

‘Property to seek lost souls’?

The ‘social lives’ of contributions made in the South Pacific in the mid-nineteenth century and their representation in missionary publications

Master Thesis Cultural History

Stephanie Hall (5677602)

Supervisor: Dr. Britta Schilling

Utrecht University

27/06/2016

23, 634 words

Table of Contents

Summary	2
List of illustrations	3
Introduction: Missions, contributions and empire?	4
Chapter One: Creation and Cultivation.	15
I. Cultivating contributions, cultivating Christians.	16
II. Creating and earning contributions. Moving towards civilisation.	23
III. Labour or virtues? Missionary mind-sets and representation.	24
IV. Conclusion.	28
Chapter two: Making, offering or gifting? Contributing as a process.	29
I. The May Meeting.	30
II. Functions of contributions.	36
III. Making, offering or gifting?	42
IV. Conclusion.	47
Chapter three: Destinations. Exiting the contribution stage?	49
I. The general ‘path’ of contributions.	50
II. Between exchanges. Moving into a ‘commodity status’.	51
III. Diverted from their intended ‘path’.	52
IV. Destinations.	55
V. Continuing beyond their destinations.	59
VI. Conclusion.	60
Conclusion: The ‘social lives’ of contributions, missions and empire.	62
Appendices.	68
Appendix One: Contributions named in the Missionary Magazine and Chronicle (1841-1866) and in the Missionary Chronicle of the London Missionary Society (1867-1871).	68
Appendix Two: Destinations of contributions mentioned in the Missionary Magazine and Chronicle (1841-1866) and in the Missionary Chronicle of the London Missionary Society (1867-1871).	70
Bibliography.	71
Primary sources.	71
Secondary sources.	71

Summary

The nineteenth-century London Missionary Society (LMS) missions to the South Pacific involved a remarkable form of material culture: the contribution. Contributions were produce, craft objects or money which South Pacific Christians gave to the LMS, like its metropolitan supporters, in order to fund its missions. Hitherto contributions have been neglected by historians. This thesis seeks to trace the ‘social lives’ of the contributions made by converts in the South Pacific to the LMS through missionary publications in order to understand how these reflect the relationship between missions and (in)formal empire in the mid-nineteenth century. It will largely do so using periodicals the LMS published between 1841 and 1871. The ‘social lives’ or ‘object-biographical’ approach used here draws on and adapts the concepts and theories of Arjun Appadurai and Igor Kopytoff on how to approach ‘things’, in particular commodities. The ‘social life’ of a contribution has been broken down into three main stages: its cultivation, creation or earning; when it became a contribution; and, finally, what happened to it afterwards, in particular where it ended up. The ‘social lives’ of contributions reveal that there was not one link between LMS missions and (in)formal empire, but several. In the first stage, the attitudes of the missionaries with regard to their roles in bringing Christianity and civilisation to those in the South Pacific, which would in turn enable them to produce contributions, formed the most important link. These attitudes were also an important link for the second stage. In addition, this second stage seems to reveal the missionaries’ authority and raises questions around how voluntary contributions were. Finally, the third stage connected empire and missions through the trading networks relied upon by the LMS to exchange contributions for money.

List of illustrations

Image 1: ‘Hurricane in Samoa.’ *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 15, no.177 (February 1851): 21.

Image 2: “Juvenile Missionary Festival at Maupiti.” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: chiefly relating to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 16, no.188 (January 1852): 1.

Image 3: “Missionary Offering of the Samoan Children.” The *John Williams* can be seen in the left of this image. “Missionary Offering of the Samoan Children,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle; relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 11, no.135 (August 1847): 121. August 1847.

Introduction: Contributions, missions and empire?

When the July 1847 issue of the *Missionary Magazine and Chronicle* discussed the return of the ship belonging to the London Missionary Society (LMS), the *John Williams*, from the South Pacific, it was eager to emphasise the significance of the ship's cargo. This cargo consisted of the contributions which the South Pacific converts had made to the LMS and was estimated to be worth over two thousand pounds. Its value went beyond money, though, as the contributions symbolised missionary success. The article declared:

While it thus constitutes a most acceptable and timely addition to the resources of the Society, the gift is a noble testimony to the expansive power of christian [sic] principle among a people so lately called, from the darkness of heathenism, to the knowledge of Christ and the enjoyment of his love.¹

London was the final destination of the contributions mentioned in this quote. Yet, other phases of the 'social lives'² of the contributions from the South Pacific can also be traced through missionary publications. Contributions were actually one of the main ways in which material culture from the South Pacific featured in the LMS' periodicals. In addition, their positive connotations contrasted with the negative connotations of 'heathendom' and savagery which other objects that missionaries brought back from the South Pacific often had. The positive connotations of contributions stemmed from their purpose, to fund the mission society and thus the expansion of missions. This was reflected in the name an unnamed South Pacific Christian gave to contributions: '*Property to seek lost souls*'.³ Despite this, contributions have barely been discussed by those who study the South Pacific missions or those who study the interactions of missionaries with and their representation of indigenous material culture.⁴

¹ "Arrival of the "John Williams"," *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle; relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 11, no.134(July 1847): 116.

² Arjun Appadurai, "Introduction: commodities and the politics of value," in *The social life of things: commodities in cultural perspective*, ed. Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 3.

³ John Williams, *A narrative of missionary enterprises in the South Sea Islands; with remarks upon the natural history of the islands, origin, languages, traditions, and usages of the inhabitants* (London: J. Snow, 1838), 231.

⁴ Steve Hooper, "Illustration of an Exhibition and Sale at the Wesleyan Centenary Hall, United Kingdom," in *Trophies, Relics, Curios? Missionary Heritage from Africa and the Pacific*, ed. Karen Jacobs, Chantal Knowles and Chris Wingfield (Leiden: Sidestone Press, 2015), 45-49 ; John Garrett, *To Live Among the Stars: Christian Origins in Oceania* (Geneva and Suva: World Council of Churches in association with the Institute of Pacific Studies University of the South Pacific, 1982), 27; Rod Edmond, *Representing the South Pacific: Colonial Discourse from Cook to Gauguin* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 124. Brief mentions of contributions feature in these works, although they fail to explore them in detail.

Christian Wingfield, 'Scarcely more than a Christian trophy case'? The global collections of the London Missionary Society museum (1814-1910)," *Journal of the History of Collections*, Published electronically February 19, 2016, 2-6, 14-16, doi: 10.1093/jhc/fhw002 ; Annie E. Coombes, *Reinventing Africa: Museums,*

This omission is even more striking due to the new perspective which a study of contributions offers to the central historiographical debate on the relationship between the expansion of missions and the development of (in)formal empire in the nineteenth-century South Pacific region. The islands of the South Pacific were first visited by LMS missionaries in the late eighteenth century and as the missions expanded in the nineteenth century, it became clear that they were among the few successful modern British missions. Missionary success was highly contingent on indigenous support, especially from leaders, given that the missionaries had gone beyond the empire's frontiers and remained beyond them until the late nineteenth century.⁵ The contributions were one of the ways in which South Pacific converts supported the LMS missionaries. Moreover, since the LMS sold the contributions in order to raise money which was sent to its headquarters in London, they formed one of the most important links between the metropolitan side of the LMS, its headquarters and supporters, and the converts in the mission field. Nonetheless, the contributions also linked the converts and those in the metropole by functioning as symbols of missionary success within missionary publications. By studying these publications, it is possible to establish the 'social lives' of these contributions and gain an insight into the relationship between the LMS missions and (in)formal empire around the mid-nineteenth century.

Prior to doing so, it is important to discuss the broader historiographical debates on nineteenth-century missions and, in particular, the relationship between missions and empire. Although historians frequently suggest that there is a relationship between the two due to the roughly similar times of their expansion, few agree on its exact nature. All they seem to agree on is that the relationship was complex.⁶ Beyond this point of agreement different research topics, methodologies and their corresponding arguments have resulted in a diverse and extensive debate. This contrasts starkly with the lack of research on the relationship until the 1960s. When the connections were finally made, missionaries were frequently identified as imperial agents who were laying the groundwork for expansion or supporting the colonial

Material Culture and Popular Imagination in Late Victorian and Edwardian England (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 161; Nicholas Thomas, *Entangled Objects: Exchange, Material Culture, and Colonialism in the Pacific* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1991), 151-162 ; Rosemary Seton, "Reconstructing the museum of the London missionary society," *Material Religion* 8, no. 1 (2012): 98-101; 124. These works neglect contributions completely.

⁵ John Barker, "Where the missionary frontier ran ahead of empire," in *Missions and Empire*, ed. Norman Etherington (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 86, 104-105 ; Thomas, *Entangled Objects*, 155.

⁶ Peter Sherlock, "Missions, colonialism and the politics of agency," in *Evangelists of Empire? Missionaries in Colonial History*, ed. Amanda Barry, Joanna Cruickshank, Andrew Brown-May and Patricia Grimshaw (Melbourne: eScholarship Research Centre, 2008), 14.

state.⁷ These opposite historiographical stances reflect the central question in the current debate: to what extent missionaries played a role in imperialism, whether intentionally or unintentionally. Historians tend to address this with case studies, rather than through broader studies which synthesise scholarship.

Two exceptions to this are Andrew Porter and Norman Etherington, who go beyond restricted case studies. Their nuanced arguments emphasise the diversity of the missionary societies as well as the fact that neither the missions nor the British Empire were unchanging entities.⁸ Yet, despite these complicating factors, they do make more general suggestions. Porter heavily criticises the identification of missions as a form of cultural imperialism. The concept of cultural imperialism posits that empire is not just expanded through military or economic might but that the coloniser enforces their cultural beliefs and systems of thought on the colonised. As a result the colonised are less able to challenge the imperial domination that the imposed mental worlds underpin. Porter opposes using this concept because he argues that that the missions' diversity, disagreements among missionaries and their reliance on those who they sought to convert prevented missions from being forms of cultural imperialism. Instead, he emphasises how missions were sites of cultural interaction, translation and adaptation. His perspective enables a fuller understanding of the many interactions between missions and empire.⁹ Etherington suggests that missions and empire were related through their wider impact on global culture, but qualifies this by calling for the detailed research of actual missions.¹⁰ The petitions for a focus on specific missions and their contexts are reflected in the preponderance of case studies within the historiography. This dissertation will take the contributions of South Pacific Christians as a case study. The contributions offer a focal point but also extend beyond a single mission or missionary. As a result a study of contributions offers an opportunity to reflect on the wider relationship between missions and empire.

The nuanced arguments of Etherington and Porter tend to rely on a growing recognition of the importance of indigenous agency to missions. Indigenous agency is one of the principal topics

⁷ Norman Etherington, "Missions and Empire," in *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume 5: Historiography*, ed. Robin W. Winks (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 306-307.

⁸ Norman Etherington, "Introduction," in *Missions and Empire*, ed. Norman Etherington (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 4-5, 15 ; Andrew Porter, *Religion versus Empire? British Protestant missionaries and overseas expansion, 1700-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), 11-13, 330.

⁹ Andrew Porter, "Cultural Imperialism' and protestant missionary enterprise, 1780-1914," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 25, no. 3 (1997): 367-371, 380-382,388 ; Porter, *Religion versus Empire?* 316.

¹⁰ Etherington, "Introduction," 3-4.

within the historiography on South Pacific missions as well as the more general, postcolonial, studies of the region. Etherington's edited volume *Missions and Empire*, particularly John Barker's chapter, emphasises the significance of indigenous agency as well as the challenges faced by historians who wish to study it.¹¹ Nicholas Thomas criticised the binary view of the South Pacific, which pits indigenous agency and cultural continuity against imperial dominance and an accompanying cultural destruction. Instead, Thomas calls for an approach which focuses on cultural interaction and change which influenced both Westerners and non-Westerners but did not cause the loss of indigenous agency.¹² Such an approach includes taking the religious motivations of converts seriously, as opposed to viewing Christianity as something which was wholly negative for indigenous cultures.¹³ Contributions, the focus of this dissertation, offer a chance to consider indigenous agency and religious devotion, yet they also allow an exploration of the influence of missionaries on their converts' behaviour as well as the limitations of the missionary's transforming potential. Thus, a study of the 'social lives' of South Pacific converts offers a means of studying the relationship between missions and empire without defaulting to either of the binary views which Thomas condemns.

For a study of contributions, older historiographical arguments that are centred on the economic, rather than cultural, aspects of the relationship between missions and empire are also relevant.¹⁴ Brian Stanley emphasises the importance of missionaries' providential perspectives for the mid-nineteenth century expansion of British commerce. Yet, Porter criticises his failure to consider how practical missionary experience influenced missionaries' views on whether commerce and Christianity were complementary. Porter does, however, acknowledge that the isolation of the South Pacific missionaries meant that they needed to engage in some trade to survive. Some encouraged their converts to grow produce which visiting ships could buy and accepted objects as payments.¹⁵ The contributions were far more than simply a form of trade, they symbolised people's conversion and willingness to support

¹¹ Etherington, "Introduction," 7-8 ; Barker, "Where the missionary frontier ran ahead of empire," 92-95.

¹² Nicholas Thomas, *In Oceania: Visions, Artefacts, Histories* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1997), 43-47.

¹³ Barker, "Where the missionary frontier ran ahead of empire," 95, Sherlock, "Missions, colonialism and the politics of agency," 19.

¹⁴ Tony Ballantyne, "The changing shape of the modern British Empire and its historiography," *The Historical Journal* 53, 2 (2010): 451.

¹⁵ Andrew Porter, " 'Commerce and Christianity': The Rise and Fall of a Nineteenth-Century Missionary Slogan," *The Historical Journal*, 28, 3 (1985): 597-599 ; J.P. Sunderland and A. Buzacott, *Mission Life in the Islands of the Pacific being a narrative of the life and labours of the Rev. A. Buzacott, missionary of Rarotonga, for some time co-worker with Rev. John Williams, Martyr of Erromanga* (Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies of the University of the South Pacific, 1985), 90-91, 207 ; Porter, *Religion versus Empire?* 60-61, 146-147.

the LMS. Through this, they represented the joint community of all Christians, in the metropole as well as the converts in the South Pacific within the LMS. Nevertheless, the emphasis which some missionaries placed upon trade needs to be considered as a background factor of the contributions.

Hence, the historiographical debate on the connections between missions and (in)formal empire is defined by diverse approaches and detailed case studies. Nevertheless, these studies are often restricted to the role of missions and missionaries in the field, rather than their impact in the metropole. Thus, there is a need for the studies to extend their focus to the metropole. The representation of the 'social lives' of contributions offers a chance to consider the mission field as well as the metropolitan aspect of missions and can therefore extend the historiographical debate.

Contributions were some of the many objects with which missionaries came into contact in the mission field. It is therefore unsurprising that material culture approaches to the history of missions offer new perspectives. Researchers with an anthropological background use material analyses to consider indigenous agency but they also study how missionaries appropriated indigenous objects. Thomas' work on the latter is important since he emphasises the dual message contained within missionary representations of indigenous material culture: it was a sign of indigenous barbarity yet also a sign of indigenous humanity, which implied their ability to become Christians and achieve salvation.¹⁶ Other work on missions and material culture considers missionary collecting and the exhibitions which missionaries contributed to or that mission societies held. This research emphasises that indigenous objects were sites of cultural interaction and also offered the missionary societies a means of presenting their successes, attracting attention and thus encouraging their audiences to offer them financial support.¹⁷ Given the lack of attention within these studies on contributions, a study of their 'social lives' extends the historiography on missions and material culture whilst also building upon the links these studies identified between missions, material culture and the metropole.

¹⁶ Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution: Christianity, Colonialism and Consciousness in South Africa Volume One* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1991), 17-19, 183-184, 188-197; Thomas, *In Oceania*, 18-19; Thomas, *Entangled Objects*, 151-162.

¹⁷ Karen Jacobs and Chris Wingfield, "Introduction," in *Trophies, Relics, Curios? Missionary Heritage from Africa and the Pacific*, ed. Karen Jacobs, Chantal Knowles and Chris Wingfield (Leiden: Sidestone Press, 2015), 10-12, 17, 19-21; Jeanne Cannizzo, "Gathering souls and objects: Missionary collections," in *Colonialism and the Object: Empire, Material Culture and the Museum*, ed. Tim Barringer and Tom Flynn (London: Routledge, 1998), 153, 157-158, 163-166.

This thesis will examine not only the material nature of the contributions themselves, but also how missionaries represented contributions in their texts. Missionaries were prolific writers and publishers: they wrote (auto)biographies, travel narratives, ethnographies and official narratives. In addition to this, they produced letters and reports for missionary societies, which they in turn edited and republished in their periodicals. Historians have long neglected missionary periodicals as unsuitable secondary sources due to their hagiographical nature and their propaganda-value for missions.¹⁸ However, they are now the subject of a productive historical focus on missionary experiences. These studies investigate the tensions and ambiguities in how the missionaries represented themselves and indigenous people, which in turn reveals the contradictions of (in)formal empire.¹⁹ Other studies identify missionary publications as some of the key ways in which those in the metropole learned about empire, both the general public and specialists such as anthropologists.²⁰ The way in which missionaries represented the people and objects they came into contact with thus needs to be considered in light of their publications' function as propaganda for the LMS, the ambiguous and contradictory nature of their writing as well as the important role they played in shaping people's ideas on empire. A study of the representation of the 'social lives' of contributions can use the findings from this historiography in order to think about the symbolic function which contributions served in addition to the income which they provided for the LMS.

The biographical approach to contributions which looking at their 'social lives' entails draws on a seminal approach and theorisation of material culture, although it will be modified since it will be applied to representations of material culture as well as the objects themselves. The essay collection *The Social Life of Things* contains highly influential essays by Arjun

¹⁸ Etherington, "Missions and Empire," 304-305.

¹⁹ Anna Johnston, *Missionary Writing and Empire, 1800-1860* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 8-10, 202-203 ; Nicholas Thomas, "Colonial Conversions: difference, hierarchy, and history in early twentieth century evangelical propaganda," in *Cultures of Empire A Reader: Colonizers in Britain and the empire in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries*, ed. Catherine Hall (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 304.

²⁰ Susan Thorne, *Congregational Missions and the Making of an Imperial Culture in Nineteenth-Century England* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1999), 6-7, 10 ; Patrick Harries, "Anthropology," in *Missions and Empire*, ed. Norman Etherington (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 238-245 ; Patrick Harries and David Maxwell, "Introduction: The Spiritual in the Secular," in *The Spiritual in the Secular: missionaries and knowledge about Africa*, ed. Patrick Harries and David Maxwell (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Company, 2012), 3-5, 11 ; Esme Cleall, *Missionary Discourses of Difference: Negotiating Otherness in the British Empire, 1840-1900* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 2.

Appadurai and Igor Kopytoff which contributed to the concept of an ‘object-biography’.²¹ Kopytoff argues that commoditisation is a process rather than a static state; therefore the process by which objects become or stop being commodities can be traced and analysed. He terms this the study of the ‘cultural biography of things’.²² Drawing on the ideas on object exchange and value, Appadurai extends Kopytoff’s concepts as he suggests which factors influence the ‘trajectories’²³ of objects. His argument is based on the idea that objects themselves do not carry cultural meaning; their meaning is shaped by their cultural context and in this sense it is always in flux. One consequence of this conceptualisation of an object’s meaning is that objects cannot carry meaning across cultural boundaries. According to Appadurai, objects do not simply move in and out of a commodity phase but are continually subject to tensions over their meaning. These tensions are frequently political, in that they reflect power relations and the attempts of some in society to contest these. Appadurai suggests that objects follow a ‘path’²⁴, one which is heavily influenced by those with more power, but that within the ‘social life’ of an object there can also be ‘diversions’²⁵ from this ‘path’. His concept and the analytical tools which he developed to accompany it thus enable historians to gain an insight into a wider culture and changes within that culture through the analysis of the ‘social life’ of an object.²⁶ Appadurai has since moved on to focus and globalisation and criticises the restricted focus which looking at the ‘social life’ of an object entails; instead he calls for the consideration of materiality on a wider scale.²⁷ Despite his criticisms, the ‘object-biographical’ approach still has much to recommend it; primarily that it enables a consideration of change as opposed to the more static approaches which feature in material culture studies. Moreover, since it focuses on the meanings which objects gain through their cultural context, it is possible to extend this approach to the representation of material culture. The ‘social life’ of an object included the changes in how it was viewed on a symbolic level as well as on a physical level.

²¹ Chris Gosden and Yvonne Marshall, “The Cultural Biography of Objects,” in “The Cultural Biography of Objects,” special issue, *World Archaeology* 31, 2 (1999): 172, 174 ; Wim van Binsbergen, “Commodification: Things, agency, and identities. Introduction,” in *Commodification. Things, Agency, and Identities (The Social Life of Things Revisited)*, ed. Wim van Binsbergen and Peter Geschiere (Münster: Lit Verlag, 2005), 9, 15-17.

²² Igor Kopytoff, “The cultural biography of things: commoditization as a process,” in *The social life of things: commodities in cultural perspective*, ed. Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 66.

²³ Appadurai, “Introduction”, 5.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 18.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 9, 13-18, 25-26 34-35, 57.

²⁷ Arjun Appadurai, “Materiality in the Future of Anthropology,” in *Commodification. Things, Agency, and Identities (The Social Life of Things Revisited)*, ed. Wim van Binsbergen and Peter Geschiere (Münster: Lit Verlag, 2005), 55-62, quoted in Frank Trentmann, “Materiality in the Future of History: Things, Practices and Politics,” in “Special Issue on Material Culture,” special issue, *Journal of British Studies* 48, 2 (2009): 285-286.

There are further factors which make this approach particularly suitable for the study of the relationship between missions and empire. Tim Barringer and Tom Flynn argue that an object-biographical approach offers an insight into ‘the contradictions of colonial culture.’²⁸ The relationship between missions and empire was defined by its complexity and many contradictions. As such, the contributions are a series of objects whose ‘social lives’ provide a point of entry for historians into the contradictions and complexities of the interactions between missions and (in)formal empire. Looking at the representations of contributions and the ways in which their meanings shift or are obscured in missionary publications provide information about how missionary societies wished to represent themselves to their metropolitan audiences.

Contributions as represented within LMS publications offer a case study which can be analysed using both the object-biographical and textual approaches discussed above. This does require an adaptation of the approach outlined by Appadurai and Kopytoff, since the contributions were a class of objects rather than a single object. Moreover, contributions spanned many different types of objects: produce, craft objects and money were all contributed. These objects can be discussed as a group as, at one point in their ‘social lives’, they all found themselves in the cultural context: that of being a contribution. The trajectories of this class of objects can be traced both backwards and forwards in order to identify the other cultural contexts which they found themselves in. Tracing the ‘social lives’ of the contributions made to the LMS in the South Pacific enables a fresh look at the interaction between missions and empire in the area and how missionaries represented these interactions to their metropolitan audiences. As a result, this thesis asks: how the representations of the ‘social lives’ of the contributions made by converts in the South Pacific to the London Missionary Society in missionary publications reflect the relationship between missions and (in)formal empire in the mid-nineteenth century.

The LMS was founded in 1795 as a broad, largely non-conformist, mission society and although it quickly became a largely Congregationalist organisation, its missions maintained its initially intended non-denominational character. Inspired by eighteenth century evangelicalism, it combined an Enlightenment interest in scientific exploration with a belief that the world had to be proselytised before the Last Days. Among its metropolitan supporters

²⁸ Tim Barringer and Tom Flynn, “Introduction,” in *Colonialism and the Object: Empire, Material Culture and the Museum*, ed. Tim Barringer and Tom Flynn (London: Routledge, 1998), 6.

were members of the working as well as the middle classes.²⁹ The islands of the South Pacific were the subject of its first, failed, mission in 1796. Later, in the 1810s and from the 1830s, it saw successes in several islands, including Tahiti, the Cook Islands, then called the Hervey Islands, and Samoa. The LMS missionaries hoped to bring morals and practical skills to the, in their view, deeply sinful and degraded people of the South Pacific. The mid-nineteenth century LMS missions in the South Pacific are a particularly suitable case study for an exploration of the relationship between missions and empire since they were active and successful in the region before the official expansion of the British into the region, directly experienced French expansion in Tahiti, New Caledonia and the Loyalty islands as well as due to their close contacts with supporters in the Australian colonies.³⁰ Hence the ‘social lives’ of the contributions made to the LMS provide an insight into the many different interactions between its South Pacific missions and empire.

The sources through which these ‘social lives’ will be traced are LMS periodicals and memoirs written by its missionaries or associates. The volumes of the *Missionary Magazine* and its successor *The Chronicle of the London Missionary Society (Chronicle)* for the years 1841-1871 form the main source base for this thesis. These combined letters and reports from LMS missionaries with news about the LMS’ metropolitan affairs, its supporters and appeals from its directors. Anna Johnston has extensively discussed the issues of the LMS periodicals, which were intended as fund-raising propaganda, as sources. The, exclusively male, missionaries’ letters and reports which featured were heavily edited and redacted by people without direct experience of the missions. As a result, the periodicals feature common tropes of heroic missionaries, either spectacular successes or failures and misguided indigenous resistance.³¹ The heavily mediated nature of the LMS periodicals is further evidenced by the translated speeches and letters from South Pacific Christians which they sometimes contained.³² These were usually translated by the missionary, in the field or in the metropole, and there is no way of verifying their contents with the original letters in the scope of this research. Given the heavily processed nature of the letters and reports which featured in the

²⁹ Diarmaid MacCulloch, *A History of Christianity* (London: Penguin, 2010), 875-876 ; Comaroff and Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution: Christianity, Colonialism and Consciousness in South Africa Volume One*, 44-45 ; Thorne, *Congregational Missions*, 13-14, 19.

³⁰ *The Library*, School of African and Oriental Studies, accessed February 3, 2016, http://archives.soas.ac.uk/CalmView/GetDocument.ashx?db=Catalog&fname=CWM+guide_CURRENT+VERSION.pdf ; Garrett, *To Live Among the Stars*, 19, 193, 197-200; Barker, “Where the missionary frontier ran ahead of empire,” 88, 93-97; Johnston, *Missionary Writing and Empire*, 115-116.

³¹ Johnston, *Missionary Writing and Empire*, 6-8, 32-33, 126-127.

³² “Polynesia: Rarotonga,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: chiefly relating to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 20, no.247 (December 1856): 258.

periodicals, it seems safe to suggest that translated sources were also altered. This means that it is hard to know what indigenous people thought about the contributions they made and what the missionaries told them about the act of making a contribution. These limitations are why this thesis largely analyses the representation of contributions by the LMS to its metropolitan audiences. Nonetheless, these limitations also offer opportunities, as Johnston eagerly emphasises. She argues persuasively that the periodicals enable historians to analyse the image which the LMS wished to present to its metropolitan audience and to consider how the discourses which characterised them reflected the wider discourses associated with empire.³³ The missionary memoirs extend the temporal perspective of the periodicals and provide supplementary information, especially regarding the first stage of the ‘social lives’ of contributions. By tracing the ‘social lives’ of the contributions made by South Pacific Christians to the LMS through its periodicals and the publications of its missionaries rather than its extensive archives it is possible to explore the dual function contributions had for the LMS. They were both a source of income and something which it could use on a symbolic level, in order to inspire its metropolitan supporters to give it more. Furthermore, the gaps in the information the periodicals and memoirs provide offer an insight into how the LMS wished to represent its relationship with empire.

The ‘social lives’ of contributions can be roughly divided into three stages. Although their ‘paths’ were both more complex and varied than this division suggests, it is a useful analytical tool. The first chapter will look at the trajectories of contributions before they were made, in order to identify how missionaries represented the work of islanders and their own successes. Following this, the moment at the material objects were actually contributed to the LMS will be reconstructed so that its key practical and symbolic functions can be identified. In addition, this will allow for a detailed exploration of the mentality and power relations within the missionary representations of indigenous Christians. Finally, the destinations of contributions and the process of their potential exit from the contribution phase of their ‘social lives’ will be probed so as to identify how their destinations reflected the entanglement of missions and empire in the South Pacific.

Contributions were a form of material culture unique to missions, yet their ‘social lives’ were broader and worldlier than their devotional aspects suggest. Despite the relatively frequent mentions of contributions within missionary publications, in particular periodicals, they have

³³ Johnston, *Missionary Writing and Empire*, 6.

been largely neglected. This omission is especially conspicuous when it is noted that they offer historians a chance to bring together two productive methodological approaches which do not appear to have been brought together in a sustained way with regards to LMS' South Pacific missions: the analysis of missionary texts and the analysis of missionary material culture. Their suitability for this dual approach reflects the dual trajectories of contributions, which in turn reflected the multiple functions they had for the LMS. They were literally given to and used by the LMS, but, perhaps more importantly; contributions had their own symbolic trajectories in missionary publications. A greater insight into their 'social lives', then, reveals how entangled the LMS and its missionaries were within the links of empire in the South Pacific region and in those which led back to the metropole.

Chapter One: Creation and Cultivation.

Contributions did not simply materialise; craft objects had to be created and produce had to be cultivated by the Pacific islanders. These were either traded so that islanders could contribute money, or contributed in kind. The islanders were not the only ones seeking to do so for the mission, the missionaries frequently reported on their own attempts to create and cultivate civilisation in their mission fields. The missionaries' descriptions of the roles they played in supporting and encouraging indigenous creation or cultivation were framed by wider discourses around civilisation and industriousness. Yet, the creation and cultivation of contributions do not feature strongly in the missionary publications, particularly in the periodicals. Instead, they come up in the texts more incidentally. In order to consider the creation or cultivation stage of the 'social life' of contributions this chapter will try to connect the incidental mentions of it within missionary publications. In addition, hints within the sources about the cultivation, creation or trade of produce and objects which were not necessarily contributions will be used to gain more insight into this stage. Moreover, reading against the grain makes it possible to identify contradictions within the missionary representations of the creation and cultivation of contributions.

Although there were similarities between the trading of items to raise money for contributions, the creation and cultivation of contributions, there were also many differences in how they were represented. It is therefore useful to consider them separately. Since produce, especially in the form of arrow-root, cocoa-nut oil and, later in the 1860s, cocoa-nut fibre, formed the bulk of contributions made in kind, its cultivation by Pacific islanders will be the main focus. The missionary representations of this cultivation attributed roles to themselves as well as the islanders and hence offer important insights into how the missionaries viewed and represented indigenous involvement within the 'social lives' of contributions. Following this, there will be a brief consideration of craft objects and the trade which resulted in the money islanders sometimes contributed. An analysis how objects came to be intended as contributions will be explored in light of Appadurai's concepts of 'object-paths' and 'diversions' from these 'paths'.³⁴ Do the missionary sources indicate that there was an in-between stage for those objects which become contributions? Finally these ideas will be drawn together in order to probe at the nature of the relationship between missions and empire

³⁴ Appadurai, "Introduction," 18.

which these representations of the creation or cultivation stage of the ‘social lives’ of contributions reflect.

I. Cultivating contributions, cultivating Christians.

Landscapes and especially the plants within them which could provide sustenance or useful products were often described in missionary memoirs as missionaries tapped into established natural history narratives about the South Pacific.³⁵ Missionaries journeyed through the islands on which they were stationed as well as further afield in order to extend their missions. Their reports on these journeys usually contained descriptions of the landscapes and state of cultivation on the islands. These tended to focus on either the luxuriance or barrenness of the landscapes.³⁶ In part missionary descriptions reflected the range of landscapes in the Pacific. However, they were also contradictory. In spite of the luxuriance they noted in places such as Tahiti, Rarotonga and Samoa, missionaries tended to focus on their roles in encouraging cultivation. They did so in two ways; either through the introduction of new food types, both plants and animals, or by encouraging the islanders to process the things they grew in order to be able to participate in commerce. Both Aaron Buzacott and John Williams eagerly emphasised their roles in their memoirs, the latter even included a table of the crafts, plants and animals he had introduced.³⁷ Their memoirs offer further insight into the contradictions of the missionary representation of South Pacific produce. In *A narrative of missionary enterprises in the South Sea Islands*, which will be called *Missionary Enterprises* in this thesis, *Williams* included an extensive description of the plantations on Rarotonga:

for on our arrival, we were astonished to see the *taro* and *kape*, the *ti* and sugar cane growing luxuriantly nearly down to the edge of the sea. The whole island was also in a state of cultivation, and I do not recollect having witnessed any thing more beautiful than the scene presented to me, when standing on the side of one of the hills, and looking towards the sea shore. In the first place, there are rows of superb chestnut trees, *inocarpus*, planted at equal distances, and stretching from

³⁵ Edmond, *Representing the South Pacific*, 104-108.

³⁶ Williams, *Missionary enterprises*, 489-499; “Mangaia,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle; chiefly relating to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 7, no.80 (January 1843): 9 ; “Erromanga,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle; chiefly relating to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 7, no.87 (August 1843): 126 ; “Missionary Voyage of the Camden,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle; relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 5, no. 57 (February 1841): 24.

³⁷ Rev. A. Buzacott and Rev. J.P Sunderland, eds., *Mission Life in the Islands of the Pacific being a narrative of the life and labours of the Rev. A. Buzacott, missionary of Rarotonga, for some time co-worker with the Rev. John Williams, Martyr of Erromanga* (London: John Snow and Co., 1866 ; Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies of the University of the South Pacific / The Cook Islands Library & Museum Society, 1985), 89-92, citations refer to the 1985 edition ; Williams, *Missionary enterprises*, 579.

the mountain's base to the sea, with a space between each row of about half a mile wide. This space is divided into small *taro* beds, which are dug four foot deep, and can be irrigated at pleasure. These average about half an acre each. The embankments round each bed are thrown up with a slope leaving a flat surface upon the top of six or eight feet in width. The lowest parts are planted with *taro*, and the sides of the embankment with *kape* or gigantic *taro*, while on the top are placed at regular intervals, small beautifully shaped bread-fruit-trees.³⁸

This description is worth including in full as it indicates how complex plantations on Rarotonga were when the missionaries arrived; it is also all the more remarkable as Williams and Buzacott focused on the lack of available produce for commerce, such as cocoa-nuts. Buzacott even complained about the lack of readily available food when his own ran out. He also stressed the vulnerability of the produce cultivated by Rarotongans to hurricanes.³⁹ Rod Edmond argued that nineteenth-century missionary representations of South Pacific islanders were marked by contradictions and instability due to the interaction of ethnological discourses, from explorers, and evangelical discourses, around converting child-like heathens.⁴⁰ This instability can be extended to how they viewed the landscape: even though the indigenous peoples on some of the islands had clearly cultivated the land, the missionaries still came to focus on the role which they played in encouraging cultivation for a more varied and disaster-resilient diet or commerce. When considering how the missionaries represented the cultivation stage of contributions, it is essential to recognise these contradictions. They suggest that the missionaries would have seen and represented islanders' work cultivating produce in different ways, depending on whether they had converted.

In spite of the luxuriant vegetation on some of the islands, cultivation was not necessarily easy, especially on the islands with less abundance due to the soil or climate. As a result when discussing the growth of produce both for commerce and for contributions, the missionaries emphasised the importance of industry. Industriousness was a virtue which the missionaries keenly encouraged in their converts, both scholars and church members. Nineteenth-century Non-conformism was infused with ideas on the connection between industriousness and virtue. Jean and John Comaroff discuss this extensively and argue that the connection between civilisation, industry, commerce and Christian virtues was a fundamental feature of the mind-set of LMS missionaries in Southern Africa in the nineteenth century.⁴¹ This mind-

³⁸ Williams, *Missionary enterprises*, 206.

³⁹ Williams, *Missionary enterprises*, 166-168, 269-270, 497 ; Buzacott and Sunderland, eds, *Mission Life*, 38-39, 39-92.

⁴⁰ Edmond, *Representing the South Pacific*, 108.

⁴¹ Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution, Volume Two: The Dialectics of Modernity on a South African Frontier* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1997), 167-173.

set also featured in the writing of LMS missionaries about other areas, including in the South Pacific, in which they frequently used the increased industriousness of those they sought to convert or had converted as a sign of their successes.⁴² It dovetailed well with the discourses, discussed by Edmond, which portrayed those in the South Pacific as child-like and in need of civilisation. Industry and the commerce it enabled countered the sinful idleness or the warfare, idolatry and games which had characterised heathen life in the region. Converted islanders not only industriously cultivated their produce but spent their free time learning more about and practicing their faith.⁴³ Older habits did occasionally resurface: an October 1844 letter in the *Missionary Magazine* suggested that the Tahitians had come to neglect their plantations due to fighting a war.⁴⁴ Nonetheless, those industrious islanders who diligently tended their plantations were able to grow more than they needed and thus enter the world of commerce by trading their surplus. The islanders would trade with visiting whalers obtaining decent, English, clothing, useful tools and money.⁴⁵ In addition to this, they could buy or barter for devotional texts and scripture translations from the LMS. Missionaries asserted that the latter was a sign of their success; people had exchanged weapons for bibles, savagery for civilisation.⁴⁶ The islanders, who industriously cultivated their plantations and gardens, were thus themselves cultivated by the missionaries as they were drawn into the commerce and civilisation of a Christian England.

One of the few direct mentions of islanders cultivating their contributions was made in a letter from the Rev. William Gill, of Rarotonga. In August 1827 he wrote that ‘[t]hose of the

⁴² “South Africa: Caledon Institution,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle; relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 6, no.71 (April 1842): 60 ; “Thursday, May 9th – The Annual Meeting,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: chiefly relating to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 14, no.169 (June 1850): 84-85 ; “Polynesia: Savage Island,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: chiefly relating to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 26, no.318, n.s. no.35 (November 1862): 314.

⁴³ “Individual and Family Life in Samoa,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: chiefly relating to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 16, no.196 (September 1852): 203-205 ; “Fruits of the Gospel in Rarotonga,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle; relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 11, no.137 (October 1847): 158.

⁴⁴ “Arrival of the Missionary Ship at Hobart Town,” *The Evangelical Magazine and Missionary Chronicle* n.s. 23 (March 1845): 159.

⁴⁵ “Thursday, May 11th: The Annual Meeting,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: chiefly relating to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 18, no. 217 (June 1854):152 ; Williams, *Missionary enterprises*, 583 ; Buzacott and Sunderland, eds, *Mission Life*, 92-93.

⁴⁶ “Samoa: the lion changed into the lamb,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle; relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 10, no.127 (December 1846): 178, “Thursday May 10: The Annual Public Meeting,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle; relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 13, no.157 (June 1849):85-86 ; “Polynesia: Journal of a visit to the island of Maupiti,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: chiefly relating to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 16, no.188 (January 1852):4 ; “Thursday, May 13th.— The Annual Meeting,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: chiefly relating to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 16, no.193 (June 1852): 115.

natives, united in classes for instruction, have been diligent during the past year in planting and weeding their patches of arrow-root for the benefit of the Society.’⁴⁷ His use of the word ‘diligent’ brings to mind industriousness. The industry of the islanders is even more virtuous as they are not working for their own profit, but to support the LMS. The idea that the islanders’ cultivation or creation of a contribution symbolised their commitment to the mission and to their faith was echoed by the Rev. George Gill in a June 1848 letter, published in the *Missionary Magazine*:

You will observe that the amount of contributions in money is small; but the amount of personal and individual labour, required in the manufacture of the arrow-root and the fishing-net, gives a pleasing proof that they love the cause of Christ, not in word only, but in deed and in truth.⁴⁸

Intriguingly, the missionaries usually failed to describe the actions which cultivating contributions entailed. W.Gill’s mention of ‘planting’ and ‘weeding’ is actually a rare detail, yet still tells the reader little about the actual process of cultivating the produce. Other hints about the work entailed in cultivating contributions both had yams as their subject. The Rev. S. Macfarlane reported that the lack of fertile soil in Lifu, present-day Lifou, meant that people had to spend so much time cultivating their produce that he did not have as much time to teach them as he would like.⁴⁹ Children were drawn away from the mission schools by the effort that harvesting yams demanded, according to the Rev. J.P. Sunderland in another letter.⁵⁰ Again, these comments highlighted the hard work which cultivation and, by extension, the cultivation of contributions required in the South Pacific, but gave almost no information about the practical aspects of cultivation. Appadurai conceptualises the ‘social lives’ of objects in terms of their cultural contexts, the meanings which people attribute to them.⁵¹ Thinking about the cultivation stage in these terms allows another understanding of the gaps in the missionary descriptions. The actual work the cultivation entailed did not necessarily matter; the intentions and conduct of the islanders who did the work were more important for the missionaries representing these contributions to their audiences in the metropole. This stage of the ‘social life’ of a contribution as represented had a separate

⁴⁷ “Missionary Liberality in the Hervey Islands,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle; relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 7, no.87 (August 1843):128.

⁴⁸ “Mangaia: Encouraging state of the mission,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle; relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 13, no.152 (January 1849): 11.

⁴⁹ “Polynesia: Review of the first year of missionary labour in the island of Lifu,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 25, no.299, n.s. 16 (April 1861): 85.

⁵⁰ “Polynesia: Nengoné. Loyalty Islands,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 20, no.239 (April 1856): 64.

⁵¹ Appadurai, “Introduction”, 14-15.

cultural context to the actual stage of its 'social life' in the South Pacific. Within the missionary representation of the cultivation of contributions, the actual work involved was obscured, despite missionaries' focus on the diligence and industriousness of the islanders. This apparently contradictory attitude, celebrating their industry yet neglecting to discuss it in detail initially seems hard to explain. It comes down to the new context which the missionary representations offered the cultivation stage of the 'social lives' of contributions. In their new context, they were part of a fund-raising effort as much, if not more so, as an exercise in providing information. The fact that the islanders were industrious was important for the former, since it functioned as a sign of missionary success whereas extra information on the work they actually did was extraneous.

Further details about the actual process of cultivating contributions as well as a further insight into the ways in which missionaries represented these processes come from descriptions of hurricanes which destroyed plantations and even resulted in the near-starvation of islanders. Descriptions of the experience and after-effects of hurricanes were common in missionary publications. They indicated how vulnerable some of the main crops which Pacific islanders gave as contributions were to the forces of nature. The salt water from the coastal floods which accompanied hurricanes destroyed the crops on plantations and left islanders with little food. Cocoa-nuts were blown from the trees, which were either broken or felled.⁵² The focus on the destruction of cocoa-nut trees also fed into the visual depictions missionary publications made of hurricanes, such as in a *Missionary Magazine* depiction of the April 1850 hurricane in Samoa.⁵³ (Image 1) The tall cocoa-nut trees, a commonplace in missionary illustrations of the South Pacific, in the centre are what draw the viewer into the scene as opposed to the people and destroyed house in the foreground. The choice of the editors to use this image to illustrate the hurricane indicates how much the cocoa-nut tree was the subject of LMS interest, especially as a source of income through contributions. This picture simultaneously gives a sense of their grandeur and their vulnerability, perhaps also giving a wider message about the position of the LMS missions in the region. Just like the cocoa-nut tree, the LMS missions in the South Pacific saw soaring successes. Yet the missions remained vulnerable to heathen opposition and negative European influences.

⁵² "Destructive Hurricane in Rarotonga," *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle; relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 10, no.125(October 1846): 155-156; "The Hurricane in Mangaia," *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle; relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 11, no.134 (July 1847): 114 ; Buzacott and Sunderland, eds, *Mission Life*, 91.

⁵³ "Hurricane in Samoa," *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 15, no.177 (February 1851): 21.

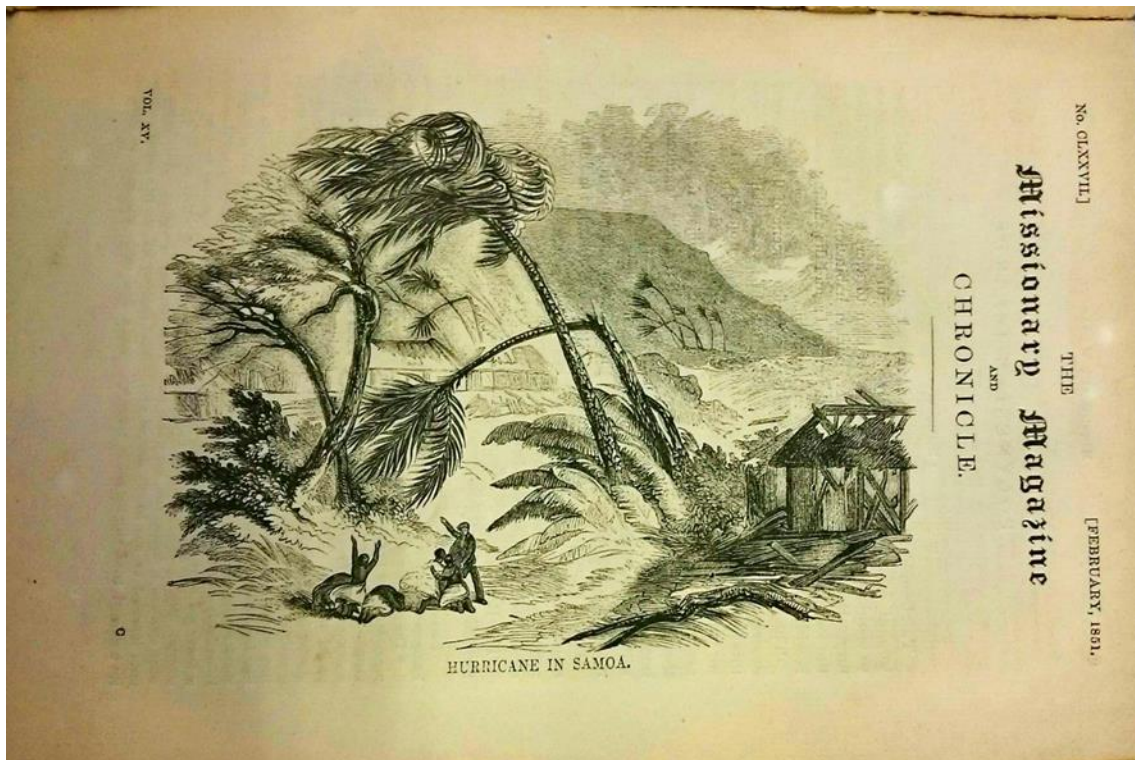


Image 1: An engraving showing the destruction wrought by a hurricane in Samoa. “Hurricane in Samoa,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 15, no.177 (February 1851): 21. Photograph taken by author.

Providential beliefs characterised Non-conformism, although they rarely featured in descriptions of hurricanes. The lack of fatalities in the 1850 hurricane on Samoa meant that it was thought to have the potential to encourage spiritual progress.⁵⁴ Usually, though, descriptions focused on the need for people to re-establish their plantations and re-build their homes.⁵⁵ G. Gill’s description of the events following a hurricane on Mangaia indicated that the islanders prioritised their source of food and income over a decent home:

At present the mass of the people are dwelling in very inferior and unhealthy buildings; their time and labour, as I have intimated, having been so fully occupied in cultivation.⁵⁶

The devastation wrought by hurricanes is brought home by the fact that he wrote this letter two years after the storm hit and the plantations had still not recovered.

⁵⁴ “Polynesian Islands. Samoa. Destructive Hurricane,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 15, no.177 (February 1851): 22.

⁵⁵ “VI.—Hurricane in Rarotonga and Mangaia,” *The Chronicle of the London Missionary Society for the Year 1867* (October 1, 1867): 211.

⁵⁶ Mangaia: Encouraging state of the mission,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle; relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 13, no.152 (January 1849): 10.

The praise within missionary publication of the dedication of islanders who cultivated produce in spite of tribulations indicates that the cultivation stage of the ‘social life’ of contributions was seen in conjunction with the contribution stage. These contributions to the LMS gained an extra moral dimension; they were not just symbols of industriousness and missionary success but of remarkable devotion and virtue. Thus, the missionary publications took on particularly laudatory tones when those hit by disaster made contributions. G. Gill’s 1848 letter, quoted earlier, celebrated the devotion of those who contributed despite the hurricane they had experienced.⁵⁷ At the 1850 annual meeting of the LMS, a report of which was published in the *Missionary Magazine*, the 1846 hurricane which hit the Hervey Islands was again a topic of interest. The work of communities towards recovery was mentioned, yet, the discussion ended with a hyperbolic note on their contributions: ‘Contributions for the year amounted to 120l. — an example of liberality, considering their very limited resources, almost unexampled in the history of Modern Missions.’⁵⁸ These islanders, who had only recently been converted to Christianity, were the ones setting the example to those supporters of the LMS in Britain. This emphasis on what the islanders gave, despite the limitations they faced due to the disasters, was probably linked to more than a celebration of their industriousness and piety. The LMS faced continual funding short-falls and their reports frequently lamented this fact.⁵⁹ An emphasis on the generosity of the Pacific converts worked as a critique of those in Britain who were less munificent. These discussions within missionary publications would thus have been in the context of the LMS’ attempts to shame their supporters at home into increasing the amount they gave, something which will be further explored in Chapter Two. This could be an important reason why there is more information about the cultivation of contribution when they are discussed in relation to a disaster.

⁵⁷ Mangaia: Encouraging state of the mission,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle; relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 13, no.152 (January 1849): 11.

⁵⁸ “Thursday, May 9th — The Annual Meeting,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 14, no.169 (June 1850): 85.

⁵⁹ “London Missionary Society,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle; relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 5, no.63 (August 1841): 122-123 ; “Thursday May 10th. — The Annual Meeting,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 19, no.229 (June 1855): 177 ; “Anniversary of the London Missionary Society: Seventy-second general meeting,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 30, no.361, n.s. no.78 (June 1866): 155.

II. Creating and earning contributions. Moving towards civilisation.

The craft objects contributed to the LMS in the South Pacific were highly varied, in part reflecting the cultural diversity of the region. This factor and the uncommon, more incidental mentions of craft objects which were contributed make any attempt to trace their creation challenging. The main craft objects mentioned in the LMS periodicals were mats, cloth and baskets.⁶⁰ Although information about their creation is sparse, a description of the mats given by Samoans indicates creation was labour intensive: ‘87 fine mats, many of which would employ three or four months in making’.⁶¹ The memoirs mentioned craft objects more than the periodicals but also neglected discussing their creation. References, such as that of Buzacott, to the use of mats by Rarotongans indicate that although they were being drawn into English civilisation and material culture, Rarotongans continued to use and make traditional craft objects.⁶² This widespread use might actually have made the craft objects seem unimportant and their creation largely irrelevant to the metropolitan audiences the missionaries had in mind when they wrote. Descriptions of cultivating in the face of disaster had biblical overtones and lent themselves better to moralising. Yet, since craft objects were also mentioned less frequently than contributions in the form of produce and money, the lack of information could simply derive from this fact.

The contributions which were made in money are also hard to trace in the sources, despite the frequency with which contributions were made in this form. Usually, the sum of all the contributions was mentioned without any description of how it was obtained. Nevertheless, just as with the cultivation of produce, there was more information available about how money was earned when the means through which this usually happened were prevented. Buzacott celebrated the visits of ships to Rarotonga to stock up and trade with its islanders.⁶³ Letters from one of his successors, E.R.W. Krause, in 1862 indicated that this main source of income was not completely reliable. The island’s main source of income was the whaling fleet and its failure had initially threatened the island’s contributions for that year, the Rarotongans

⁶⁰ See Appendix One: Contributions named in the *Missionary Magazine and Chronicle (1841-1866)* and in the *Missionary Chronicle of the London Missionary Society (1867-1871)* for the full list of craft objects contributed.

Thomas, *In Oceania*, 133-136.

⁶¹“South Seas. Samoa. — Missionary Offerings of the Young,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle; relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 11, no.135 (August 1847): 122.

⁶² Buzacott and Sunderland, eds, *Mission Life*, 218-219.

⁶³*Ibid.*, 93, 238.

generously gave produce and craft objects instead.⁶⁴ The Samoans also came to largely make contributions in the form of money. Following his mention of their yearly contributions, the Rev. T. Powell attributed the trade with which the Samoans earned that which they gave as contributions to the work of the missionaries in introducing Christianity and, by extension, commerce: ‘now the people, who had no commerce before the Gospel was introduced, have an export trade in cocoa-nut oil and cotton of some £40,000 or £50,000 per annum.’⁶⁵ This brings the discussion back to the arguments of the Comaroffs about the mind-set of missionaries and the way in which they viewed indigenous participation in trade as a sign of their success in inculcating Christian virtues of industry. In most cases produce was offered for trade by the islanders of the South Pacific and the representation of the work which enabled the islanders to earn money was the same as that which was discussed above. Nonetheless, trading drew the islanders more closely into civilisation than the industrious cultivation of produce or objects for their own consumption. The eagerness of missionaries to draw attention to the trade their converts engaged with and the consequences of this for the links between missions and empire will be further discussed later on in this chapter.

III. Labour or virtues? Missionary mind-sets and representation.

One part of the cultivation or creation stage of the ‘social life’ of contributions is particularly challenging to identify in the sources: the point at which it came to be intended as a contribution. Was becoming a contribution part of the ‘path’ which the object was intended for or was it diverted from this ‘path’ in order to become a contribution? Since the craft objects were reported to be in use in the missionary memoirs, it might be suggested that these objects were less likely to be intended as contributions from the moment of their creation. However, this was also the case for the forms of produce which made up the bulk of contributions. The missionaries indicated that islanders could not only contribute this produce, but use it in order to trade with visiting ships. If the things contributed could also be used in other ways by the islanders themselves that suggests that contributions were objects which had been diverted from their ‘path’ or common use.

When considering produce an additional question arises about how it was processed and prepared for long distance trade so that it would be suitable as a contribution. Arrowroot

⁶⁴ “Rarotonga: Liberality of the people— prosperous state of the educational institution,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 26, no.318, n.s. no.35 (November 1862): 316 ; “Polynesia: Rarotonga,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 27, no.323, n.s. no.40 (April 1863): 93.

⁶⁵ “I.—Samoa,” *The Chronicle of the London Missionary Society for the Year 1868* (April 1, 1868): 63.

could either be left in its raw form, when left in a dark cool place it would keep for about 6 months, or it could be processed into arrow-root flour; this flour was the starch of the tubers and kept indefinitely.⁶⁶ Since the missionaries mentioned arrowroot it was most probably not processed and this explains the lack of information about the processing of arrowroot. In terms of whether and when it was diverted from its 'path', arrowroot was commonly consumed in the South Pacific. However, W. Gill's mention that the islanders of Rarotonga worked on 'their patches of arrow-root for the benefit of the Society' suggests that arrowroot could be cultivated for contributions rather than later diverted from another 'path' onto the 'path' towards becoming a contribution.⁶⁷ The lack of information given about the processing of cocoa-nuts to produce cocoa-nut oil is a more surprising oversight. It might be expected that any extra industry required for the production of a contribution would enhance its edifying value for the missionaries' metropolitan audiences. The work required in processing cocoa-nuts in order to obtain the cocoa-nut fibre, which became an important form contributions took in the 1860s, was emphasised in unique comments by the Rev. W.G. Lawes, of Savage Island or Niué:

The people have done their utmost. There is scarcely a cocoa-nut, such as is used for fibre, to be had in the whole island. Much has been done from a desire to outstrip others; but still we feel sure much has been done from a sincere love to Christ and to promote His glory. The fibre is a good deal of trouble to prepare, and it is only the fibre of ripe, newly gathered nuts that will sell.⁶⁸

Lawes also celebrated the piety of converts which he saw represented in the labour they put into preparing their arrowroot and in this sense he appears to have mentioned work which other missionary descriptions obscured in their descriptions of indigenous virtue.⁶⁹ In terms of the cocoa-nuts, it seems likely that the moment at which they were diverted from a more general 'path' to the 'path' of becoming a contribution was linked to when they began to be processed. At this point they could also be a commodity for trade, though, so it is hard to suggest when their 'diversion' was definitely one which would lead them to the contribution stage. The challenges in identifying when objects came onto a contribution 'path' might

⁶⁶ Dirk. H.R. Spennemann, "Traditional arrowroot production and utilization in the Marshall Islands," *Journal of Ethnobiology* 14, 2 (1994): 225.

⁶⁷ "Missionary Liberality in the Hervey Islands," *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle; relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 7, no.87 (August 1843): 128.

⁶⁸ "Polynesia: Glad tidings from Niuè or Savage Island," *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 30, no.362, n.s. no.79 (July 1866): 205-206.

⁶⁹ "Anniversary of the London Missionary Society: Seventy-first general meeting," *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 29, no.349, n.s. no.66 (June 1865): 115.

derive from the restrictive nature of Appadurai's concepts. His arguments rest on the idea of objects having one main 'path', heavily influenced by the will of those with power in a society. A useful adaptation of his concepts could be the idea of multiple potential 'paths' for objects, rather than a 'path' with 'diversions'. Cocoa-nuts and arrow-root could be consumed on the island, processed for trade or become a contribution. The missionary sources do not indicate that any of these uses were restricted. This lack of definition of the exact 'path' of produce would also have enabled more flexibility in the case of destruction wrought by a hurricane, when it could have been helpful if more could be consumed on the island.

The information in the missionary publications is insufficient to claim that there might have been an in-between phase within the 'social life' of contributions, from the cultivation or creation stage to the contribution phase. It could have been the case for the contributions made in money, the point at which the money was earned through trade could have served as this phase since the islanders were doing work to process what they were selling into something which they could contribute. In the other cases, there is not enough information to suggest that there was specifically an in-between phase in the 'social lives' of things which went on to be contributed. Thinking about the creation or cultivation stage of the 'social lives' of contributions in terms of multiple potential 'paths' seems more productive for an understanding of contributions than thinking about 'paths', 'diversions' and in-between stages. After all, the islanders contributed objects which they did not solely produce for the LMS. This anchored the contributions more within the larger societal changes, towards civilisation and the virtuous industry which would accompany it, that the missionaries wished to introduce to their converts.

Finally, the question arises about how the cultivation or creation stage of the 'social lives' of contributions made by South Pacific islanders reflected the relationship between missions and empire. The cultivation and earning of contributions drew the islanders further into a culture of commerce and long-distance trade, mainly with Europeans. This was not only the case with contributions; the missionaries also aimed to introduce produce which the islanders could trade themselves. Nonetheless, the LMS often took those same tradable objects as contributions. Given this, the comments of Williams at the end of his memoirs are particularly interesting. Williams was eager to promote the benefits of missions for Britain and it is striking that he did so in terms reminiscent of imperial relations:

I firmly believe that, in a few years, cargoes of coffee, as well as of arrow-root, cocoa-nut oil, and sugar, will be shipped by our converts at the Missionary

stations in the South Sea islands. Ought not a great and mighty nation like England, with the generosity which is allied to her true greatness, to put forth her hand, and help her infant offspring, who have been raised from barbarism, and brought into national existence, by the benevolent efforts of her own subjects, especially as her own beloved sovereign is styled the Protector of the Polynesian isles.⁷⁰

This quote indicates that Williams worked with a mind-set in which he, as an Englishman, knew what was best for those in the South Pacific. The islanders were the ‘infant offspring’ of the English, in other words, they needed to be guided by the English missionaries in matters of trade as well as of religion. It is also in keeping with the discourses on those in the South Pacific which Edmond discussed and those analysed by the Comaroffs. These views are echoed by a footnote in an earlier chapter in *Missionary Enterprises* when Williams discussed attempts by the LMS to encourage the production of cotton cloth:

* While the anxiety of the Directors of the Society to promote the industry of the native converts admits of the highest commendation, I do not think that it is generally desirable to attempt the introduction of complex manufactures among an infant people. A nation in such a state should rather be encouraged to direct its energies to the production of the raw material, and to exchange that with the mother countries for manufactured articles.⁷¹

Here Britain, although it did not formally control the islands on which the LMS missionaries worked, was a ‘mother country’ along with the other civilised nations which could turn the cotton into cloth more effectively than the islanders of the South Pacific who had only just left a state of savagery. His comments indicate that there were power relations, ‘Politics’,⁷² in Appadurai’s words, which influenced the ‘paths’ which the things those in the South Pacific cultivated took. Trade with Europeans for money, rather than in kind, and making contributions to the LMS were both ‘object-paths’ which the entry of Europeans into the region had brought. The power relations also could have resulted in the islanders selling produce which had not or barely been processed, ‘raw material’ in other words, as opposed to their craft objects, which required skilled work. In consequence, detailed descriptions of the processes which contributions underwent were considered irrelevant for metropolitan audiences. The hard work which those in the South Pacific put into creating, cultivating or earning their contributions was relevant since it served as evidence of the successes of the missions and of how the missionaries had encouraged trade. Yet, the skilled work needed to

⁷⁰ Williams, *Missionary enterprises*, 581.

⁷¹ Ibid., 269.

⁷² Appadurai, “Introduction”, 57.

create or process contributions was unnecessary for the missionaries to mention when they wanted to use their converts as examples for those at home.

IV. Conclusion.

The relative paucity of information about the creation and cultivation stages of the contributions and the gaps within the information with the missionary publications do contain thus suggest that the missionaries representations of this stage of the ‘social lives’ of contributions were mainly interested in advertising their successes and providing edifying examples. Perhaps this is related to the mind-set of, at least, some missionaries, as evidenced in the quotes from *Missionary Enterprises* discussed above. Given that the Pacific islanders were seen as child-like, their work on cultivation, creation and processing produce was not interesting in itself. Instead, their pious attitudes, industry and persistence in the face of hardship were more interesting for the LMS as they were examples of behaviour which it wanted to encourage in its metropolitan readers. The details of cultivation and creation could not be moralised, the attitudes of the islanders could be. This moralising, in turn, enabled the LMS to use the examples of contributions to attempt to persuade those at home to provide it with more financial support. Such attempts were also visible in the missionary representations of the following stage of the ‘social life’ of a contribution: the contribution stage.

Chapter two: Making, offering or gifting? Contributing as a process.

At a basic level, craft objects, produce or money entered the contribution phase of their ‘social lives’ when they were contributed. Yet, the seemingly simple and brief act of making a contribution was more significant than it appeared. It was something which connected converts in the mission fields with the supporters of the LMS in Britain. As a result, descriptions of the point at which contributions were made framed this process within a range of discourses about the roles which those in the Pacific and those at home should play for the LMS. Moreover, a range of meanings could be attributed to these roles. Through an exploration of the moment or event at which contributions tended to be made it is possible to begin to reconstruct the context of making a contribution. The descriptions of the events at which contributions were made indicate that they could be adapted in the face of local situations, for instance contributions to established missions or contributions by children. These adaptations might be said to have resulted in there being multiple ‘paths’ to becoming a contribution.

The representations of these ‘paths’ were sometimes contradictory and these contradictions will be explored in order to gain a greater understanding of the meaning of contributions themselves and what they symbolised within missionary publications. This exploration considers how we might best understand the point at which contributions became contributions in theoretical terms. Were they made, offered or gifted? Making emphasises the act of contributing, offering reflects the language used in the periodicals and gifting relates to the influential conceptualisation of gift-giving which Marcel Mauss developed. To Mauss, gift-giving was not simply an act freely undertaken by an individual, but a form of exchange shaped by relationships of reciprocal obligations within less developed societies.⁷³ These, more theoretical questions, should enable a probing of the contradictions within the sources and hence offer more insight into the contexts of contributions and whether their ‘social lives’ reflected connections between missions and empire. Alongside a reconstruction of the contexts of the moments at which objects became contributions, the functions these events served for the LMS and for the local communities needs to be considered. For the indigenous Christians of the South Pacific, contributions could serve as an assertion of community membership, local as well as transnational. The LMS, on the other hand, seemed to focus especially on mission station contributions in order to call for their home supporters to do and

⁷³ Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: The form and reason for exchange in archaic societies*, trans. W.D. Halls (London: Routledge, 1990), 3, 13.

give more. The events at which items or money were contributed to the LMS were among, if not the, shortest periods in the ‘social lives’ of this class of objects. Despite this, this short stage within the ‘social life’ of a contribution was the one most heavily featured in the missionary periodicals. The representations of it within missionary publications give an insight into the range of practical functions contributions held as well as the links between the LMS South Pacific missions and empire.

I. The May Meeting.

In January 1846 the *Missionary Magazine* included a letter from the Rev. Thomas Slatyer, of the island of Upolu, Samoa, about the May Meetings held at his mission station, Saluafatu, the previous year. It was placed under the heading ‘CHRISTIAN LIBERALITY IN SAMOA’.⁷⁴ ‘Christian liberality’ was a phrase the LMS was particularly keen on using in its descriptions of contributions made at home and abroad.⁷⁵ It indicated that people gave freely and that the contributions which the LMS received were plentiful. The connotations of this term will be explored in more detail later. First, the event at which this liberality was seen needs to be discussed: the May Meeting, which was sometimes termed the Jubilee, Anniversary, or Annual Meeting.⁷⁶ May was the month of the anniversary of the founding of the LMS in 1795. It was marked by special church services as well as the LMS’ general meeting, which was held in Exeter Hall, London, and attracted thousands of people by the 1840s.⁷⁷ It was also the month of people’s annual contributions to the LMS, which was visible in the length of the subscription, another term for contribution, lists for the May volumes of the *Missionary Chronicle*.⁷⁸ May was thus not only a highlight in the LMS calendar, but a month traditionally

⁷⁴ “Christian Liberality in Samoa,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle; relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 10, no.116 (January 1846): 11.

⁷⁵ “Christian Liberality,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle; relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 14, no.294, n.s. no.11 (November 1860): 308 ; “Missionary Liberality in the Hervey Islands,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle; relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 7, no.87 (August 1843):128; “Polynesia: Rarotonga,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: chiefly relating to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 20, no.247 (December 1856): 258.

⁷⁶ “Samoa Mission— Station of Saluafata,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle; chiefly relating to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 10, no.126 (November 1846): 162 ; “Polynesia: Journal of a visit to the island of Maupiti,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: chiefly relating to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 16, no.188 (January 1852): 3 ; “Mangaia: Encouraging state of the mission,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: chiefly relating to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 13. No. 152(January 1849): 11.

⁷⁷ Porter, *Religion versus Empire?*, 40 ; Thorne, *Congregational Missions*, 62.

⁷⁸ “Missionary Contributions,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: chiefly relating to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 29, no.348, n.s. no.65 (May 1865): 101-148.

The annual contributions in the United Kingdom tended to be made prior to May, in order to be able to be included in the May subscription lists. The March and April editions of the *Missionary Magazine* tended to include reminders to local auxiliaries to submit their contributions in time, usually by mid to late April. Despite

associated with the collection of contributions. As such, it made sense for the missionaries to collect the contributions from their converts in the same month. In fact, Slatyer made this link directly in his letter when he mentioned the challenges that Samoans faced when they brought him their annual contributions: ‘it is easy to take a shilling or guinea to Exeter Hall, that is if the person has the shilling or guinea to spare, and the heart to give it; but it is not always so easy to contribute to the Missionary cause in Samoa.’⁷⁹ Although the link between the metropolitan May Meetings and those in the mission field was sometimes weakened when the latter were held at another time of the year, for instance due to the availability of missionaries, the missionaries did still emphasise that they saw the events on their mission stations as similar and thus connected to the annual meeting in Exeter Hall.⁸⁰ The parallels between the meetings in the South Pacific and in London, in terms of the time of year and purpose of the annual contribution, fostered a sense of single community for the readers of missionary publications.

These parallels, at least as represented in missionary publications, were one way in which the contributions given in the South Pacific were brought into the wider discourses around contributions. Nevertheless it is important to first consider the May Meeting as an actual event in order to gain a fuller understanding of the process of making a contribution. It was an important event, framed by other events in the same week celebrating the anniversary such as juvenile meetings and sermons. Secondly, the May Meeting was far more than just a moment at which contributions were made. It was opened by singing and prayer, after which those gathered listened to speeches and discussed resolutions. After the contributions were made, the meeting ended as it had begun, with singing and prayer.⁸¹ Sometimes, the contributions would be collected prior to the meeting, such as in Leone on the island of Tutuila, Samoa on 10th May 1854.⁸² Either way, the events of the May Meeting were an important context for the contributions and gave them meaning. Through an analysis of sources in which there is

this move to an April deadline, these contributions were still very much connected to the May Anniversary and thus can be related to the annual contributions made at the mission stations and churches of the South Pacific.
⁷⁹ “Christian Liberty in Samoa,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle; relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 10, no.116(January 1846): 11.

⁸⁰“South Seas: Samoa,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 27, no.326, n.s. no. 43 (July 1863): 226.

⁸¹ “Polynesia: Island of Huahine,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 22, no.261 (February 1858): 32 ; “Polynesia: Journal of a visit to the island of Maupiti,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: chiefly relating to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 16, no.188 (January 1852): 3-4.

⁸²“Polynesia: Samoa,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: chiefly relating to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 19, no.227 (April 1855): 70.

more detailed information available about the meetings, it is possible to outline what this context might have been. Moreover, it is possible to consider how the missionaries represented these meetings, providing them with a new context and therefore a new meaning.

In *Missionary Enterprises*, Williams quoted a speech made at the annual meeting on Raiatea, from an unnamed indigenous Christian:

So will those who love Christ; they will devise means to send his Gospel to other lands, that they also may know the Saviour. I have been seeking a name by which to call the property thus subscribed, and I think it may be called *Property to seek lost souls*. Are not the souls of those living in darkness lost souls? and is not this property the means by which they will obtain the light of life? It is the thought of *lost souls* that animates good people in their labours. They do not collect property for themselves; *it is for lost souls*. We give property for every thing. If we want a canoe, we give property for it; if we want a net, we give property for it; and are not lost souls worth giving property to obtain? Think of lost souls, and work while it is called to-day [sic].⁸³

The language and ideas here are strikingly similar to those used by the LMS and its missionaries when they campaigned for the expansion of missions or the establishment of new ones.⁸⁴ Yet, in this speech objects, unlike the money given at home, were the means by which the evangelisation of new lands would be funded. The indigenous May Meeting speeches quoted in the missionary publications tended to call for the funding of the LMS so that it could expand the reach of the Gospel, either among the heathen on the island or further afield.⁸⁵ The publications indicated that the awareness among South Pacific Christians that there were many in the region, especially in Western Polynesia, who had not yet come into contact with missionaries motivated them to make their contributions.⁸⁶ The sense, then, that spreading Christianity in their region was a key motivation for those making their contributions and gave meaning to the contributions when they were made at the May Meetings accords with the importance of indigenous evangelism for Christian expansion in the region.

⁸³ Williams, *Missionary Enterprises*, 231.

⁸⁴ Thursday May 10th. — The Annual Meeting," *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 19, no.229 (June 1855): 115-117.

⁸⁵ "Missionary Liberality in the Hervey Islands," *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle; relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 7, no.87 (August 1843):128.

⁸⁶ "Samoan Printing Establishment," *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle; relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 11, no.131 (April 1847): 50 ; "Polynesia: Samoa," *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: chiefly relating to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 19, no.227 (April 1855): 70 ; "Anniversary of the London Missionary Society. Sixty-Seventh General Meeting," *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 25, no.301, n.s.18 (June 1861): 176.

Although the missionary periodicals frequently contained mentions of the money or things contributed to the LMS by those in the South Pacific, they rarely featured descriptions of the moment at which they were contributed. As a result there is little information about the practical or material aspects of making a contribution, especially regarding how people brought bulky produce and craft objects to the meetings. These gaps in the sources could be for a range of reasons. The periodicals often featured letter or journal extracts and the missionaries themselves might not have considered the information to be relevant to the LMS. The Rev. Charles Barff briefly mentioned that the contributions at the 1857 May Meeting on Huahine were placed on the communion table by each person at the end of the meeting, although he did not provide any details of what the contributions were.⁸⁷

Once again, further details only seem to have been warranted when they could be represented by the missionaries as examples of piety and decorum. The four small islands of Manua, part of Samoa, were too small to have a permanent missionary, so the Rev. Thomas Bullen visited their May Meeting in 1844. His laudatory description of the point at which people made their contributions offers a rare insight into the mechanics of making a contribution:

After the repast, they brought their offerings to aid the Society's funds, consisting of arrow-root and cocoa-nut oil. The name of each person was written down, with the amount of his subscription. It would have delighted and cheered our dear English friends, could they have stood and witnessed the harmony, order and decent cheerfulness, which that day prevailed among the assembled multitude. Men, women, and children contributed. Each one gave something. As the successive groups came forward and deposited their offerings, my heart rose in gratitude to that gracious God who had shined away the thick darkness of heathenism in which until very recently they had been sitting; and had made them willing to contribute their share in extending the conquests of our dear Redeemer's kingdom into the regions beyond them.⁸⁸

His description indicates that making a contribution was a public act. People made their contributions as groups, perhaps because this made it easier to carry them. More importantly everyone could see the contributions the others made, something which was especially clear in this instance due to the materiality of the contributions. However Bullen only seems to offer these details in order to provide evidence of the virtue and devotion of his converts: they were decently cheerful and well-mannered. These virtues represented his success as a

⁸⁷ "Polynesia: Island of Huahine," *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 22, no.261 (February 1858): 32.

⁸⁸ "Samoa. — Work of God at Manua," *The Evangelical Magazine and Missionary Chronicle* n.s. 23 (July 1845): 378.

missionary and also served as an edifying example devotion and generosity for the home supporters of the LMS to follow.

Bullen's description is quoted at length as he connected the material aspects of making a contribution with the symbolic aspects that tended to dominate in the missionary representations of the event. The communion table which Charles Barff mentioned could also be viewed in this light; it was the evidence of, at least a makeshift, chapel on Huahine. Both it and the pious behaviour of those at Manua represented the successes of the LMS. These successes would beget more successes as the new converts contributed to its work. Those converts in the South Pacific had come to share the aims of those in Britain who supported the LMS, whom it continued to call on to increase their contributions. In this light then, the focus on the pious conduct of those giving contributions in the South Pacific and the emphasis on what they gave might have partially been intended to increase the contributions the LMS received from their home supporters. The exact details of how the contributions were produced, brought to the meeting or given at the meeting itself were unimportant unless they could serve as an edifying example. This derived from the different cultural context which the contribution stage of the 'social life' of a contribution had within missionary publications when compared to at the May Meetings in the South Pacific. Appadurai argues that things gain meanings through the different cultural contexts into which they enter during their 'social lives'.⁸⁹ Contributions had two 'social lives' which run parallel in this thesis, their actual 'social life' in the South Pacific and their 'social life' within the pages of missionary publications. These were not wholly divorced, yet the context of the latter imbued them with meanings specifically for the metropolitan supporters of the LMS.

The May Meeting was often accompanied by a Juvenile Meeting, at which the local children made their contributions, reflecting a similar tradition in the metropole.⁹⁰ One of these meetings, in Maupiti, was discussed and portrayed in an engraving in the *Missionary Magazine*. When taken together these enable a consideration of how the May Meeting was adapted for children and how this adaptation provided an altered context for the contributions

⁸⁹ Appadurai, "Introduction", 5.

⁹⁰ "Anniversary of the London Missionary Society: Fifty-Seventh General Meeting," *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 15, no.180 (May 1851): 85 ; "Polynesia: Manua, Samoan Group," *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 19, no.232 (September 1855): 201 ; "Polynesia: Samoa," *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: chiefly relating to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 19, no.227 (April 1855): 70 ; "Polynesia: Island of Huahine," *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 22, no.261 (February 1858): 32.

whilst also maintaining key features of the May Meeting. The Rev. George Platt, of Raiatea, visited Maupiti in mid-June 1850 for the anniversary meeting and ‘children’s festival’.⁹¹ The latter happened two days after the anniversary meeting and began after breakfast when the children came together in the chapel for singing, prayer and to listen to him giving a speech. Following this they went outside, where tables with food had been set up, and ate together. A procession followed the meal and ended back at the chapel, where the children made their contributions. They then repeated what they had learned in their classes and the meeting was closed with song and prayer.⁹²

This Juvenile Meeting is thus an example of another ‘path’ which objects or money could follow in order to become a contribution, although its altered context imbued the contributions made with additional meanings. The reciting of texts by the children was an activity which gave the contributions new meanings. It was a practice similar to that of meetings of school children arranged by missionaries across the South Pacific.⁹³ Platt’s description of how the children gave their contributions reinforced this connection:

On their return [to the settlement] we re-entered the chapel, and after singing and prayer, they came forward in classes, threw in their little subscriptions, amounting to about eight dollars, and then repeated the chapters they had learned from memory.⁹⁴

Since the groups in which the children made their contributions were their school classes, their lessons at school formed an important context for their contributions. Starting a day-school for children was one of the main tasks that the missionaries focused on, along with educating adults.⁹⁵ In choosing to place Platt’s letter so prominently, it accompanied the image on the cover of the January 1852 *Missionary Magazine*, the LMS emphasised its

⁹¹ “Polynesia: Journal of a visit to the island of Maupiti,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: chiefly relating to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 16, no.188 (January 1852): 4.

⁹² “Polynesia: Journal of a visit to the island of Maupiti,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: chiefly relating to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 16, no.188 (January 1852): 4

⁹³ “Polynesia: Rarotonga: Training the lambs of the poor,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: chiefly relating to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 19, no.231 (August 1855): 168.

⁹⁴ “Polynesia: Journal of a visit to the island of Maupiti,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: chiefly relating to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 16, no.188 (January 1852): 4

⁹⁵ “Thursday, May 12th. — The Annual Meeting,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: chiefly relating to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 17, no.205 (June 1853): 125; “Aitutaki. —Hervey Group,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: chiefly relating to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 18, no.223 (December 1854): 269; “Polynesia: Nengoné or (Mare), Loyalty Islands,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: chiefly relating to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 20, no.237 (February 1856): 32 ; “Mare (Nengone) Loyalty Islands,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: chiefly relating to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 21, no.251 (April 1857): 76.

educational role. The image shows the children processing behind children at the front who are carrying white flags, as they are watched by the missionary and adult islanders. (Image 2) They could be seen to be leading their island into a more Christian future, in which Christian beliefs were a norm people had always known instead of a new revelation which replaced older belief-systems. At the very least, the focus on children and education strongly reinforced the narrative tropes about the child-like heathens which the LMS used when it called on its supporters to fund its missions and help to spread civilisation.⁹⁶ Within their ‘social life’ in missionary publications, these contributions symbolised the successful proselytization of Maupiti and the education of its children. The contributions themselves were unimportant for this, instead the actions and behaviour which framed the making of contributions were far more prominent in the missionary representation of contributions made at May Meetings and Juvenile Meetings.

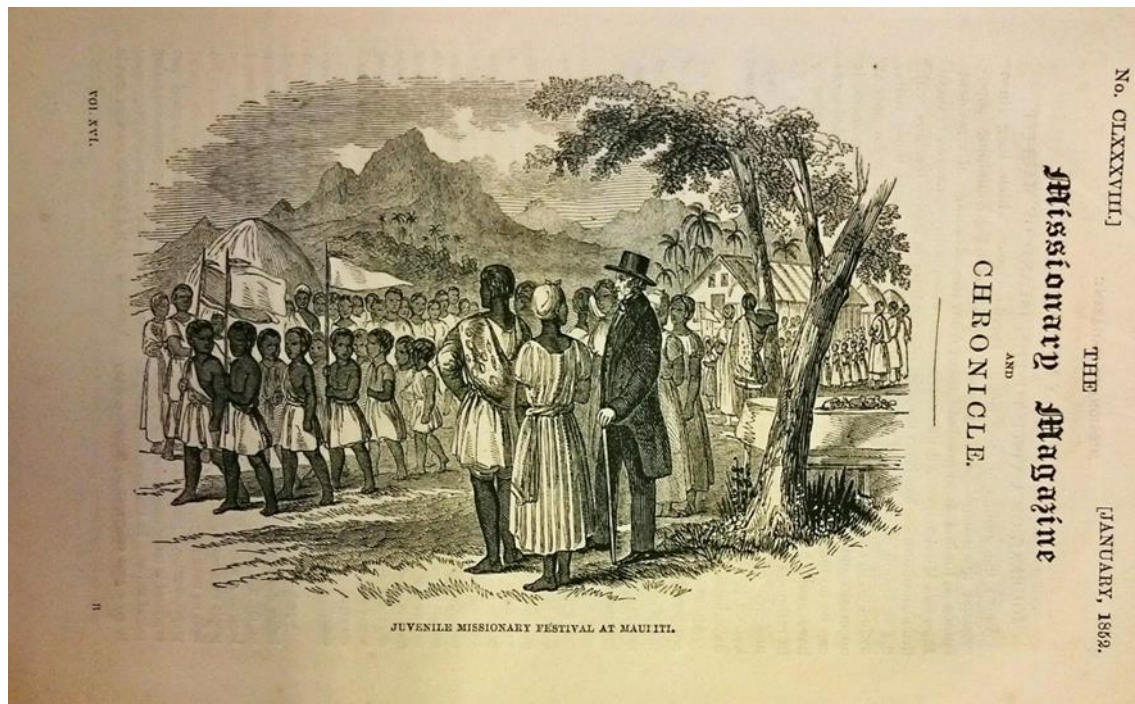


Image 2: The procession at the Juvenile Missionary Festival at Maupiti. “Juvenile Missionary Festival at Maupiti,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: chiefly relating to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 16, no.188 (January 1852): 1. Photograph taken by author.

II. Functions of contributions.

The purposes of the events at which contributions were given can be explored further.

Although both the missionaries and the converts were present when the contributions were

⁹⁶“Thursday, May 12th : The Annual Public Meeting : Exeter Hall,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle; chiefly relating to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 6, no. 73 (June 1842): 83-84.

made, they had the potential to attribute different meanings to them. Through an exploration of the potential functions which contributions served for converts and the LMS, it is possible to gain an insight into the wider social relations of the mission. Missionaries tended to be very strict with regards to giving people church membership. Becoming a member took at least the best part of a year in most cases and members could be expelled if their behaviour was deemed problematic.⁹⁷ However, there were no such restrictions on who could make contributions and thus all those who felt Christian could, and did, contribute. Slatyer and other missionaries did praise the more generous contributions which church members made, for instance larger parcels of arrowroot and fine craft-objects.⁹⁸ Nonetheless, given that islanders were aware of the practice of contributions and of the missionaries' positive affirmation of its Christian purpose, they could use the moment of a contribution to assert their sense of Christian identity, even if the missionary did not deem their behaviour of a sufficient standard for church membership. Moreover, those making contributions in the South Pacific participated in the same activity in which LMS supporters in Britain participated. Letters from the indigenous treasurers of LMS auxiliaries in the South Pacific, which featured in the annual LMS reports of 1855 and 1856, indicate that they were highly aware of this connection.⁹⁹ They attributed a similar context and meaning to both their contributions and those made in Britain, a similarity which gave them a sense of being part of a wider Christian community. This similarity was one which their missionaries were also keen to exploit within their representations of the making of contributions, albeit for different reasons, which will be discussed later.

For those in the mission field, the May Meeting signalled the coming together of a community in a physical sense. People from across a mission district would attend, this varied from hundreds to a few thousand depending on the district.¹⁰⁰ Occasionally the sources give hints of how the community might have experienced the May Meeting as celebratory. The May

⁹⁷ "Polynesia: Tamarua, Island of Mangaia." *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 20, no.245 (October 1856): 219.

⁹⁸ "May Meeting in the Samoas," *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle; relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 7, no.83(April 1843): 54.

⁹⁹ "Thursday May 10th. — The Annual Meeting," *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 19, no.229 (June 1855): 128 ; "Thursday, May 15th.— The Annual Meeting," *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 20, no.241 (June 1856): 118-119.

¹⁰⁰ "Mangaia, Hervey Group," *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 17, no.206 (July 1853):166-167 ; "South Seas: Samoa," *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 27, no.236, n.s. no.43 (July 1863): 225-229.

Meetings and the contributions made at them could also be said to replace their old feasts and the pre-Christian traditions of making offerings to idols.¹⁰¹ In a letter from Rev. John Jones, sent in February 1856 from his mission station on Maré, a direct link is made between the May Meeting and the feasts the islanders had previously held:

In July last, we had a very interesting gathering, which, for want of a name we designated our First May Meeting, although two important characteristics of a May Meeting were wanting, viz., the contributions and the season of the year. The people were very anxious to have a feast, and as this was formerly their principal pleasure, I thought it well that they should find Christianity no restraint upon innocent enjoyments. [...] Many appropriate speeches were delivered by the natives, and I explained the meaning of a May Meeting, hoping that they in future years would be able to imitate the laudable exertions of their brethren in the eastern groups. The day passed very pleasingly, and all appeared to take a deep interest in its engagements.¹⁰²

No contributions were made on this day, but it does indicate that May Meetings could have festive aspects. In fact, feasts or shared meals feature in more of the descriptions of May Meetings in missionary publications.¹⁰³ Bullen, in the letter cited above, spoke of a ‘repast’ and the children’s meeting also had a feast. John Garrett indicates that those in the South Pacific eagerly adapted the May Meetings as festivals; in some areas they are still celebrated. He argues that these replaced the pre-Christian festivals, which accords with the comments of Jones.¹⁰⁴ This suggests that in the mission field contributions were imbued with a sense of the bonds of the communities of the district and thus of their identity. The comments of W. Wyatt Gill on the May Meetings held on Mangaia in 1852 provide further evidence of this:

This festival is one of the rare occasions when all the inhabitants of the island meet. It unquestionably promotes a kindly feeling among all classes of the community, and subserves [sic] the higher aims of spiritual improvement.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰¹“Juvenile Missionary Meeting at Exeter Hall,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle; relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 6, no.72 (May 1842): 68; “Destruction of the Last Heathen Temple in Samoa,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 30, no.362, n.s. no.79 (July 1866): 207-208.

¹⁰² “Mare (Nengone) Loyalty Islands,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 21, no.251 (April 1857): 77.

¹⁰³“ II.—South Sea Mission.—Mangaia,” *The Chronicle of the London Missionary Society for the year 1870* (November 1870): 237 ; “Mangaia, Hervey Group,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 17, no.206 (July 1853):166-167 ; “Polynesia: Island of Huahine,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 22, no.261 (February 1858): 32

¹⁰⁴ John Garrett, *To Live Among the Stars*, 27.

¹⁰⁵ “Mangaia, Hervey Group,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 17, no.206 (July 1853): 167.

The festive and communal aspects of the May Meeting are important to consider alongside the missionaries' emphasis on devotion and piety in order to fully understand the context of the contributions at the point in their 'social lives' when they became contributions.

The moment of contribution served a range of purposes for the LMS and its missionaries. Contributions were the implementation of one of the LMS' two founding principles: the Voluntary Principle.¹⁰⁶ Like all the missionary societies, the LMS was a philanthropic organisation and relied on people's voluntary financial support. As a result, it continually called for support, through its representatives, meetings and the media.¹⁰⁷ Margaret Donaldson underscores that the intended end goal of the Voluntary Principle was for the members of the mission church to eventually be entirely financially responsible for their church. The LMS fervently opposed the funding of missions by states and hoped that it could eventually withdraw its own funding from the mission churches.¹⁰⁸ The Voluntary Principle was invoked by some of the missionaries in the South Pacific in their letters, for instance when they were keen to emphasise that the islanders built and funded their own chapel or that the chiefs did not exert political influence over the mission.¹⁰⁹ Missionaries were eager to emphasise that converts in the South Pacific supported their native teachers or missionaries, either financially or in kind. This support was a practical application of the Voluntary Principle and the mission station contributions might also be seen in this light. At the May 1847 general meeting of the LMS one of the speakers invoked the Voluntary Principle when he discussed its funding by those in Britain.¹¹⁰ In funding the LMS, the Christians in the South Pacific were helping to repay the costs of the missions on the islands as well as fund the expansion of missions across the world.

The eagerness of those in the South Pacific to contribute to the LMS was a source of actual financial support, but the representation of this within missionary texts was more complex and

¹⁰⁶ The LMS' other founding principle was the 'Fundamental Principle'. This meant that it would be non-denominational. It stuck to this even after most of the denominations which founded it, other than Congregationalists, set up denominational missions.

Margaret Donaldson, "The voluntary principle in the colonial situation: theory and practice," in *Voluntary Religion. Papers read at the 1985 Summer Meeting and the 1986 Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society*, ed. W.J. Sheils and Diana Wood (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), 381.

¹⁰⁷ Steven Maughan, " "Mighty England do Good": The Major English Denominations and Organisation for the Support of Foreign Missions in the Nineteenth Century," in *Missionary Encounters: Sources and Issues*, ed. Robert A. Bickers and Rosemary Seton (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 1993), 16-21.

¹⁰⁸ Donaldson, "The voluntary principle in the colonial situation," 381.

¹⁰⁹ "Polynesia: Rarotonga," *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 19, no.225 (February 1855): 22.

¹¹⁰ "Thursday May 13: The Annual Public Meeting: Exeter Hall," *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle; relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 11, no.133 (June 1847): 97.

even contradictory. On the one hand, the fact that these mission churches made contributions to the LMS in London as well as to their own evangelists was a sign of its authority among the missions it had founded. This can be seen in the references to the LMS as the ‘Parent Society’, a term which crops up in several discussions of May Meetings and contributions.¹¹¹ This sense of paternal authority reflected the wider mind-set of the LMS, the belief of its missionaries that they were still needed to guide the newly formed churches of the South Pacific. The language also relates back to the discourses, discussed by Edmond, which framed those in the South Pacific as children who needed civilisation and Christianity. These ideas were exemplified in an article about the history of the missions of the South Pacific which featured in the *Missionary Magazine* in April 1860. It said the following about the Christians of Maré, who had received European missionaries in 1854: ‘[a]lready has this infant church attested its Missionary character by sending out Teachers from its midst to the Britannia Islands, and by subscriptions to the parent Society.’¹¹² The LMS was celebrating the contributions made in this quote, yet the language does not necessarily seem to indicate it expected the goal of self-supporting churches to be achieved quickly. Referring to the mission churches as ‘infants’ and to itself as a ‘parent’ did not seem to be conducive to establishing a fully independent church along the lines of the Voluntary Principle. Along with the stringent rules which LMS missionaries maintained for church membership, this contradictory attitude to the Voluntary Principle reflected important meanings which the contributions gained through missionary representation. The contributions signified missionary success but the way in which they were represented also reflected a sense of missionary authority.

The contributions also had a further symbolic function for the LMS, one which was linked its more worldly problems of funding. The Voluntary Principle ensured the LMS’ independence, but it also meant that it always had to ask its supporters for funding. The general meeting at Exeter Hall commonly featured lamentations that the LMS was short on funding, especially as it frequently spent more than its regular income. One tactic to get more funding seemed to be to supply descriptions of the liberality of the poor, preferably poor children, in Britain or of

¹¹¹ “South Seas: Extracts from the journal of the “John Williams” on her last visit to the island of western Polynesia,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 28, no.332, n.s. no.49 (January 1864): 11 ; “South Seas: Extracts from the journal of the ‘John Williams on her last visit to the islands of western Polynesia,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 28, no.333, n.s. no.50 (February 1864): 40 ; “Aitutaki,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 19, no.231 (August 1855): 169.

¹¹² “Origin and progress of missions in Polynesia: No. IV: Historical sketch of the missions in Western Polynesia,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 24, no.287, n.s. no.4 (April 1860): 83.

recent converts, such as those in the South Pacific. If these people could give so generously, frequently leaving them with little for themselves, then surely the wealthy backers of the LMS could spare more money than they currently provided, the message went. Giving generously thus functioned as an example of true piety.¹¹³ This is particularly visible in the following quote:

The liberality of these islanders generally affords a most gratifying evidence of the power of their Christian principles. Their Missionary contributions for the past year amounted to £108 6s. 0d. This large free-will offering was made, not of their abundance, but rather of their deep poverty; and if its force were felt as an example by the opulent professors of religion throughout Britain, no want of funds would hinder the rapid extension of the Gospel among the perishing myriads in heathen lands.¹¹⁴

The contrast between the generosity of those who lived in poverty in the South Pacific and the miserliness of those who were wealthy, even opulently so, in Britain is stark in this quote. It is clear that the LMS did not think its supporters were doing enough; perhaps some within the organisation even doubted their piety as the term ‘opulent professors’ seems to suggest a lack of true devotion. These ideas were reflected in discussions at some annual meetings, for instance in 1848, 1861 and 1863, which emphasised that around a fifth of the society’s general income came from mission-station contributions.¹¹⁵ Overall, the *Missionary Magazine* had a contradictory approach to the mission-station contributions. They were a sign that the mission churches were becoming more self-supporting and could thus also symbolise the genuine piety of the Christians in the South Pacific. Yet, frequently, there is a sense of unease when the large proportion of mission contributions as a part of the general income of the LMS is discussed. Within the context of the Annual Meeting this made sense, it was a point at

¹¹³ “The Poor Children’s Mite,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 15, no. 179 (April 1851): 66 ; “South Seas,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 29, no.353, n.s. no.70 (October 1865): 292 ; “South Seas: Extracts from the journal of the ‘John Williams on her last visit to the islands of western Polynesia,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 28, no.333, n.s. no.50 (February 1864): 40 ; “Thursday, May 13th.— The Annual Meeting,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: chiefly relating to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 16, no.193 (June 1852): 116 ; “Mangaia: Encouraging state of the mission,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle; relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 13, no.152 (January 1849): 11.

¹¹⁴ “Thursday, May 13th.— The Annual Meeting,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: chiefly relating to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 16, no.193(June 1852): 116.

¹¹⁵ “Thursday May 11: The Annual Public Meeting: Exeter Hall,” *The Evangelical Magazine and Missionary Chronicle*, n.s. 26 (June 1848): 325; “Anniversary of the London Missionary Society: Sixty-Ninth General Meeting,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 27, no.325, n.s. no.42 (June 1863): 194-195 ; “Anniversary of the London Missionary Society. Sixty-Seventh General Meeting,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 25, no.301, n.s.18 (June 1861): 177.

which the LMS appealed to its metropolitan supporters.¹¹⁶ The representation of the contributions made by those in the South Pacific thus encompassed the celebration of successful missions, examples of the successful application of the Voluntary Principle, symbols of a paternalistic relationship between the mission churches and the LMS and, finally, the failure of those in Britain to provide the LMS with enough support. When considering these potential functions, the fact that the descriptions of the moment at which contributions were made tended to prioritise the conduct of the people over the material aspects of their actions makes more sense. The South Pacific contributions to the LMS were more important to it as an edifying example for its supporters in Britain than simply as part of the funding which the LMS received. Their cultural and symbolic value might be said to have been higher than their financial value. Yet, given the LMS' near perpetual shortages of money, it is difficult to judge how much influence these representations actually had on their metropolitan audience.

III. Making, offering or gifting?

Further contradictions in the ways in which missionary publications represented contributions made in the South Pacific, which were also sometimes relevant to contributions more generally, give another insight into the social relations within the missions. The best way to illustrate the one of the main contradictions in question is through two quotes, which both appeared in the transcript of the annual meeting of the LMS on 12th May 1859. The first is the term they used for contributions made by those from the South Pacific and the second is a quote from a missionary's letter about the May Meeting at his mission station. These are only a page apart in the abridged report which featured in the *Missionary Magazine*. The first characterises contributions as 'free will offerings for the year last reported'¹¹⁷ which clearly links them to the Voluntary Principle. It suggests that the people give because they want to and thus also appears to reflect indigenous agency. This contrasts with the characterisation of piety that followed:

I trust, however, that their [the islanders of Maré/Nengoné] humble efforts [their contributions] will have a salutary effect upon their own minds, in teaching them

¹¹⁶ Maughan, " "Mighty England do Good", " 17-18.

¹¹⁷ "Anniversary of the London Missionary Society: Sixty-Fifth General Meeting," *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 23, no.277 (June 1859): 139.

the duty of the Church of Christ, and not less so upon the wealthy Christians of civilized lands.¹¹⁸

This seems to suggest that contributions are a duty for all Christians, including the people the LMS had recently converted in the South Pacific. Can a free offering be a duty, or does this imply that it is compulsory? Perhaps, part of the complication derives from the way in which the LMS was not only a mission society in the South Pacific but the organisation which established and funded the churches there. Traditionally, all church-members have a duty to their church: the tithe, which is frequently defined as a set proportion of their income. Most of the churches which the missionaries established came to support their indigenous evangelists and pastors once the missions became more established but they also continued to give to the LMS.¹¹⁹ The reference to the ‘duty of Christ’ might also refer to the traditional emphasis upon charity within Christianity, which can again be linked to the contributions people made to the LMS. This view seems to be echoed in a speech by the Raiatean king Tamatoa, cited by Williams, wherein contributions were referred to as ‘good work.’¹²⁰ A big issue for any attempt to explore how these contributions were seen in their actual context is complicated by the fact that the sources were authored by the LMS. Nevertheless, the contradictions in these quotes can be further probed and this can reveal more about the mind-set of the missionaries and the impact this mind-set had on the social relations of the missions.

Another approach to understanding the apparent contradiction of contributions being a ‘free-will offering’ and a ‘duty’ is through the idea that they were both. Mauss’ seminal conceptualisation of gift-giving offers a theoretical frame for the apparently contradictory nature of these contributions. Mauss wants to emphasise that gift-giving was really a form of exchange, rather than one-way transfer of an object. He argues that ‘in theory these [gifts] are voluntary, in return they are given and reciprocated obligatorily.’¹²¹ A system of gift-giving relies on three obligations, according to Mauss: the obligation to reciprocate, to give and to receive gifts.¹²² His concept thus appears to deftly capture the duality of the contribution: it was seen to be freely given, but really it was part of a system of reciprocal giving, of an

¹¹⁸ “Anniversary of the London Missionary Society: Sixty-Fifth General Meeting,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 23, no.277 (June 1859): 140.

¹¹⁹ “Polynesia: Fruits of Missionary Labour at Malua, Island of Upolu,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 21, no.155 (August 1857): 188 ; “Polynesia: Samoa,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: chiefly relating to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 19, no.227 (April 1855): 70-71.

¹²⁰ Williams, *Missionary Enterprises*, 45.

¹²¹ Mauss, *The Gift*, 3.

¹²² Mauss, *The Gift*, 13.

exchange. A quote from a June 1848 letter written by the Rev. George Gill, of Mangaia, about the 1848 May Meeting the nature of the reciprocal system of giving:

You will observe that the amount of contributions in money is small; but the amount of personal and individual labour, required in the manufacture of the arrow-root and the fishing-net, gives a pleasing proof that they love the cause of Christ, not in word only, but in deed and in truth. *Freely have they received and freely do they give.*¹²³ [Emphasis added]

The Christians of Mangaia could thus be said to be reciprocating the gift of the knowledge of the Gospel and the knowledge of civilisation, including its material trappings, which the LMS had bestowed on them. This can be linked to the fact that the May Meeting speeches discussed in missionary publications, the idea that the converts of the South Pacific would contribute to enable the expansion of the Gospel and civilisation. There is, though, one issue with viewing this last line in terms of Mauss' theory of gift exchange. It can be related to a line in Matthew 10: 'freely ye have received, freely give.'¹²⁴ F.W. Beare highlights that Matthew 10 is about the mission of the twelve apostles and what Jesus said to them prior to their mission. Beare's paraphrase of this line is useful to consider:

The blessings of the gospel are not a reward for merit or a payment for services rendered. They are the free gift of God, and they must be passed on to others without any thought of exacting payment.¹²⁵

If George Gill intended his adaptation of the line to carry this meaning, then the concept of reciprocal exchange is complicated. The islanders of the South Pacific did not simply reciprocate the help of the LMS nor did they did not pay the LMS for introducing them to Christianity. Once they had been converted, the islanders gained the responsibility to spread the Gospel. A main way in which they could act on this responsibility was to contribute to the LMS.

However, we can also think about the question of whether the contributions were obligatory or voluntary in another way. There are some hints within the sources as to how contributions could have been presented by the missionaries as a necessity and how the islanders responded to this. The context and meaning of contributions could be contested. At the 1861 Annual

¹²³ "Mangaia: Encouraging state of the mission," *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle; relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 13, no.152 (January 1849): 11.

¹²⁴ Matthew 10:8 (King James Version).

¹²⁵ F.W. Beare, "The Mission of the Disciples and the Mission Charge: Matthew 10 and Parallels," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 89, 1 (1970): 8.

Meeting missionaries were seen to have an important role with regard to the self-support of mission churches:

The Directors are happy to acknowledge that our Missionaries have, with equal fidelity and discretion, enforced this Christian obligation on their churches; and when the poverty of the people, and the apathy and selfishness engendered by paganism are considered, their success may well excite surprise no less than thankfulness.¹²⁶

Although the descriptions of the moments when contributions were made tended to emphasise the eagerness of converts to make contributions, this suggests that the practice needed to be ‘enforced’ by missionaries. It contrasts with the claims of Williams that his converts had heard about May Meetings and wished to recreate them.¹²⁷ In a situation where missionaries were the ones who ultimately decided on church membership, were the source of further knowledge about Christianity and had a wider influence on the community in which they had settled, there is the question of how much indigenous Christians would have seen giving as a choice. Islanders might have been free to decide on the size of their contribution and those who were more devout did in all likelihood give more, but the actual practice of making a contribution was not necessarily optional.

This power imbalance ties into another aspect of the social relations in missions with regards to religious knowledge and knowledge about the contributions. In his discussion of the cultural knowledge which is imbued in objects, Appadurai argues that this knowledge cannot travel with the object into its new context.¹²⁸ However, the missionaries had knowledge of both sides of the exchange embodied in the moment at which contributions were made. They instigated the practice and received the objects or money as representatives of the LMS. This situation is, in some ways, the result of the new cultural forms which developed in the South Pacific as a result of the actions of missionaries. To a certain extent, then, the contributions did not cross a cultural divide as they were encompassed by a wider Christian purpose and identity. There is another gap in knowledge though, a gap between the knowledge of the missionaries and the knowledge which their readers gain from their representations of the ‘social lives’ of contributions. There are no direct statements that communities refused to contribute, yet some evidence for this can be found. In March 1871 the *Missionary Chronicle*

¹²⁶“Anniversary of the London Missionary Society. Sixty-Seventh General Meeting,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 25, no.301, n.s.18 (June 1861): 176.

¹²⁷ Williams, *Missionary Enterprises*, 290-291.

¹²⁸Appadurai, “Introduction,” 41-43.

included a letter by the Rev. A.T. Saville, of Huahine, in which he praised the attitude with which the islanders had made their contributions. This might have been any other letter, yet the comment which followed his praise indicated that the islanders had viewed the contributions differently to how the LMS tended to represent their views:

Many of our people are too apt to look upon these contributions as a kind of tax paid to the missionary; and it is a most difficult thing to eradicate this impression; but this year I was thankful to see some give from the love of the thing.¹²⁹

This is the only time that a South Pacific missionary mentions that contributions were viewed as taxes, it only seems to have slipped through because it contributes to a representation of the islanders as generous and devout by contrasting their behaviour at this May Meeting with that during previous ones. Missionary letters tended to be far more negative about the South Pacific Christians than the extracts published in the periodicals and in fact they even contained complaints about people refusing to pay their contributions.¹³⁰ The representations in the periodicals could not feature this, though. They would have undermined the important functions mission-station contributions served for the LMS, as signs of success and to encourage greater generosity among their metropolitan audiences. Moreover, it would have made the LMS seem less influential within the communities it had converted. The rather monolithic power which the LMS presented, especially in its more paternalist writing on the need to educate the ‘infant churches’, was an essential part of representing its success even if it was not borne out in reality.¹³¹ It suited the LMS to make the contributions appear voluntary, although in practice its missionaries sought to make them obligatory as to ensure that the LMS received funding and could exploit the symbolic value which South Pacific contributions contained. Whereas the actual contribution stage of the ‘social life’ of a contribution could be a moment of missionary impotence as well as glory, its representations always reinforced a sense of LMS superiority.

Following this attempt to probe the social and power relations which the moment that contributions were exchanged might have revealed, it is important to return to the question of how best to define contributions: were they offered, gifted or made? It is clear that contributions could carry many different meanings, to the missionaries as well as to the Christians of the South Pacific. This semantic baggage makes using the term ‘offered’

¹²⁹ “III.—South Seas.—“The John Williams,” *The Chronicle of the London Missionary Society for the Year 1871* (March 1, 1871): 58.

¹³⁰ Edmond, *Representing the South Pacific*, 120-121, 124.

¹³¹ Barker, “Where the missionary frontier ran ahead of empire,” 90, 93-96.

impractical. This only captures the willingness of people to give and fails to acknowledge the potentially compulsory nature an application of the Voluntary Principle could have in the mission field. 'Gifted' can capture more of the contradictions discussed above. Nevertheless, given that contributions do not completely fit Mauss' concept of gift-giving, applying this term to contributions could have a distorting effect. So far, this chapter has discussed how contributions were 'made' since this term can expand to incorporate the contradictions above and thus not carry the theoretical weight which the term 'gift' does. People could both 'make' contributions because they felt they had to, if they saw them as taxes, and 'make' them because they wanted as a result of their faith. Sometimes a sense of obligation and choice might have mingled within the motivations of an individual: it was important to be seen making a contribution however they also genuinely wished to make a generous one. What is ultimately most important is not whether the contribution is a gift, an offering or a product, but that making a contribution is an action. Speaking of contributions in these terms emphasises that they were something which South Pacific Christians did, something which they had their own opinions on. In addition, this encourages a greater consideration of the material aspects of contributions. Making a contribution required transporting it to the May Meeting and then placing it in a special location, such as on a communion table. To say that contributions were made, then, captures the flexibility and contradictions of the contribution itself. Instead of suggesting that all contributions carried the same meaning and intention, it allows for a consideration on a case for case basis. It can also encompass the parallel 'social lives' of contributions, in the South Pacific and in the pages of missionary publications. The latter could remake contributions so that they served their own purposes.

IV. Conclusion.

The brief act of making a contribution and the relatively short duration of the May Meeting within the 'social life' of contributions did not prevent this stage from carrying a wide host of meanings. In part these many meanings result from the fact that the moment of exchange encapsulated in the making of a contribution represented the crossing of a threshold, from the South Pacific convert to the LMS missionary. From that point on, it was for the LMS to use and invest meaning into the contribution. The gamut of meaning contained within the mentions of this stage of the 'social lives' of contributions also resulted from the multiple 'paths' which contributions could follow, both in the South Pacific and within the representations authored by the missionaries. Making a contribution could be contextualised by a desire to expand Christianity, to express Christian identity and the festive coming

together of a community for South Pacific Christians. The children's contributions contained these meanings but were also more intertwined with their education. The LMS and its missionaries viewed the contributions within a context of their sense of authority and could use them to represent their success. They hoped that the South Pacific contributions would inspire their metropolitan supporters. These generalisations are complicated by the fact that each contribution had a unique context, hence a unique meaning. Those making the contribution could have very different intentions or understandings of what they were doing, the meetings at which they were made and the attitudes of the LMS towards them could vary. The flexibility of the contribution stage was one of its strengths, making it easier to establish and ensuring that the LMS could use it in order to encourage their metropolitan supporters to give more. However, this flexibility was partially the result of deep contradictions between how contributions might be experienced and represented. They could be a sign of triumphant self-support but also of the need for further guidance. They symbolised liberality but were an obligation. In turn, these contradictions related to the unique position which missionaries occupied with regards to how contributions gained meaning. They had knowledge from both sides of the exchange and could thus attempt to shape the meaning of contributions both in the mission-field and in their writing. Their writing indicates that they saw themselves as the experts, who needed to guide both Pacific islanders and metropolitan supporters in making contributions. The LMS' need for more funds meant that within the representations of the 'social lives' of contributions piety and devotion eventually had to be the features most emphasised. To a degree, the complexities of contributions were subsumed under the need to raise an income. The gaps between the 'social life' of contributions in practice and how they were represented thus diverged.

Chapter three: Destinations. Exiting the contribution stage?

The events at which produce, craft objects and money became contributions were frequently addressed in missionary publications. Yet, just as the ways in which they were produced were mentioned infrequently, information about their destinations comes from incidental mentions. Any attempt to consider what happened to the contributions after they were made is therefore exploratory and tentative rather than comprehensive. It is possible, though, to identify some of the main destinations of contributions by South Pacific Christians by bringing together the incidental mentions in the missionary sources. The destinations of the contributions and the important points in their routes, literal and symbolic, to those destinations varied but also shared similar aspects. Immediately after they were made contributions had to be kept at the mission station by the LMS missionary, the Native Pastor or the Native Teacher responsible for that station. Sometimes, due to external events, this would be the final destination of a contribution. Most contributions made it beyond this point. They might be sold from the island itself or somewhere else within the South Pacific. However, they could also go further afield and these journeys often involved the LMS ship the *John Williams*. Sydney was an important centre for missionaries in the South Pacific, it was a source of supplies, (financial) support and a market. Finally, some contributions travelled all the way to England.

Considering these routes and final destinations in light of Appadurai's concept of 'paths and diversions'¹³² as well as his and Kopytoff's concept of a 'commodity phase'¹³³ enables a fuller understanding of this final phase of the 'social life' of contributions. It is harder to approach the contributions made in money in this manner than those made in objects. This is because money has an inscribed value in contrast to the way in which objects and material culture can move into and out of the 'commodity status' as well as between different types of value. In fact, the destinations of the contributions were the phase of their 'social lives' in which contributions made in money diverged most from those made in produce or craft objects. As a result, this chapter will focus largely on the trajectories of the latter since their 'social lives' can be explored in more detail with the information in the sources and are more suited to an application of these concepts. Moreover, these trajectories offer an opportunity to think about the relationship between missions and empire. When the LMS missionaries sold contributions they relied on the presence of European, or more widely speaking Western, people and the trades which they were involved in in the South Pacific. These traders could

¹³² Appadurai, "Introduction," 18.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 13.

buy the contributions as well as other items from the islands and were thus a source of money. Their presence might be seen as one of the ways in which missions were connected to informal empire in the South Pacific. Nevertheless, the destinations of contributions also offered a connection with formal empire: the Australian colonies were the most important British colony in the region and also highly important to the LMS. England can be seen as a destination which connected the missions and formal, as well as informal, empire. Moreover, the silences in the missionaries publications regarding what happened to contributions after they were made offer extra insights into the relationship between missions and empire. In addition, probing these silences, or gaps, in the sources provides an insight into the divergence between the symbolic functions which the LMS wanted the contributions to serve and their more practical purposes.

I. The general 'path' of contributions.

Prior to discussing the different 'paths' which contributions took, both intended and due to external circumstances, it is useful to try to consider what the general 'path' of a contribution looked like. Contributions were first cultivated, created or earned before they were made at the May Meeting. For the LMS to be able to utilise the non-monetary contributions it needed to exchange them for money. Once the contributions had been made and were the possessions of the LMS, their meanings were significantly altered. The contributions no longer represented the industry and devotion of indigenous Christians so much as something which could be sold. Their sale might take place at different places and along different time scales, these could be especially long in the isolated and less visited islands where the LMS had missions.¹³⁴ Wherever the contributions were sold, the money which they had been sold for was intended to be sent to the LMS' headquarters in London. Once here, this money would become some of the tens of thousands of pounds which the LMS received each year from its supporters. The contributions thus had a clear practical function: they were to be exchanged for money. This function could be the main reason that there is so little information about what happened to contributions after they had been made. Selling them would have been a routine matter for missionaries and less interesting to discuss in the letters than dramatic or edifying stories, such as hurricanes or May Meetings. Given these other options, reports of the sale of contributions were even less likely to be published in the LMS' publications. Luckily

¹³⁴ See Appendix Two: Destinations of contributions mentioned in the *Missionary Magazine and Chronicle (1841-1866)* and in the *Missionary Chronicle of the London Missionary Society (1867-1871)* for the full list of where contributions were sold.

though, the sources are not entirely mute and provide an insight into this stage of the ‘social lives’ of contributions as well as how the LMS represented it.

II. Between exchanges. Moving into a ‘commodity status’.

Once items had been contributed, they needed to be stored until they were further transported or sold. It is not clear where they were kept. In all likelihood the money was kept with the other LMS money that the missionary or native evangelist was responsible for. The produce and craft objects might have been kept in storerooms or storehouses at the mission station, much like other products which were intended to be traded. What is clear is that these objects were considered to be the property of the LMS once they had been given as contributions.¹³⁵ Unlike the symbolic function of the moments and events at which the contributions were made, the time they spent on the island after this exchange does not seem to have had a similar symbolic value. This could be linked to the fact that they were now being stored in order to be traded for money or to be transported somewhere where they could be traded for money. Drawing on the ideas of Kopytoff, which Appadurai has used and further developed, it might be suggested that this moment in storage was an important stage in the objects coming into a ‘commodity status’. Kopytoff emphasises that commoditisation is not a constant status, instead it is a process. As a result, he argues that items can move in and out of a ‘commodity status’. For this to happen objects need to be seen in a less heterogeneous way, in terms of the meanings which individuals or cultures might attribute to certain objects. Viewing the objects as more homogeneous is important for them to be able to be exchanged.¹³⁶ When in storage, as the property of the LMS, the contributions had less of a connection to the individuals who made them. They were no longer in physical proximity to those who made them and when the whole community made contributions in a few types of produce it would have been extremely difficult to identify the contributions of an individual.

This changed view of the contributions is reflected in the published letters that the missionaries wrote to the LMS foreign secretary. They switched from describing the contributions in symbolic terms and focused on practical uses. For instance, the Rev. Thomas Bullen’s elaborate description of the contributions given by the Christians at Manua, Samoa, was followed by the following sentence: ‘About 2,000 lbs of arrow-root [sic] were given, and

¹³⁵ “Polynesia: Seizure of the Loyalty Islands by the French authorities of New Caledonia, and gross outrages on our missionaries and the native protestant Christians,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 28, no.343, n.s. no.60 (December 1864): 332.

¹³⁶ Kopytoff, “The cultural biography of things,” 68-70.

50 gallons of oil – a larger contribution than in any previous year, and which, when sold on the spot, will bring to the Society 25/ [pounds].¹³⁷ Thus, once he moved to discuss the objects that he now possessed, rather than the event at which they had been given to the LMS, he switched to a business-like attitude and focused mainly on their value. The juxtaposition of these two representations of the contributions within the same paragraph supports the idea that for items to move into a ‘commodity status’ they need to be viewed in a different light. Bullen could be said to have homogenised the contributions into objects that he needed to sell, in other words he reimagined them as commodities. Such a shift in his attitude to what were, essentially, the same objects is likely to have been supported by their physical movement to a place where they were stored with other contributions possessed by the LMS as opposed to when they were possessed by the people who made them. The period in which missionaries, or native teachers, were in possession of contributions for the LMS was therefore an important point in the ‘social life’ of a contribution. It was not subject to exchange, but the meaning it had been imbued with was transformed as it moved into a ‘commodity status’.

III. Diverted from their intended ‘path’.

Not all the contributions made it to the next phase that was intended for them, even if they had already moved into a ‘commodity status’. Some contributions never left the island and were thus diverted from the ‘path’ which they were expected to follow. Hurricanes and flooding sometimes resulted in the destruction of contributions. The missionaries Rev. William Gill and Rev. Aaron Buzacott both reported that the 1846 hurricane on Rarotonga resulted in the loss of the contributions which had been made at their mission stations.¹³⁸ Yet, not just natural disasters resulted in contributions failing to leave the island; human behaviour could have the same result. This appears to have been extremely rare. There are only two examples in the missionary periodicals published by the LMS between 1841 and 1870, both happened in the 1860s. Appadurai’s conceptualisation of ‘diversions’ is well-suited to analyse these events. He defines a ‘diversion’ as the result of the behaviour of individuals, or more uncommonly of institutions, which results in an object not continuing along its intended ‘path’. The object is instead moved, by these external forces, to a new ‘path’. The external forces can be linked to Appadurai’s concept of ‘Politics’¹³⁹, which was discussed in the first chapter. These

¹³⁷ “Samoas.—Work of God at Manua,” *The Evangelical Magazine and Missionary Chronicle* n.s. 23 (July 1845): 378.

¹³⁸ “Destructive Hurricane in Rarotonga,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle; relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 10, no.125 (October 1846): 155-156.

¹³⁹ Appadurai, “Introduction,” 57.

‘diversions’ do not negate the significance of the object’s originally intended ‘path’, argues Appadurai. Instead, the meaning of the ‘diversion’ relies on the meaning of the ‘path’ which an object was diverted from. He suggests that events in warfare and theft are both examples of ‘diversions’.¹⁴⁰

In December 1864, the *Missionary Magazine and Chronicle* published what was to be the first of many letters criticising the French invasion of Maré and Lifu, in the Loyalty Islands. The French claimed that these islands were historically subject to their colony New Caledonia, which the missionaries denied but their appeals to the British and French governments failed to overturn the invasion. In his letter, the Rev. Samuel Macfarlane lamented the plunder and destruction which accompanied the invasion of Lifu and did not leave the LMS untouched: ‘Cocoanut [sic] fibre, to the value of £130, the property of the London Missionary Society, which had been prepared and given by the natives as their yearly offerings, was burnt.’¹⁴¹ Macfarlane’s letter indicated that the French were critical of the English influence of the LMS. Thus, destroying the LMS contributions could be seen as a destruction of English influence, something which supports Appadurai’s argument that the intended ‘path’ of an object was significant for the meaning of its ‘diversion’. The ‘diversion’ was significant to the LMS as a loss of funds, compounded by the French ban on the indigenous Christians of the Loyalty Islands making any collections for the LMS.¹⁴² In a later letter, the Rev. John Jones of Maré further lamented this destruction of Lifu’s contributions: ‘We fear henceforth that the natives will not be allowed to offer any more contributions for the support of religion in any way. ‘A voice of wailing is heard out of Zion, *How are we spoiled!*’¹⁴³ These two quotes indicate that the LMS viewed and represented the French troops’ ‘diversion’ of the contributions as indicative of the wider threat French power posed to their mission. The fate of the contributions might be seen to represent the LMS’ fears regarding the fate of the indigenous Christians who made them. Given the restrictions that the LMS faced working in a French colony and the support which the Catholic missionaries received, the industrious Protestantism of their converts that the contributions embodied might be lost to ‘popish

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 17, 22-28.

¹⁴¹ “Polynesia: Seizure of the Loyalty Islands by the French authorities of New Caledonia, and gross outrages on our missionaries and the native protestant Christians,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 28, no.343, n.s. no.60 (December 1864): 332.

¹⁴² “Polynesia: Seizure of the Loyalty Islands by the French authorities of New Caledonia, and gross outrages on our missionaries and the native protestant Christians,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 28, no.343, n.s. no.60 (December 1864): 328.

¹⁴³ “Polynesia: French Oppression in the Loyalty Islands,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 29, no.343, n.s. no.62 (February 1865): 27.

superstitions'. The 'diversion' of the contributions made by Lifu in 1864 was thus a sign of what was to come: it signified the threat which French colonialism posed to LMS missions.

A few years later, in 1866, contributions were diverted through theft on Raiatea. Although this 'diversion' through theft might seem like less of an existential threat than the one on Lifu, it actually has important implications for any attempt to consider the relationship between missions and empire. The theft was committed by a man, Napario, who had recently been ordained a native pastor for the district of Opoa. Native pastors were ordained by the LMS to be responsible for the churches in a district and as such were a step towards the independent churches which the LMS aspired to create. Nonetheless, the missionaries and Napario clearly had differences of opinion which crystallised around what was to happen to the contributions:

The former [Napario] soon became troublesome, and showed his covetous spirit by early desiring to keep for himself the whole amount which the church subscribed annually towards the Society. Upon Mr. Platt's remonstrance with him on this subject he insulted him, and charged both him and Mr. Morris with wishing to get the people's money for themselves.¹⁴⁴

The Rev. James Vivian, who wrote this letter, was clearly eager to emphasise that this theft was the result of Napario's personal flaws, flaws which the missionaries had deemed a sign that he was unfit for the role of native pastor. The LMS thus represented the theft as a 'diversion' of the contributions from its rightful ownership, in which they would be used to extend missions, to the ownership of an immoral man for his personal gain. Yet, the description of the event indicates that his understanding of the destination of contributions differed. He appeared to see the missionary as the final point of the contribution. Given that he probably viewed himself as equal in status to the missionaries, after all he was also ordained, he did not see why they would be given the contributions which had been made at his church. Vivian's description indicates that the LMS saw its missionaries as those with the highest authority on the islands. Barker indicated that this attitude caused problems in the South Pacific, especially as those who had been trained at the society's institutions still failed to be treated as white missionaries would.¹⁴⁵ As an example of a 'diversion', Appadurai suggests the example of when people disobey sumptuary regulations which restrict who can use specific objects to those in power.¹⁴⁶ The LMS was eager to represent Napario's actions as theft, but it also makes sense to consider them as a response to the restrictions on

¹⁴⁴ "IV.—South Seas.—Raiatea," *The Chronicle of the London Missionary Society for the Year 1867* (January 1, 1867): 14.

¹⁴⁵ Barker, "Where the missionary frontier ran ahead of empire," 97-98.

¹⁴⁶ Appadurai, "Introduction," 22.

contributions which the LMS had developed. All the contributions made at May Meetings or to its special funds, such as the ones for new missionary ships, belonged to it and thus to its missionaries who were its representatives in the field. This restriction reflects the LMS' attitude to the indigenous Christians who worked with them; they were important but could not yet hold the same authority as European missionaries. This attitude reflects a paternalist mind-set, the idea that the British knew what was the best for nations and would be the only ones who could be trusted to carry this out. As a result, the contributions were subject to an exclusive control by the LMS and the European missionaries who represented them. Any attempts by native pastors to assert their own authority with regards to contributions were represented by the LMS as the result of sinful greed rather than a potentially legitimate assertion of power.

IV. Destinations.

One potential destination of contributions under missionary control was to be sold to traders who visited the island that they were made on or on other islands in the South Pacific. There are three mentions of this happening in the LMS periodicals. In one of these, casks of coconut oil which would not fit on the *John Williams* were instead directly sold from Samoa.¹⁴⁷ The large and more developed islands of Tahiti and Samoa were also places where missionaries reported sending their contributions to be sold.¹⁴⁸ Whether the contributions were sold directly from the island on which they were made or sold elsewhere in the South Pacific, their sale relied on European and American trade networks. European trade was common in the region from the 1840s, it focused on luxury products such as pearl shells as well as commodities such as sandalwood and cocoa-nut oil.¹⁴⁹ There was also a second set of traders in the South Pacific who were especially important to some of the more far-flung and isolated mission stations: whalers. In his memoirs, Buzacott stated that Rarotonga was visited

¹⁴⁷ "Missionary Contributions," *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 21, no.152 (May 1857): 128 ; "South Seas. Samoa. — Missionary Offerings of the Young," *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle; relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 11, no.135 (August 1847): 123 ; "Samoas.—Work of God at Manua," *The Evangelical Magazine and Missionary Chronicle* n.s. 23 (July 1845): 378.

¹⁴⁸ "Polynesia: Overthrow of Idolatry at Manhiki," *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 15, no.183 (August 1851):190 ; " Polynesia: Missionary Visit to the Penrhyn and Manihiki Groups," *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 26, no.319, n.s. no.36 (December 1862): 340 ; "Anniversary of the London Missionary Society: Seventy-second general meeting," *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 30, no.361, n.s. no.78 (June 1866): 157.

¹⁴⁹ Raewyn Daziel, "Southern Islands: New Zealand and Polynesia," in *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume III The Nineteenth Century*, ed. Andrew Porter (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 590.

by between sixty and seventy whalers each year. These traded with the islanders as they stocked up on supplies but they might have also bought some of the contributions.¹⁵⁰ These two adaptations of the general ‘path’ of a contribution, which required its exchange for money, thus relied on the presence of Western traders in the region. Other ‘paths’ followed by contributions involved the LMS for a longer period of time.

These other ‘paths’ were often, but not always, highly reliant on the existence of ships belonging to the LMS in the region. Following a successful lobby by John Williams, the LMS acquired the *Camden* in 1837 to travel between the missions of the South Pacific as well as to visit new places. In the years after, missionaries were eager for there to be a larger ship for them to use. The LMS acquiesced in late 1843, but requested that the children attached to the Society collect the £4000 needed to fund the new ship, which would be named in honour of the, by then, martyred John Williams. It was launched in 1844.¹⁵¹ The fact that the ship and its 1865 and 1868 replacements, which kept the same name, were sponsored with children’s contributions meant that they represented liberality and devotion in a similar way to the contributions they sometimes carried. Moreover, their crew and the missionaries who visited other islands on them were celebrated as exemplary.¹⁵² In Buzacott’s memoirs the ship was even referred to as a ‘floating church’.¹⁵³ The symbolic significance of the ‘missionary ship’ is likely to have influenced those contributions whose ‘paths’ involved a journey to either Sydney or England on it. In contrast to the invisible storage places of contributions on the islands within missionary publications, the *John Williams* was prominent in the missionary periodicals (Image 3). The contributions were drawn back into discourses which celebrated

¹⁵⁰ Buzacott and Sunderland, eds, *Mission Life*, 93.

¹⁵¹ John Williams was killed when he visited Eramanga, New Hebrides in 1839.

“Appeal for a New Missionary Ship for the South Pacific,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle; relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 7, no.90 (November 1843): 185-187 ; “Appeal to the Young for a New Missionary Ship,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle; relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 7, no.91 (December 1843): 197-199 ; Chris Wingfield, “Ship’s Bell, United Kingdom,” in *Trophies, Relics, and Curios? Trophies, Relics, Curios? Missionary Heritage from Africa and the Pacific*, ed. Karen Jacobs, Chantal Knowles and Chris Wingfield (Leiden: Sidestone Press, 2015),128.

¹⁵²“Shipwreck and Total Loss of the “John Williams”,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 28, no.342,n.s. no. 59 (November 1864): 297-298 ; “Launch of the “John Williams”,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 29, no.354, n.s. no.71 (November 1865): 303 ; “I.—Wreck of the “John Williams”,” *The Chronicle of the London Missionary Society for the Year 1867* (August 1, 1867): 155 ; “II.—Departure of the “John Williams”,” *The Chronicle of the London Missionary Society for the Year 1868* (December 1, 1868): 242 ; “Fourteenth Missionary Voyage of the “John Williams” in the South Pacific,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 24, no.292, n.s. no.9 (September 1860): 245-251.

¹⁵³ Buzacott and Sunderland, eds, *Mission Life*, 195.

missionary success and piety, rather than the practical discussions which were often seen when they were mentioned after the point at which they had been made.

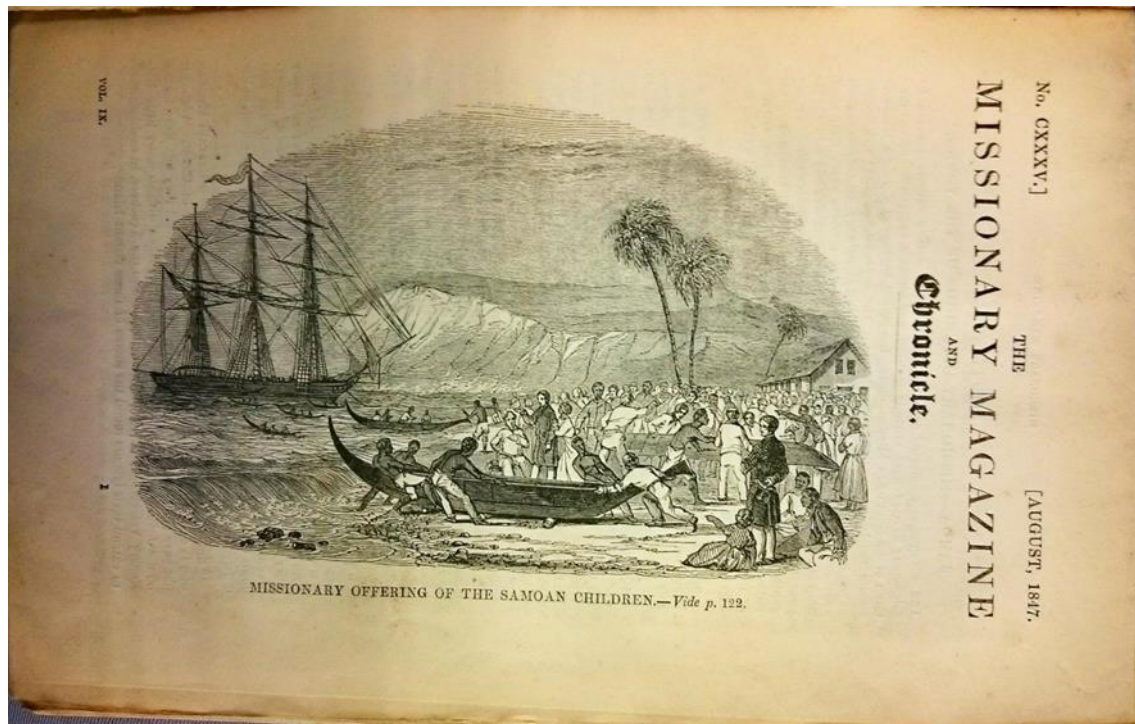


Image 3 : The *John Williams* can be seen in the left of this image. “Missionary Offering of the Samoan Children,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle*; relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society 11, no.135 (August 1847): 121. August 1847. Photograph taken by author.

Sydney was essential for the missions of the South Seas and the *John Williams* visited its port every year. Once there, it stocked up on new supplies and sold the contributions which it had collected.¹⁵⁴ The city’s significance to the South Pacific missions is further indicated by the fact that the LMS’ agent for the region resided there.¹⁵⁵ The Rev. W.G. Lawes, who worked on Niue, mentioned that he sent arrowroot to Sydney on the ship.¹⁵⁶ Nonetheless, missionaries would also mention the value they expected contributions to make at Sydney without referring to the *John Williams*, so they might have used other ships to send contributions to be sold there.¹⁵⁷ Sydney offered the LMS a higher return for its contributions, which was essential for an organisation which was almost perpetually short of funds. An 1865 letter from Lawes

¹⁵⁴ “The Voyages of the “*John Williams*,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle*: relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society 23, no.278 (July 1859): 186-188.

¹⁵⁵ “The Death of the Rev. Dr. Ross of Sydney,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle*: relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society 27, no.321, n.s. no. 38 (February 1863): 39.

¹⁵⁶ “South Seas: Savage Island,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle*: relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society 27, no.331, n.s. no.48 (December 1863): 343.

¹⁵⁷ “South Seas: Extracts from the journal of the “*John Williams*” on her last visit to the island of western Polynesia,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle*: relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society 28, no.332, n.s. no.49 (January 1864): 11.

lamented the financial impact of the loss of the *John Williams*: ‘Had we a Mission vessel to take the fibre, &c., to Sydney they would doubtless realize twice the amount.’¹⁵⁸ When the LMS sold contributions in Sydney, they were trading in a colonial context. The Australian colonies became heavily involved in global trade from the mid-nineteenth century and a large volume of their trade was with Britain. They were not only involved in trading the things which could be mined, grown or produced in Australia, but treated the whole of the Pacific as an area in which to acquire things and trade.¹⁵⁹ The contributions coming from the mission ships were thus sold on a market in which similar commodities had been obtained through trade with the islands of the Pacific or produced in Australia. These products could then be sold on in wider commodity markets, potentially ending up in Britain itself. Hence, Sydney was a key point on the ‘path’ of many contributions and functioned as an important destination for the contributions sold in its markets. In this manner, it acted as a connection between the South Pacific missions and formal empire through the ‘social lives’ of the contributions which the LMS received and sold.

Once every three or four years, until the late 1860s, the *John Williams* supplemented her annual visit to the Australian colonies with a visit to England. Upon her return she carried missionary families as well as the payments, for books, and some of the contributions made by those in South Pacific.¹⁶⁰ In *Missionary Enterprises*, Williams proudly discussed the first time that the LMS had sold South Pacific contributions, in the form of cocoa-nut oil, in London in 1821. He was eager to highlight that George IV had cancelled the import duties, resulting in an even higher income for the LMS.¹⁶¹ It was only fitting that the ship named in his honour continued this tradition. The LMS planned to bring contributions to England, as the final item of the list of things which the mission ship carried on its second outward journey to the Pacific attests: ‘casks and tanks for bringing home contributions of native produce, &c.’¹⁶² The LMS might be said to have created their own trading network for contributions as well as relying on those which existed due to the informal and formal imperial influence in the South Pacific.

¹⁵⁸ “South Seas,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 29, no.353, n.s. no.70 (October 1865): 292.

¹⁵⁹ Donald Denoon and Marivic Wyndham, “Australia and the Western Pacific,” in *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume III The Nineteenth Century*, ed. Andrew Porter (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 551-552.

¹⁶⁰ “The Voyages of the “John Williams,”” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 23, no.278 (July 1859): 186.

¹⁶¹ Williams, *Missionary Enterprises*, 42.

¹⁶² “Departure of the Missionary Ship,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle; relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 11, no.138 (November 1847):173.

Within missionary periodicals, the arrival of contributions in England was treated quite differently to the arrival of contributions in Sydney. As suggested above, their journey on the missionary ship offered these objects religious and moral dimensions as well as the economic ones which contributions sold in the South Pacific and Sydney were given:

The arrival of the *John Williams*, at the present time, is of special advantage to the Society, from the large contributions to its funds with which she is freighted, in the shape of cocoa-nut oil and arrow-root. It is expected that these offerings of love and gratitude from the christian [sic] islanders will, when converted into money, bring more than TWO THOUSAND POUNDS. While it thus constitutes a most acceptable and timely addition to the resources of the Society, the gift is a noble testimony to the expansive power of christian [sic] principle among a people so lately called, from the darkness of heathenism, to the knowledge of Christ and the enjoyment of his love.¹⁶³

This description of the contributions is more evocative of the descriptions seen in the previous chapter than most of those discussed in this one. The contributions were still in the form in which they had been given in the South Pacific, linking them more closely to the edifying example of the May Meetings, and they had also gained a further sense of piety through their journey on the *John Williams*. They were potentially seen by those who visited the ship when it docked in London and would have been some of the few non-monetary contributions with which those at the LMS headquarters came into contact. The return to edifying discourses around the contributions was not in opposition to the focus on their practical value in this quote. Perhaps this was due to the fact that the LMS remained fully in control of their sale by transporting them to England, rather than selling them to potentially immoral traders in the South Pacific region.

V. Continuing beyond their destination?

It is important to note that the contributions of the South Pacific also arrived in London in another form: money. Hitherto, this chapter has suggested that once a contribution became a commodity it could be sold and thus left the contribution status. However, it is important to emphasise that the sale of contributions was an exchange in which the missionaries received money. Thinking about the question of when contributions stopped being contributions is complicated by this exchange. After all, even if the objects which the South Pacific islanders had contributed to the LMS were sold, the money which was received for them was sent to the LMS headquarters in London as their contributions. It might be said that although the

¹⁶³ Arrival of the “*John Williams*,” *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle; relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 11, no.134 (July 1847): 116.

items which had originally been the contributions left the contribution stage, their status was transmuted onto the money that was paid for them. In its annual meetings, the LMS was eager to represent the contributions made by all the mission stations. Its financial statements included separate lines on what was given at mission stations and the discussions of the Polynesian missions were eager to focus on the support indigenous Christians offered the LMS.¹⁶⁴ The flow of money and occasionally material culture contributions to the LMS headquarters in London from the mission-stations in the South Pacific appears about as imperial a relationship between the two as might be possible. The mission stations were supplying the LMS' directors with money and commodities. Its aims and focus might have been very different to those of the traders in the South Pacific and in Sydney but it too gained an income from the islanders of the South Pacific, through their contributions. In trading the contributions for money, the LMS brought the contributions onto a 'path' which was inherently imperial. It relied on the trading networks linked to informal empire in the South Pacific and those between the Australian colonies and the British metropole. It even established its own trading network between the South Pacific and London. Almost all the contributions made in the South Pacific and at the other LMS mission stations ended up in London, either in the transmuted form of money, if the original contributions had been traded, or in their original form, either if they were made in money or if they had not yet been exchanged.

VI. Conclusion.

The contributions made in the South Pacific thus had many possible destinations, both intended and unintended. Yet the 'paths' to all the intended destinations discussed in this chapter shared important features. All of the objects were initially kept by the local mission on the island on which they had been made, this period was an important one since it was

¹⁶⁴"Thursday, May 12th : The Annual Public Meeting : Exeter Hall," *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle; chiefly relating to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 6, no. 73 (June 1842): 91 ; Thursday, May 9th – The Annual Meeting," *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: chiefly relating to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 14, no.169 (June 1850): 84-85; "Thursday, May 12th. — The Annual Meeting," *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: chiefly relating to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 17, no.205 (June 1853): 155; "Anniversary of the London Missionary Society: Sixty-Fifth General Meeting," *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 23, no.277 (June 1859): 137-140 ; "Anniversary of the London Missionary Society: Sixty-eighth general meeting," *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: chiefly relating to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 26, no.313, n.s. no.30 (June 1862): 159,161 ; "Anniversary of the London Missionary Society: Sixty-Ninth General Meeting," *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society* 27, no.325, n.s. no.42 (June 1863): 167-169 ; "Annual meeting in Exeter Hall," *The Chronicle of the London Missionary Society for the Year 1868* (June 1, 1868): 117.

when they transitioned into a 'commodity status'. They did not just practically become things to be sold; the LMS also represented them in this way in its missionary periodicals. When they came to be represented like this, they no longer carried the symbolic value which the LMS had previously been eager to emphasise. They tended to disappear from missionary publications once they reached this stage of their 'social lives'. This silence suggests that although the contributions from the South Seas did have an actual financial value, they were of far more interest for the LMS to present to their metropolitan audience as an edifying example than a source of income. Nevertheless, the incidental mentions of the destinations of contributions and their journeys to these destinations indicate that one of the major strengths of the system was its flexibility. Contributions were of course all sold and then the money was sent to the LMS, so in this sense their value shared a final destination. The physical destinations of the physical items which were contributed did vary though: they could remain within the South Pacific islands, arrive in Australia before travelling on into global commodity markets or be brought to the metropolitan heart of England and the LMS, London. These 'paths' were all suitable for contributions and could thus be selected depending on the external circumstances of the mission or of the LMS as a whole. Hence, when the *John Williams* was shipwrecked and could not take the contributions out of the South Pacific, missionaries could adapt the contribution 'paths' so that they could sell their items from their islands or from important islands in the region. When it was possible, they could bring them to the markets in Sydney where they would generally command higher sums and thus deliver better value to the LMS headquarters which would receive their value. Finally, when it was possible to bring contributions to London on the homeward bound journeys of the *John Williams*, the contributions could be restored to serving a symbolic as well as a financial purpose. The flexibility of the 'social life' of a contribution made them both a practical, financial, and symbolic, exemplary, success for the LMS.

Conclusion: The ‘social lives’ of contributions, missions and empire.

There were common features in the ‘social lives’ of contributions. They were all contributed and most ended up at the LMS headquarters in London, either in their original form or in the money for which South Pacific contributions had been exchanged. These common features, though, did not result in there being a single ‘path’ which contributions followed as they journeyed through their ‘social lives’. Instead, there were multiple ‘paths’ and these could be adapted at various stages. Those in the South Pacific could cultivate, create or earn the items which they contributed. The missionaries and indigenous Christians both played a role in adapting the May Meetings to suit local needs and situations. Finally, the LMS, when it remained in control of contributions, could trade them in various places depending on external circumstances. This flexibility increased the usefulness of contributions for the LMS and its representation of their ‘social lives’ added a further symbolic journey in the pages of the LMS publications. The LMS representations of the ‘social lives’ of contributions focused on the industry and piety of those who cultivated, created or earned contributions and then on their devout behaviour when they made them. Once it had taken ownership of the contributions, the LMS’ representation shifted away from edifying examples to the practicality of trading the contributions. Due to its connection to liberality and missionary success the *John Williams* provided a different context for contributions headed to England, one in which they could be brought back into wider discourses of devotion.

There was one more common feature which all of the ‘paths’ that contributions traversed during their ‘social lives’ shared: they illustrated how entangled contributions, and by extension the LMS missions, were within the webs of (in)formal empire in the South Pacific and elsewhere in the world. Just as there were multiple ‘paths’ which contributions could follow, there were multiple ways in which their ‘social lives’ reflected the relationship between missions and empire. The way in which missionaries represented the creation, cultivation and earning stage of the ‘social life’ of contributions not only prioritised their edifying functions over the actual work which the South Pacific Christians did, but framed this stage in terms of the work the missionaries had done and needed to do to cultivate civilisation and commerce in the South Pacific. When it came to the moment at which contributions were made, the objects themselves carried a range of meanings for both the individuals making them and for the missionaries receiving them. However, once again, in missionary representations of these events contributions were used largely as an edifying example which could encourage greater liberality back in Britain. In addition, the

contradictions within their representations of this stage encourage doubt as to the extent to which the contributions were voluntary and the degree to which the LMS was willing to accept the implications of its own Voluntary Principle when it came to indigenous self-support and independence. Underlying all of this was the sense of the LMS and the missionaries that they had a responsibility to their converts and the heathens of the South Pacific. This responsibility was imagined by them in terms of parental authority and education. The final stages of the ‘social lives’ of contributions, when they moved into a ‘commodity status’ and were traded for money, relied on the presence of informal empire in the South Pacific, in the form of trading networks, as well as the formal empire embodied in the Australian colonies. Furthermore, the LMS created its own quasi-imperial trading connections through its use of the *John Williams* to bring back some of the South Pacific contributions, mainly in the form of commodities, to England. Some of the ‘diversions’ of contributions in this final stage brought yet another link to empire: the extension of the French Empire in the South Pacific through the French invasion of the Loyalty Islands. The LMS South Pacific missions operated in an area where there was formal as well as informal empire. Beyond this, the attitudes of the missionaries overlapped with and extended the imperial concepts of European authority and the responsibility to civilise. Meanwhile, the strategies which the LMS used to gain a monetary income from the contributions made in the South Pacific built on the trading networks and European presence in the region. These strategies also relied on the colonial markets of Sydney and the Australian colonies.

The ‘paths’ of the contributions made to the LMS in the South Pacific provide an insight into the power relations which controlled these ‘paths’, which can be likened to those which Appadurai alludes to in his discussion of value and the role of ‘Politics’¹⁶⁵ in determining value. As a result, tracing the ‘social lives’ of contributions, provokes questions about the nature of the relationship between Pacific islanders and LMS missionaries. The power relations which these ‘paths’ reveal do not seem in fitting with a relationship shaped mainly by religious bonds. Instead, the relationship between the missionaries and those Pacific Christians making contributions had proto-imperial characteristics. The attitudes of the missionaries to those who they wished to convert and had converted did indeed contain a sense of authority and superiority. Throughout this thesis, these attitudes have been termed paternalist, which describes their own sense of bringing civilisation to the South Pacific and the fact that they frequently envisioned their superiority in terms of familial relations. They

¹⁶⁵ Appadurai, “Introduction,” 57.

were the ‘fathers’ of the ‘children’ of the South Pacific, who brought Christianity, civilisation and commerce but also acted as spokespeople for their converts in England when they felt they needed protecting. The letters that the LMS sent to the British and French governments were an example of the sense among missionaries that they protected those whom they had converted.

Furthermore, the ‘social lives’ of contributions reveal an insight not only into the attitudes of the missionaries but into how they might have held practical, ‘imperial-like’ authority over the South Pacific islanders whom they had converted when they enforced contributions. It is important to recall that not only church members made contributions. This means that the enforcing of contributions went beyond the internal discipline linked to church membership and that the relationship between the missionaries and the South Pacific islanders was more extensive than a purely religious one. In addition, the social relations involved in the exchange of contributions could also involve an imbalance of knowledge and power between the missionaries and the South Pacific converts, an imbalance which is also at the heart of imperial relations. The role missionaries carved out for themselves within South Pacific communities as the source of knowledge about Christianity and, more widely, civilisation as well as their emphasis on their role in educating their converts might be said to have reinforced this imbalance of knowledge. The missionaries both introduced the concept of contributions to their converts and received the contributions these people made.

Other ‘paths’ taken by contributions illustrate yet more ways in which they were tied up in a proto-imperial relationship between missionaries and islanders. When the French troops destroyed contributions, the LMS was quick to emphasise that those contributions were its possessions and thus effaced the work done by those who had made the contributions in the first place. More importantly, the LMS viewed the French invasion in terms of the threat this posed to its own authority. The LMS could sell contributions into the trading networks which characterised informal empire in the region but also in the Australian colonies. When missionaries sold contributions into the latter, they ended up directly funding the British Empire. Finally, since the value of all the contributions eventually arrived at the LMS headquarters in London, the way in which the LMS funded itself not only used trading networks implicated in (in)formal empire, it also created a similar trading network of its own.

Given the above it can be argued that the LMS missions, with regards to how they encouraged, collected, sold and represented contributions, were proto-imperialist. Identifying the actions of missionaries, both with regards to their converts and the contributions, as proto-imperialist rather than simply terming them imperialist allows for a more nuanced view of the social and power relations which the missions entailed. The sense of superiority and authority that LMS missionaries had needs to be acknowledged, since it was ‘imperial-like’. The attitudes of LMS missionaries caused them to treat the islanders whom they ordained as less authoritative. In addition to this, the mind-set of the missionaries apparently prevented them from fully accepting the implications of self-support, even as they represented the contributions which were an example of how self-support worked in practice.¹⁶⁶

Nonetheless, it is also important to acknowledge that the missionaries did not fully succeed in imposing their culture and ideas on the South Pacific Christians. It is useful to consider the critiques Porter made of cultural imperialism to further understand why the missions were proto-imperialist rather than imperialist or culturally imperialist. The ‘social lives’ of contributions reveal the limits to the missionaries’ authority as well as their ‘imperial-like’ attitudes and behaviour. Although the letters published by the LMS often glossed over any opposition to the missionaries, evidence of this opposition still slipped through. The comments of Saville on how those living on Huahine had seen contributions as taxes or the description of the actions of the Native Pastor who refused to hand the contributions over to the LMS missionaries are two examples of this evidence. More importantly, the events around making a contribution offered South Pacific Christians a form of agency. They could use it to express their Christian identity, in spite of missionaries not accepting them as church members, and they could also use how much they gave as a means of expressing their piety. Most importantly, the LMS was highly reliant on the cooperation of indigenous Christians for its success. As a result, Christianity was not simply imposed from above but was something which people genuinely incorporated into their culture. The feasts which were held at May Meetings serve as an example of this. Characterising the actions of the LMS missionaries in the South Pacific with regards to contributions as proto-imperialist gives a sense of the attitudes of the missionaries, the way they drew the islanders into imperial trade networks as well as the power and knowledge imbalances between them and their converts. At the same time, it also acknowledges the agency and involvement of the islanders of the South Pacific.

¹⁶⁶ Stephen Howe, *Empire: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 30.

The new approach to the relationship between missions and empire, in particular between material culture, missions and empire in this thesis was made possible by the theories of Appadurai and Kopytoff. However, it is also important to note the adaptations of their ideas which working with them in this case study has entailed. Firstly, rather than following one object through its 'social life', this thesis follows a class of objects which became a class by virtue of sharing a phase in their 'social lives': they were contributed to the LMS in the South Pacific. This class includes a rather disparate mix of produce, craft objects and money. Secondly, partially as a result of this and due to the variations in how contributions could be cultivated, created, earned, contributed and sold it is more useful to talk of multiple 'paths' which a thing can take in its 'social life' than one 'path' followed by all the contributions. Thirdly, the theories on the 'social lives' of things can be extended to their representation, which offered a new context and meaning.

Contributions are a form of material culture linked to missions that have largely been neglected by historians of missions and of South Pacific material culture. There is no sustained consideration of the functions contributions served for the LMS, its missionaries or the South Pacific Christians. Yet, this thesis has shown that tracing the 'social lives' of contributions enables a greater understanding of the wider relationship between missions and empire around the mid-nineteenth century. As the contributions traversed their 'paths', they became increasingly intertwined with the attitudes and networks of empire. Before they were contributed, the objects were framed by the imperial discourses on non-Europeans and especially the discourses the European explorers and missionaries had developed on the South Pacific. This framing implied that the missionaries had both the responsibility and the right to convert those in the South Pacific, the 'degenerate children' needed to be guided to 'adulthood'. The contributions were a tangible result of the changes which the missionaries wanted to achieve. They were more than just a sign of success though. The social and power relations which making contributions entailed drew the Pacific islanders into an 'imperial-like' relationship with the missionaries who worked on their islands, especially as the missionaries were not opposed to using coercion. Finally, the missionaries brought the Pacific islanders directly into contact with imperial trading networks, both those linked to informal empire in the South Pacific and those linked to formal empire in the Australian colonies and London. The attitudes and strategies of the missionaries both overlapped with those of imperialists. The 'social lives' of contributions reveal attitudes, relationships embodied in their exchange and ways of trading them for money which had the potential to be formalised

in a more directly imperial relationship. The ‘paths’ of contributions underline how entangled missions and empire were, something formal empires could use to their advantage later in the century.

This new perspective has the potential to be extended through further research into contributions. The letters and reports which the LMS published in the periodicals studied in this thesis are just a fragment of those held in the archives. More importantly, this thesis has noted that unpublished letters were often more critical of the converts’ attitudes towards contributions. A more extensive study of the ‘social lives’ of contributions made in the South Pacific drawing on these letters could offer more insights into the relations between missions and empire. In addition, it could offer a case study to reflect on the differences between missionary correspondence and missionary publications. The approach taken in this thesis could also be extended outside of the period discussed, the main source base used here consisted of the LMS periodicals published between 1841 and 1871. Extending the period under consideration enables historians to look at the expansion of formal empire into the Pacific later in the nineteenth century through a new lens. Finally, given that the LMS was not the only missionary society that received contributions from its mission-stations in the South Pacific, a comparative study of the ‘social lives’ of contributions is possible.

The moment of making a contribution was brief, yet the ‘social lives’ of contributions made in the South Pacific were extremely important to the LMS and should thus be important to historians studying its missions today. Contributions appeared in missionary publications in a wide range of contexts and with a wide range of functions. As a result they can be traced through these publications, bringing together what happened with them with how the LMS represented this. More importantly, they offer a means of exploring the complex and occasionally contradictory relationship between the LMS missions and empire. As they journeyed through their ‘social lives’ contributions made in the South Pacific could be caught up in the wider webs of empire in a range of ways and one contribution might be caught up at several points in its ‘social life’. The ‘social lives’ of the contributions made in the South Pacific show that they had an importance which went beyond the island at which they were made and even the region. In their journey to the metropolitan heart of the LMS, London, they were caught up in and interacted with several forms of empire. These journeys continue to be important, even if the contributions themselves have long been consumed or spent.

Appendix One: Contributions named in the *Missionary Magazine and Chronicle* (1841-1866) and in the *Missionary Chronicle of the London Missionary Society* (1867-1871)

Note that I have only looked at the contributions at the May Meetings and the Missionary Ship for this table, not ones to missionaries for their work or for native teachers.

Some years are from the *Missionary Magazine and Chronicle* included in the *Evangelical Magazine and Missionary Chronicle*, these have been italicised in this table.

Since the annual volumes had successive page numbers, just the year and the page feature in this table. This is in the interest of clarity.

Type	Where mentioned. Year (page)
<i>Produce</i>	
Arrow root	1841 (7); 1842 (11); 1843 (54, 128, 146); <i>1845</i> (378); 1846 (11, 181); 1847 (114, 123); 1849 (11); 1851 (123); 1862 (270, 272, 316); 1863 (343); 1864 (40); 1865 (155, 213, 215); 1871 (119)
(Cocoa-nut) oil	1842 (168); <i>1845</i> (378); 1846 (11, 162, 181); 1847 (123); 1852 (230, 231, 232, 233); 1860 (308); 1861 (40); 1862 (316); 1865 (213, 215, 294)
Cocoa-nut fibre	1863 (343); 1864 (13); 1865 (155, 292); 1866 (157, 205)
Cotton	1865 (292); 1866 (157, 205); 1869 (171)
Cotton fungus	1871 (119)
Coffee	1862 (316); 1865 (294)
Tobacco	1865 (294)
Bundles of piere, the native mica	1841 (7)
Bananas	1843 (128)
Old cocoa-nuts	1862 (340)
Produce, unspecified	1864 (265)
<i>Man-made Objects</i>	
(native) baskets	1841 (7); 1843 (54); 1862 (270); 1864 (11)
(native) mats	1842 (11); 1843 (54); 1852 (230); 1862 (316); 1864 (11)
(native) cloth	1842 (11); 1847 (122); 1852 (230); 1862 (270)
English cloth	1847 (122)
Clothing, unspecified	1862 (316)
Stones of murder	1841 (7)
Axes	1847 (122)
Heathen ear drops	1841 (7)
Scissors	1847 (122)
Razors	1847 (122)

Knives	1847 (122)
Fishing nets	1849 (11); 1871 (119)
<i>Cinet/Cinnet</i>	1852 (230); 1862 (340)
Small bowls	1862 (340)
Walking sticks, made from iron-wood	1862 (270)
Hats	1871 (30)
Manufacture, unspecified	1864 (265)
<i>Natural objects</i>	
Shells	1865 (294)
<i>Animals</i>	
Fowls	1841 (7); 1851 (123)
Ducks	1851 (123)
Pigs	1851 (123)
<i>Money</i>	
Money	1841 (7); 1843 (128); 1846 (11,181); 1847 (123); 1851 (123); 1852 (116, 232, 233); 1854 (126) ; 1855 (70, 112, 128); 1856 (119, 258); 1857 (128); 1860 (308); 1861 (40, 177); 1862 (61, 272, 340); 1863 (227); 1864 (5, 7, 11, 13, 40, 267, 293, 323); 1865 (25, 154, 213, 215, 259, 260, 292, 293, 294); 1866 (157, 208, 268, 316, 331); 1867 (60, 227); 1868 (244); 1869 (10, 105, 239, 272); 1870 (100); 1871 (28, 30, 58, 98, 119, 179)
Monetary value of contributions indicated, but it is not clear if money or produce/objects were given	1851 (14); 1854 (152); 1860 (6, 83, 306); 1861 (38); 1862 (161); 1863 (93); 1864 (265, 266); 1865 (62, 64, 212); 1866 (156)

Appendix Two: Destinations of contributions mentioned in the *Missionary Magazine and Chronicle (1841-1866)* and in the *Missionary Chronicle of the London Missionary Society (1867-1871)*

These are either mentioned as places at which the John Williams left cargo or where contributions were sold or intended to be sold. This excludes the contributions in cash, which the missionaries did not have to sell.

Some years are from the *Missionary Magazine and Chronicle* included in the *Evangelical Magazine and Missionary Chronicle*, these have been italicised in this table.

Since the annual volumes had successive page numbers, just the year and the page feature in this table. This is in the interest of clarity.

Destination	Where mentioned. Year (Page)
England	1842 (11); 1847 (116); 1859 (186)
Sydney and New South Wales	1842 (11); 1859 (188); 1863 (343); 1864 (11)
Samoa	1862 (340); 1866 (157)
Tahiti	1851 (190)
Sold on the island they contributed on (i.e. to visiting traders)	<i>1845</i> (378); 1847 (123); 1857 (128)
Stolen by a native pastor	1867 (14)

Bibliography

Primary sources

Missionary periodicals

The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle; relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society, 1841-1843 1846-1847, 1849.

The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle: relating chiefly to the missions of the London Missionary Society, 1850-1866.

The Evangelical Magazine and Missionary Magazine, 1844-1845.

The Missionary Chronicle of the London Missionary Society, 1867-1871.

Missionary memoirs

Buzacott, Rev. A. and Rev. J.P. Sunderland, eds. *Mission Life in the Islands of the Pacific being a narrative of the life and labours of the Rev. A. Buzacott, missionary of Rarotonga, for some time co-worker with the Rev. John Williams, Martyr of Erromanga*. London: John Snow and Co., 1866 ; Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies of the University of the South Pacific / The Cook Islands Library & Museum Society, 1985. Page references are to the 1985 edition.

Williams, John. *A narrative of missionary enterprises in the South Sea Islands; with remarks upon the natural history of the islands, origin, languages, traditions, and usages of the inhabitants*. London: J. Snow, 1838.

Secondary Sources

Appadurai, Arjun. "Introduction: commodities and the politics of value." In *The social life of things: commodities in cultural perspective*, edited by Arjun Appadurai, 1-63. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986

Ballantyne, Tony. "The changing shape of the modern British Empire and its historiography." *The Historical Journal* 53, 2 (2010): 429-452.

Barker, John. "Where the missionary frontier ran ahead of empire." In *Missions and Empire*, edited by Norman Etherington, 86-106. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Barringer, Tim and Tom Flynn. "Introduction." In *Colonialism and the Object: Empire, Material Culture and the Museum*, edited by Tim Barringer and Tom Flynn, 1-8. London: Routledge, 1998.

Beare, F.W. "The Mission of the Disciples and the Mission Charge: Matthew 10 and Parallels." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 89, 1 (1970): 1-13.

Cannizzo, Jeanne. "Gathering souls and objects: Missionary collections," in *Colonialism and the Object: Empire, Material Culture and the Museum*, edited by Tim Barringer and Tom Flynn, 153-166. London: Routledge, 1998.

Cleall, Esme. *Missionary Discourses of Difference: Negotiating Otherness in the British Empire, 1840-1900*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.

- Comaroff, Jean and John Comaroff. *Of Revelation and Revolution: Christianity, Colonialism and Consciousness in South Africa Volume One*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1991.
- . *Of Revelation and Revolution, Volume Two: The Dialectics of Modernity on a South African Frontier* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1997
- Coombes, Annie E. *Reinventing Africa: Museums, Material Culture and Popular Imagination in Late Victorian and Edwardian England*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994.
- Daziell, Raewyn. “Southern Islands: New Zealand and Polynesia.” In *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume III The Nineteenth Century*, edited by Andrew Porter, 573-596.
- Denoon, Donald and Marivic Wyndham, “Australia and the Western Pacific,” in *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume III The Nineteenth Century*, edited by Andrew Porter, 546-572. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Donaldson, Margaret. “The voluntary principle in the colonial situation: theory and practice.” In *Voluntary Religion. Papers read at the 1985 Summer Meeting and the 1986 Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society*, edited by W.J. Sheils and Diana Wood, 381-390. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986.
- Edmond, Rod. *Representing the South Pacific: Colonial Discourse from Cook to Gauguin*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- Etherington, Norman. “Missions and Empire.” In *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume 5: Historiography*, edited by Robin W. Winks, 303- 314. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999
- . “Introduction.” In *Missions and Empire*, edited by Norman Etherington, 1-18. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Garrett, John. *To Live Among the Stars: Christian Origins in Oceania*. Geneva and Suva: World Council of Churches in association with the Institute of Pacific Studies University of the South Pacific, 1982.
- Gosden, Chris and Yvonne Marshall. “The Cultural Biography of Objects.” In “The Cultural Biography of Objects.” Special issue, *World Archaeology* 31, 2 (1999): 169-178.
- Harries, Patrick. “Anthropology.” In *Missions and Empire*, edited by Norman Etherington, 238- 260. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Harries, Patrick and David Maxwell. “Introduction: The Spiritual in the Secular.” In *The Spiritual in the Secular: Missionaries and Knowledge about Africa*, edited by Patrick Harries and David Maxwell, 1-29. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Company, 2012.
- Hooper, Steve. “Illustration of an Exhibition and Sale at the Wesleyan Centenary Hall, United Kingdom.” *Trophies, Relics, Curios? Missionary Heritage from Africa and the Pacific*, edited by Karen Jacobs, Chantal Knowles and Chris Wingfield, 45-49. Leiden: Sidestone Press, 2015.

- Howe, Stephen. Stephen Howe, *Empire: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Jacobs, Karen and Chris Wingfield. "Introduction." In *Trophies, Relics, Curios? Missionary Heritage from Africa and the Pacific*, edited by Karen Jacobs, Chantal Knowles and Chris Wingfield, 9-22. Leiden: Sidestone Press, 2015
- Johnston, Anna. *Missionary Writing and Empire, 1800-1860*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- Kopytoff, Igor. "The cultural biography of things: commoditization as a process." In *The social life of things: commodities in cultural perspective*, edited by Arjun Appadurai, 64-91. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.
- MacCulloch, Diarmaid. *A History of Christianity*. London: Penguin, 2010.
- Maughan, Steven. " "Mighty England do Good": The Major English Denominations and Organisation for the Support of Foreign Missions in the Nineteenth Century." In *Missionary Encounters: Sources and Issues*, edited by Robert A. Bickers and Rosemary Seton, 11-37. Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 1993.
- Mauss, Marcel. *The Gift: The form and reason for exchange in archaic societies*. Translated by W.D. Halls. London: Routledge, 1990.
- Porter, Andrew. *Religion versus Empire? British Protestant missionaries and overseas expansion, 1700-1914*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004.
- . " 'Cultural Imperialism' and protestant missionary enterprise, 1780-1914." *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 25, no. 3 (1997): 367-391.
- . " 'Commerce and Christianity': The Rise and Fall of a Nineteenth-Century Missionary Slogan." *The Historical Journal*, 28, 3 (1985): 597-621.
- Rappaport, Erika. "Imperial Possessions, Cultural Histories, and the Material Turn: Response." *Victorian Studies* 50, no. 2 (2008): 289-296.
- School of African and Oriental Studies. "Guide to the Council for World Mission / London Missionary Society Archive." *The Library*. School of African and Oriental Studies. Accessed February 3, 2016.
http://archives.soas.ac.uk/CalmView/GetDocument.ashx?db=Catalog&fname=CWM+guide_CURRENT+VERSION.pdf
- Seton, Rosemary. "Reconstructing the museum of the London missionary society." *Material Religion* 8, no.1 (2012): 98-102.
- Sherlock, Peter. "Missions, colonialism and the politics of agency." In *Evangelists of Empire? Missionaries in Colonial History*, edited by Amanda Barry, Joanna Cruickshank, Andrew Brown-May and Patricia Grimshaw, 13-20. Melbourne: eScholarship Research Centre, 2008.
- Thomas, Nicholas. *Entangled Objects: Exchange, Material Culture, and Colonialism in the Pacific*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1991.

- . *In Oceania: Visions, Artefacts, Histories*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1997.
- . “Colonial Conversions: difference, hierarchy, and history in early twentieth century evangelical propaganda.” In *Cultures of Empire A Reader: Colonizers in Britain and the empire in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries*, edited by Catherine Hall, 298 - 328. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000.
- Thorne, Susan. *Congregational Missions and the Making of an Imperial Culture in Nineteenth-Century England*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1999.
- Trentmann, Frank. “Materiality in the Future of History: Things, Practices and Politics.” In “Special Issue on Material Culture.” Special issue. *Journal of British Studies* 48, 2 (2009): 283-307.
- Spennemann, Dirk H.R. “Traditional arrowroot production and utilization in the Marshall Islands.” *Journal of Ethnobiology* 14, 2 (1994): 211-234
- Van Binsbergen, Wim. “Commodification: Things, agency, and identities. Introduction.” In *Commodification. Things, Agency, and Identities (The Social Life of Things Revisited)*, edited by Wim van Binsbergen and Peter Geschiere, 9-51. Münster: Lit Verlag, 2005.
- Wingfield, Christian. ‘Scarcely more than a Christian trophy case’? The global collections of the London Missionary Society museum (1814-1910).” *Journal of the History of Collections*. Published electronically February 19, 2016: 1-20. doi: 10.1093/jhc/fhw002.
- Wingfield, Chris. “Ship’s Bell, United Kingdom.” in *Trophies, Relics, and Curios? Trophies, Relics, Curios? Missionary Heritage from Africa and the Pacific*, edited by Karen Jacobs, Chantal Knowles and Chris Wingfield, 127-129. Leiden: Sidestone Press, 2015.