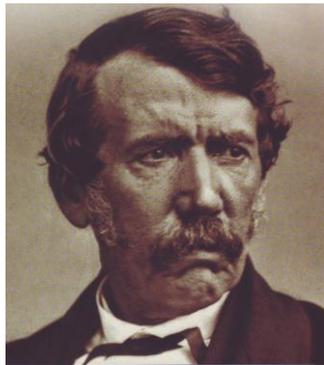


David Livingstone



Doctor, missionary, explorer, visionary – Livingstone was all these and more. From humble Scottish beginnings he opened Africa to the world. He began as a missionary but soon saw that, rather than Christianize unbelievers himself, he must forge the way for others to do so. He saw himself as a door through which others would enter, to preach and establish legitimate trade to drive out the evil traffic in human lives pervading the continent – the Slave Trade. He learned about geographical features from local Africans and determined to explore them himself. He was the first white man to see the glorious Victoria Falls and his accounts of his explorations entranced Victorian society. He was lauded in his own country, so much so that, after silence from him for some years, Henry Morton Stanley penetrated the depths of Africa and found him at Ujiji. Unlike many other explorers, his attitude to Africans was kindly and sympathetic, and his progress across Africa non-violent. He carefully documented African culture in his letters and journals.

Livingstone spent his last years chasing the source of the Nile, but died on 1 May 1873 without finding it. His followers took his body to the coast, where it was shipped to England. He now lies in Westminster Abbey, with the inscription: Brought by faithful hands over land and sea, here rests David Livingstone, missionary, traveller, philanthropist... For 30 years his life was spent in an unwearied effort to evangelize the native races, to explore the undiscovered secrets, to abolish the desolating slave trade, of central Africa, where with his last words he wrote: 'All I can add in my solitude, is, may Heaven's rich blessing come down on everyone, American, English, or Turk, who will help to heal this open sore of the world.'

It is significant that the huge statue of Livingstone standing by Victoria Falls, facing Zambia and the nearby town of Livingstone, has not been toppled nor the town renamed.

Christine Nicholls, author of *David Livingstone*, 1998
www.csnicholls.co.uk