending to both the physical and spiritual needs of the community by establishing churches, developing schools, and creating employment opportunities for converts. Their endeavors focused on mission management, training native helpers, translating the Bible, and distributing Christian publications. The American Board engaged in activities that extended beyond its evangelical goals, with all efforts aimed at furthering those objectives. Missionaries were encouraged to set ambitious goals; local churches were established to achieve self-governance and financial independence, and members were urged to seek the spiritual conversion of the local population. The primary objective of the missionaries was to propagate the church on a global scale. The evangelistic strategy of the American Board was distinguished by its broad influence, which included social centers, clinics, hospitals, and educational institutions establishments. The Holy Land, known as the birthplace of Christianity and a key focus for the American Board since its founding, was seen as inappropriate for Islamic influence or a weakened form of Christianity from their viewpoint.

In November 1819, with the ordination of Pliny Fisk and Levi Parsons in Jerusalem, the American Board entered the territory of the Ottoman Empire. Fisk and Parsons based their operations in Izmir and conducted their activities there for some time, thus establishing the American Board within the Ottoman Empire (Çoban Döşkaya, 2022). During this organizational phase, the American Board divided the Ottoman Empire into missions, stations, and outstations. The Board undertook systematic propaganda against the Ottoman Empire through the missionaries they appointed (Çoban Döşkaya & Öztürk, 2023).

In the Ottoman Empire, Armenians were recognized as a trusted Christian community living in various regions within the empire's borders. Armenians were concentrated in Erzurum, Sivas, Van, Diyarbakır, Elazığ, and Bitlis. Of these six provinces (Vilayeti Sitte), the Armenian population in Bitlis was not only a settled group in the region but also influential in the province's governance, administrative, economic, and socio-cultural structure. The American Board valued Bitlis' demographic and

geostrategic position, as it played a crucial role in the region's development. Because of its demographic composition, minority communities, and the possibility of engagement in missionary endeavors, Bitlis Station became a prominent cultural and strategically crucial center in the Eastern Turkey Mission of the ABCFM.

Much archive-based research has been conducted on the American Board Bitlis Station. However, the study by Kuş and Alan (2019) on Bitlis Station is crucial as it investigates the activities of the American Board from its founding to its closure. On the other hand, this article focuses on the first decade of Bitlis Station (1860-1871) and analyzes the station's establishment along with the preliminary effects of missionary activities through annual data. The objective is to examine the dynamics of the station's founding and the factors that influenced its long-term outcomes, as well as to present the developments of the first ten years at Bitlis Station based on the microfilm archive at Bilkent University Library. The tabular views from the first ten years are being explored in the archival records. The primary goal of the missionary work undertaken at the station was to understand the American Board's influence in the region. This was achieved by assessing the station's impact on changing educational, social, and religious activities. This research aims to address the following aspects: the primary focus of missionary efforts, the effect of the American Board on the local populace, the contributions of religious and educational activities to social transformation, and the relationship between the Bitlis Station and its outstations.

Between 1860 and 1871, local involvement in the Stations' activities grew significantly, resulting in an increase in the number of outstations. This involved pastors and educators, enabling them to spearhead religious and educational initiatives. This approach strengthened the mission's connection to the local community and ensured sustainability. Community contributions, including support for pastors' salaries, reflected the growing commitment of the local Protestant community to the mission's goals.

The Preparations for the Establishment of Bitlis Station of ABCFM

In the archival records of the American Board, "the name Bitlis was first mentioned in 1841" (Kuş & Alan, 2019, p. 1406). In the April issue of the Board's periodical, *The Missionary Herald*, a letter written by William C. Jackson, the missionary at the Erzurum station, includes some notes from that station. The expression Bitlis appears as follows:

December 9th. I have been employing an Armenian from Bitlis for some days, a city upwards of three hundred miles south of this. He wished to purchase a New Testament. Being asked if he wished a copy of the gospels, "What!" says he, "am I a priest that I should read the gospel? That is for the priests to read." He here uttered a sentiment very common among this people. They regard the gospel as more sacred than the rest



of the Bible and most suitable to be read by the priests. This same young man was lately called by a vartabed of his acquaintance and cautioned to beware of me. "Be careful that they (the missionaries) do not lead you out of the true way. They have a strange religion, whether they are Mohammedans or Christians I cannot tell."

February 15th, 1841. I visited Hafiz Pasha, the governor of this pashalik, in company with the English consul. I learned at this visit a most grievous instance of Turkish oppression. To conciliate the Koords that frequent the pasture grounds about the region of Moosh and Bitlis, the Turkish government ordered, some years since, that the Christian villagers in this quarter should maintain the Koordish shepherds that should be in their vicinity through the winter that is, that the Christians should receive their cattle into their stables, and the Koords themselves to their firesides, and feed them from their own provisions; but for this service the Koords were to pay them (Jackson, 1841, p. 165).

From 1841 to 1854, Bitlis appears in the letters of the Erzurum missionaries to the Board. It is primarily mentioned during the missionaries' visits to the outstations of Erzurum and its surroundings. In 1854, Bitlis was included in the annual report of the Erzurum station (The Missionary Herald, 1854). By 1858, Bitlis was occupied by missionaries. In the tenth issue of *The Missionary Herald* released that year, Bitlis is recognized as distinct from the Erzurum station for the first time. It is noted as a sub-heading under the Diyarbakır station of the Assyrian mission, which had been thoroughly investigated in earlier expeditions to the region, with the findings meticulously documented. In George C. Knapp's correspondence dated June 17, 1858, he clearly states that it is time to send missionaries to Bitlis. Additionally, he elaborately details Bitlis in his correspondence, listing the fruit trees in the area, mentioning the existence of thirty-two bridges and several mills along the city's waterways, as well as noting the city's altitude, its proximity to neighboring villages, and the quality of its air and water. Knapp's expression of his feelings of being nearly home implies his intention to stay engaged in the city for many years (The Missionary Herald, 1858).

George Cushing Knapp, acknowledged as the first Board missionary to Bitlis, was unable to remain in Diyarbakır (Diarbekir) for an extended time due to health constraints. Therefore, in May 1858, he was tasked with establishing a new station in Bitlis, described as a healthy location at a high elevation. In the summer of 1859, the Knapp family occupied Bitlis in the latter part of the season (Anderson, 1872).

Annual Tabular Views of Bitlis Station for the Years 1860-1871

Founded in 1860, the Eastern Turkey Mission established seven stations: Arapkir, Bitlis, Diyarbakır, Mardin, Mosul, Harput, and Erzurum. When it was established, the mission included 11 preachers and two physicians, and educational initiatives included creating a seminary and 17 common schools (PABCFM, Reel 676, No: 4)

The annual tabular view of the Eastern Turkey Mission at the Bitlis station for 1860 presents the following information: The missionaries at the Bitlis station included both American and native helpers. The American missionaries comprised two preachers and their two wives, while the native helpers included one preacher and an additional helper. Preaching activities in Bitlis during 1860 took place in two different locations, with an average Sabbath attendance of 15 individuals (PABCFM, Reel 676, No: 4). At that time, Bitlis lacked educational institutions but held potential for future development. The mission aimed to meet the region's spiritual and practical needs, tailoring its efforts to various circumstances and opportunities. Despite its small size, Bitlis was crucial to the mission's overall strategy. The Bitlis station has one outstation, Moosh (Mouş) (Muş), served by a local priest (PABCFM, Reel 676, No: 5).

The annual tabular view of the mission about the Bitlis station for the year 1861 provides the following information: It details the development of missionary activity at the Bitlis station and its outstation, Moosh. The station engaged two American preachers, two American women, a native preacher, and a catechist. Religious activities substantially increased, with an average of 30 individuals attending Sabbath prayers, indicating a major rise in attendance relative to the prior year. Nonetheless, Bitlis has failed to build missionary institutions, signifying a deficiency in educational resources. The mission also expanded to Moosh, where a local preacher was appointed, indicating efforts to disseminate into adjacent areas. (PABCFM, Reel 676, No: 13, No: 14). In 1861, the financial report of the Bitlis station revealed a budget of \$2,025 designated for missionary salaries, local representative assistance, educational programs, rent, and maintenance. The budget prioritized personnel and facilities to enable the mission's work. Pastor Simon's relocation to Moosh led to its designation as an outstation of Bitlis, intended to centralize supervision and improve outreach. This choice enhanced regional connectivity and the coordination of religious and educational endeavors in Eastern Turkey, exemplifying the mission's strategic approach to resource distribution (PABCFM, Reel 676, No: 129).

The 1862 annual tabular view of the Eastern Turkey Mission reveals significant developments at Bitlis and its outstation Moosh. The Bitlis station employs a diverse staff that includes two U.S. missionaries, two U.S. women, a licensed preacher, and a schoolteacher. In the meantime, Moosh employs a dedicated educator who enhances educational initiatives outside the basic mission center. Religious events in Bitlis and Moosh have seen a rise in attendance, with an average Sabbath congregation of 40 and 12 participants, respectively. The mission emphasizes spiritual leadership and foundational education to facilitate cultural and religious reform in the area (PABCFM, Reel 676, No: 17, No: 21). The financial account for the Bitlis Station in 1862 indicates a total expenditure of \$2,247, containing salaries for missionaries Knapp and Burbank,



along with provisions for a local agent. The mission pointed out the importance of education and intended to expand its outreach in the Bitlis region. The increase in overall costs relative to the prior year emphasizes the mission's operations and infrastructure growth, reinforcing its dedication to sustaining an effective presence in eastern Turkey. Supplementary operating expenditures including rent, maintenance, other charges, and postage. (PABCFM, Reel 676, No: 130).

The annual tabular view of Eastern Turkey Mission for 1863 indicates a rise in missionary activities in Bitlis and in the outstations of Moosh, Yoncalı (also known as Yonjali), and Van. The Bitlis station employed a significant workforce that included two U.S. missionaries, two U.S. ladies, three licensed preachers, a schoolteacher, two additional helpers, and an increasing number of local personnel. Religious participation remains a priority, with Bitlis hosting two preaching sites and surrounding areas like Moosh and Yoncalı enhancing preaching initiatives. Moosh has a place of worship and a Sabbath congregation that averages 15 attendees, and it also runs a common school teaching eight male students while employing a local licensed preacher. Bitlis, together with another assistant, oversees two preaching locations and a Sabbath school with 44 attendees. The staff in Van comprises a qualified minister and another assistant. Educational initiatives in Bitlis encompass a cooperative institution serving 22 male students, of whom six are pursuing a theology course and nine are undergoing vocational training, reflecting a strong dedication to both formal and informal education. Furthermore, early educational donations reached four, whilst overall relief initiatives were 38. The results emphasize that the mission regards preaching, education, and outreach as essential instruments for fostering community participation in the region and furthering its religious goals. (PABCFM, Reel 676, No: 24, No: 27) The financial estimate from Bitlis Station in 1863 indicates a broadened scope of operations, with total expenses amounting to \$2,532. This budget encompasses vital elements required for the mission's operation, including remuneration for missionaries Knapp and Burbank, assistance for an indigenous agent, and educational programs. The purpose underscores a dedication to local engagement and the incorporation of indigenous staff. Supplementary expenditures for rent, maintenance, incidental fees, and mailing highlight the intricacies of overseeing and organizing the mission's operations. The growing expenses show the mission's increasing impact in Eastern Turkey and its augmented religious, educational, and administrative initiatives. (PABCFM, Reel 676, No: 132).

The 1864 annual tabular view of the Eastern Turkey Mission indicate consistent growth and consolidation of operations in Bitlis and the related regions of Moosh Havodorik (Derecik) and Yoncalı. The personnel at Bitlis comprised two American missionaries, two women, a licensed preacher, and an educator. Notable progress has

been achieved at the station, featuring the creation of a church, five individuals committing their loyalty, and five founding members. Preaching activities occur in two venues, drawing an average audience of 50 individuals, alongside a Sabbath school that includes 70 students. Educational initiatives are ongoing, featuring a primary school with 40 male students, a theology class comprising six participants, and 56 adults engaged in training. Bitlis was home to 68 registered Protestants, who received support from four civil leaders, 18 educational supporters, and 29 general benevolence. In Moosh, there is one educator, a place of worship with an average attendance of 15 registered protestants, and an educational facility for 10 male students. Although information regarding Havodorik and Yoncalı is scarce, records show that both centers are vital to a broader network that promotes the mission's objectives. The data suggests the mission's strategic integration of religious, educational, and outreach initiatives to foster a growing Protestant community in the region. The importance of the mission's expanding influence in establishing a sustainable framework for spiritual and practical needs is highlighted by the gradual increase in registered Protestants and educational efforts (PABCFM, Reel 676, No: 30, No: 33).

The 1865 annual tabular view of the Eastern Turkey Mission offers a comprehensive overview of Bitlis's religious, educational, and social structures and its outstations Moosh, Havodorik, and Yoncalı. The mission included two school teachers, two US missionaries, two women, and a local licensed preacher. The station contained one church with seven congregants, two of whom confessed their beliefs. Preaching events took place in two venues, with an average Sabbath attendance of 62 individuals. The educational initiatives encompassed a primary school for 28 boys, six theology students, and 73 adults. The civic society comprised 53 men, 23 taxpayers, and 49 registered Protestants, supported by 16 civil administrators. Contributions to pastoral salaries, education, and general aid were recorded at 16, 8, and 29, respectively. The mission's comprehensive strategy for religious, educational, and social advancement was evident in the 1865 data, underscoring its growing impact on the Protestant community in the region (PABCFM, Reel 676, No: 36, No: 39). In 1865, the financial budget for the Bitlis Station emphasized investments in religious and educational initiatives, allocating \$2,444 for expenditures. The remuneration of Missionaries Knapp and Burbank constituted a substantial fraction of the budget. The mission emphasized its dedication to include local leaders and building communal ties. Educational activities were prioritized, with financial resources allocated for upkeep and expansion. The operational intricacy of sustaining infrastructure and communication networks was highlighted, along with a minor decrease in costs relative to 1863. (PABCFM, Reel 676, No: 134).



The 1866 annual tabular view of the Eastern Turkey Mission offers an extensive overview of Bitlis's religious, educational, and social endeavours, as well as its outstations, including Moosh, Havodorik, Yoncalı, and Pakhaut. The missionaries in Bitlis included two American missionaries, two women, one licensed native preacher, two schoolteachers, and one assistant. Religious activities centered around a congregation of seven members, with two declaring their faith. A Sabbath congregation, averaging 74 people, was established, with sermons preached in one location. The civil congregation in Bitlis comprised 55 men, 25 taxpayers, and 78 registered Protestants, indicating a significant increase in religious participation. Educational institutions in Bitlis included a girls' boarding school with 12 students, a common school with 16 boys, and six seminary students, totaling 34 students. In Moosh, religious activities were held at a preaching location with an average attendance of 25 supporters by a Sabbath school with 10 students. Yoncalı and Pakhaut were incorporated into the mission framework, but their activities remain underreported. In Pakhaut, one preaching place attracted an average congregation of 30 people, indicating its potential as an emerging center of engagement. The 1866 records indicate the mission's steady growth in religious influence, education, and community engagement, especially in Bitlis and its surrounding areas (PABCFM, Reel 676, No: 54, No: 58). The financial budget for the 1866 Bitlis Station mirrored this expansion, with total expenses amounting to \$2,568. Missionaries Knapp and Burbank received compensation, enhancing their roles in managing religious and administrative activities. An Indigenous representative was also funded to strengthen community engagement. Education was a primary focus, with significant resources allocated for programs. Operational costs included rent, repairs, miscellaneous expenses, and postage. The increased budget reflects the mission's commitment to meet the growing scope of its activities (PABCFM, Reel 676, No: 136).

The 1867 annual tabular view of the Eastern Turkey Mission highlights expanding religious, educational, and social activities in Bitlis and its outstations of Moosh, Havodorik, Yoncalı, and Pakhaut. Bitlis had a pastor, three school teachers, one assistant, a seven-member church, and a Sabbath school with 70 students. Educational initiatives included a girls' boarding school and a primary school with 20 boys. The civic community in Bitlis comprised 60 men, 25 taxpayers, and 80 registered Protestants, reflecting growth in religious and civic engagement. Contributions to pastors' salaries and general philanthropy were substantial, with an additional 10 individuals contributing towards education. In Muş, the local personnel supported a preaching site with an average Sabbath congregation of 25. The civil congregation consisted of 35 men, 20 taxpayers, and 45 registered Protestants who made financial contributions, while the civic society included 40 men, 20 taxpayers, and 46 registered Protestants who are contributing financially. The civic community in Yoncalı and Pakhaut each employed one

native assistant, indicating their involvement in the mission's broader structure. The 1867 data shows steady growth in congregations, schools, and financial contributions, underscoring the mission's effectiveness in building a sustainable Protestant community in the region (PABCFM Reel 676, No: 62, No: 68). The financial budget for the Bitlis Station in 1867 totals \$2,531, with a significant allocation for missionary salaries and support for indigenous representative. The mission emphasizes promoting learning and literacy, while supplementary expenses for rent, repairs, miscellaneous supplies, and postal services highlight the logistical needs for infrastructure maintenance and communication facilitation. This financial allocation demonstrates the mission's strategic efforts to align operational requirements with spiritual and educational objectives, enhancing its presence and influence in the Bitlis region (PABCFM, Reel 676, No: 138

The 1868 annual tabular view of the Eastern Turkey Mission indicates consistent expansion and diversity of religious, educational, and social activities in Bitlis and the outstations Muş, Havodorik, Yoncalı, and Pakhaut. The mission in Bitlis included a team of nine individuals: two American missionaries, four women, one local pastor, and two educators. Religious engagement was robust, with seven new members joining one church. Sermons were delivered at two locations, averaging each Sabbath attendance of 120 individuals. Educational efforts featured a collaborative school with 30 children, evenly split between 15 boys and 15 girls, and 14 people pursuing education. The civil society included 89 men, 45 taxpayers, and 176 registered Protestants. Significant contributions have been allocated for pastors' salaries and general support. In Moosh, the mission comprised a school instructor and an additional aide. Preaching activities were centralized at a single site, drawing an average congregation of 30 individuals, complemented by a Sabbath school with 30 students. Educational efforts included a school with 28 children—13 boys and 15 girls—and six adults. The civil society encompassed 30 men, 15 taxpayers, and 50 registered Protestants, with 12 individuals contributing to education. Both outstations bolstered the mission's regional presence; however, information about Yoncalı and Pakhaut was limited (PABCFM, Reel 676, No: 73, No: 79) In 1868, the Bitlis Mission's financial budget was \$1,605, which covered missionary salaries, local representation, and education. The mission emphasized local engagement and indigenous leadership, with additional expenses for rent, repairs, miscellaneous items, and postage. The budget decreased compared to previous years, reflecting a strategic approach to funding allocation that balanced financial constraints while maintaining core priorities of religious outreach and educational development in the Bitlis region (PABCFM, Reel 676, No: 142).

The 1869 annual data present a thorough and systematic methodology regarding religious and educational activities for the mission in Bitlis and its extensive network of



outstations. The ministry employed 14 individuals, including two American missionaries, four women, one local pastor, and seven educators. Religious activities centered around a single church with 33 members. Sermons were delivered at two locations, with an average Sabbath attendance of 180 people and a Sabbath school instructing an equivalent number of 180 students. Outstations displayed significant variation in personnel allocation and congregation sizes. Moosh had one licensed preacher and one educator, supporting a preaching site with an average Sabbath attendance of 28 and 20 students in the Sabbath school. The capacity to adjust its resources to the evolving needs of its outstations is apparent. The heightened involvement of the congregation and attendance at Sabbath school proves the expanding influence of the mission's activities in Eastern Turkey (PABCFM Reel 676, No: 92). The financial estimate issued by the Bitlis Station in 1869 indicates considerable activity, with total expenditures amounting to \$20,700. The salaries of missionaries Knapp and Burbank form a substantial part of the budget, reflecting their responsibilities in managing the mission's operations. The mission also endorses an indigenous representative, illustrating the involvement of local leadership in religious and social initiatives. Education programs have expanded, and increased allocations for rent, repairs, miscellaneous expenses, and postage demonstrate the logistical and infrastructural needs of the mission. The significant expenditure rise indicates a strategic investment by the mission in Bitlis and its nearby regions (PABCFM Reel 676, No: 140).

The 1870 annual tabular view of the Eastern Turkey Mission provides a detailed summary of its operations in Bitlis and outstations. The mission focused on religious development, educational initiatives, and community involvement. The church in Bitlis saw notable growth, with 40 individuals professing their faith, resulting in an overall membership of 72. Religious activities included a Sabbath congregation with an average attendance of 160 individuals, two preaching stations, and 120 educators involved in the Sabbath school. Educational initiatives featured a girls' boarding school accommodating 20 students, four general schools serving 60 students, and a theology class with nine participants. Civil society recorded 110 men, 60 taxpayers, 200 registered Protestants, 105 donations designated for pastors' salaries, and 240 for general relief efforts. Outstations exhibited varying degrees of activity and engagement. At the preaching site in Muş, three native workers, one licensed preacher, and two teachers facilitated services for an average Sabbath congregation of 62 individuals. Educational facilities included two community schools serving 32 students and 18 adults in training, totaling 50 individuals involved in education. Outstations such as Yoncalı, Shegyagob (Şeyhyakup), Aagh, and Kultig significantly contributed to the mission's overall efforts, hosting 14 registered Protestants and 30 students. The mission's growing influence and

commitment to developing sustainable Protestant communities demonstrate its strategic balance between religious and educational objectives (PABCFM, Reel 676, No: 100 No: 108).

The 1871 annual tabular view of the Eastern Turkey Mission provides a comprehensive overview of its religious, educational, and social initiatives in Bitlis and the surrounding areas. The mission comprised seven individuals: one American missionary, three women, one local pastor, and two school teachers. The church recorded five new members, raising its total membership to 74, despite one death and two excommunications. Religious activities included two preaching locations, each averaging a Sabbath attendance of 150 people, along with a Sabbath school accommodating 125 students. Bitlis featured a girls' boarding school with 32 students and a general school with 25 boys, totaling 57 students in education. The civil community consisted of 118 men, 30 taxpayers, and 178 registered Protestants, contributing 140 toward pastors' salaries, 44 for education, and 32 for general relief. Havadorik had an 18-member church and a preaching station that served a Sabbath congregation with an average attendance of 60 people. Smaller stations primarily focused on education, operating joint schools with student enrollments ranging from six to 35. The data reflects the strategic integration of the mission's religious and educational efforts, adapted to local contexts (PABCFM Reel 676, No: 120, No: 114). Financial estimates for the Bitlis Mission in 1871 indicate a significant increase in expenses, totaling \$57,273, due to the growing number of stations and missionary activities. The budget primarily covers the salaries of missionaries Knapp and Burbank, as well as support for a local representative. Investment in education is prioritized, with resources allocated for maintaining and expanding educational programs. Expenses related to rent, repairs, postage, and various other costs underscore the operational needs of managing the mission and its extensive network of stations (PABCFM Reel 676, No: 144).

CONCLUSION

The origins of the American Board are fundamentally connected to the evangelical revival movements of the late eighteenth century in the United States, which nurtured the idea that missionaries should construct rather than deconstruct. As missionaries settled in the regions they explored, a Christian community developed around them. Distributing translated and printed Bibles and select literary works proved to be the most effective way to engage this group. Additionally, simple medical remedies and advice emerged as practical means of communication. A group was quickly established to create a training institution for educating clergy, preachers, and educators. By applying the same methodology at each station and mission field, the organization expanded its efforts in the Eastern Turkey Mission in the same manner over the years.



From 1860 to 1871, the Bitlis Station significantly contributed to the theological, educational, and social advancement of the Eastern Turkey Mission within ABCFM. The mission employed American missionaries, local pastors, and educators, fostering a collaborative effort to maximize its impact. By 1871, Bitlis had emerged as a crucial center for religious activities, with church membership increasing to 74 members. Sabbath schools and preaching venues played an essential role in congregational engagement, with the number of Sabbath school pupils rising to 125 and average attendance reaching 150. Education was a key component of the mission, with public schools and a girls' residential institution serving numerous students each year. Additionally, the mission partnered with outstations like Moosh and Havadorik, thereby expanding its reach to remote regions. The mission's significance in promoting organizational advancements, including meetings in Kharpoot and Bitlis, along with the rise in registered Protestants and civic participation, underscored its impact on theological and social matters progress.

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