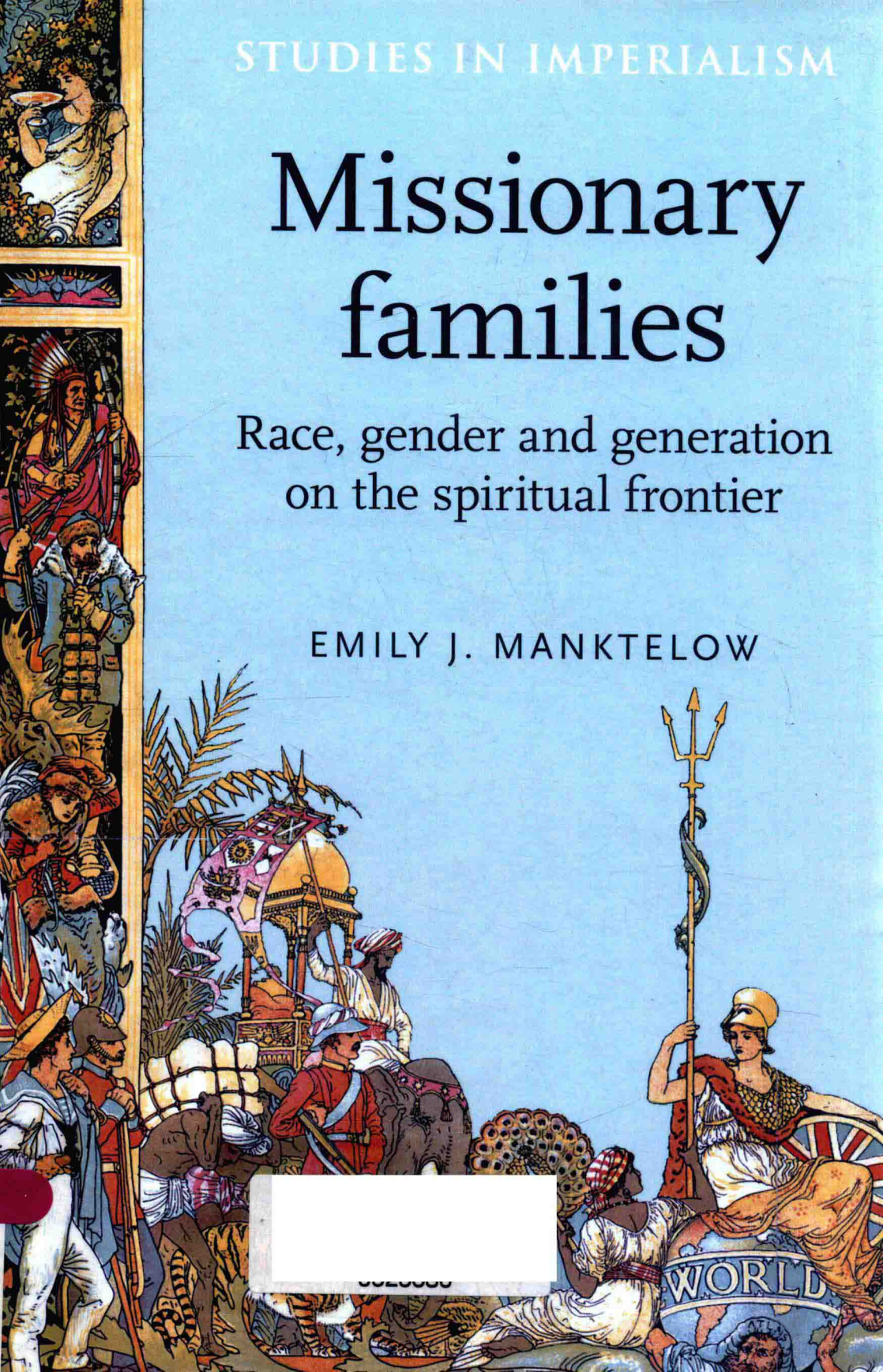


STUDIES IN IMPERIALISM

Missionary families

Race, gender and generation
on the spiritual frontier

EMILY J. MANKTELOW



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**RACE, GENDER AND GENERATION
ON THE SPIRITUAL FRONTIER**

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STUDIES IN IMPERIALISM

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Missionary families

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GENERAL EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

There is no better focus for inter-cultural contacts of all kinds than overseas Christian missions. Given the very nature of their proselytising ambitions, they were established in the midst of indigenous communities, often on or beyond the frontiers of colonial societies. In such locations, missionaries set about learning the local language both for the purposes of preaching and communication, but also in order to translate the Bible, that central ambition of each newly located mission. But their inter-culturalism went much further than this. Missionaries invariably regarded the transmission of their own cultural norms, what they regarded as elements of 'civilisation', as central to their purposes. These behavioural standards might include, in their eyes, such forms as domestic architecture, the structure of the family (including, of course, monogamy), clothing, aspects of western education and medicine, hygienic practices and 'modesty' in behaviour and demeanour (often represented in anxieties about indigenous music and dance, discussion of sexual and other basic practices, and respect for the Christian god, his representatives and converts). But it was generally impossible for missionaries to be entirely unaffected by the people among whom they had settled. Such people were not passive recipients of the message of the mission. Through their own agency, they also created reciprocal influences upon the white inhabitants of the mission, including various forms of resistance, even producing syncretic religious compromises. Moreover, the missionaries were inevitably sucked into local politics and, indeed, frontier warfare, sometimes conflicts between whites and 'natives' such that their position became a highly dangerous one.

If all this is well known, it is also the case the missions were sites of inter-generational and gendered contact as well as inter-racial. After some initial hesitancy, missionary societies began to realise that the western-style family might itself act as an instrument of conversion, by precept and example, and also through the activities of the various members of a missionary's family. Missionary wives became unofficial and unpaid missionaries themselves with carefully delineated gendered roles – and this was also true of children as they grew up. On the indigenous side, missionaries attempted to create routes into local societies both through the elders and through the children. Above all, women seemed to constitute, through their power over the upbringing of children, an important field for both forms of education (often domestic and practical) and conversion. All such activity provoked extensive debates within the councils of parent missionary societies, as well as among practical missionaries on the ground. But the debates that have been least recognised have been those connected with the family policy to be adopted towards the proselytisers themselves. Should missionaries be married before they entered the field? What should be the arrangements for the education and training

GENERAL EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

of the resultant children? Could missions become, in a sense, almost self-sustaining through the eventual employment of those children once they had reached adulthood? Was it indeed possible that such children were themselves more valuable as a result of their rearing within the missionary environment? To what extent had they received a dual socialisation, Christian and western, local and indigenous?

But of course inter-cultural contacts presented threats as well as opportunities. Missionaries could well be led astray, not least by 'sexual opportunity' in a setting of complex and sometimes unequal power relations (in both directions). Their wives and daughters might be seen as highly vulnerable. Above all missionary children, inhabiting as they did a 'grey area' between the two cultures, constituted the very embodiment of just such threats and opportunities. As they grew up, their contacts with indigenous people were often more frequent and 'easier' than those of their parents. They learned the language and in some cases adapted to environmental and social conditions more readily, partly because they had often known no other home. And, of course, all of this was mediated by relations between husbands and wives, between children and parents, and among siblings of both sexes. All sorts of questions were raised. What should be the roles of husbands or of wives in such settings, far from their home societies? How should they behave as fathers and as mothers? How far should they set about building cultural bridges with those whom they were setting out to convert? To what extent should their children be the instruments in such bridge-building? How could they train those children up for the maintenance of the 'civilised' norms they professed, educate them in the learning of their own societies, as well as maintain their adherence to the Christian principles central to their existence as missionaries? Was all of this best achieved at home, in schools in the colonial setting, or by transmission of those children back to the home society, even if only temporarily? And what distinctions should be made between boys and girls?

These are the questions that have not been addressed before. Emily Manktelow does so in this volume by concentrating on the London Missionary Society and on the first half of the nineteenth century when many of these issues were in a state of flux, when policies were being initially formulated. Her book should act as a model for further studies in respect of other societies and further 'spiritual frontiers' (as she calls them). We need to know, for example, the extent to which there were different responses and different results across the continents, or whether policies changed and developed in the course of the nineteenth century. To what extent did the imposition of more formal aspects of imperial rule produce significant changes? Were there any differences among the various Christian denominations or the ethnic origins of the missionaries (in the British case, Scottish or Irish, English or Welsh)? Moreover, as we enter the twentieth century, at a time of very different technologies and transport arrangements, were these relationships and arrangements transformed again? To what extent did the establishment of missionary dynasties, as Manktelow identifies them, ensure that succeeding generations passed through these transformations in conditions? And most

GENERAL EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

importantly of all, how did these gendered and generational familial relationships affect the actual conduct of the missions themselves? There is a rich vein of enquiry here and Manktelow has done missionary scholarship a considerable service by opening it up in such an illuminating fashion.

John M. MacKenzie

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AtPQ	Answers to Printed Queries
BM	Board Minutes
CLRU	Cory Library, Rhodes University
CP	Candidate Papers
CWM/LMS	Council for World Mission/London Missionary Society
<i>EM</i>	<i>Evangelical Magazine</i>
LMS	London Missionary Society
MDC	Madras District Committee
MIL	Madagascar Incoming Letters
NLNZ	National Library of New Zealand
NLSA(CT)	National Library of South Africa (Cape Town)
NSW	New South Wales
SAIL	South Africa Incoming Letters
SI(T)IL	South India (Tamil) Incoming Letters
SSA	South Seas Academy
SSIL	South Seas Incoming Letters
SSM	South Seas Mission
SSJ	South Sea Journals
WOL:SS	Western Outgoing Letters: South Seas

PREFACE

Being thematic in structure, this book does have a tendency to rove fairly freely around time and space, particularly in the chapters more interested in cultural, rather than chronological, trends. Chapter 2 aims to provide a chronological scaffold, but it might also be useful for the reader to orientate themselves within the contexts and characters of the book: London, Tahiti and South Africa; and the main missionary families involved.

Contexts

This book is placed within three main contexts: the Pacific 'South Seas Mission' of the London Missionary Society (LMS) (and more particularly, Tahiti); southern Africa, through the LMS's 'South Africa Mission'; and the LMS hierarchy and directorate in London. What you will not find within this book, however, is a sense of metropole and periphery, despite its use of the idea of the 'spiritual frontier'. Rather, the LMS in London was part of an uneven, but complex web of relationships that stretched across the missionary world. While London may be thought of as some sort of hub within that web, taking in and dispersing information about its mission stations and mission actors, the missionary enterprise was shaped by interactions between London and individual mission stations, as well as by the transglobal connections that existed between mission stations themselves – mediated often, indeed, by familial relationships, as well as associations based upon friendship, professional affiliation and regional networks.

London

Many of the most famous missionary societies that were founded at the turn of the nineteenth century sprang up in London, the home of a strong evangelical network then centred around Baker's Coffee House in Change Alley, the Castle and Falcon public house on Aldersgate Street, Spa Fields Chapel in Finsbury (connected with the famous Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion), and Freemason's Hall in Great Queen Street. Indeed, the Missionary Society (as the London Missionary Society was known until 1818) was founded in 1795 out of a series of small meetings held primarily at Baker's Coffee House ('which at that time was used for an hour or two every Tuesday morning as a place for chat and the interchange of news by the London ministers'),¹ the

PREFACE

Castle and Falcon (which was also the site of the inaugural meeting of the Church Missionary Society, in 1799), and finally a large meeting, of over 200 people, at Spa Fields Chapel. The Directors of this new society, meanwhile, were drawn from all over the country, including Cambridge, Warwickshire, Sudbury, Sheffield, Birmingham and Scotland, thereby creating a national religious network that would be consolidated by the later creation of numerous auxiliary societies (the grass-roots organisations of the missionary movement). Even in 1795, pledges of monetary aid and regional public promotion of the Society flowed in from such places as Axminster, Derby, Glasgow, Taunton, Essex, Nottinghamshire and Warwickshire.

The London Missionary Society became one of the hubs of the London evangelical network, connecting sites such as Salisbury Square (the eventual home of the LMS's headquarters, as well as the primary site of many of the other missionary societies); Exeter Hall (erected between 1829 and 1831, the Freemasons' Hall having been deemed too small for the purpose of popular missionary and anti-slavery society meetings);² Spa Fields Chapel (which remained a hub of evangelical activity); the Religious Tract Society (founded in 1799 in Paternoster Row); the *Evangelical Magazine* (a monthly periodical which served as a forum for the dissemination of revival news, information and ideas among Anglicans, Independents and dissenters, and had been founded in the same year as the LMS, sharing a number of founders and editors with the LMS's directorate, and serving as its unofficial mouthpiece until the founding of the *LMS Chronicle*), which also found a home in Paternoster Row; and existing evangelical networks at Baker's Coffee House, the Castle and Falcon, Tottenham Court Chapel, Surrey Chapel and other prominent places of non-conformist worship (e.g. Walworth, Shacklewell and Blackfriars Road).

Missionary students, meanwhile, were educated among the dissenting academies of London, including Homerton Academy, Cheshunt College, New College, the Home and Colonial School Society, Highbury College and Hoxton Academy. The LMS founded their own school at Gosport, in Hampshire in 1800 (under the auspices of David Bogue, one of the LMS's founding members and a prominent evangelical leader). The Mission Schools for the education of missionary children were both founded in Walthamstow, though the girls' school (Walthamstow Hall) ultimately moved to Sevenoaks in Kent. The boys' school, meanwhile, was moved south of the river to Mottingham.

The LMS thus became part of, and intersected with, numerous evangelical networks, at home and abroad. National networks of evangelical activity included the home towns of its directors, local hubs of interest and activity, and later the extensive network of

PREFACE

mission auxiliaries that transected the country. In London itself, the LMS was at the heart of the city's evangelicalism, and would remain so for many years.³ London, meanwhile, formed part of an increasingly global evangelical network, intersecting with both the British Empire, and beyond. At the same time, webs of contact, information and supply linked local hubs of evangelical knowledge and activity: from the connections formed between local auxiliaries, through the links forged between mission sites themselves, and finally to those links made between missionaries in the field, and particular auxiliary organisations – often those situated in the missionary's home town.

South Seas Mission

The inaugural mission of the LMS, the South Seas Mission (SSM) was founded in 1797 with the arrival of thirty missionaries from London. This first contingent was something of a motley crew – four were ordained, five were married, and its ranks were made up of skilled artisans and 'pious mechanics' including carpenters, tailors and weavers.⁴ 'The reason why there was so undue a proportion of handicraftsmen and tradesmen was, undoubtedly, the belief that the natives would speedily see the value of European civilization, and be glad to learn trades', noted the LMS's official historian, Richard Lovett, in 1899.⁵ The mission proceeded by placing eighteen missionaries at Tahiti (including all of those who were married), ten at Tonga and two at the Marquesas (though one returned immediately to Tahiti).

Tahiti itself was then under the control of the *ari'i rahi* (paramount chief) Pomare I (so-called by the missionaries). The Pomare family had been the most successful in capitalising on the increasing trade links with Europeans in the mid-late eighteenth century – their chiefdom (one of many on the island) encompassing the sheltered Matavai Bay which was used as a harbour by passing and visiting ships. Visiting Europeans, meanwhile, recognised their local authority and scaled it up to the island as a whole – believing them to be kings and queens.⁶ Their rise to paramount power in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries would have a profound impact on the LMS's fledgling mission there as the missionaries allied themselves with this well-known family, and ultimately converted to Christianity important elements within it. At the time of their arrival, however, the political situation in Tahiti was far from stable, and in Tonga too, power struggles between the local rulers marked the early years of mission activity in the South Seas. In 1798 four of the Tahitian missionaries were assaulted, stripped and maltreated by a group of 'unfriendly' natives. Frightened by their precarious situation, and unhappy that they were forbidden to marry the locals (see Chapter 2), eleven of the missionaries (including four of

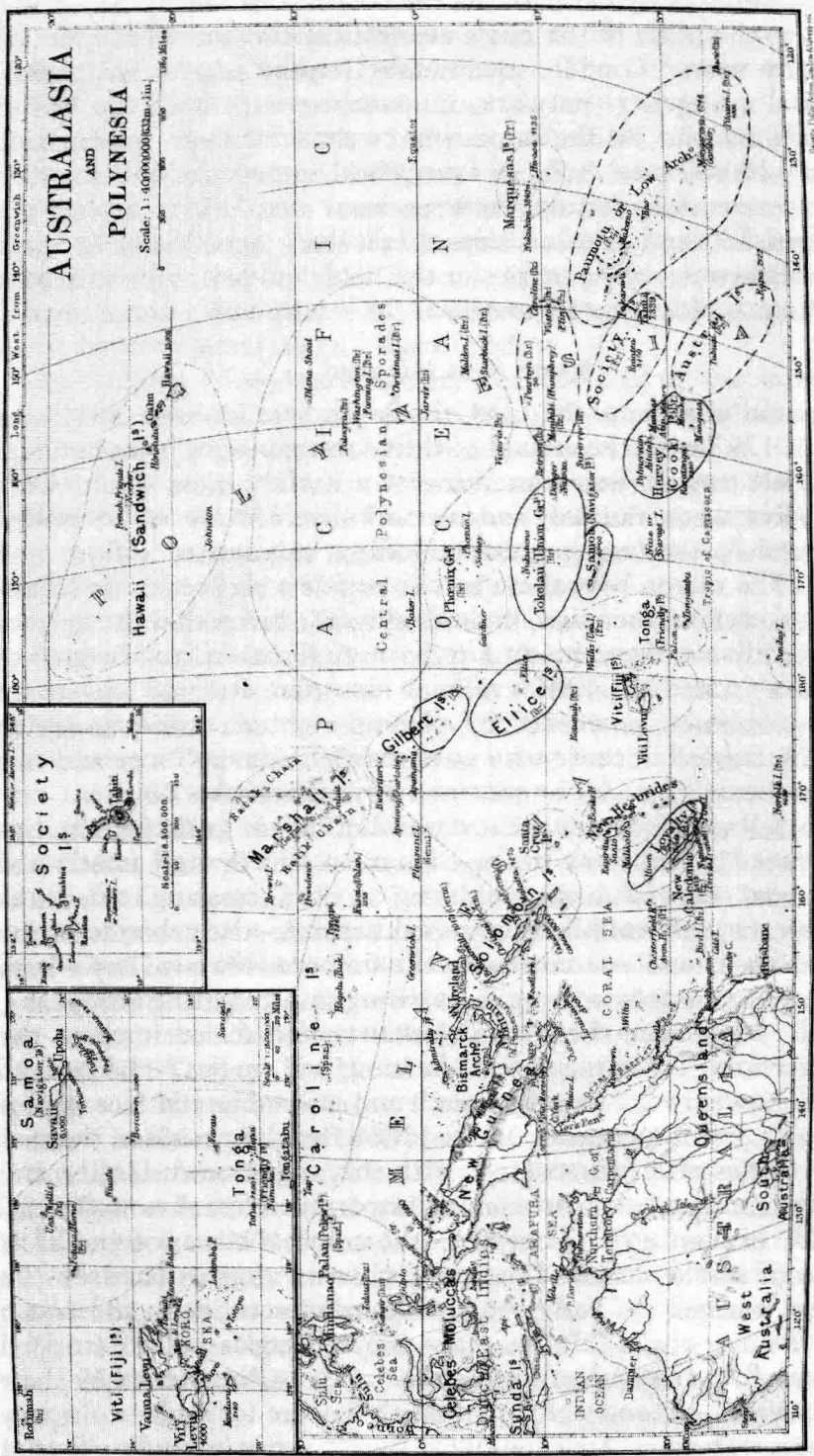


Figure 1 Australasia and Polynesia.

PREFACE

those who were married) resolved to leave the mission for the safety of Port Jackson, New Holland. In Tonga, meanwhile, three of the missionaries were killed in May 1798 having become embroiled in local conflict. By January 1799 the Tongan missionaries had also fled. The SSM then, did not get off to a good start. War broke out in Tahiti in 1807, leading the married missionaries then on the island to move to Huahine, and in 1808 Pomare II and the remaining missionaries fled to Eimeo (later Moorea). By 1809, all but Henry Nott and James Hayward had retired to Port Jackson, there to wait out the war. But better news was on the horizon. Pomare II eventually declared himself interested in Christianity, the 'idols' were abandoned, and by 1815 it seemed that the civil war was over, with Pomare as the victor. More and more of the missionaries scattered around the Pacific region returned to their work, and by 1816, with mass conversions apparent around the islands, Tahiti, Moorea, Tapuamanu and Tetaroa were confidently declared '*Christian Islands*'.⁷ Pomare was officially baptised in 1819, and 'from this period until the time of the French intervention the work of the Tahiti Mission consists chiefly of a record of evangelistic and educational work at the different stations occupied by the missionaries'.⁸ Consolidation and expansion followed, and the ties tightened between the missionaries and the Pomares. Mrs Hannah Crook attended the birth of Pomare's first son, and the prince was educated at the South Seas Academy, alongside the children of the missionaries. Pomare II died in December 1821, succeeded by his second son, then eighteen months old, who became Pomare III and was himself succeeded by his 14-year-old sister Queen Pomare IV in 1827.

Queen Pomare IV was the last of the family to exercise independent rule in Tahiti, which was declared a French protectorate in 1842. Years of rebellion followed, but by 1847 the French hold over the island was complete. Queen Pomare was retained as a figurehead, but European settlers ultimately carved up the island into fenced plantations, under the protection of martial law. As for the missionaries, their work continued, but from a rather more precarious position than before, and in active competition with both French Catholicism and the Paris Evangelical Society. Pomare IV died in 1877 and was succeeded by her son Pomare V until his forced abdication by the French in 1880, when Tahiti formally became a French colony.

Despite these ups and downs, the SSM was something of a flagship mission for the LMS. Parts of its history had been disastrous, but the mass conversions occasioned by Pomare II's personal conversion c.1812 led to the missionaries becoming an integral part of the island's history, involved in education, politics and the law. News from the Pacific was often first in the LMS's regular publications, and the

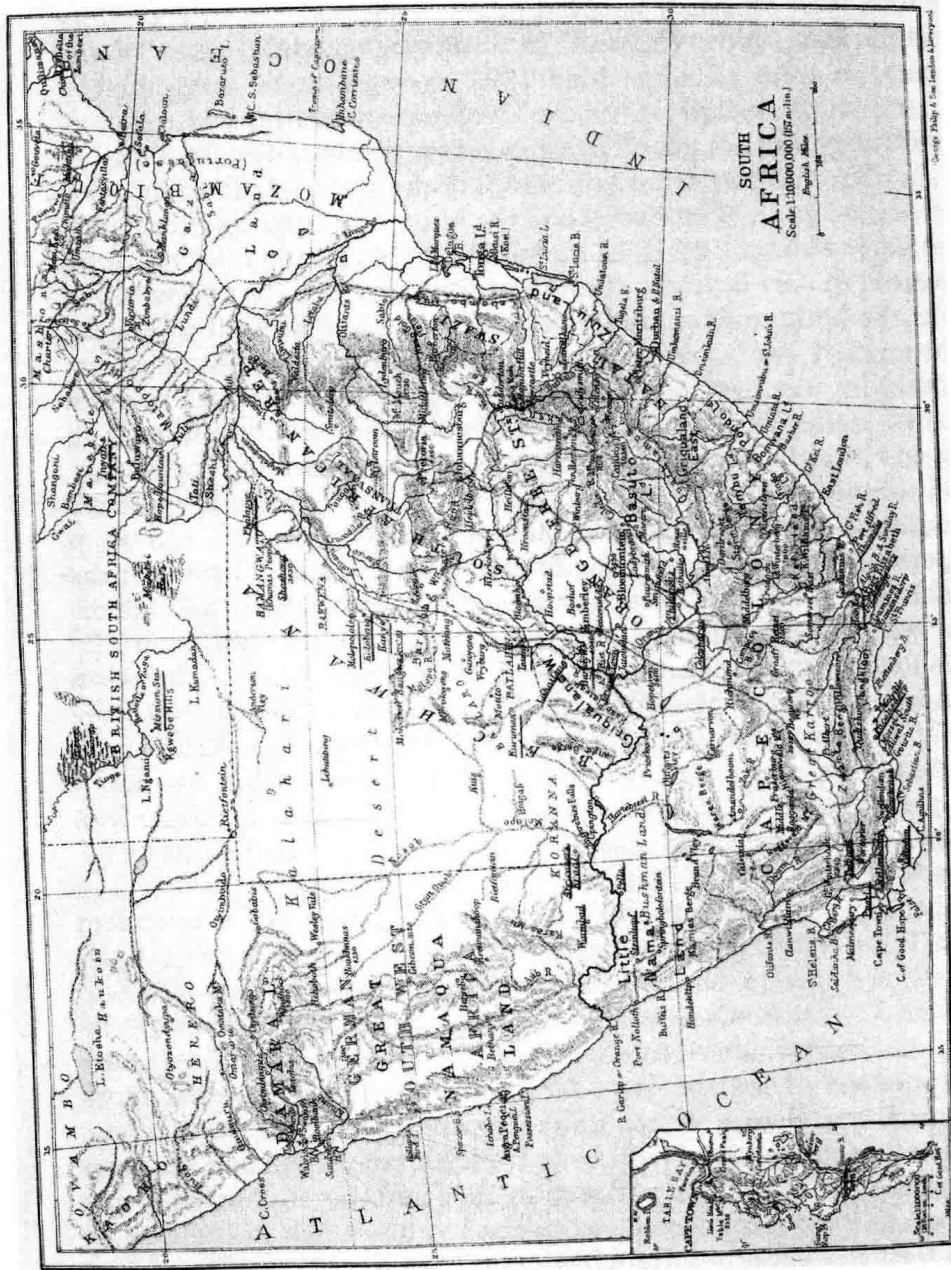


Figure 2 South Africa.

Note: Kuruman is between the 'E' and 'C' of BECHWANA; Molepolole under the 'A'; and Inyati above the word 'company' in the BRITISH SOUTH AFRICA COMPANY.

PREFACE

mission gave the LMS at least one true missionary hero, in the shape of John Williams, who was famously killed on the island of Erromango in 1839. The SSM also gave the LMS at least one prolific writer and mission-publicist, William Ellis, who later became the LMS's foreign secretary.⁹ For our purposes what is important about the SSM is that it became a proving ground for LMS policy on the family – and many of the most tense debates about the role of the family were played out there. The reasons for this are addressed in the introduction, but the public and private history of the SSM is one of the most important for historians who wish to understand the LMS's early mission endeavour.

South Africa Mission

The story of the South Africa Mission of the LMS is well known, in no small part owing to its engagement with the early history of empire, and of white settlement in particular. It is a history filled with famous characters: Johannes Vanderkemp, John Philip, Robert Moffat, John Mackenzie and David Livingstone. This second mission of the LMS was founded in 1799 when Vanderkemp, John Kitcher, John Edmonds and William Edwards dropped anchor in Table Bay. The Cape itself was oscillating between the control of the Dutch and the British, the latter having taken over in 1795 (they later ceded the territory back to the Dutch in 1803, but regained it in 1806). The history of European settlement in southern Africa meant that the South Africa Mission was always an expanding one – interested from the first designs of Vanderkemp in pushing inwards towards the local African populations: the so-called 'Kafirs' (a general term, Arabic in origin meaning 'non-believer', but used generally for black Africans in the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries), the 'Hottentots' (modern-day Khoikhoi or more broadly Khoisan), and the Xhosa. It was also a largely successful mission, capitalising on (or mitigating against) the dislocation and dispossession of the local people occasioned by European settler-colonialism.

The South Africa Mission is most famous for its political and humanitarian agenda (often much against the designs of the LMS hierarchy in London). Vanderkemp was a famous egalitarian, quick to baptise local converts, and uninterested in the precepts of 'civilisation' as embodied in dress or custom. His closest missionary ally was undoubtedly James Read, who joined the mission in 1800 (having first been captured by the French when bound for the SSM in 1798). He and Vanderkemp founded the famous mission station at Bethelsdorp (near Port Elizabeth) in 1803 which became the centre of African Christianity in the early nineteenth century. Vanderkemp and Read engaged in constant political tussles with the British government in the colony, fighting