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 mission 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’),

[ xv ]
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); 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 Mitcham.

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
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. 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. ‘The reason why there was so undue a proportion of handi craftsman 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. 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 chieftdom (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. 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.
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’. 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’.

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

[ xix ]
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.
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. 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 Kitcherer, 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
in particular for the rights of the local people. In 1812, after the death of Vanderkemp in 1811, Read was intimately involved in the so-called ‘black circuit’ – a series of court cases brought by the Khoikhoi against the white farmers and settlers.

Read was replaced as the mission’s superintendent by John Philip, having been accused of serious immoralities (including adultery, and fathering an illegitimate child) in 1817. Although his remaining relationship with the LMS was rocky, his popularity among the local converts ensured his continuation as a missionary, and ultimately as an independent pastor to the ‘free Khoi’ Kat River Settlement from 1829. Philip, meanwhile, had begun his own campaign for racial equality in the Cape. His *Researches in South Africa*, and parliamentary campaigning, are often cited as crucial to the passing of Ordinance 50 in the colony, which ended indentured labour, abolished the offence of ‘vagrancy’, and established the ideal of equality under the law. Philip and Read both returned to Britain in 1835 to report to Thomas Buxton’s Select Committee on Aboriginal Tribes (in reference to the recent ‘frontier wars’ against the Xhosa). In the end, however, the political activities of both Read and Philip earned the unease and later ire of their fellow missionaries and the LMS, who increasingly turned towards apoliticism as a mission policy. For the most part it was impossible for the South Africa Mission to remain entirely apolitical, however, and its history is marked by its context, often right on the frontier of British (and Dutch) expansion. Missionaries in South Africa were often embroiled in local and colonial issues, and lived sometimes precarious lives in the midst of war and violence. It remained famous, however, for its complex and ambivalent interactions with imperial advance; and its early years of evangelical humanitarianism became an important element in the missionary movement’s self-justification and interaction with the moral side of empires and imperialism.

**Characters**

The most important family, or indeed missionary dynasty, in this book is that of the Moffats and their offshoots: the Livingstones and the Prices. The choice of this missionary dynasty is both pragmatic and methodological. As historians of mission in Africa will know, the extended Moffat family is exceptionally well documented, with contemporary publications (including Robert Moffat’s *Missionary Labours and Scenes in South Africa* and David Livingstone’s *Travels and Researches*), post-mortem reflections (most especially John Smith Moffat’s biography of his parents, *The Lives of Robert and Mary Moffat*) and a wealth of both historical writing and primary sources (all
beautifully archived by the School of Oriental and African Studies in London and Rhodes University Library in Grahamstown). At the same time, the Moffat family stretched across southern Africa’s spiritual frontier throughout its generational history. Robert and Mary Moffat struck out and made their home at Kuruman, in the modern-day north of South Africa, a place then very much on the geographical, colonial and spiritual frontier, though later a busy hub of regional missionary activity. The Prices ventured further north into Shoshong and Molepolele some thirty years later, and made their life in the latter, situated in modern-day Botswana. Of course, the Livingstones famously travelled even further north, initially as a family, and later Livingstone alone. The Moffats’ second living son John Smith Moffat was also a missionary, first to Inyati (in modern-day Zimbabwe) and later taking over the mission station at Kuruman. The Moffats’ second daughter Ann also married a missionary, Jean Fredoux, though they do not appear in these pages, being of a different missionary society; while Jane, their youngest, remained with her parents in Africa, working as an unofficial missionary, until their retirement to England in 1870. 

Robert and Mary Moffat

Robert Moffat was born in Scotland in 1795 into a strictly Calvinist family. In 1815 he travelled to Manchester to meet with William Roby (a Congregationalist minister and evangelist in Lancashire), in order that he might give himself to be a missionary. It was in the job as a gardener that Roby initially found him at Dukinfield, Manchester that Robert met and fell in love with his future wife, Mary Smith. Theirs was a love story that did not run smoothly, however. Moffat offered himself to the LMS and ultimately sailed for South Africa in 1817, but without his beloved Mary who, as is well documented, was reluctant to leave her ageing parents without their consent. Two years of heartache and heartbreak followed (which Robert spent in Great Nama Land, modern-day Namibia), until, at last, Mary’s parents gave their permission for the marriage, and Mary journeyed to South Africa, where they were married in Cape Town in 1819.

From their marriage until 1823, the Moffats lived in Dithakong, a station pioneered by James Read, Robert and Ann Hamilton, and a number of Bethelsdorp converts in 1815. Troubled times and wars followed, but ultimately the station was re-established as New Dithakong, or Kuruman, in 1824, having been moved closer to the eye of Kuruman – a fresh water spring that was key to Kuruman’s later productivity. Again, the Moffats found themselves in the middle of intense frontier conflicts – the price of living on that intersection between the geographical, colonial and spiritual frontier. At the same time,
Figure 3 Moffat Family Tree.
Figure 4 Robert Moffat.
however, they built up a strong and thriving mission station (that still survives today), complete with church, school and homestead. Robert started to produce the first setswana Bible (finished in 1857), and Mary produced eight children (later followed by two more). Both created what was to become a mission hub in South Africa, responsible for refuelling mission stations for miles around, and caring for missionaries bowed down by the pressures of itinerant and frontier mission work in the further north.

The Moffats returned to England in 1838, gaining a daughter on the voyage, and losing a son (to the measles). They stayed in England for three years, Robert touring the country promoting the mission, his translation work and his book, *Missionary Labours and Scenes in South Africa* (published in 1842), Mary fostering the female evangelical networks that were such an important part of their life in Kuruman, and upon whom they often relied for material and emotional support. They returned to South Africa in 1843. Robert finished his Bible translation in 1857, and engaged in the foundation of numerous new mission stations, including the mission to the Ndebele at Inyati, to be staffed by his son John and his new wife Emily (Unwin), and the Kololo mission whose disastrous end would bring young widower Roger Price into the Moffat fold through his marriage to their daughter Elizabeth (Bessie).

The Moffats reluctantly retired from the mission in 1870, leaving behind them a difficult legacy for their son John to negotiate on their behalf – something he did not do entirely successfully, giving up the mission and joining the British Bechuanaland colonial service in 1879. Robert and Mary Moffat, meanwhile, went to live with their daughter and her family, the Vavasseurs, in Brixton, where Mary died only six months after their arrival in 1871. Robert, accompanied still by his youngest daughter Jane, travelled the country for the next two years, promoting mission work and finally settling down in Brixton in 1873. In 1874 he identified the body of his son-in-law, David Livingstone – the seventh of his children and children-in-law that he had outlived. Robert himself died in 1883, and was buried in Norwood Cemetery with Mary, who had been ‘indeed a missionary second only to himself!’

[ xxvi ]
Figure 5 Mary Moffat.
Mary and David Livingstone

The life of David Livingstone is of course well known, and hardly needs reiterating here. Nonetheless, the Livingstone marriage is less often the site of historical enquiry, despite some recent trends to victimise Mary, which are discussed later in the book. The salient facts will, I think, suffice. David was born in 1813 in Blantyre, to a poor family whose daily life was structured around the working rhythms of Monteith’s cotton mill. An extremely determined autodidact, and supported by a family enthusiastic about such an education as could be gained within the confines of mill life, David ultimately offered himself to the London Missionary Society in 1838. Inspired by his father-in-law to be, Robert Moffat, and put off his course to mission work in China by the outbreak of the Opium Wars, David eventually sailed for South Africa, famously and unusually unmarried, in 1840.

Mary was one of the Moffat clan, born and bred in South Africa, and educated in Grahamstown (with her younger sister Ann, but unlike her youngest sisters who were educated in Britain) from the age of nine. She accompanied her parents to Britain in 1838, and returned with them to Kuruman in 1843, where she worked at the mission schools, helped her mother in her domestic and mission duties, and ultimately trained herself for what would be her eventual vocation: missionary wife (with all the public and private duties that entailed). David and Mary had first met when Livingstone came out to meet the Moffats on their return to Kuruman in 1843. Their acquaintance was consolidated in 1844 when Livingstone returned to Kuruman to convalesce after being mauled by a lion. At the end of that trip he proposed (under an almond tree that was later split by lightning), and the couple married at Kuruman in 1845. Two years later, and after the birth of their first two children, they headed north to Chonuane, and then west to Kolobeng (see figure 2; Kolobeng is beneath Molepolole).

In 1848 Mary and their three children returned to Kuruman, while Livingstone prepared for an expedition into the north with explorer William Oswell. In 1849 the expedition travelled to Lake Ngami (see figure 2; beneath the ‘British’ of British South Africa Company), returning then to Kolobeng in order to collect the Livingstone family, and gearing up for a second expedition to the Botletle River (also known as the Zouga). This was the more ill-fated of their family expeditions – two of their children died, and they returned to Kolobeng only just in time for the birth of their fourth child (who lived for only six weeks). Mary also was very ill, that journey being the root of her lifelong facial paralysis. The family returned to Kuruman in 1850, but embarked for their second expedition in 1851, this time reaching the Chobe river...
Figure 6 Livingstone Family Tree.

[despite nearly dying of thirst en route]. Leaving the family at the river, David proceeded to the Zambesi river, and ultimately determined that it required further navigation. He rejoined his family, and the Livingstones headed south to the Cape, with the intention that Mary and the children should leave for Scotland, while David should return to the Zambesi for further explorations.

By 1852 then, the family had temporarily split. Mary embarked for Britain with the children; David was back into the north. During the years 1852–56 David travelled across Africa, while Mary and the children travelled across Britain. They met again in December 1856 at Southampton. During the next two years the Livingstones travelled around the country, David giving lectures and speeches about his experiences, and publishing his book, *Travels and Researches in South Africa* in 1857. In the same year he resigned from the LMS and in 1858 the Livingstones [minus their three older children, who were left with]
Figure 7 David Livingstone.

Figure 8 Mary Livingstone.
relatives in Britain, to be educated) set off for the ill-fated Zambesi expedition.

Realising that she was pregnant again, Mary headed up to Kuruman, while David continued on the expedition (which was itself delayed until 1860). After the birth of Anna Mary in November 1858, Mary returned briefly to Scotland, meeting David again in 1862, having sailed with the young Scots missionary James Stewart (with whom some said she had had an improper friendship) and having travelled to the mouth of the Zambesi to meet him. As the expedition assembled the Lady Nyasa, a portable steamer more appropriate than previous vessels for exploring the waterways of central Africa, Mary died of fever in April 1862.

With Mary’s death, the idea of the ‘Livingstone family’ also died. Although David returned to Britain (and his children – except Robert who had travelled to America to fight in the civil war, where he died in 1864), he did not stay long. Having published his second book Narrative of an Expedition to the Zambesi and its Tributaries in 1865 he left for his final expedition in 1866, famously dying (to cut a long story short) while out there in April 1873.

Roger and Elizabeth Price

Elizabeth Lees Moffat (known as Bessie) was born on board ship, while anchored in Table Bay, on 16 March 1839. Her family were en route to England for the Moffat’s first furlough since their arrival in South Africa in 1817 and 1819, and would remain there for the first four years of Bessie’s life. Indeed, her time at the Moffat mission station at Kuruman was short-lived compared with her childhood in England, which included not only those first four years, but later seven years at Walthamstow Hall, school for the daughters of missionaries (where she resided 1847–54). When she returned to Kuruman as a 15-year-old in 1854, however, she was returning to the place she considered home, and to the region to which she would devote her life.

She first met Roger Price in 1858 when he was en route to the new (and ultimately disastrous) mission to Inyati. Roger was a Welshman, born in South Wales in 1834, and was then accompanied by his first wife, Isabella Slater, whom he had married between ordination and embarkation for South Africa. The Prices and the Helmores (Henry Helmore, his wife and four of their children) proceeded into the north to found their new mission, but met with a great deal of disaster, including the death by fever (though Roger thought by poisoning) of Mr and Mrs Helmore, two of their children, and ultimately Isabella Price and their infant daughter Eliza.11 Roger returned to Kuruman with the two remaining Helmore children in February 1861, and was
Figure 9 Price Family Tree.
Figure 10 Elizabeth and Roger Price.
there nursed back to health by the Moffats, including 22-year-old Bessie. Roger and Bessie married in the autumn of that year.

In May 1862 the Prices arrived at their first mission station, Shoshong, where they remained for four years until 1866 (Shoshong is next to the ‘N’ in Bechwana in figure 2). This was what Una Long has called Bessie’s ‘baptism of suffering’ for it was there that her first two children were lost to fever. They returned to Kuruman in February 1866, and in July of that year proceeded to their new station at Logagen (later Molepolole), where they would tend to the Bakwena people, who had recently settled there themselves, under the Chiefdom of Sechele (whom Livingstone had converted to Christianity – though it was not a stable conversion – in 1846).

The Prices had a long and prominent missionary career. Roger Price was appointed the leader of the Ujiji expedition during their first furlough in Britain 1875–79 (though he was later removed from the post owing to his objections about its viability); they remained at Molepolole for eighteen years; and were ultimately appointed to work at the Moffat Institute in Kuruman in 1885. They had fourteen children (ten of whom survived into adulthood), undertook educational, medical and spiritual work throughout their lives, and Roger accompanied the LMS’s Foreign Secretary on his deputation to North Bechuanaland and Matabele Land (so-called) in 1883–84. Roger died at Kuruman in January 1900, and was buried next to the grave of his first son Moffat Price, whose grave also commemorated the deaths of Isabella and Eliza Price. Bessie Price moved to Cape Town (where four of her children then lived), and died there nineteen years later in 1919.

My discussions of the Tahiti context have been less driven by particular families than by crystallising events. The South Seas Mission was often a place where debates about the family were played out: a result of both its being the first mission of the LMS, and its island location. Nonetheless, one family in particular has made its imprint on my discussions there: the Crook family.

William and Hannah Crook
William Pascoe Crook (1775–1846), former gentleman’s servant and later tin-worker, arrived in the South Seas in 1797 with the first fleet of missionaries dispatched by the LMS (a year earlier, in 1796). He was dropped off at the Marquesas in June of that year, and, after the departure of his colleague John Harris, toiled there alone until the Butterworth ‘rescued’ him and returned him to England in May 1799.

Crook had had a rather distressing time during his year in the Marquesas. There ‘ever[y] temptation ha[d] been of such a strange sort’ that he wished to ‘blush and be confounded before the Lord’. After
a year of temptations, argues Alex Calder, ‘Crook long[ed] to reconsti-
tute his identity in the confirming looks of someone who knows
how to read him rightly’ – in other words, his desire to ‘blush and
be confounded before the Lord’ was, among other things, a need to
be reconstituted as a white, western man, a pious missionary, and a
martyr to temptation, rather than its slave. Upon his return to England
he worked on a dictionary of the Polynesian language, wrote up an
account of his experiences, and married a respectable young English-
woman – Hannah Dare (1777–1837).

William and Hannah sailed together for Tahiti in 1803, stopping off
at Port Philip, and three weeks later, Sydney. ‘But painful intelligence
awaited him there, for on his arrival in that city he found that the
Society Islands were all at war, and that the missionaries had all left
except two, Mr. Hayward and Mr. Nott.’¹⁴ This was the ‘separation’,
as it was known, and equated to the abandonment of the South Seas
Mission in 1798 by eleven of its missionaries, supposedly spooked by
a ‘plan to seize our women and property’, but probably as much to do

[ xxxv ]
Figure 12 William Pascoe Crook.
with the difficulties, temptations and dangers of missionary work for a group of highly unprepared and idealistic young men [and a small handful of women]. The Crooks settled in Sydney, William founding a school and for some time being the colony’s official chaplain, Hannah setting up a millinery business. But though at this time their ‘prospects in life were highly flattering … [they] could not be happy, but sold all off, and returned to the mission, considering that only to be [their] proper place.’

The Crooks had an illustrious career in Tahiti, and were strongly connected with the Pomare family; but with nine children – eight of whom were girls – they found themselves constantly perplexed by how to ensure their temporal and eternal well-being, which makes them of particular interest in this book. While the Crook children were often of great assistance to the mission – particularly the two elder daughters, Mary and Hannah Jr – by 1827 the Crooks were in a deep quandary about their futures. So concerned were they, and so unhelpful was the LMS in their response [as explored in later chapters], that the Crooks felt forced to abandon their mission – a rare and striking case in which missionaries put their family ahead of their vocation. They returned to Sydney in 1830, and continued their religious and philanthropic work until their respective deaths in 1837 and 1846.

Notes

3 It is interesting to note that the current Council for World Mission [which absorbed the LMS, and the Colonial Missionary Society, in 1966] is now in the process of moving out of its offices in Great Peter Street, London, for a new headquarters in Singapore – an attempt, among other things, to shed the idea of London as the metropole of its operations, with all of the colonial and imperial connotations that may go with it.
5 Ibid., p. 127.
8 Ibid., p. 223.
11 It seems to me particularly interesting that Roger and Bessie named their first
daughter Isabella, and one of their later sons Slater, speaking perhaps not only to the rhetorical purchase of missionary martyrdom to Protestant evangelicals, but also to the long-term emotional consequences of this first tragedy in Roger’s life.


15 Ibid.