THE MISSIONARY PERSONALITY IN CAFFRARIA, 1799-1853: A STUDY IN THE CONTEXT OF BIOGRAPHY

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I

The advent of Christian missionaries in Caffraria[1] during the first half of the 19th Century is a significant event in the history of South Africa, which has not been accorded the importance it deserves. The traditional way of life of Black societies was threatened by Western Christianity,[2] education and civilisation. This resulted in a closing of the ranks which, aided and abetted by the Indian Mutiny of 1857, contributed to the emergence of Black consciousness. The latter, in turn, was the precursor of Black nationalism, with its momentous consequences for the 20th Century.[3] Yet it is curious that in an area of research which by virtue of its important legacy for the present demands an intensive study of all contributory factors, little work has been done on the missionary personality. Personality is an integral part of biography[4] and therefore the dearth of the latter in the historiography of Christian missions in Caffraria during the period in question leaves a significant gap.[5] A glance at the current situation reveals useful, short biographies in the *Dictionary of South African Biography.* They are informative,

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"Caffraria" is used in this article as a generic term for the Ciskei and Transkei (or, more precisely for the purposes of this article, the area from Lovedale to Butterworth). 1799 marks Dr. J.T. van der Kemp's entry into Caffraria; 1853 is a useful date incorporating the first half of the 19th Century and the re-establishment of missions after the 1851 frontier war.

2. Attention is drawn to the fact mentioned in both parts of this article that during the first half of the 19th Century (as elsewhere in Africa) missionaries failed to introduce Christianity significantly into traditional Black societies. However, the *threat* of Christianity was taken very seriously by such societies. Cf. Part Two, footnote 62.
Donovan Williams, "African Nationalism in South Africa: Origins and Problems," *Journal of African History,* vol. XI, no. 3, 1970, pp. 371-383, and "The Indian Mutiny and the Cape Colony, Part II: The Emergence of Black Consciousness," *Historia,* vol. 32, no. 2, September, 1987, pp. 56-67. In the latter article I mentioned the neglect by South African historians of the 19th Century roots of Black nationalism. Since then I have observed that the trend continues in Paul Maylam, *A History of the African People of South Africa: From the Early Iron Age to th 1970s* (London, Cape Town and Johannesburg, 1986). Maylam is particularly neglectful of the missionary impact on Black societies.
There is, inevitably, some disagreement among historians and social scientists about a generally acceptable definition of "biography". For a useful summary of the differences between autobiography, biography, life stories and life history, as seen by a variety of disciplines, see Daniel Bertraux (ed.), *Biography and Society: The Life History Approach to the Social Sciences* (California/ London, 1981. pp. 7-8).
Nevertheless, there is something of a consensus among historians as to what is meant by "biography", and the use of alternative terms, such as "life-writing" by P.M. Kendall, does not cloud any issues (*The Art of Biography,* London, 1965, p. 4). A detailed discussion of the consensus does not seem called for in this article, with the exception of certain aspects in the footnote 5.
The debate on the relationship between history and biography continues. Some of the more interesting contributors to it include P.M. Kendall who asserts that "the essential nature of life-writing [biography] ... becomes obscured if it is classed as a branch of history." (*The Art of Biography.* London, 1965, p. 4.) In his view biography "explores the cosmos of a single being" and "deals with the particularities of one man's life," while history deals with "a cosmos of event pro-

but, by virtue of their relative brevity, cannot explore personality in detail. As far as books are concerned (and excluding contemporary or near-contemporary works) I have produced two biographies: *When Races Meet: The Life and Times of William Ritchie Thomson, 1794-1891* (Johannesburg, 1967) and *Umfundisi: A Biography of Tiyo Soga, 1829-1871* (Lovedale, 1978). (Tiyo Soga's activities in the mission field fall outside the confines of this article.) Other than this there are two works by Basil Holt: *Joseph Williams and the Pioneer Mission to the South-Eastern Bantu* (Lovedale, 1954) and *Greatheart of the Border: A Life of John Brownlee* (Kingwilliamstown, 1976). Unfortunately these are not studies in depth. *Brownlee J. Ross, his Ancestry and Some Writings* (Lovedale, Introduction by R.H.W. Shepherd, 1948) contains some fragmentary biographical material, as do a number of other publications which are not biography in the accepted sense of the word. Lately there has been a biography of Dr John Philip (at last!): *John Philip (1775-1851): Missions, Race and Politics in South Africa* (Aberdeen, 1986). It does not deal satisfactorily with missionary activity in Caffraria nor with Philip's reaction to it. This is not a generous number of biographies.[6]

Without the leavening influence of biographies, current historical studies on southern Africa which incorporate Christian missions mainly lean towards the material achievements of missionaries in their relationship with Black societies. And this is often dealt with within the framework of various theories which, however useful they may be as historians' tools, tend to reduce individuals to part of an explorable process involving the transition from "pre-industrial" and "pre-colonial" societies to their present status.[7] (The study of the impact of

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ducers and events-suffers (sic)" and with generalisation about a time.

A.J.P. Taylor, on the other hand, in a masterly article ("The Writing of History," *Wiener Beiträge zur Geschichte der Neuzeit*, Austria, 1979, 6), is careful not to separate biography and history as drastically as Kendall. While admitting that biography is a "literary art, much nearer to fiction and poetry than it is to serious history" (p. 259), he stresses their interdependence, concluding that "The greatest achievements have been made by mixing biography and history together" (p. 261). This is another way of saying that biography can be the ideal medium for illuminating the life and times of an individual.

Cushing Strout takes the interdependence of biography and history a step further: "Literature, history and psychoanalysis belong to a common family, perhaps even a somewhat incestuous one." He suggests that the common ground between literary critics, historians and psychoanalysts is their imaginative participation in people's experiences. ("Psyche, Clio and the Artist," *New Directions in Psychohistory: The Adelphi Papers in Honor of Erik Erikson*, edited by Mel Albin, assisted by Robert J. Devlin and Gerald Heiger. Lexington/Toronto, 1980, p. 97 and Foreword, p. xv.)

For useful articles on how the biographer-historian and the psychoanalyst seek to come to terms with each others' disciplines see Samuel H. Baron and Carl Pletsch (eds.), *Introspection in Biography: The Biographer's Quest for Self-Awareness* (The Analytic Press, 1985).

6. I have concentrated on biographies of White missionaries. In addition to these there are biographies of Blacks, such as Johannes Meintjes' *Sandile: The Fall of the Xhosa Nation* (Cape Town, 1971) and Janet Hodgson's engrossing *Princess Emma* (Cape Town, 1987). (Emma was Sandile's daughter.) My attention has been drawn to P.H. Kapp, "Dr John Philip. Die grondlegger van die liberalisme in Suid-Afrika," *Archives Year Book for South African History*, 1985, Part II. This was published in 1988 and I have not yet been able to consult it.

7. Examples of this kind of writing can be found in Shula Marks and Anthony Atmore (eds), *Economy and Society in Pre-industrial South Africa* (London, 1980). The Introduction specifies that: "For all their regional and temporal diversity, these essays are, in general, concerned with the socio-economic basis of societies and its relationship to ideology and politics" (p. 3). Recently, however, Shula Marks has come out strongly in favour of reinstating individuals. In the Introduction to her book *The Ambiguities of Dependence in South Africa: Class, Nationalism, and the State in Twentieth Century Natal* (Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore and London, 1986) she indicates her dissatisfaction with the current literature: "On the one hand, recent work on the political economy has been marked by a heavy structuralism that has left little space for the role of the individual, and on the other, studies of particular nationalist and trade union organisations have tended to be heavily institutional and have dealt with individuals only at a generalized and idealogical level." (p. 7).

African societies on the colonial versions of Western civilisation is still in its infancy.)[8]

This mode of dealing with Christian missions has much to do with a materialistic, statistical and pragmatic approach. It may also be associated with an alleged prevailing lack of enthusiasm on the part of professional historians for biography as a medium for historical explanation, at least in the French-speaking world.[9] The allegation itself needs investigation, if only to establish the fact that biography (whether "general" or "professional") is alive and well, thus highlighting the need for its increased use in the field of mission history in Caffraria (and, indeed, for Africa as a whole) as a counterbalance to current trends. And this opens the door to a discussion of group history or collective biography - an aspect of prosopography - as a means of bridging the gap between wider, conventional history and "pure" biography.

In a paper published in 1980 Barrie M. Ratcliffe drew attention to the hostility of twentieth-century historiography to biography.[10] He attributed this to several factors, of which the most important was "the changing nature of modern mass society, by the fact that natural and social sciences revealed more fully the extent to which the individual is the product and the prisoner of his time, the extent to which biographical, psychological and socio-economic factors determine his behaviour." Another reason was "ambivalence because there can be no agreement as to the value of biography as long as the issue of the role of the individual, of contingency and determinism, is unresolved, as long as the areas of individual endeavour are so disparate." In addition, "the controversial nature of biography has been heightened rather than diminished by the two major methodological advances that have been applied to life studies: psychohistory and prosopography."[11]

Ratcliffe was not alone in identifying this trend. A year earlier A.J.P. Taylor mulled over the subject of the historian as biographer and came to the same conclusion:

> The historian is no longer allowed to lapse into biography in this way. Now he must present "the profound forces" of history. Movements, not men, are his theme. He must write about public opinion or imperialism, not about an individual editor or founder of a colony. Indeed under pressure from a dominant school of French historians he is now ashamed to write at all about events which have become as unfashionable as the individual. The biographer is no longer an ally or a writer to

Marks thus seems to be making a plea for more biographical approaches to Black history. Among the books which she identifies as indicating change for the better is Brian Willan's *Sol Plaatje, A Biography* (London and Johannesburg, 1984).

In spite of this, certain current African historiography, as reflected in Bogumil Jewsiewickie and David Newbury (eds), *African Historiography: What History for Which Africa?* (Sage Publications, Beverley Hills, London, New Delhi, 1986), virtually ignores personalities and biography. (See below, footnote 30.)

8. There is much to be done here. As far as the study of personality is concerned, an inviting topic is the generation of children of the first wave of missionaries. Among these was the Hon. Charles Pacalt Brownlee, C.M.G., "Napakate," or "Chalisi," who served in native administration for many years. In the words of Holt: "No man of his time knew or understood the South African Native better than Charles Brownlee did." (*Greatheart of the Border: A Life of John Brownlee*, p. 144.) Frank Brownlee also served with equal distinction (*ibid.*, p. 145). Bryce Ross, the son of the Rev. John Ross, followed in his father's footsteps. These, and others, enjoyed Xhosa virtually as a mother tongue and "thought Black."
9. This is discussed below.
10. "The Decline of Biography in French Historiography: The Ambivalent Legacy of the 'Annales' Tradition," *Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Western Society for French History* (Las Cruses, N.M.), vol. 8 (1980), pp. 556-567.
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 557-558.

> be envied. He has become a deplorable example any historian would do well to avoid. The conscientious historian turned biographer has to grasp that the two tasks are fundamentally different despite their apparent similarities. To write a successful biography the historian must learn a new trade.[12]

But, having said this, Taylor proceeds on the comforting assumption that biography will survive because of its affinity to history.

Ratcliffe, on the other hand, in his preoccupation with characterising the Annales school, appears to have exaggerated the opposition by professional historians to biography as a legitimate historiographical medium. There is, on the contrary, evidence of a vigorous interest in it. And Ratcliffe himself admits that "the biographical form in general flourishes."[13] There is certainly abundant activity at the "professional" level, over and above the publication of books themselves. There has been, and still is a steady stream of publications about the theory and practice of biography as a medium for the historian.[14] Literary biography is strong. As the Introduction in one of the latest publications puts it: "Biography has become one of the major literary genres of the twentieth century. There is now considerable interest not only in the history of life writing but also in how a biographer captures the essence of an artist's inner life."[15]

Underpinning this is the establishment of two international research centres which also reflect the current interest in biography: the Institute for Modern Biography at Griffith University, Australia, which publishes steadily, and The Biographical Research Centre at the University of Haiwaii, which, in 1979, organized an international symposium "devoted exclusively to biography." The foreword to the published proceedings of this conference mentions "the almost promiscuous increase in the field recently [of biographical writing]."[16]

Ratcliffe's assertion that professional biography is weak and ailing should therefore be viewed against the background of biography in general. According to P.M. Kendall, during the thirties the "new" biography which had sought to imitate Lytton Strachy had fallen into disrepute. After the Second World War, however, biography "assumed a formally recognized, if hardly dominant place" on the literary scene. Kendall then gives the following statistics:

Between 1916 and 1930, about 4 000 biographies were published in the United States, averaging something like 300 per year. In 1929, at the height of the biographical boom, 667 new biographical works appeared, in a country of about 120 million people. In 1962, for a population of 180 million people, exactly the same number of new biographies were published, out of a total of 16,448 titles. During 1962 in Great Britain, 577 biographies appeared among 18,975 new books.[17]

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12. "The Historian as Biographer," *Wiener Beiträge zur Geschichte der Neuzeit,* (Austria), 1979, 6, p. 255.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 556.
14. Contributions to theory include Anthony M. Frieson (ed.), *New Directions in Biography* (Biographical Research Centre, University Press of Hawaii, 1981); Samuel H. Baron and Carl Pletsch, *Introspection in Biography* (The Analytic Press, 1985); *Reading Life Histories: Griffith Papers on Biography* (The Institute for Modern Biography, Griffith University, 1981). These are among the latest additions to an already generous number of earlier publications, including such books as Robert Gittings, *The Nature of Biography* (London, 1978); P.M. Kendall, *The Art of Biography* (London, 1968).
Jeffrey Meyers, *The Craft of Literary Biography* (London, 1985), p. 1.
Anthony M. Frieson, *New Directions in Biography,* (University Press of Hawaii, 1981), p. vii. There is no mention here of a difference between "general" and "professional" biography - something which Ratcliffe emphasizes. (See below, footnote 17.)
17. P.M. Kendall, *The Art of Biography,* p. 115. Kendall, like Frieson, does not distinguish between "general" and "professional" biography, or between historical biography and literary biography. (See above, footnote 16.)

What is the situation in the 1980's? An online search in *Books in Print* as of January, 1988 is revealing. "This database includes scholarly, popular, adult, juvenile, reprint and other types of books covering all subjects, provided they are published or exclusively distributed in the United States and are available to the trade or to the general public for single or multiple copy purchase."[18] A search under the word "biography(ies)" and variant forms in the various subject headings and/or titles resulted in 25,886 items. A search for biographies which included the word "history" in the subject heading turned up 5 105 titles. A further search in the *Biographical Index* for the period July, 1984 to August, 1987 covered the biographical content of periodicals and books in English published internationally. This yielded 4 585 biographical monographs, including collective biography and biographical dictionaries. These searches confirm Ratcliffe's observation that biography is alive and well at the general level. It was not possible to determine how many of these biographies qualified as "professional biography" (to use Ratcliffe's phrase), but it must indeed be a healthy number.

Therefore biography thrives -in spite of an allegedly adverse climate of opinion - by way of publication, discussion on its role in history (and elsewhere), discussion of biography as a medium, and its cultivation by institutes. There is also evidence of a renewed interest in it in the teaching of History at university.[19] And, to reiterate, it needs to be cultivated as a means towards a fuller understanding of the role played by personality in history, as a counterweight against theories of history which often see people as part of an inevitable process.

The case for the restoration of personality was well put by J.H. Broomfield as early as 1971:

> How strange that social scientists should have forgotten people. All of us -historians, anthropologists, sociologists, demographers, political scientists, psychologists, and even perhaps linguists, geographers and economists - ostensibly study people, yet people appear remarkably seldom in our writings. Systems, networks, models, inputs and outputs, value perceptions, kin groups, elites, and even classes, castes and parties if we are slightly old-fashioned, with these our work abounds; but recognizable men and women are hard to find ... I think we should be aware of what we are in danger of losing if we hustle people out of our work ... We may lose, in the first place, an appreciation that people make events ... We may also lose a sense of the mixture of motives with which men and women act ... If, finally, we forget how ridiculous people often are, our work will become totally humourless.[20]

In short, humanizing history by the added dimension of personality adds to the depth as well as the enjoyment of the discipline, and one is reminded of E.M. Foster's division of characters in literature into the "flat" and the "round."[21]

This humanizing process began before Bloomfield's plea, with Erik Erikson's psychobiographies *Young Man Luther: A Study in Psychoanalysis and History* (1958) and *Gandhi's Truth* (1969). The increase of psychobiography or psychohistory is, as Ira Bruce Nadel puts it: "currently the most captivating and experimental and yet controversial approach to historical writing."[21] Psychobiography is concerned with "Motivation and inner strength, as contributors to achievement." It examines "inner conflict, but placed within the historical context."[22] There are, of course, inherent dangers in the use of psychobiography, of which the

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18. *Books in Print 1887-88,* vol. 1 (R.P. Bowker and Company, New York and London, 1987), p. v.
19. See Glen Jeansonne, "Teaching a Course in Writing Biography," *Perspectives* (American Historical Association Newsletter), vol. 26, no. 1, Jan. 1988, pp. 13-15. She refers to "an area of study that has been resurrected after a long period of neglect."
20. "Four lives: History as Biography", *South Asia,* Issue 1, 1971.
21. *The Art of the Novel.*
21. *Biography: Fact, Fiction and Form* (London, 1984), p. 186.
22. *Ibid.*, pp. 186-187. Also see pp. 187-190 for a lucid discussion of the debate on the pros and cons of psychobiography.

most important is probably degeneration into heartless case studies in psychoanalysis to the neglect of historical forces.[23]

Nevertheless, psychobiography is here to stay, one way or another, and coupled with other disciplines it is opening up new avenues for exploration of personality. Some of these probes are more profitable for the historian than others. In one instance the use by historians of work by psychologists into the nature of creativity and drive has led to the attribution of the "outburst of entrepreneurial drive" in Britain during the Industrial Revolution to a change in breastfeeding habits, with its accompanying psychological "need for achievement." This is probably more difficult to accept than the possibilities generated by a study of 189 "innovative American entrepreneurs" at the turn of the century which revealed that more than a quarter lost their fathers before the age of 16, and another quarter "had highly unsatisfactory relationships with absent or bullying fathers."[24]

Psychobiography is now sustained by related studies which strive to make subjectivity methodologically respectable. At least one study of empathy attempts to bring it into the historian's camp.[25] Another offshoot of the marriage between psychology and history is emotionology.[26] This relies on the use of generalisations, and is, inter alia, the "attitudes and standards that a society, or a definable group within society, maintains towards basic emotions and their appropriate expression.[28]

Yet, against this strong, prevailing tide of interest in biography, which flows in spite of attempts to deny its existence, biographies of missionaries in Africa in the 19th Century continue to languish. An online search of *Books in Print* current to August, 1987 traced 8 177 publications on Africa and 1943 related to missions. A combination of those two terms, including variant forms and associated with the word(s) "biography(ies)," resulted in only six books. A second search in February, 1988, combining "missionary(ies)" and "biography(ies)" (not specifically for Africa) revealed 84 titles. There are, of course, all sorts of difficulties in locating biographies, including the fact that the book may not actually have the word "biography" in the title and/or subject heading provided in the data base. Nevertheless, this search, coupled with knowledge from other sources, reveals a disturbingly low number.[29] For Caffraria the number of publications in relation to the tally of persons in the field is relatively small.[30] This is certainly not because of a lack of colourful characters, for Caffraria abounded

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23. *Ibid.*, p. 189. For more doubt about psychobiography indulging in mere case studies see James F. Veninga, *The Biographer's Gift: Life Histories and Humanism* (Texas, 1983), pp. 83, 99-100, 110-111.
24. These examples are drawn from a stimulating article (based on an inaugural lecture) by Professor Leslie Hannah of the London School of Economics: "Entrepreneurs and the Social Sciences," *The South African Journal of Economic History*, vol. 2, no. 1, March, 1987, p. 24-25. Hannah hits the nail on the head by remarking dryly that "as far as I know the Japanese postwar economic miracle has not yet been ascribed to the delaying of the translation into Japanese of Dr Spock until 1966." (*Ibid.*, p. 25.)
25. Gelya Frank, "'Becoming the Other': Empathy and Biographical Interpretation," *Biography*, vol. 8, no. 3, 1985, *passim*. Gelya verges on Collingwood's *The Idea of History* (Oxford, 1946).
26. For an informative overview see Peter N. Stearns with Carol Z. Stearns, "Emotionology: Clarifying the History of Emotions and Emotional Standards," *The American Historical Review*, vol. 90, no. 4, Oct., 1985, pp. 813-836.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 813.
29. I would like to thank Ms. Saundra Lipton, of the MacKimmie Library, University of Calgary, for conducting these searches.
30. See above, footnote 6.

with them.

Reasons must be sought elsewhere. Firstly, the history of Christian missions in Africa was a late starter in the already delayed opening up of the history of Africa after the Second World War. Roland Oliver's *The Missionary Factory in East Africa* (London, 1952), sturdy pioneering work that it is, is but a chronicle of labour and achievement which does not pay much regard to personalities. Secondly, as time went by mission history fell victim to African independence. That which did not subscribe to theoretical considerations, concentrated on the progress of civilisation and the emergence of the Black elite. Works such as J.F.A. Ajayi, *Christian Missions in Nigeria 1841-1891* (London, 1965) and E.A. Ayandele, *The Missionary Factor in Modern Nigeria 1842-1914: A Social and Political Awakening* (London, 1966), although livening up missionary personalities, nevertheless concerned themselves mainly with the influence of missions and African response.

Increasingly, independence and anti-colonialism played their part in the rout of the missionaries. Books on African historiography bypassed those who had made them possible. Terence Ranger's *Emerging Themes in African History* (London, 1968) does not even list missionaries in its index, much less biography of any kind. Caroline Neale's *Writing "Independent" History* (London, 1985) mentions missions in passing, but not biography, while A. Temu and B. Swai in *Historians and Africanist History: Post-Colonial Historiography Examined* (London, 1981), draw a veil on missions and Christianity. The clue to the latter is to be found in the extracts from *The Nationalist* (Dar es Salaam) in the dedication, inter alia, to "African peasants and workers" who would "undoubtedly achieve the goal of unity, but it will be a unity in struggle and unity through struggle - ideological, economic and military." In much the same vein, in the wider context of African historiography, biography and individuals fare rather badly in Bogumil Jewsiewickie and David Newbury (eds), *African Historiography: What History for Which Africa?* (Sage Publications, Beverley Hills, London, New Delhi, 1986.) The role of important personalities ("historical actors") is discussed in one chapter only, but within the constraints of the theoretical and conceptual framework of *Histoire Immediate.*[30] Missionaries are nonexistent.

All this is a far cry from seminal, short, experimental biographical works such as G.A. Gorlock's *Lives of Eminent Africans* (New York, 1928), and, much later, in the same tradition, Margery Perham's edited work *Ten Africans* (Northwestern University Press, 1971). In 1984 the strong tide of women's history produced David Sweetman's *Women Leaders in African History* (London, 1984). This was a counterpart to Christopher Saunders' *Black Leaders in Southern African History* (London, 1979), and both are in the welcome Heineman African Historical Biographies series. But the latter two books, of necessity, leave the missionaries untouched (with the exception of Tiyo Soga). The current trend for Africa as a whole tends to bypass the missionaries without much recognition, with their basic contribution to the sweeping events of the 20th Century slipping into obscurity. There is now an understandable preoccupation with political personalities, as is demonstrated in such books as A.J.P. van Rensburg's *Africa's Men of Destiny* (Pretoria, 1981) and Robert A. Hill (ed.), *Pan-African Biography* (Los Angeles, 1987). And in Oxford A.M.H. Kirk-Greene reminds one that "A consistent feature of contemporary research into the colonial period is the emphasis on personalities."[31]

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30. Benoit Verhaegen, "The History of 'Histoire Immediate': Its Application to Africa," pp. 238-243.
31. "Colonial Service Biographical Data: The Published Sources," *African Research and Documentation*, no. 46, 1988, p. 2. Kirk-Greene's interest in biographical data is within the framework of small-scale collective biographies. (See below, footnote 36.) Such data would be useful for "studies of socio-educational provenance or recruitment patterns, and for the construction of career pro-

What probably helped to save the missionaries from being virtually totally forgotten is the continuing stream of biographies of David Livingstone. He has been a source of fascination for historians and others alike, surviving the trend against missionary biography. It is unnecessary to list the scores of books on this dominating personality which have been published steadily during the last few decades (indeed, during the century since his explorations). But Livingstone is an exception to the rule. This has something to do with the fact that he was an explorer in the true sense of the word, as well as a missionary, and thus caught the public imagination.[32]

There is a sharp drop away once one leaves Livingstone, and the general disinterest or disenchantment with missionary biography is obvious for Caffraria during the first half of the 19th Century. But in the case of the latter area there is an additional factor which should be considered, viz., the relative lack of sources for the history of Christian missions. Manuscript sources such as letters, journals and private papers, as well as printed sources of letters and extracts of journals which have long since vanished, have been preserved; but they are the result of a late awakening to the need for preservation of missionary sources after the Second World War and therefore reflect the earlier neglect.[33] Thus the manuscript records of the various societies are not as copious as one would hope for; and, to boot, they are as far apart as South Africa, London and Edinburgh. Yet biographies in other historical areas have been produced with less. Consequently, however persuasive the arguments for a very desirable return to the study of personality through biography, the historian undertaking such a study for Caffraria must resign himself or herself to adequate but relatively lean sources and work in far-flung centres.

It is a pity that the lack of interest in biography, for whatever reasons, should have manifested itself for Africa as a whole, and Caffraria in particular, at a time when new and interesting modes of historical research and writing are coming to the fore. I have already drawn attention to psychohistory (admittedly not a newcomer to the discipline), and the study of empathy and emotionology. To these must be added group biography, or collective biography. This has also been called "group studies," and was used by exceptional historians such as Richard Cobb and George F. Rude who, according to Frank E. Vandiver, "have extended the dimensions of group psychology and discovered a collective personality that promises new and greater insight into man."[34]

Group or collective biography is worthy of consideration as a tool for fashioning both

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files of the District Office in Africa as a contribution towards the wider project for a history of the British colonial service." (*Ibid.*, p. 16.) However, the thrust of the article is a lament on the inaccessibility of official records.

32. For instance, Robert A. Rotberg includes him in his edited book *Africa and its Explorers: Motives, Methods and Impact* (Harvard, 1973). The title of the chapter is "David Livingstone: Exploration for Christianity" - and exploration is a popular subject. A useful guide for the mass of manuscript and printed material by and on Livingstone (including biographies) is *David Livingstone: A Catalogue of Documents*, compiled by G.W. Glendennen, assisted by I.C. Cunningham (Edinburgh: National Library of Scotland for the David Livingstone Documentation Project, 1979).
33. I am reminded of my first visit to the headquarters of the Church of Scotland, Edinburgh, in 1954 in search of records of Scottish missionary activity in Caffraria. I was told that there had been a cache in the attic during the war, but that it had been regarded as a fire hazard and given to salvage! Whether true or not, the mood of the times is obvious.
34. "Biograpyhy as an Agent of Humanism," in James F. Veninga, *The Biographer's Gift* (Texas), 1983, p. 6.

African and Caffrarian missionary history. In tight circumstances, such as a shortage of sources, it offers something for the redemption of the study of personality. It is the halfway house between what Diane Langmore, in a perceptive paper (1984) on missionary activity in Papua, described as "institutional histories which concentrate on the foundation and expansion of a mission or missions," on the one hand, and, on the other, "biographies of individual missionaries which may illuminate the lives of particular people, but usually give little or no indication of how representative these individuals were of the species."[35]

Langmore draws attention to the fact that prosopographical studies have generally been of two kinds: large-scale collective biographies and small-scale collective biographies. The latter, or "group portraits", unlike prosopography as such, with its more "mechanistic view of human motivation and behaviour," leans towards the study of "individuals in all their dimensions, not as statistics to be used for generalized abstractions." She claims "the artist's right to try and interpret and recreate my subject."[36]

In Langmore's view one of the difficulties in creating a composite group picture with human interest is the lack of sources, especially as one descends on the social scale.[37] She admits the resultant difficulty of identifying thoughts and motives. "It is," she says, "inevitable that one's knowledge and understanding [of their innermost levels of being] will remain more superficial, especially when the evidence is not easily accessible."[38] She contends that this innermost exploration of the individual must be sacrificed in favour of the study of a group, the "charting of its external contours, its institutional framework and its relation to the larger community."[39] And, finally, she warns that "it is necessary at times to resist being drawn too far down the tantalizing by-ways of behaviour and personality which, while fertile paths for the individual biographer, shed little light on the group."[40]

How does the study of missionaries in Caffraria during the first half of the 19th Century fit into Langmore's concept of a "group portrait?" She researched 327 missionaries who worked in Papua between 1874 and 1914. The total number of Caffrarian missionaries at work between 1799 and 1853 in the area from Lovedale to Butterworth was 28.[41] There is an advantage here. The relatively small number of missionaries in Caffraria enables one to combine a wider view of generalized characteristics of a group with a closer inspection of individuals and

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35. "The Problems and Pleasures of Prosopography: Writing a Group Biography," *Biographers at Work*, edited by James Walter and Raija Nugent (The Institute for Modern Biography, Nathan, Queensland, Griffith University, 1984). To the best of my knowledge Langmore's article is probably the only one dealing with the subject of missionaries and prosopography (biography) and therefore merits attention.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 65.
37. *Ibid.*.
38. *Ibid.*, pp. 68-69.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 69.
40. *Ibid.*. On this point I disagree with Langmore (see below).
41. This data is drawn from my Ph.D. thesis "The Missionaries on the Eastern Frontier of the Cape Colony, 1799-1853," University of the Witwatersrand, 1959, Appendices A to D. I have exercised some discretion in enumeration by excluding "transient" missionaries (e.g., the Wesleyans among the Fingo from 1851 to 1853). The missionaries were the following: Glasgow Missionary Society and (after 1838) the Glasgow African Missionary Society): J. Bennie; W. Chalmers; W. Govan; W. Laing; W. McDiarmid; R. Niven; J. Ross; B. Ross; W.R. Thomson. London Missionary Society: J. Brownlee; F.G. Kayser; R. Birt; H. Calderwood. Wesleyan-Methodist Society: J.W. Appleyard; J. Ayliff; W.B. Boyce; W.J. Davis; H.H. Dugmore; G.H. Green; W. Impey; W.C. Holden; S. Kay; W. Shaw; W.J. Shrewsbury; W. Shepstone; J.S. Thomas; S. Young.

to consider both of these as influencing their activity. Therefore I gently disagree with Langmore. When the circumstances are favourable - as they are when a manageable number of persons are involved - one *is* surely entitled to wander down the forbidden "tantalizing by-ways of behaviour and personality," for it is there that much can be gleaned about how and why missionaries reacted to their situations.[43]

Thus, with the shortage of biographies of missionaries in Caffraria (and, indeed, elsewhere in Africa), Langmore's point about producing a composite portrait is well taken and the second half of this article will attempt that exercise in a limited way for Caffraria. This will be combined with a study of personality, enabling one to bring to the fore a particular aspect of psychobiography in which, inter alia, there is an emphasis on what Ira Bruce Nadel has described as "interpretative moments that define the psychological truth of the subject,"[44] the creation of "a fundamental portrait of the subject's inner world, organized around either significant moments in that life or probing questions concerning that life."[45] And this will be discussed by way of an example which will reveal that while small-scale collective biography is a useful tool for the historian, the uniqueness of personality will continue to assert itself - thus, once again, underlining the importance of biography.[46]

II

It is a truism, which nevertheless has to be emphasized, that the missionaries in Caffraria were products of their past. In this respect family, social background and education are major constituents.[47] With the limited number of missionaries in Caffraria, small-scale collective

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43. See Part Two of this article.
44. *Biography: Fiction, Fact and Form*, p. 186.
45. *Ibid.*, p. 115.
46. Since the completion of this article two book reviews have been published which add to both the bibliography and the discussion on the theory and practice of biography. The first is "From the life" by Martin Seymour-Smith in *The Times Literary Supplement*, no. 4, 478, January 27 - February 2, 1989, p. 92. The books in question are: Eric Homberger and John Charmley (eds.), *The Troubled Face of Biography* (Macmillan); William H. Epstein, *Recognizing Biography* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press); Reed Whittemore, *Pure Lives: The early biographers* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press); David Wheeler (ed.), *Domestic Privacies: Samuel Johnson and the art of biography* (University Press of Kentucky). (No publication dates given for any of the books.)

    The second review is "The Princess and the Paulina" by Debby Gaitskell in the *Southern African Review of Books*, vol. 2, no. 3, February/March 1989, pp. 10-11. It discusses *Paulina Dlamini: Servant of Two Kings*, compiled by Heinrich Filter and edited and translated by S. Bourquin (University of Natal Press, 1986), and *Princess Emma* by Janet Hodgson (Ad Donker, 1987). (The latter is referred to in footnote 6 above.) As Gaitskell points out, these books reflect "a growing awareness of the often enthusiastic response of African women to nineteenth-century mission overtures."
47. The wider historical setting of the various countries of origin is not addressed in this article. For an excellent example of how Scotland shaped its missionaries see Andrew Ross, *John Philip (1775-1851): Missions, Race and Politics in South Africa* (Aberdeen, 1986), ch. 3, *passim*.

    Sopme useful generalizations on the social and educational background of missionaries who were active in South Africa during the 19th Century can be found in Richard Elphick, "Africans and the Christian Campaign in Southern Africa", in *The Frontier in History: North America and Southern Africa Compared*, edited by Howard Lamar and Leonard Thompson (New Haven and London, 1981), pp. 270-307. This article, however, devotes virtually no attention to the Eastern Frontier and Caffraria - a curious omission for a chapter in a book on the Frontier and History, especially in view of the crucial importance of this formative area for later developments in the history of South Africa.

biography is useful, enabling the historian to identify common features within the context of generalization while allowing for some careful scrutiny of individuals. What follows here is an exercise which tries to illuminate the missionary personality through the use of small-scale collective biography. However, it also demonstrates the limitations of this technique in historical explanation because of the often overriding influence of personality.

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The British missionary societies which were active in Caffraria during the first half of the 19th Century were the Glasglow Missionary Society (GMS) and, after 1838, the Glasgow African Missionary Society; the London Missionary Society (LMS) and the Wesleyan-Methodist Missionary Society (MMS).[48] Each of these initially had some idea of the type of individual whom they thought would be adequate for missionary work in far-flung places (although sometimes this was based on a rather romantic conception of it).

Shortly after the formation of the Glasgow Missionary Society, a certain Mr. A. Fuller of the Baptist Missionary Society, in a letter to the GMS, attempted to answer the question: "What are the requisite talents and character of a Missionary."[49] He drew a distinction between a principal and an assistant. In every mission there should be at least one person "of a clear head, calm, cool, enterprising, prudent and persevering." Such a person should have a knowledge of native languages. The assistant required no great talents other than "a warm heart for Christ, an ardent love for the souls of poor heathens, an upright character, and decent share of common sense." In addition the Directors of the GMS received from the Rev. Thomas Bell, who had attended the inaugural meeting of the Society, a report on "The Talents Requisite for a Missionary." He recommended that a missionary should be pious, prudent and have an aptitude for teaching. He should be of good health, not below twenty-four years of age or beyond forty. He could be of any denomination and should be acquainted with "the Rules of Physic, as in knowing the pulse, letting of blood," *inter alia.*[50]

There seems to have been no statement on education, but the early failures of the GMS (in areas other than Caffraria) were attributed to a lack of education, and only after 1821 were the Directors satisfied that the missionaries were sufficiently qualified in this respect to undertake service in the field. The funds from public donations were used to provide candidates with a carefully supervised course of instruction,[51] and the majority of Scottish missionaries in Caffraria from 1821 onwards enjoyed a liberal education, such as was required for ministers entering the Church of Scotland.[52]

Consequently the Scottish missionaries in Caffraria were, in general, better educated than their London or Wesleyan-Methodist counterparts.[53] William Ritchie Thomson attended

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48. Material which follows on the background of missionaries is based on my Ph.D. thesis "The Missionaries on the Eastern Frontier of the Cape Colony, 1799-1853," University of the Witwatersrand, 1959, ch. 2, *passim.*
49. *Glasgow Missionary Society Quarterly Paper,* ii, p. 1: A. Fuller to W. Muir, 3 March 1796.
50. *GMS Report,* 1 March 1796. During the first half of the 19th Century in Caffraria, missionaries were males. Some women entered the mission field, but as teachers.
51. R.H.W. Shepherd, *Lovedale, South Africa, The Story of a Century, 1841-1941* (Lovedale, 1945), p. 29.
52. *Short statement relative to a Missionary Attempt in the Vicinity of the Cape of Good Hope, by the Glasgow Missionary Society* (quoted in Shepherd, *Lovedale ...*, p. 29 as *GMS Annual Report,* 1822, pp. 5-7.
53. The Rev. Tiyo Soga lies beyond the scope of this article because he began his work in Caffraria as an ordained minister in 1857. Nevertheless, this first Black missionary in southern Africa deserves mention because he came out of the same Scottish mould, having been educated at Glasgow and Edinburgh universities. (See Donovan Williams, *Umfundisi: A Biography of Tiyo Soga, 1829-1871.* Lovedale, 1978, ch. 3, *passim.*)

Glasgow University where he studied Greek, Latin, Logic, Philosophy and Theology.[54] James Laing, after an education at a parish school where English, Writing, Arithmetic, Latin and Greek were taught, went to Edinburgh University and was credited with courses in Humanity, Logic and Metaphysics, Moral Philosophy, Mathematics, Natural Philosophy, Pathology and Surgery, Anatomy and Physiology and was awarded a certificate in Anatomy by Glasgow University.[55] John Ross attended Glasgow University,[56] as did William Govan.[57] John Bennie, as an ordained minister, and a missionary catechist[58] must have enjoyed advanced education. He was to become an outstanding scholar of the Xhosa language. William Govan was Town Clerk of Dumbarton and studied at Glasgow University. For ten years he was classics master at Dumbarton borough school, after which he resumed his studies.[59] And if Robert Niven did not receive higher education (for the records are silent) then he was a natural scholar of English and certainly one of the most intelligent and astute self-taught missionaries of his time. It is a pity that not more of the manuscript letters and journals for the Scottish missionaries as a whole have been preserved, for what there is, supplemented by in the edited printed versions in the annual and quarterly reports and elsewhere, indicate well trained minds at work.[60]

The London Missionary Society was founded in 1795 on a basis of non-sectarianism and with considerable enthusiasm and willingness to co-operate with other societies. On 28 September 1795 the newly appointed Board of Directors adopted a set of "Rules for Examination of Missionaries" which identified those very features which led to unfortunate failures by the Glasgow Missionary Society and the Wesleyan-Methodist Missionary Society. It was felt that there was no need for missionaries to be learned men of scholarly inclination and disciplined mind. The result was a series of failed expeditions because of unsatisfactory and secularly-minded missionaries. This brought to the fore the need for higher qualifications as a solution.[61]

As a result of this inauspicious start - indeed, even before all the bad news had reached home - the matter of providing high qualifications for missionaries had come to the fore. A seminary was envisaged to provide special training for probationary missionaries.[62] A committee reported on this possibility in May 1800, and £500 was allotted for "the education and general improvement of a certain number of missionaries."[63] A Mr Bogue was invited to be the

54. R.W. Barbour, "The First Scottish Missionary in South Africa," *Catholic Presbyterian*, iv, pp. 101-109. Evidence by Thomson himself in his old age.
W. Govan, *Memorials of the Missionary Career of the Rev. James Laing, Missionary of the Free Church of Scotland in Kaffraria* (Glasgow, 1875), p. 2; Cory Library, Rhodes University, Testimonial by J. Henderson, 13 December 1825, and certificates in the flyleaf of the Journal of the Rev. James Laing.
56. Anon., *Brownlee J. Ross: His Ancestry and Some Writings* (Lovedale, 1948), p. 5.
57. *Fasti Ecclesiae Scotianae*, vii, p. 562.
58. *GMS Annual Report*, 1832, p. 21.
59. *Fasti Ecclesiae Scotianae*, vii, p. 562.
60. The main repositories for the bulk of this material are the Cory Library for Historical Research, Rhodes University, the South African Library, Cape Town and the National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh. The LMS and MMS sources are in the appropriate archives in the Library of the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London. The latter two collections are hereafter referred to as SOAS.
61. R. Lovett, *History of the London Missionary Society* (London, 1899), Vol. 1, pp. 4-7, 477-480.
62. *Ibid.*, pp. 51, 55.
63. *Ibid.*, pp. 66-73.

tutor at the seminary, and at the rear of his church at Gosport he established an academy for training missionary candidates with a three year course which included Latin, Greek and Hebrew, Geography, Astronomy, English, Jewish Antiquities, Ecclesiastical History and Pastoral Office.[64] The committee had recommended, inter alia, that candidates be prepared for work by instruction in such things as agriculture and mechanics. Apparently this fell by the wayside. But the goal of a "judicious missionary education", which included character-building, remained.

John Philip, a Superintendent of the London Missionary Society, was alive to the problems surrounding the requirements for missionaries destined for the Cape Colony and beyond. He realized the need for particular attributes and had few illusions about those "with no qualifications but their piety." Philip was probably the only person who mentioned the need for a "sound personality and intellect" which would enable a missionary to bear the loneliness of life in the field, as well as to deal with the secular affairs arising from contact between colonists and Blacks. In a memorandum to the Directors, dated 9 December 1819, he set high standards, speaking of the African missionary who had to "sustain the complicated characters of the Magistrate, the Father, the Master and the Minister of the Gospel," amongst other things.[65]

These were expectations which, in a curious way, had already been partly met by the relatively brief appearance in Caffraria by Dr J.T. van der Kemp from 1799 to 1802. He had acquired a knowledge of 16 languages and had studied Philosophy, Religion and Medicine at Leyden and completed his medical studies at Edinburgh. After being ordained as a minister of the Church of Scotland he became a missionary of the LMS.[66] There is no need to elaborate further on this fascinating character (about whom a considerable amount is known). He was followed by Joseph Williams in 1816 at the Kat River. Williams was the very antithesis of Van der Kemp. This carpenter or shoemaker had little schooling and never really mastered written English. It was eight years before he was allowed to enter the Gosport Academy. He died after two years in the field.[67]

Thereafter the educational qualifications of the LMS missionaries improved. Frederick Gottlieb Kayser, the son of a farmer, was a schoolmaster of five years standing before he entered the University of Halle where he studied Divinity for three and a half years.[68] Richard Birt, a farmer, studied at Turvey College and London University.[69] Henry Calderwood, who was a missionary at Blinkwater from 1840 to 1846, attended Edinburgh University and the United Associates Synod Divinity Hall, apparently with great credit to himself.[70] John Brownlee, a gardener, studied Theology at Glasgow University before his ordination. Thus,

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64. Basil Holt, *Joseph Williams and the Pioneer Mission to the South-Eastern Bantu* (Lovedale, 1950), pp. 6-7.
65. Cape Archives Depot, C.O. 102/65: Philip's Memorial.
66. A.D. Martin, *Dr Vanderkemp* (London, n.d.), chs. i-x; See also I.H. Enklaar, *Life and work of Dr. J.T.H. van der Kemp, 1747-1811* ... (Cape Town, 1988).
Holt, *Joseph Williams*, ch. 1, *passim.*
68. LMS Archives, SOAS, Kayser to Directors, 11 Oct. 1826, Candidates' Papers: *LMS Register of Missionaries. A generous source for material on the LMS and MMS, from which this and some of the references which follow are derived, is C. Roxborough, "Colonial Policy on the Northern and Eastern Frontiers of the Cape Colony, 1834-1845," B. Litt. thesis, Oxford. Also see my Ph.D. thesis (footnote 2, above). The LMS and MMS sources cited in these theses are now in the Library of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.*
69. *LMS Register of Missionaries;* Minutes of Examination Committee, 12 Oct., 14 Dec., 1835, 11 July 1836, 27 Feb., 18 Dec., 1832, LMS Archives, SOAS, University of London.
70. LMS Archives, SOAS, LMS Candidates' Papers, Recommendation from Calderwood's fellow ministers in Lancashire Presbytery, 21 Feb. 1837.

for this small group of LMS missionaries, the level of education was high (with the exception of Joseph Williams).

As for the educational background of the Wesleyans, the Committee was satisfied if candidates were suitably recommended and had expressed a desire to become a missionary. Piety, experience of lay preaching, good health and no heavy responsibilities appear to have been criteria; there was no fixed rule against the acceptance of married men.[71] Many missionaries were young when accepted.[72] Education was not underrated.[73] Clause 2 of the "Instructions to the Wesleyan Missionaries" stated: "We wish to impress on your minds the absolute necessity of using every means of mental improvement with an express view to your great work as Christian Missionaries."[74]

Wesleyan interest in education went back to John Wesley[75] and education was a prime concern of William Shaw, Minister of the Wesleyan Methodist Church at Grahamstown, who wrote to the Secretaries in March 1838, that they must have men of the right sort for "the Kaffir language is difficult and none who are destitute of love of study and reading can be of much use to us - We want *mind* and piety."[76]

In this respect there seems to have been a difference of opinion between Shaw and William Boyce, missionary at Albany. Boyce thought that

> One or two first rate men ... we want *now and then,* but generally Kaffirland requires men of a different and more homely cast: *Average talent, plain good sense and a special love for Heathen work* are what we principally want. Men who will take delight in ploughing, and the temporalities of a Station, and whose minds can be completely taken up with the circumstances of their position, viewing their Stations as their world, and caring little for anything beyond; these are the men we need ...

He begged that they send "*single men, handy* men, willing to do anything for the cause," and not "men of literary habits and tastes who have in England been accustomed to good society."[77]

Actual educational qualifications of Wesleyan missionaries in the field varied. Judging from their letters "most could write a fair hand and had some idea of grammar."[78] William Shaw received "a good education acquired by private tuition"[79] which enabled him to teach in his own sch ol.[80] J.W. Appleyard went to school for a year at Weymouth and was then sent to Kingswood. The standard of education at the latter was apparently not very high. At the age of 20 he undertook a one-year course in self-education. During this time, apparently, he taught

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71. MMS Archives, SOAS, "Missionary Candidates" books. (See Roxborough, p. 261.)
72. *Ibid.*, p. 262.
73. *Ibid.*.
74. *Ibid.*.
75. *Ibid.*, p. 265.
76. MMS Archives, SOAS, Shaw to Beecham, 23 March, 1838. (Quoted in Roxborough, p. 265.)
77. MMS Archives, SOAS, Boyce to Secretaries, 15 April, 1837.
78. Roxborough, *op. cit.*, pp. 263-264.
79. H.H. Dugmore, *A Memorial Discourse in Relation to the Death of the Reverend William Shaw ... 9th February 1873 ... With a Biographical Sketch,* (Mount Coke, 1873). p. 25.
80. W.B. Boyce, *Memoir of the Rev. W. Shaw, Late Superintendent of the Wesleyan Missions in South-Eastern Africa* (London, 1874), p. 3. Cf. Roxborough, *op. cit.*, p. 264; Journal of the Rev. W. Shaw, 1816-1819, in *The Journal of the Methodist Historical Society of South Africa,* Aug., 1954, pp. 28-29.

himself Greek, Hebrew and Latin. He then became a local preacher and at the institution for the training of Wesleyan ministers he studied English, Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Logic and Mathematics. He also attended lectures on Theology and Homeletics and the exposition of the Scriptures. As a private venture he studied Syriac and Chaldee and showed an interest in Geology.[81] He later became a competent translator of the Bible. W.J. Davis, W.B. Boyce and R. Haddy were numbered among those who assisted with the translation of the Bible, and Haddy was well qualified to do this, having a good knowledge of Greek, Hebrew, Latin and Dutch.[82]

Lack of formal education did not seem to deter W.J. Shrewsbury, who left school at the age of ten but by later life had acquired a clear hand and excellent orthography and verbal accuracy.[83] His nimble mind enabled him to commit to memory the whole of Hebrew grammar while travelling the Tortola circuit.[84] Nine months after landing at the Cape he preached his first *ex tempore* sermon in Dutch and he also later learned the Xhosa language.[85] H.H. Dugmore received the rudiments of reading and writing from his family.[86] Of William Boyce little is known, it seems.

On balance, therefore, the Wesleyans had less formal higher education than their Scottish and LMS counterparts. And, as Roxborough has pointed out, ability to translate the Scriptures should not be taken as the hallmark of good education.[87] Therefore an element of commonality for the Scottish and LMS missionaries was a fairly uniform degree of university education coupled with training as a minister, whereas the Wesleyans do not seem to have had that common bond.

Does a search into the family and social background of missionaries who came to Caffraria reveal elements common to one or more groups, especially with regard to early religious experiences? And, arising from this, how strong was subsequent religious conviction in the mission field itself?

Among the Scottish missionaries William Ritchie Thomson was the son of a schoolmaster. His father had religious interests and it was apparently his decision that his son should become a minister. His early years at Glasgow University were not happy ones since he was not committed to this calling. It was only after the family had moved to London and he had heard a sermon on the life of Van der Kemp, that he decided to become a missionary.[88]

James Laing was of humble origin. His father was a shepherd. His mother was "an intelligent and godly woman" who was responsible for his early education. It may have been her influence which prompted him eventually to study at Edinburgh University and become an ordained minister. Perhaps it was the influence of "Old Margaret Thomson", in whose cottage, as a youth, he spent a great deal of time, listening to "theological lectures" drawn from her

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81. T. Smith, *Memoir of the Rev. John Whittle Appleyard, Wesleyan Missionary in South Africa* (London, 1881), pp. 3, 6-12, 18-20.
82. W. Eveleigh, *The Settlers and Methodism* (Cape Town, 1920), p. 109. Cf. Roxborough, p. 265, footnote 1.
83. J.V.B. Shrewsbury, *Memorials of the Rev. J. Shrewsbury* (London, 1968, second ed.), pp. 2, 12-13.
84. C.G. Findlay and W.W. Holdsworth, *The History of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society* (London, 1921, first ed.), Vol. II, p. 150.
85. Shrewsbury, *op. cit.*, p. 252.
86. E.H. Croach, *Life of Revd. H.H. Dugmore, Poet, Preacher, 1810-1897* (Cape Town, n.d.), p. 36.
87. Roxborough, *op. cit.*, pp. 264-265.
88. R.W. Barbour in *Catholic Presbyterian,* iv, pp. 101-109.

large, open Bible. Throughout his early life he revealed an inclination for service in the church, with a bent for missionary work, which he chose over and above a position which he had been offered in the established church.[89]

Of John Ross, one of the patriarchs of missionary enterprise in Caffraria, more family background is available. His grandfather was a landed proprietor in Sutherland, and two, if not three of his uncles held commissions in Highland regiments. His father, Richard Ross, because of reduced family circumstances, had to follow the footsteps of his elder brother to Glasgow to make a living. He appears to have possessed considerable business acumen, for eventually he owned a small factory. He was also possessed of considerable evangelical fervour, for even the workmen in his factory - without stopping work - had to give an account of the discourses they had heard on Sunday. Both he and his wife participated in church and charitable work: John was brought up in the strict Protestant tradition.[90] At four years John Ross demanded that his sister give him her doll to burn because "it was an image and those who worshipped images were Papists." His earliest memories seem to have been of the morbid sort, embracing a clay-hole in to which he had fallen, mud, frogs and two men whom he had seen hanged in Glasgow and who haunted him in his dreams. He also recollected having broken the Sabbath.[91]

What does one know about the family and social circumstances of the Wesleyans?

William Shaw's father was a militiaman and he and his wife were members of the Established Church, bringing up their large family "in the fear of God" (to quote Shaw's fellow-missionary biographer). At the age of nine William was placed in the "Band of Musicians" of his father's regiment. When his father retired from the Army, he fell under the care of his brother who was a sergeant. Apparently Shaw lived a fully army life and indulged in such an "excess of riot" that his conscience began troubling him. He then fell in with a group of Wesleyan-Methodist soldiers and was converted. Not only did his brother start persecuting him but the officers were all very opposed to Methodism. William left the Army, and being without work because he had no trade, and probably feeling the indignity of being supported by his family, he took to local preaching, which, however, did not provide an income. He then opened a school at Long Sutton and afterwards became a missionary.[92]

J.W. Appleyard was the first child of a Wesleyan minister and brought up "in the fear of God, though not, for some time, a decided Christian." Of his conversion and call to the missionary field, apparently at the age of twenty, there is little information.[93]

More is known about William J. Shrewsbury. In his own words:

> My parents were poor, and, having a large family to bring up, they could not afford to give me a very liberal education, so that I was taken from school at the age of ten years, and employed at home in learning my father's business. This proved of considerable utility: for being sometimes necessitat-

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89. W. Govan, *Memorials of the Missionary Career of the Rev. James Laing, Missionary of the Free Church of Scotland in Kaffraria* (Glasgow, 1875), pp. 1-4; testimonial by John Henderson, 13 Dec. 1825, and certificates in the Journal of the Rev. James Laing, Cory Library for Historical Research, Rhodes University. (To the best of my knowledge "Old Margaret Thomson" was not related to William Ritchie Thomson.)
90. Anon., *Brownlee J. Ross ...*, pp. 3-5.
91. *Ibid.*.
92. W.B. Boyce, *Memoirs of the Rev. W. Shaw, Late General Superintendent of the Wesleyan Missions in South-Eastern Africa* (London, 1874), p. 1; Journal of the Rev. W. Shaw, 1816-1819, in *The Journal of the Methodist Historical Society of South Africa,* August, 1954, pp. 23-29.
93. T. Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 3-7, 8-12, 18-20.

> ed to work hard, it taught me diligence and industry, and gave me a great aversion to idleness. My parents were possessed of the 'fear of God', especially my mother, who spared no pains to impress the minds of their children with sentiments of piety ... From the earliest period of recollection I felt the influence of the Holy Spirit on my mind.

As a child Shrewsbury had an active imagination through which he experienced visions of Christ hanging on the Cross. Already at the age of eight he was so moved by a preacher - in this instance speaking of missions - that he hung his head on the pew and wept. He was, apparently, no mean performer on the violin and sang as well, studying music assiduously. But at the age of sixteen he damaged the little finger of his left hand. It is significant that he became a local preacher in the year of his accident, very much doubting his call to the work.[94]

Information on the family life of LMS missionaries is meagre. Virtually nothing seems to be known about Dr Van der Kemp, Joseph Williams and Richard Birt. Frederick Kayser was of Lutheran background.[95] And Henry Calderwood emerges from relative obscurity at Peebles, being moved, at intervals, to become a missionary.[96]

Some generalizations on missionaries from the three societies in question can be formulated from this data, limited as it is by availability of records.

Modest, or relatively modest, economic circumstances seem to have been the family norm. Most Caffrarian missionaries did not come from the upper or privileged classes. The occupations of fathers of future missionaries reflected variety, with a leaning away from the professions. (Was there then a striving within the family to better the lot of the children by upward mobility?) The Scottish group had among their number missionaries whose fathers were: a teacher (Thomson), a small-factory owner (Ross) and a shepherd (Laing). The Wesleyans sported a militiaman (William Shaw), a Wesleyan minister (Appleyard), and a poor businessman (?) and farmer in the Eastern Province (Dugmore). In the LMS camp there were the extremes between a minister and professor of theology at a Lutheran college (Van der Kemp), on the one hand, and probably an illiterate carpenter or shoemaker, on the other (Williams). There was perhaps a small farmer (Kayser).

This limited exercise in small-scale collective biography reveals the dangers of generalized statements such as that made by Andrew Ross, when describing the vocational backgrounds of missionaries for the various societies spawned by the Evangelical Revival between 1792 and 1840: "Indeed the skilled working class ... were the core group from which the missionaries themselves were drawn."[97] This does not hold for Caffraria during the first half of the 19th Century.

But to return to the matter in hand, it seems that there was a tendency on the part of parents

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94. J.V.B. Shrewsbury, *Memorials of the Rev. J. Shrewsbury* (London, 1868, second ed.), pp. 2, 13-14, 22-23.
95. LMS Archives, SOAS, Kayser to Directors, 11 Oct., 1826, Professor Thuluck to LMS (no date); E. Henderson to Directors of LMS, 21 Oct., 1826, Candidates' Papers; *LMS Register of Missionaries.*
96. LMS Archives, SOAS, *LMS Register of Missionaries*; Candidates' Papers, Answers to Questions, 10, and letters to Directors, 23 Sept., 1837, 2 Oct., 1837, recommendations from Calderwood's fellow ministers in the Lancashire Presbytery, 21 Feb., 1837. Also see *Dictionary of South African Biography*, Vol. 1 (Cape Town, 1968).
97. A.J. Ross, *John Philip* ..., p. 38. It should be noted that Ross does not mention the Wesleyan-Methodist Missionary Society when listing "perhaps the most important" societies which emerged from the Evangelical Revival.

to educate their children "at the knee," which generated a desire or capacity for self-education, or further formal education on the part of a significant number of those who later became missionaries. This was combined with a general observance and inculcation of Christian morals and values, at a more intense level in some families than in others. But in most cases piety and Christian conviction were strong at what might be called grass roots level.

This raises the matter of sincerity of calling. There were some cases of doubt about original motives. William Shrewsbury left Caffraria in 1834, stating that: "If I had known myself as thoroughly 20 years ago as I do now, I really think I should have never become a Missionary at all."[98] J.C. Warner was another who, by 1850, dissociated himself from his original calling as a missionary. He did so "merely and solely because my own soul is not prospering in personal piety, and I feel that I am utterly unfit for so holy an office."[99] John Bennie and Henry Calderwood both left the field without giving reasons, but from their actions and the remarks of others they seem to have gradually lost interest in Christianizing the Blacks.[100]

For the relatively small number of missionaries in Caffraria this meant a noticeable loss of manpower. And this should be coupled with gloominess on the part of some who were clearly unhappy about their lot in life. William Impey was one of these.[101] John Cumming was highly emotional and morbidly introspective, demonstrating, from the time of his embarkation for Caffraria, signs of extreme neurosis, such as keeping himself incognito on board ship. Uncertainty, apprehension and loneliness in Caffraria forced him to the brink of a mental breakdown.[102] William Shaw,[103] John Bennie,[104] John Ayliff,[105] and others were clearly (and naturally) apprehensive at the prospects in a strange land. And let there be no doubt about the severity of mental stress imposed by remoteness from home and hearth. As John Cumming lamented: "My solitary situation is now preying frequently on my mind."[106] Couple this with the physical discomforts and dangers which missionaries had to endure[107] and it is remarkable that more of them did not forsake their calling.

To what extent these reactions are attributable to the family, social and educational back-

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98. Cory Library, A/C 1174: Shrewsbury to H.H. Dugmore, 13 July, 1836.
99. Cory Library, Godlonton Papers: J.C. Warner to R. Godlonton, 30 Jan. 1850.
100. In the case of Calderwood I have inferred this from his letters to the LMS over the years. Bennie simply drifted gradually from Caffraria into service in the Cape Colony (Donovan Williams, *An Account of a Journey into Transorangia and the Potchefstroom-Winburg Trekker Republic in 1843 by the Rev. John Bennie,* Cape Town, 1956, Introduction, *passim*; Bennie's Bible, notes on flyleaf. This Bible has disappeared from the Library of the University of Fort Hare where I consulted it in the early 'fifties.)
101. Cory Library: Journal of the Rev. W. Impey, 16 Jan., 15 March, 30 August, 16 Sept. 1839, 7 Nov. 1842.
102. South African Library, Cape Town: Journal of the Rev. John Cumming, 12 March, 1837; 16 June, 1837; 4 July to 9 Aug., 12 Sept. (or Oct.) 1838; 3 May, 1840; 10 June, 1842; 12 Aug., 1842; 25 Apl., 1842. A marked change for the better takes place in the journal from 19 Aug., 1842, when he reached Glenthorn to ask for Catherine Pringle's hand in marriage. T. Campbell, a fellow worker, had previously suggested to him that: "If you had a wife you would have been saved all these troubles."
103. Cory Library: Shaw's Journal, 11 Feb. 1820.
104. *GMS Annual Report,* 1827, p. 25.
105. Cory Library: J. Ayliff to parents, 5 Aug. 1861, Ayliff Papers. (1861, but worth mentioning.)
106. Cumming's Journal, 10 June 1842. I.D. MacCrone, *Race Attitudes in South Africa* (London, 1937), p. 110, commenting on the Boer women on the frontier, drew attention to the possibility that the extreme monotony, loneliness, and trying conditions experienced may have had something to do with the prevalence of hysterical disorders among them which M.H.C. Lichtenstein recorded in his *Travels in Southern Africa In the Years 1803, 1804, 1805 and 1806* (Van Riebeeck Society, Cape Town, 1928), vol. 1, pp. 108-110.
107. For detail see Williams, "The Missionaries ...", pp. 56-59.

ground which have been discussed is difficult, perhaps impossible, to determine. But they are another dimension of small-scale collective biography and should not be ignored when assessing missionary activity during the first half of the 19th Century in Caffraria. They help to explain the often overlooked but vitally important missionary failure to propagate Christianity significantly among the Blacks during that time.[108] Fear, hesitancy, lack of genuine interest in missionary work, and just plainly unsatisfactory temperament which led some to abandon the mission field: all of these blunted the missionary thrust, given the fact that the complement of missionaries in Caffraria was relatively small. Thus individual personalities, with their infinite variety, played a role in the deepening crisis, demonstrating limitations in the generalizations formulated by small-scale collective biography.

However, despite this caveat, these generalizations remain very useful for demonstrating, for instance, that in the negative situation in Caffraria the Scottish missionaries were a relatively compact group of men who had something of a common psychological background as well as an element of common education, and who, with two exceptions who withdrew from the work, were dedicated to bringing redemption to the heathen of Caffraria. In this respect the Scottish religious millieu undoubtedly played a part. Whatever the intricacies of the Evangelical Revival in Scotland (and they were many) the spirit was strong.[109]

In Caffraria Scottish missionary cohesion is further demonstrated by a strong sense of reality about the missionary failure to propagate Christianity. These missionaries were most cautious about exaggerated claims of success.[110] Their reluctance to rush candidates to baptism reflects this.[111] In July 1832 the Presbytery of Caffraria (GMS) resolved to recommend to the Directors that they publish only communications from missionaries which had been officially transmitted and that care should be taken in connection with any "seeming or real mis-statements" in the published or unpublished missionary journals.[112] As early as 1828 John Ross had told the Secretary that "experience teaches us not to be so sanguine, as any present favourable appearances would, at first view, lead us to hope.[113]

And yet, this recognition by the Scottish missionaries, as a group, of the realities of Caffraria,

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108. Examples of the histories of missionary activity which have wittingly or unwittingly fostered the illusion of significant success of Christianity during the first half of the 19th Century in Caffraria include: C.P. Groves, *The Planting of Christianity in Africa* (London, 1948), Vol. 1, ch. 2, and Basil Holt, *Joseph Williams and the Pioneer Mission of the South-Eastern Bantu* (Lovedale, 1954), *passim.* J. du Plessis, *A History of Christian Missions in South Africa* (London, 1911) is more circumspect but fails on pp. 183-184. R.H.W. Shepherd, *Lovedale, The Story of a Century, 1841-1941* (Lovedale, 1940), does not ignore Black opposition to Christianity but fails to deal realistically with the initial missionary failure. (In this respect I would like to add a personal footnote. In the 1950's my biography of William Ritchie Thomson, *When Races Meet,* which dealt with this failure, was initially offered to the Lovedale Press. The manuscript was rejected on the grounds that it was unsympathetic towards missionaries.)

    Missionaries in other parts of Africa experienced the same lack of success during the first half of the 19th Century. This has been recognized by Godfrey Moorhouse in *The Missionaries* (Philadelphia and New York, 1973), p. 320. This book is sensitive, pragmatic, and breathes new life into the missionary personality.
109. See Andrew Ross, *John Philip,* ch. 3, *passim.*
110. See W.R. Thomson's undated Draft Memorandum on the increase of the Native Agency, Cory Library. For a summary see Williams, *When Races Meet,* pp. 67-68.
111. *GMS Quarterly Paper,* iv, p. 5.
112. Cory Library: Minutes of the Presbytery of Caffraria, vol. 1, 5 July 1832.
113. *GMS Quarterly Paper,* iii, p. 10, Ross to Secretary, 5 June 1828.

and their steadfastness in not succumbing to the temptations of exaggerated claims of success, did not prevent two of their number from pursuing their own individualistic paths. In 1845 Robert Niven, of the Glasgow African Missionary Society,[114] allowed himself to be carried away before an eager crowd of mission supporters in Scotland. He stated that the Blacks in Caffraria had been uplifted to such a degree that they might be termed "African Scotsmen," and that as a hapless race they had suffered much from professing Christianity.[115] Simultaneously William Boyce, of the Wesleyan-Methodist Missionary Society, indulged in public exaggerations at Exeter Hall, saying that 360,000 Blacks in Caffraria were under the influence of the Gospel.[116]

The response of the rest of the Scottish missionaries and the LMS missionaries to such stretching of the truth was immediate and strong. On 13 November 1846 the *Grahamstown Journal* published a refutation signed by eleven of their number, the bulk of whom were Scottish.[117] This statement - in itself a public confession of missionary failure - reflects the previously mentioned cohesiveness of the Scottish (and LMS missionaries) as identified by small-scale collective biography.

The perversity of fate has decreed that there seems to be no information available on the personal or educational background of either Niven or Boyce. However, Niven's actions and reactions in Caffraria, as revealed in his copious (almost compulsive) writings in the printed records,[118] are those of an intelligent, aggressive free spirit, and his questionable performance in Scotland suggests a highly emotional person.[119] Further investigation of Niven's political activities as a missionary confirms this.[120] His cavalier attitude resulted in Governor Sir George Cathcart digging in his heels even more against what he had earlier referred to as "adventurer missionaries"[121] and running him out of Caffraria.[122] Thus, with or without advanced education, Niven was mercurial and injudicious.

And what of William Boyce? Evidence of native intelligence is sufficiently demonstrated by the fact that he was the first to publish a Xhosa grammar under the title *Grammar of the Kafir Language.*[123] With nothing more to go on, and, as with Niven, assuming an absence of malice or ulterior motive in his pronouncements at Exeter Hall, one is once more thrown back

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114. In 1838 the Glasgow Missionary Society divided into the Glasgow Missionary Society adhering to the Principles of the Church of Scotland and the Glasgow African Missionary Society which became the charge of the United Presbyterian Church in 1847. I have chosen (perhaps wrongly) to ignore this in my evaluation of the missionary personality.
115. *Graham's Town Journal,* 18 September 1845; J.M. Bowker, *Speeches, Letters and Selections from Important Papers of the late John Mitford Bowker* (Grahamstown, 1864), pp. 140-147, 211.
116. *Ibid.*
117. The signatories were: W. Govan, J. Laing, J. Weir, J. Bennie, J. Ross, A. McDiarmid, W. Chalmers (Scottish missionaries) and F.G. Kayser, J. Brownlee, R. Birt and H. Calderwood (LMS).
118. Especially in the *Caffrarian Messenger of the Glasgow African Missionary Society.* Would that more missionaries had had Niven's sharp eye for detail about Black life and customs and the process of acculturation.
119. *Dictionary of South African Biography,* Vol. 1, reaches almost the same conclusion as I do. However, the article does not mention the 1845-46 debacle.
120. Liddle to Niven, 22 Nov., 1853, *Correspondence of the Rev. Robert Niven, Missionary, with Sir George Cathcart, K.C.B. ... relative to the Mission Stations of the United Presbyterian Church among the Gaika Tribes, South Africa ... etc.* (Cape Town, 1854), p. 21.
121. A.E. du Toit, "The Cape Frontier: A Study of Native Policy with special reference to the years 1847-1866," *Archives Year Book for South African History,* 1954, Pt. 11, p. 77.
122. Cape Archives Depot: B.K. 375, Schedules for documents 113 and 115, annotations by Cathcart; B.K. 405, Maclean to Niven, 28 Jan. 1854.
123. C.R. Doke in *Bantu Studies,* xviii, 1, 1959, p. 8; *The Southern Bantu Languages* (Oxford, 1954), p. 14.

on personality. And in this respect Boyce himself is helpful. As early as 1838 he wrote to the Secretaries of the MMS to excuse his involvement in colonial politics:

> I defy any man to read the attacks on *me* and my colleagues without justifying my replying to them ... It is impossible with *my excitable nature* to avoid a constant irritation arising out of the party feuds into which the Colony is divided, now that I stand committed to certain opinions ... Shaw, *who never feels* after my fashion, goes on careless and quite easy as if he was a stranger to all excitement. I am not as happily constituted ..."[124]

This, then, is probably the explanation. Boyce, like Niven, was prone to emotional involvement in intense situations. Both were attracted by the limelight, inclined to run with the crowd, and hence unable to do justice to the facts in the face of an enthusiastic (and, conceivably, potentially financially generous) audience.[125]

The 1845-46 affair is more than merely an illustrative footnote to an essay on small-scale collective biography. It is a very important (and underrated) event in the history of Christian missions in Caffraria and South Africa in general. And in the context of this article it enables one to achieve a major goal of psychobiography when explaining the actions of Niven and Boyce, viz., to formulate "a fundamental portrait of the subject's inner world, organized around either significant moments in that life or probing questions concerning that life."[126] In doing so it becomes clear that although the generalizations derived from small-scale biography are useful for historical explanation, they are not infallible. The deeper recesses of the human personality continue to produce action which is frequently unpredictable in terms of theoretical frameworks.

Thus this article ends where it began in Part One,[127] by discouraging the writing of history which utilizes rigid, theoretical frameworks since they tend to reduce individuals to part of an inexorable historical process. It encourages the limited use of small-scale collective biography and positively recommends the art of biography as a mechanism for humanizing the writing of history - something from which the writing of missionary history for Africa as a whole could benefit enormously.

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124. MMS Archives, SOAS: Boyce to Secretaries, 15 Oct., 1838 (Boyce's emphasis).
125. There is something else which should be considered here. In 1845 Boyce was appointed general superintendent of Wesleyan missions in Australia (*Dictionary of South African Biography*, vol. 1). I have not been able to check the date of his appointment. Was it before, or after his public pronouncement? Either way one could speculate about motives.
126. I.B. Nadel, *Biography, Fact, Fiction and Forum* (London, 1984), p. 115.
127. *Ibid.*, p. 115, also quoted at the end of Part I of this article.