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Book Reviews
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Boekresensies

The Early History of Missionary Activity in South Africa

Karel Schoeman, ***The Early Mission in South Africa: Die Vroeë Sending in Suid-Afrika, 1799-1819***
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This work attempts to fill an important gap in the early history of missionary activity in South Africa. Unfortunately, it is only partly successful in doing so. I frequently found myself wishing that Schoeman had gone deeper and engaged many of the fascinating underlying issues which he skims over in attempting to provide a broader narrative of events. At times, one wanted to cry out for him to stop the "and then … and then ..." description and start asking "but what could have been happening here?" or "is it possible to read these events in another way?" There are also places where I felt that the work should have been restructured. Representing a series of articles written over a number of years, and now brought together for publication, the reader is left with a strong feeling that more care could have been taken in arranging, and linking, the chapters.

The introduction sketches the development of mission activity from the ministrations of H.R. van Lier at what became the Groote Kerk in Cape Town, through the mission work of M.C. Vos and others among slaves at Roodezand (Tulbach), Cape Town, Stellenbosch and Wagenmakersvallei (Wellington), to the beginning of the work of the London Missionary Society (LMS) and the South African Missionary Society (SAMS) among the Khoisan, slaves, Xhosa, Korana and Basters. Schoeman argues that the first phase of mission work, which began with the arrival of Doctor J.T. van der Kemp and his colleagues, ended with the appointment of Doctor John Philip as South African Superintendent of the LMS in 1819. This he sees as having been "characterised by the presence of a significant number of Dutch and German missionaries, as well as the active participation of non-white [sic] missionary assistants, and considerable support from the Dutch-speaking section of the community, among whom women played a prominent part". He attempts

to explain changes in focus from about 1820 in terms of the ending of the Napoleonic Wars, the Cape becoming a permanent British possession, the official policy of Anglicisation, "and above all the involvement of the missionaries, especially van der Kemp and Philip, in what were considered to be 'political' matters" (p 12).

Schoeman sees this second period of mission activity as being characterised by significant growth in the number of mission societies working in South Africa (the Wesleyan Missionary Society came in 1816, the Glasgow Society in 1821 and the Rhenish, Paris and Berlin Societies in 1829-1834). This in turn led to a great increase in the number of mission stations and in the scale of problems inherent in, or caused by, missionary activity. This he sees as playing out against a society characterised by "growing tension and colour prejudice", leading to increasing divisions between English and Dutch, and white and black. In his view, the major internal factor contributing to change was an illegal "Synod" at Cape Town in 1817, convened by a number of younger missionaries who were extremely critical of their predecessors. In Schoeman's interpretation, Robert Moffat, one of the leading members of this "Synod", managed "to undo most of what had been accomplished" in the Transorange area by his predecessors, "and succeeded in alienating or otherwise freeing himself of all the coloured assistants employed by them" (p 12). This is one of the themes running through several of the articles in the book.

For this reader, the strengths and weaknesses of the introduction encapsulate those of the work as a whole. It is clear that this period in the mission activity at the Cape raises crucial questions for mission historiography in particular and the historiography of the wider society in general. The interaction between German, Dutch and English missionaries and settlers, the crucial role played by black mission assistants, the active participation of women, and the increasing polarisation of society along lines of language and ethnicity, all emerge as major themes. However, one is left with more questions than answers. In which ways did women play a crucial role in mission activity? What were the main issues surrounding the illegal "Synod" of 1817 (a recurring issue in the work with insufficient explanation)? What were the subtleties of the impact of trends in the wider society on missionary thought and mission activity? What were the fundamental differences between the first and second periods of mission activity? What were the differences in approach among the different societies and among the individual missionaries? In addition, in the introduction and throughout the text, the

use of the term "non-white" (as opposed to Black or black) is out-dated and has value-laden implications which should have been avoided.

The first chapter (pp 14-19) is a brief biographical survey of the directors of the SAMS in 1799. This should have been a crucial chapter as it could have provided a framework against which to view the more detailed individual biographies which make up the core of the text. By looking at the directors, the forces which shaped their lives and ideologies, and their whole position in society, Schoeman could have highlighted the way that they acted on a macro-level to shape the micro-level of the missionaries and other participants in the actual mission field.

To some degree, he succeeds in painting intriguing pictures of the directors. Of the ten men discussed, two were immigrants (from Germany), six were the sons of immigrants and two the grandsons of immigrants. Five had German *stamvaders* and three Dutch. One had a black mother, another a black grandmother and at least one had black illegitimate siblings whose paternity seems to have been acknowledged. All were middle-aged and they generally seem to have been well-to-do with good connections. It seems likely that they owned considerable numbers of slaves between them. All of the nine wives of directors whose details were traced, were born locally. Five of the wives were first generation South Africans, three second generation and one third generation. Only two had Dutch *stamvaders*, the remainder being German.

Schoeman notes that these characteristics were typical of the demographics "of white colonial society at the Cape in the eighteenth century" and that miscegenation became increasingly less socially acceptable by the end of the century. However, one would have liked him to have gone much further, particularly in his examination of miscegenation, slave-ownership and how the social position of the directors impacted on the practice of missionary activity, and the ideologies of the mission and its missionaries during the period under review. One would also have liked the wives to have been given more of a role of their own, rather than that of appendages of their husbands. Schoeman states that, although they could not become directors, women were "extremely active" in the work of the Society from its inception. We are nevertheless given little idea of the scope of these activities. In addition, of the eighteen chapters in the book, only two are specifically dedicated to women.

The second chapter (pp 20-41) deals with "Die egpaar Voster-De Jong en die vroeë sending in die gemeente Roodezand, 1794-1806" ("Yda de Jong, Harmen Voster and the early mission in the congregation of Roodezand, 1794-1806"). Yda de Jong was the Dutch maidservant of *dominee* M.C. Vos and his wife. From 1794, she played an active role in the evangelisation of slaves and settlers in the parish of Roodezand (Tulbach). In doing so, she continued the work begun by Vos. She also accompanied him on one of his journeys into the interior and claimed to have preached the Gospel to the Xhosa on the eastern frontier. In 1799, Vos acquired the services of Harmen Voster, a widower aged 40 years, as a catechist. Voster came to work among the whites and slaves of the Bossiesveld (Worcester district). He and De Jong were married on 2 February 1802. After this, they carried out mission work together.

Thus, we have a potentially fascinating story. An early woman mission worker, her catechist husband and their work among slaves and settlers. Our appetite for more is whetted by the fact that Vos' methods of evangelisation were seen as being "new and controversial". This caused division in his congregation which came to a head with a scandal, resulting in him resigning his pulpit in April 1802. In the period before his successor took office in June 1803, the Vosters were among those who played an active role in the affairs of the congregation. They too fell foul of divisions and were removed from Roodezand by the Batavian authorities, appearing in Cape Town by the end of 1806. It was then proposed that they go to work in the Sneeuberg. Little is known of their subsequent history.

Schoeman gives us the outline of this story in fair detail. However, for me, he really succeeds in whetting my appetite for more material. Rather than the events, one would have wished a more nuanced reading of what they tell us of the social history of the time, including the gender history and the social history of slavery. In an almost Victorian way, the author also titillates our interest with the scandal, without analysing its social dimensions and the divisions which it revealed in enough detail. Similarly, he presents fascinating evidence of the passionate zeal and unbridled emotion with which some of the missionised reacted to the Christian message. One would have liked a deeper reading of the underlying forces at play here. Here too, one would have liked a deeper analysis. On a technical level, the author has provided précis of the chapters which appear in Afrikaans. For the benefit of readers who are not familiar with the language, these could have been slightly longer. They nevertheless do encapsulate the key ideas of the relevant chapters. Unfortunately, Schoeman has not provided translations of the (sometimes

lengthy) quotations in Dutch in the English chapters. This seriously limits the usefulness of the text for those unable to read the former language.

Chapter 3 (pp 42-56) represents a commendable effort at recreating the life and murder of "Jan M. Kok (1763?-1806), the first coloured missionary in South Africa". One would have welcomed a more thorough attempt to embed Kok's story in the social milieu of settler, "Baster" and Bechuana societies at the time. Also, more could have been made of his subsequent reinvention as "'n Afrikaner-sendeling oorkant die Oranjerivier", rather than "a man of colour". However, despite this, and despite the fragmented nature of the sources referring to Kok directly or providing extended descriptions of his work, Schoeman has managed to present a very readable summary of his career and death. Fascinating detail is also provided of the execution of his killers at the order of the Bechuana-leader Molehabangwe. This chapter provides a great deal of food for thought and leads easily into the discussion of the life of "Maart van Mosambiek (fl. 1797-1817): a slave in the service of the LMS" (pp 57-67).

In a strange twist of fate, Maart was a slave of *dominee* M.C. Vos, who was himself partly of slave ancestry. On Vos' departure for England in 1802, Maart was purchased on behalf of the directors of the LMS for a sum of £100 Sterling. While still owned by Vos, he had expressed a desire for conversion, and had been instructed in the fundamentals of Christianity by the *dominee* for five years. It was now envisaged that he would be educated in basic literacy and then work as a missionary among "his Fellow-Natives" at the Cape.

Curiously, despite his fiery preaching and his successes among the "heathens", Maart managed to avoid baptism himself (apparently right until his death). For a considerable period, the LMS were also under the misapprehension that he had been freed at the time of his purchase on their behalf. In fact, he legally remained a slave until freed by the intervention of Van der Kemp in January 1811. He then adopted the name of Andreas Verhoogd. Serving as a missionary assistant and then a schoolteacher at Bethelsdorp, he eventually fell from grace and appears to have been expelled from the mission by 1817. Schoeman has not as yet managed to trace any further details of his life, but what he has managed to recover certainly makes for stimulating reading.

After Maart's tale comes the brief discussion of the short mission career of "John Irvin, Royal Artillery (died 1803): an early mission

volunteer" (pp 68-76). A bombardier, Irvin was reportedly "brought to a knowledge of Christ" through reading a religious tract. Not only did he begin spreading the Gospel among his fellow soldiers but, having come into contact with Van der Kemp and Vos, expressed a keen desire to begin mission work among the "heathen". Assisted by Van der Kemp, he managed to obtain a discharge from the artillery and begin his work as a mission volunteer. The poignancy of this story lies in Irvin's descriptions (gleaned from intriguing extracts from his correspondence) of his successful attempt to reconvert a fellow soldier, by trade a pocketbook maker, who should have been a missionary, his joy at securing release from the army to enter his mission career and his frustrations at attempting to secure a passage to Algoa Bay (Bethelsdorp) to achieve his ambition. In an ironic twist, just as it seems that Irvin's dedicated manoeuvrings were about to be rewarded, and his joy completed, he drowned after being shipwrecked on the way to Algoa Bay. An interesting and moving tale about "the most obscure of the early LMS mission workers" which would have been bettered had Schoeman built further on the tantalizing glimpses of the religious fervour of Evangelical Christians, slaves and Khoikhoi given in the selections from Irvin's correspondence and other contemporary *Transactions*.

Chapter 6 examines the tale of "Bastiaan Tromp at Wagenmakersvallei (Wellington), 1801-1804" (pp 77-89). This is chiefly of interest for the dramatic account of his conversion – involving prayers reportedly directly communicated by the Holy Spirit – which it gives. Originally intended as a missionary for the LMS among the Xhosa, he was instead drawn into the service of the SAMS to work among the local slave population. While stationed at Wagenmakersvallei, he also began to work among the local whites, who were members of the Drakenstein congregation at Paarl.

These dual loyalties soon brought about conflict. A relatively small group of active and pious white Christians supported Tromp's mission activities. However, a much larger group became increasingly critical of Tromp and other missionaries, describing them as "seducers", teaching a false doctrine, and encouraging slaves and the so-called "heathens" to "become too wise". Not only were they teaching basic literacy, they were also allegedly emphasising "that obedience was due to God much rather than to man" (p 87) and portraying their sanctity as being superior to that of the other colonists. This led to calls for Tromp either to be prevented from preaching to slaves or to be removed entirely from the area. Tensions increased after the Drakenstein Church Council appointed a local layman, Daniël le Roux, as "godsdienst-onderwijzer" to

the slaves of Wagenmakersvallei in February 1802. For some years, he and Tromp operated among this community in rivalry with each other. This greatly increased tensions and dissension among the Christians in the area. These continued until Tromp left for Bethelsdorp in 1805. Potentially, this is a fascinating story. Unfortunately, Schoeman has not gone nearly far enough in filling in the details of the conflict, or in contextualising it. The reader is left with an uncomfortable feeling that the author has only scratched the surface, and with a longing for a much more thorough analysis.

Some of these deficiencies are remedied in the Afrikaans chapter on "Hendrikus Maanenberg in Kaapstad, 1801-1803" (pp 90-104). Despite having to overcome the difficulties of sketchy surviving biographical information, here Schoeman has managed to weave an intriguing tale of the man and the difficulties which he had to face. Sent out by the Dutch Mission Society, Maanenberg arrived in Cape Town in May 1801. He was then appointed by the SAMS to work among the slave population in the area. At the time, missionary society policies focused on sending missionaries out specifically for the conversion of so-called heathens beyond the colonial frontiers. As a result, while the LMS had approved of Maanenberg's posting, the DMS expressed severe dissatisfaction with this departure from normal policy.

Placing Maanenberg's story in its wider context, Schoeman argues that the Dutch Church at the Cape also repeatedly protested against missionaries at the Cape working within the colony rather than outside its frontiers, and ministering to white Christians in existing congregations. In addition, the Batavian administration (who took over the Cape in 1803) viewed the missionaries as a potentially disruptive influence. Maanenberg fell foul on both counts. Not only was he one of the missionaries that the Dutch Church complained about, but his conceited and grandiloquent manner seems to have alienated the new administration even further. Citing what he called the "insolent" treatment that he had received from Commissary-General De Mist as a motivation, he resigned on 17 March 1803.

Maanenberg had in fact intended to return to Europe even before his resignation, but was prevented from doing so by the resumption of war. He died at Stellenbosch on 29 August 1827. Ironically enough, he was the owner of three slaves at the time of his death. In recognition of his pioneering work among this community, a suburb on the Cape Flats would later be named "Manenberg" in his honour. An absorbing tale,

well told. It is a pity that the care taken with this chapter does not appear to have been extended to that preceding it.

This leads us into consideration of "Jansz en Koster se kort verblyf onder die Tlhaping, 1805" ("The short residence of Jansz and Koster among the Tlhaping – pp 105-121). A ship's surgeon by profession (in the context of the times, this did not imply any formal training), Lammert Jansz was accepted for service by the DMS in 1802. Willem Koster, a cobbler, was accepted two years later. Arriving at the Cape in January 1804, it was some time before they were sent to begin a mission among the Tlhaping of the Transorange area. Arriving there by March 1805, they were already on their way back to the Cape by May 1805. In support of their decision to abandon their attempt at starting a mission station, they alleged that war was imminent in the interior and that the Tlhaping were unable to assist in providing for their survival. Jansz would end up working with missionary William Anderson among the Basters on the Klaarwater mission station (Griquatown). Koster failed to find further work as a missionary, his conceited personality having alienated both the civil authorities and the SAMS. He ended up practising as a doctor in Swellendam, where his wife ran a shop. In addition, he conducted services for Khoikhoi and slaves in his private capacity. In 1819, he was described as "the richest man in the district".

Of particular interest in this chapter, are the details of the mission training which the two men received in Holland prior to being sent out to South Africa. One would have wished for more details and an analysis of their significance for the kind of missionaries produced, but what appears is an interesting start. Their careers also provides extremely interesting insights into the role of personality in mission history. The traveller Hinrich Lichtenstein, in particular, makes it clear that the two missionaries were too young, too inexperienced, too obsessed with their own self-importance, and inadequately prepared to have been given the task of opening a new mission field. Whatever the weight of other factors, their unreasonable demands and expectations must be considered as major contributory factors for the failure of the embryonic Tlhaping mission.

The chapter also provides an interesting lead into the later consideration of "Die vrou van Lammert Jansz (oorlede 1814): gissings oor 'n onbekende" ("The wife of Lammert Jansz [died 1814]: speculations on an unknown woman" - pp 194-205). From a structural point of view, I feel that this chapter should have followed the preceding one

immediately, rather than appearing later on in the book. While stationed at Klaarwater, Jansz married a member of the local Baster community. Little is known about her, including her name. Anderson's biography states that she was called Ester. Anderson himself referred to the Baster Piet Pienaar as being Jansz' father-in-law. In opposition to these sources, the Klaarwater baptismal register records the baptism of the son of Lammert Jansz and Maria Hinderina Jacobs in 1984. The mother, Maria, is recorded as having been born in 1794 and baptised in 1812. The family name Jacobs is otherwise unknown in the context of Klaarwater. Based on his detailed knowledge of the local community, Schoeman argues that it is possible that she may have been the stepdaughter of a Piet or Petrus Pienaar, a member of a well-known local family related to the Koks, and the daughter of his wife Geertruida Fortuin, also from a family who had played a central role in the early history of the mission in the area. Extrapolating from this background, Schoeman provides a brief account of the Pienaar and Fortuin families. As a result of the paucity of surviving information about these families, he also includes a survey of the better-documented Engelbrecht clan, their contemporaries. This enables him to say something about their likely circumstances and possible experiences.

Mistress Jansz passed away on 10 February 1814, shortly after the birth of her son. If the dates in the baptismal register are correct, she was nineteen at the time (an extremely moving account of her death extracted from a letter by William Anderson to the missionary James Read at Bethelsdorp is included in the text). Her husband followed her on 14 January of the following year. Lambert Jansz, their young son, was raised by the Andersons. When they left in 1820, he was left behind at Griquatown. While little is known of his subsequent life history, his name appears from time to time in local records. For example, in 1863 he was serving as the resident magistrate of Griquatown.

One could nit-pick that this is only a speculative reconstruction or that the Engelbrechts appear to have been tacked on only because there was more information available about them. Admittedly, the contextualisation could have been more nuanced. This is nevertheless an intriguing reconstruction of at least a possible fragment of the story of Maria/Ester's life. It gives some substance, and some voice, to a person who otherwise would have remained incorporeal and totally silent. As such, it adds to our understanding of the history of the Baster and Griqua pioneers in the interior of South Africa in general, and that of the mission community at Klaarwater in particular. From a personal perspective, I was particularly struck by the ways in which the account of Mistress

Read's death (and that of her husband) echoed themes found in the accounts of the passing of converts and missionaries which I have come across in my own research in the then Northern Transvaal. This has given me the impetus to examine these in more depth at a later date.

To return to the structure followed by Schoeman, the chapter which follows that on Jansz and Koster, considers a set of notes from "Daniël Krynauw (1753-1835), 'n vroeë sendingvriend aan die Kaap" ("Daniël Krynauw [1753-1835], an early mission supporter at the Cape" – pp 122-128). Krynauw played a significant role in the administration of early mission activity at the Cape. An active supporter of the SAMS from the time of its establishment, he served as a director from 1800 to 1817. He was also the official representative of the DMS in the Colony. In January 1805, the missionary J.J. Kicherer returned to the Cape after a brief visit to Europe. While overseas, he had enthusiastically given a great deal of information, much of it of dubious accuracy, to the British and Dutch Missionary Societies. Fired up by this (mis)information, a large party of new missionaries accompanied Krynauw on his return. This seriously perturbed the Batavian authorities, who were already seriously worried about the disruption caused by uncontrolled mission work within the colony and across its borders. It also worried the directors of the SAMS who, by this time, had become concerned about the methods followed by missionaries and their suitability for their task. Against this background, Krynauw addressed Kicherer and the band of new missionaries two days after their return.

This chapter is a transcription of Krynauw's notes on his impassioned and lengthy address. Its value lies in the fact that it represents a critical insider's view from a loyal, active and senior official of the mission. The notes reflect many of the points made by opponents of the mission, and the concerns of the Batavian administration. The inadequate training of missionaries, the unsuitability of many of the candidates sent to the Cape for mission work, their tactlessness, audacity and wilfulness – themes which have also echoed elsewhere in this work – are revealed to have been major problems facing the missionary endeavour. The names of Bastiaan Tromp, Erasmus Smit and Johannes Seidenfaden – all of whom feature in this book – are specifically mentioned in this regard. Jansz and Koster, particularly the latter, could equally well have been included.

As Schoeman has pointed out, the notes are abbreviated, and Krynauw's Dutch is "somewhat eccentric". The meaning of the notes is not always clear and the text is difficult to read. Schoeman attempted to

clarify the more obscure sections of the notes, with explanatory footnotes and explanatory terms in the text. However, one would have wished for more extensive commentary and contextualisation. Given the great importance of the document, an English translation should also have been included.

From the point of view of the flow of the book, it would have been logical to consider "Bastiaan Tromp writes 'the very truth': a letter to the LMS, 1812" (pp 138-148) here. Instead, Schoeman first discusses "The wife of Dr van der Kemp: the life of Sara Janse (1792-1861)" (pp 129-137). This chapter begins with a brief overview of the life of Johannes Theodorus van der Kemp, whose name has frequently appeared in the pages of the text until now. We are introduced to Sara through her and another slave, Dorinda van Bengale, being freed by Van der Kemp in 1805. In quick succession, we learn that the 57-year-old missionary married Sara, aged thirteen-and-half, in the following year. Apparently deeply embarrassed by her youthful age, the LMS attempted to suppress this information in their records by rendering her age illegible in the English translation of a letter referring to it in their archives. Although Sara was also referred to as "Sara van de Kaap", her mother was from Madagascar. Her father was recorded merely as "Janse". Van der Kemp would nevertheless later report that he had been a "Muslim priest", and that Sara had originally been brought up as a Muslim. It is clear from the comments of a number of missionaries in the text, and the telling omission of references to Sara and her and Johannes' four children in other reports, that this marriage was widely frowned upon in mission circles. Considerable prejudice against marriages to former slaves and "Hottentots" – used almost co-terminously in many sources – seems to have been common in missionary circles. With the notable exception of individuals such as Van der Kemp's close friend James Read, the marriage seems to have gone down like a poefie in the pantry. Often treated with embarrassed silence, it could from time to time appear in casual references, or be referred to with distaste. This continued even after Johannes' death. For example, after a visit to Bethelsdorp in 1813, the gossip-mongering Scottish missionary George Thom reported prudishly that: "Two missionaries told me that when the Dr was alive she was a Pharaoh's wife with them. She now lives almost as a prostitute." With Schoeman, one can wonder "what it might mean to be 'almost a prostitute'" (p 132). Predominantly arising from the sketchy resources referring to Sara van der Kemp in the mission archives, one is left wanting to know more about her. The closest one gets to her feelings is in an extract from an unsigned letter, apparently by her, in which she justifies her decision to ask for the return of her two sons from England

(after their father's death, they had been sent there – at his request – to be educated). Here she movingly tells the reader that: "I could not bear the idea of dying without seeing my sons" (p 135). In the absence of sources, it is difficult to see what Schoeman could have done to satisfy this longing. However, this could perhaps partly have been achieved by anchoring her tale more firmly in the context of missionary and colonial attitudes to slavery, freed slaves, people of colour and miscegenation at the Cape. This could also have been followed through to the next generation – one of the two sons married a woman who came out from England for the purpose (this union ended in divorce) and both daughters married men whose stepmothers were so-called "coloured" people. Sara herself remarried, her new husband apparently being Frans B. Meyer, a carpenter and builder, who was the son of a Dutch artillery officer. They fist settled at Bethelsdorp and later at Uitenhage. Here Sara died in July 1861, at the age of 69 years and 7 months.

We first heard of Bastiaan Tromp in the context of his controversial stay at Wagenmakersvallei, and his departure for Bethelsdorp. If anything, his experiences over the next five years were even more contentious. The chapter which follows that on Sara van der Kemp (Janse) contains the full text of a letter written by Tromp to the LMS in response to a letter from them expressing disapproval about his behaviour as a missionary, and doubts about his fitness for this kind of work. Since the account is highly personalised and subjective, Schoeman gives a "brief and somewhat more dispassionate introduction" (p 138). For me, this chapter – and the two which follow it – are two of the highlights of the book. Read together, the two strands of the Tromp chapter tell us a great deal about the operation of the early LMS mission in Namaqualand, the kinds of personalities involved and the kinds of tensions and difficulties facing missionaries anywhere. Far from being saintly cardboard cut-outs, the men who were attracted to careers in the early mission were often restless, refractory personalities. They could be extremely jealous in protecting their small mission empires, particularly in the case of the Congregationalist LMS, which gave a considerable deal of autonomy to "the man on the spot". They sometimes felt slighted, or badly treated, with little provocation – a situation made worse by difficulties of communication with superiors, slow transmission of decisions, and sometimes erratic remuneration. In the small world of the mission station, they could have mercurial differences of opinion with each other. Personality clashes and personal dislikes could be blown out of all proportion, and achieve great significance. Tensions with the civil authorities were common. Isolated from mainstream theological debates, and often having received only

basic theological education, LMS missionaries sometimes formulated their own misguided or heretical interpretations of the Bible and Christianity. Here, at last, one gets a clear picture of flesh and blood people, their petty jealousies, their sometimes lofty aims, and their efforts to spread the word of God, or simply to survive.

This feeling carries through into the discussion of "Jan Hendrik, 'native agent' of the LMS, 1814-1823" (pp 149-157). A convert from Klaarwater, Hendrik and three others were "publickly [sic] set apart as assistant Missionaries for Griqua Town" in August 1814, acquiring the status of "evangelists or itinerant preachers" (p 152). In achieving this, their activities came to be associated with those of Cupido Kakkerlak, the subject of André Brink's recent novel *Praying Mantis* (Secker & Warburg, London, 2005). These men were among the small group of Griquas and Basters who were extremely active in supporting John Read and his Scottish colleague Robert Hamilton in mission work among the Tlhaping after 1816.

When Read left the area under a cloud as a result of sexual peccancy, his place was taken by Robert Moffat. The latter soon set about "pruning" what he saw as rotten and dead wood. Amongst others, Hendrik was persuaded to resign as assistant missionary in January 1823 – apparently because he was engaging in hunting and fishing (although Moffat saw these activities as rendering "it impossible to attend to his duties as an assistant missionary" [p 155], they were in fact essential for his survival). Kakkerlak was dismissed in May of the same year. Under Read, black and white mission workers had laboured together under conditions of near equality. With the arrival of the bigoted and blinkered Moffat, this situation was sharply reformed – a sad and moving tale of how local initiative could be stifled by over-zealous, self-opinionated and cocksure young white missionaries.

Having picked up momentum, Schoeman's book maintains this in the following chapter, "W.F. Corner (fl. 1811-1866): an early black missionary in South Africa" (pp 158-176). As the author points out, a black missionary coming to South Africa from the Caribbean, preaching to the Bushmen and being hospitably received by the Boers of the district of Graaff-Reinet, certainly merits some attention. Luckily for us, a fair number of documents concerning Corner have survived. Schoeman has given us a reasonably detailed reconstruction of his life and activities from the disputed details of his early origins, through his arrival in Cape Town; and his activities as a carpenter, missionary and (unfortunately) philanderer at Bethelsdorp, Graaff-Reinet, Toornberg (modern

Colesberg), Griquatown, Hephzibah (in the vicinity of modern Petrusville, abandoned in the face of opposition by Lord Charles Somerset), and again at Bethelsdorp; until his expulsion from the church at Bethelsdorp and the LMS in March 1899. Schoeman also follows up available references to Corner, including some financial shenanigans and his appearance in the vicinity of Grahamstown and at Uitenhage, after this. While one would, in places, have wished for more of a sense of the human feeling and pathos at play, this is an extremely intriguing chapter.

One wishes that more chapters in the book had the kind of spark of these three. The one which follows, discussing "Jan Goeyman, 'native teacher', 1814-1825" (pp 177-193), should have been fascinating. When Jan Hendrik and his three colleagues were "set aside" at Graaff-Reinet in August 1814, Jan Goeyman, a Baster, was also designated to assist the Reverend Erasmus Smit. An able and gifted man, he would play an important role in early mission history. Despite, or perhaps because of, these qualities, he would nevertheless be a casualty of the deteriorating relationship between white and coloured missionaries in the field, which characterised the LMS after the illegal "Synod" of 1817. Deeply disturbed by his marginalisation by Moffat and Doctor John Philip, Goeyman resigned from the LMS in 1825. He thus joined the expelled Jan Hendrik and Cupido Kakkerlak in severing ties with the mission. Fascinating as these details are, the chapter should have been more tightly structured and edited. There should also have been a much more subtle analysis of its main protagonist, and the setting against which the events described, played out. Instead, Schoeman lost this reader in a mass of (apparently not fully digested) detail, and left me with a feeling of having been cheated out of a good tale.

The following chapter, dealing with Sara Janse, has already been considered. The work ends with chapters considering "'Brother Pretorius': the deacon and mission helper Andries Pretorius (ca 1773-1858)" (pp 206-214) and "Andries Waterboer (ca 1789-1852), 'native agent' and Griqua kaptyn: some notes towards a biography" (pp 215-226).

Proudly proclaiming himself to be a "Bushman", and emphasising that his conversion demonstrated that Jesus did not spurn even members of "the most despised of all the African tribes" (p 206), Andries Pretorius played an exceptionally active role in the early development of Bethelsdorp mission station. Ordained as a deacon at the same time that Cupido Kakkerlak was "set apart" as an elder, Pretorius played an important role in the "great awakening" at Bethelsdorp in October 1814.

So too did his wider family. Intimately involved in James Read's moves into the interior, Pretorius was specifically intended to help William Corner in his attempts to start a new mission station at "Makoon's Kraal", beyond modern Kuruman (an unsuccessful initiative because of government intervention). He was also the father of Sabina Pretorius, the birth of whose child would ultimately lead to the fall of Read. These events, and the changes which they heralded, gradually led to Pretorius' own fading from prominence. Pretorius obviously had a clear perception of his dignity and worth, and the important independent role that he played in the success of the missionary endeavour. While Schoeman hints at this, he should have brought it more clearly and strongly to the fore. Schoeman also gives us some idea of the ecstatic nature of the religious experience of the Pretorius family and their contemporaries. However, this should have been expanded much more, as Elizabeth Elbourne has done convincingly in her fascinating study of "Early Khoisan Uses of Missionary Christianity".[1] Thus, the potential offered by an intriguing man (and his family) for historical comment has not been sufficiently explored by the author.

One of the recurring themes of a number of the chapters of this book is that of the four men who were "set apart" at Graaff-Reinet in August 1814. In Schoeman's interpretation, only one of these, "Andries Waterboer, was destined to go far". Even so, his success would lie not in mission circles, "but as Kaptyn of the Griqua Captaincy at Griquatown" (p 215). The concluding chapter is a brief summary of the more readily accessible facts about his career until he was elected as *Kaptyn* in 1820. This gives some useful details of the intricacies of the Waterboer family and Andries' life as a convert, mission teacher, evangelist and so-called "assistant missionary". They also introduce us to the machinations of the Griqua political system, and possible missionary involvement in this. However, given the crucial role played by the Griqua polity in South African history, and the important role played by the Waterboer family in this regard, one can only wish that he had devoted more effort to fleshing out the story and following it through.

Thus, taking the work as a whole, the key issues of race; class; gender; hardship and triumph; divisions and alliances; fractured and conflicting loyalties; intrigue and politics; insiders and outsiders; black, white and shades of grey; sultans and subalterns (even if Schoeman often

1. See especially E. Elbourne, "Early Khoisan Uses of Missionary Christianity", *in* H. Bredekamp and R. Ross (eds), *Missions and Christianity in South African History* (Witwatersrand University Press, Johannesburg, 1995), pp 65-95.

does not use this terminology) are all touched on. There is also a useful chronology of events described in the text (pp 233-244), which should prove valuable to students of the mission history of the period. However – with the exception of the chapters on Bastiaan Tromp, Jan Hendrik and W.F. Corner, and tantalizing references in the discussion of the lives of others – Schoeman only scratches the surface of what he could have done with this book. I would recommend the work as a useful starting point for research into the history of the early mission in South Africa, but a great deal more of the social history of the period remains to be done. Perhaps the points that I have taken issue with represent a critique based on the book that I would have liked to have seen, rather than the one that was actually written. I nevertheless believe that what I see as the omissions are fundamental enough to warrant serious consideration by the student of the period and by Schoeman himself, should he bring out a second edition of the work. He is prepared to tackle reconstructing lives where there are only scant sources to build on. He obviously also has a great knowledge of the period and a passion for the people involved. One gets the feeling that he held the novelist in him tightly in check when writing this history. One wishes that he had set this part of his personality free, and will do so in further editions or new works. For Schoeman himself, as for others, this should be seen as a signpost to interesting fields for further research, rather than the final product.

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