

Sisters and Brothers Abroad: Gender, Race, Empire and Anglican Missionary Reformism in Hawai'i and the Pacific, 1858–75

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British Anglo-Catholic and high church Anglicans promoted a new set of foreign missionary initiatives in the Pacific and South and East Africa in the 1860s. Theorizing new indigenizing models for mission inspired by Tractarian medievalism, the initiatives envisioned a different and better engagement with 'native' cultures. Despite setbacks, the continued use of Anglican sisters in Hawai'i and brothers in Melanesia, Africa and India created a potent new imaginative space for missionary endeavour, but one problematized by the uneven reach of empire: from contested, as in the Pacific, to normal and pervasive, as in India. Of particular relevance was the Sandwich Islands mission, invited by the Hawaiian crown, where Bishop T. N. Staley arrived in 1862, followed by Anglican missionary sisters in 1864. Immensely controversial in Britain and America, where among evangelicals in particular suspicion of 'popish' religious practice ran high, Anglo-Catholic methods and religious communities mobilized discussion, denunciation and reaction. Particularly in the contested imperial space of an independent indigenous monarchy, Anglo-Catholics criticized what they styled the cruel austerities of evangelical American 'puritanism' and the ambitions of American imperialists; in the process they catalyzed a reconceptualized imperial reformism with important implications for the shape of the late Victorian British empire.

In the 1860s and 1870s, British high church Anglicans (influenced and led by advanced Anglo-Catholics) launched a series of missionary initiatives in South and East Africa, India, Melanesia and Hawai'i, designed specifically to reorder the foreign missionary practice of the Church of England and challenge the dominance of evangelicals in the movement, both inside and outside of their communion. Fundamental to this programme was the arrival in Honolulu in November

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1864 of three nuns vowed to the Society of the Most Holy Trinity (SMHT), the first of the revived Anglican female religious communities inspired by the Oxford Movement. They represented the first of a growing wave of English Anglican sisters and brothers to spread out into empire and world in the decades that followed. Theorizing new indigenizing models for mission inspired by the Tractarian thought associated with John Henry Newman, Edward Bouverie Pusey and John Keble, as well as a developing Anglo-Catholic holiness asceticism, the initiatives envisioned a different and better engagement with indigenous cultures, focusing on enculturated missions and community-based faith in contrast to evangelical emphases on individual conversion and cultural Westernization.

Central to the Anglo-Catholic initiatives were the newly revived religious communities in foreign missions: sisters and brothers in vowed religious life operating in emulation of the pre-Reformation ancient and medieval Church. Conceiving of themselves as employing methods for church expansion tested in the ancient era of the Roman empire, Anglo-Catholics believed themselves capable of founding and building enculturated churches that would outlast the governments and empires in which they operated. Despite setbacks in their first decade, the continued use of Anglican religious communities in India, Africa and the Sandwich Islands from the 1860s and into the twentieth century created a potent new imaginative space for missionary endeavour, but one made problematic by the uneven reach of the British empire: from formal and pervasive, as in India, to contested, as in the Pacific. Of particular relevance to the inauguration of the Anglo-Catholic missionary project was the Sandwich Islands mission, where the Anglo-Catholic bishop Thomas Nettleship Staley arrived in 1862. Anglo-Catholics and high church bishops, who shared a high valuation of the ordinances and historic authority of the Anglican priesthood, sought to extend the Anglican Church beyond the bounds of empire with independence from the British state. Immensely controversial in Britain and America, where among evangelicals suspicion of the supposedly 'popish' religious practice of Anglo-Catholics ran high, the Hawaiian mission mobilized discussion, denunciation and reaction. What difference did missions, that were limited in impact by their comparatively small numbers of converts and missionaries sent overseas, make to the missionary strategies employed in founding and growing churches in the late Victorian and Edwardian era of 'high empire'? Without doubt debates over

Anglo-Catholic missions catalyzed new and widely influential missionary methods as well as a reconceptualized imperial reformism that had important implications for the shape of late Victorian Anglicanism and the British empire.

The upholding in 1850 by the secular Judicial Committee of the Privy Council of the Gorham Judgment, in which the evangelical G. C. Gorham was instituted as vicar of Bramford Speke despite the proscription of his views on baptismal regeneration by the high church bishop of Exeter, Henry Philpotts, established a new era: 'low church' evangelicals were assured they would not be driven from the Church of England over doctrinal matters, while many high churchmen were subsequently determined to achieve its independence from what seemed ungodly secular control. As evangelical Anglicans underwrote the establishment of new dioceses in Hong Kong, Rupert's Land and Sierra Leone – all British dominions and thus unambiguously legal under British imperial crown authority – Anglo-Catholics and other high churchmen determined to move beyond the official sphere of the crown and thus of the imperial state. Thus the *Church Times*, the new, self-proclaimed newspaper champion of Anglo-Catholicism, featured in its inaugural issue in 1863 an article entitled 'Missionary Bishops' which advocated their use in a world of threats from the state. Fearing not only doctrinal interference but also disestablishment in England, high churchmen sought a means to safeguard and expand the Church by propagating independent Anglican religion throughout the world both within and beyond imperial bounds. Comparing the situation of the Church to that of the ancient Roman general Fabius Maximus in the face of Hannibal's victories, independent church expansion under the lead of the episcopate operated as an explicit strategy of persistence and defensive action.¹ This was to be carried out in particular areas, specifically those overseen by the few sitting overseas Anglo-Catholic bishops, in South and central Africa, Melanesia, India and Hawai'i.

Anglo-Catholic missionaries were determined to found their distinctive churches not only in empire, but also beyond it. Notably, when the sisters of the SMHT (also known popularly as the Devonport Sisters) arrived in Hawai'i, they were not entering a part of the existing British empire, but instead an independent indigenous kingdom, which was a contested, liminal area of Western rivalry and

¹ 'The New Missionary Bishops', *Church Times*, 7 February 1863.

indigenous struggle for independence. In this context the sisters worked consciously to create an independent enculturated church operating under the authority of, and at the invitation of, Hawaiian royalty. The Society of St John the Evangelist (SSJE, or Cowley Fathers), who provided the first overseas brotherhood missions in India in 1874, similarly (at least initially and in theory) operated on a model of enculturating Christianity within existing local communities, rather than insisting on the need to impose Western Christian cultures of restraint and respectability within a framework of imperial order and privilege.² By the end of the 1870s, the movement inaugurated by Anglo-Catholic women and men religious had had profound effects on missionary operations, if not directly in terms of numbers of missionaries. Most scholarship on British foreign missions, particularly in the second half of the nineteenth century, has focused on evangelicalism and Nonconformity; however, the expansion of high church Anglican missions, animated in large part by the aggressive experimentalism of its Anglo-Catholic wing, resulted in a response that was both reactive and stimulative, as the larger body of evangelical missionaries felt obliged to redouble their use of unmarried female missionaries, adopt a more positive attitude to the retention of non-Western cultural practices and the promotion of indigenous pastors within emerging 'native churches', and challenge the territorial expansion of high church missions throughout the world. In addition, it ushered in a transformative era of acceptability and influence for Christian missions in the British universities, as their educated Anglican supporters in Oxford and Cambridge redefined mission as a more 'gentlemanly' pursuit of educated, culturally sophisticated advocates and practitioners.³

Anglo-Catholic missionary plans operated on several controversial foundations: first, criticism of the personal conversionary focus of evangelical missions; second, greater willingness to accept indigenous cultural forms into the Church and its worship; third, introduction of a new missionary agency in the form of vowed sisters and brothers acting as missionary agents. Evangelicals saw each as a threat, as

² Rowan Strong, 'Origins of Anglo-Catholic Missions: Fr Richard Benson and the Initial Missions of the Society of St John the Evangelist, 1869–1882', *JEH* 66 (2015), 90–115.

³ For discussion of this historiography, as well as more detail on the broad outlines of development in Anglo-Catholic foreign missions, see Steven S. Maughan, *Mighty England Do Good: Culture, Faith, Empire, and World in the Foreign Missions of the Church of England, 1850–1915* (Grand Rapids, MI, 2014), 11–15, 113–38, 194–205.

the subsequent controversies that arose over the Hawaiian mission show. In 1867 Priscilla Lydia Sellon, Mother Superior of the SMHT (1848–76), who was in her day one of England’s most commanding and controversial religious women, appeared with three additional sisters in Honolulu, responding to an invitation from the Hawaiian royal family delivered by Queen Emma during her 1865 English tour. Sellon purchased land and established St Andrew’s Priory as a base for the activity of her nuns in mission in Honolulu and Lahaina. The project had the public support of the Tractarian leaders, E. B. Pusey and John Keble, the latter preaching a sending sermon from his Hursley pulpit to these ‘first mission sisters sent out by the English Church’. Comparing their coming endeavour with what he styled the historic English medieval parallel – the role of Queen (also St) Bertha in the conversion of sixth-century England – he observed to those assembled that ‘[t]he conversion of England began in some sort from a Queen; and in Hawaii [*sic*] He has raised up a Queen ... [who] seeks her consolation in God, and in furthering the work of His Church’.⁴ This resort to ancient historical precedent, tied so intimately to the Gothic revivalism and ritualist vogue animating the second generation of the Oxford Movement, pervaded what was coming to be called Anglo-Catholicism, creating a distinct set of goals for what was conceived of as a new kind of mission.⁵

Active Anglo-Catholic missions dated from the founding of the Universities’ Mission to Central Africa (UMCA) in 1858 and the organization for high church expansion into the Pacific, first into Melanesia, as planned by Bishop Selwyn of New Zealand, and next into Hawai‘i, both areas that extended beyond the bounds of the British empire. The Hawaiian royal invitation requested a clerical appointment to establish an episcopal church in the kingdom and was advocated by Bishop Wilberforce of Oxford, forwarded by the Hawaiian consul-general, Manley Hopkins, delivered directly to Queen Victoria, and relayed to the recently revived Convocation of the Church of England.⁶ In Hawai‘i, high church Anglican leaders were being asked more or less explicitly to produce an alternative

⁴ ‘Seed Time and Harvest: Sermon by the late Rev. John Keble’, *Mission Life; or, Home and Foreign Mission Work* 1 (1866), 315.

⁵ Thomas Jay Williams, *Priscilla Lydia Sellon, the Restorer after Three Centuries of the Religious Life in the English Church*, rev. edn (London, 1965), 229–30.

⁶ [Thomas N. Staley], *Five Years’ Church Work in the Kingdom of Hawaii* (London, 1868), 13–15.

missionary model which rejected a strategy that emphasized British imperial values and the expectation of European dominance, and which instead operated as a counterweight to the mission of the American Congregationalist evangelicals who had been in residence from the 1820s. In this, the Anglican mission and its use of female missionaries contrasted explicitly with the outlook of the dozens of American missionary wives who, as Patricia Grimshaw has shown, gloried in a confident assertion of the superiority of American society, spirituality and cultural forms.⁷ By contrast, the Anglican mission would make use of recently revived Anglican sisterhoods, communities of single vowed women who would live in the midst of the Hawaiian children they instructed under the patronage of Hawaiian royalty as a mission agency directed to the creation of an autonomous indigenous church. Justifying the use of these 'popish' sisterhoods to English supporters, however, required emphasizing that they were not destructive of British notions of femininity or domestic order, especially when attempting to work with secretaries at the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (which provided grants-in-aid) and its many missionaries of more traditional high church sympathies.⁸

In the 1840s, the Oxford Movement had reasserted the apostolic authority of the Church and raised the authority of ordination and particularly episcopacy to essential status, notably and explicitly above that of national or imperial authorities in church matters.⁹ Lydia Sellon had a close connection to Pusey, leader of the older Tractarian generation, who served as her confessor and was a frequent visitor to her base in England at Ascot Priory; she was also in touch with the more radical younger ritualists of the age, such as Charles Lowder and Father Ignatius (Joseph Leicester Lyne). One of the pioneers of sisterhood work in Britain, Sellon was the first to found a daughter house abroad.¹⁰ With a strong sense of mission to the poor developed through 'rescue' work with prostitutes, soup kitchens, charity schools

⁷ Patricia Grimshaw, *Paths of Duty: American Missionary Wives in Nineteenth-Century Hawaii* (Honolulu, HI, 1989), xi, 154–6, 193–6.

⁸ On alternative, indigenizing visions in Anglo-Catholic missions, see Geoffrey Rowell, *The Vision Glorious: Themes and Personalities of the Catholic Revival in Anglicanism* (Oxford, 1983), 177.

⁹ Standish Meacham, *Lord Bishop: The Life of Samuel Wilberforce, 1805–1873* (Cambridge, MA, 1970), 175–6; C. Brad Faught, *The Oxford Movement: A Thematic History of the Tractarians and their Times* (University Park, PA, 2003), 30–1.

¹⁰ Staley also extended invitations to the Clewer and East Grinstead sisters: Williams, *Sellon*, 216–19, 229.

and orphanages, Sellon was one of the pioneers of women's public charity work in Britain and the originator of the use of Anglican sisters in mission, but hers was hardly the only – or the most successful – of the new overseas foundations that flourished in the decades that followed.¹¹

Tension between Anglo-Catholic sisterhoods and the episcopacy in England was the normal state of affairs, for unlike the Roman Catholic Church, Anglican bishops had far fewer institutional means to oversee or control religious communities.¹² Similar frictions rapidly emerged in the Hawaiian mission, and were exacerbated both by the personality conflicts that were so characteristic of so many mission fields (not to mention religious communities), and by the intense nationalistic and religious partisanship produced by the existence of an influential American Congregationalist mission forty years in residence and a large, successful Roman Catholic Church of some twenty years. Fiercely independent in her relations to external church authorities, and notoriously autocratic with regard to the internal dynamics and politics of the SMHT, Mother Lydia, while clearly ambitious to expand her religious model overseas, only agreed to enter the mission field with an explicit assurance of non-interference from Bishop Staley. For his part Staley, eager for support in his isolated location, proved far more willing than other bishops to accommodate the independence of an established women's community.¹³ In support of the project, Queen Emma, a child of Hawaiian and English grandparents, as well as a devout and scrupulous Anglican, took decided action. Visiting England in 1865 to raise funds for an Anglican cathedral, Emma was shepherded on a round of visits to high church and Tractarian luminaries by Bishop Wilberforce and formed a friendship with John Keble, which led to a private audience at Ascot Priory with Mother Lydia. This in turn resulted in Emma's

¹¹ Sean Gill, "The Power of Christian Ladyhood": Priscilla Lydia Sellon and the Creation of Anglican Sisterhoods', in Stuart Mews, ed., *Modern Religious Rebels: Presented to John Kent* (London, 1993), 144–65, at 147–8; Stewart J. Brown, *Providence and Empire: Religion, Politics and Society in the United Kingdom, 1815–1914* (Harlow, 2008), 171–3.

¹² Susan Mumm, "A Peril to the Bench of Bishops": Sisterhoods and Episcopal Authority in the Church of England, 1845–1908', *JEH* 59 (2008), 62–78.

¹³ Oxford, Pusey House, Ascot Priory papers, Ellen Mary Mason to Lydia Sellon, 10 November 1863.

lodging there four Hawaiian girls sent for an English education.¹⁴ Noted as being ‘of the Polynesian colour, nothing of the *negro* about them’, these girls were presented as emissaries of dignified society capable of transformation under the educated leadership of upper-class ladies, a Polynesian version of Sellon’s own model for the rehabilitation of urban Britain. The Anglo-Catholic periodical *Mission Life* proclaimed that race was not destiny, for by ‘raising the social sentiments’ to extinguish ‘existing associations’ – that is, licentious associations – such Hawaiian women would save their own people from extinction.¹⁵ The charge to the sisterhood was explicitly to reject the supposed determinism of race, placing the fate of the Hawaiian people in what would become their own self-supporting systems of self-development. Indeed, the chief advocate of the mission, Manley Hopkins, made explicit that Hawaiian royal preferences for English Anglicanism had much to do with resentment in the royal family over racial insults, both gross and subtle, delivered at the hands of crass Americans, as well as the desire to strengthen Hawaiian political independence.¹⁶

While, like the UMCA’s Zambezi expedition and the Melanesian mission, the Hawaiian experiment operated beyond the bounds of formal empire, it had the advantage of being initiated at the invitation of reigning indigenous royalty in Hawai‘i. King Kamehameha IV and Queen Emma desired the founding of an Anglican Church for a variety of reasons, including a stated preference for the solemnity and dignity of Anglican services, particularly in comparison to the austerities of ‘puritan’ American Congregationalist worship. Moreover, their interest was supported by Anglicanism’s known deference

¹⁴ Ascot, Ascot Priory, ‘The Hawaiian Mission of the Society of the Most Holy Trinity of Devonport (1864–1901)’, typescript scrapbook; George S. Kanahale, *Emma: Hawai‘i’s Remarkable Queen: A Biography* (Honolulu, HI, 1999), 194–8, 219–20.

¹⁵ ‘The Hawaiian Mission’, *Mission Life; or, Home and Foreign Mission Work* 6 (1869), 436–8, at 436; Katharine Shirley Thompson, *Queen Emma and the Bishop* (Honolulu, HI, 1987), 3–4. Nineteenth-century discourse on the fitness of races was extensive and focused particularly on the Pacific, given the propensity of Pacific islanders to succumb to introduced communicable disease – in Hawai‘i, particularly venereal disease – which made the focus of missionary discourses on saving island cultures through transformation of social and moral patterns particularly resonant: Patrick Brantlinger, *Dark Vanishings: Discourse on the Extinction of Primitive Races, 1800–1930* (Ithaca, NY, 2003), 142, 150–9.

¹⁶ ‘Hawaiian Mission’, *The Net Cast on Many Waters* 2 (1867), 65–73, at 70; Manley Hopkins, *Hawaii: The Past, Present, and Future of its Island-Kingdom* (London, 1862), 322–4.

to royalty, and also piqued by their knowledge that American merchant and planter interests designed to annex Hawai'i to the United States.¹⁷ In this context, the SHMT's plans to establish both a boarding school for the creation of an educated Hawaiian female elite and a day school for 'more humble' classes, fitted local Hawaiian goals to international Anglo-Catholic ones.

Rapidly, however, the Hawaiian mission and its work began to unravel in a torrent of bad press. Staley sailed in August 1862 already dreaded by Congregationalist missionaries of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM); upon arrival he confirmed their fears by prohibiting Anglican clerical cooperation with any who denied the apostolic authority of Anglican sacraments. Publicized by the American Congregationalist missionaries, and ABCFM secretary Rufus Anderson, as a dangerous exponent of Anglo-Catholic ritual, 'papist' tyranny and British imperial ambition, Staley proved a lightning rod for a paranoia heightened by the American Civil War.¹⁸

The Hawaiian mission was particularly remarkable in its vision for an enculturated church with indigenous families reinforced in their resilience by an educated Hawaiian womanhood to be strengthened by the efforts of the sisters. Working in close cooperation with Queen Emma to establish boarding schools and multiply girls' education, the sisters, it was argued, would combat the decline of the Hawaiian people and their culture.¹⁹ In the case of St Andrew's Priory and its girls' schools, the primary approach to mission generated out of the sisterhood experience, which was subsequently generalized in many high church missions, was guided by what Elizabeth Prevost has called an 'ideology of female protectionism'.²⁰ Anglo-Catholic supporters had argued from the 1850s that Anglican sisters were differentiated from Catholics by their public, charitable life; free from the isolation of the cloisters, they became (in Eleanor Frith's term) 'pseudonuns', whose liminal position as 'Sisters of Mercy' provided

¹⁷ Ralph S. Kuykendall, 'Introduction of the Episcopal Church into the Hawaiian Islands', *Pacific Historical Review* 15 (1946), 133–46, at 135–6.

¹⁸ Robert Louis Semes, 'Hawai'i's Holy War: English Bishop Staley, American Congregationalists, and the Hawaiian Monarchies, 1860–1870', *Hawaiian Journal of History* 34 (2000), 113–38.

¹⁹ [Staley], *Hawaii*, 57–61; Kanahele, *Emma*, 155–6, 230–7.

²⁰ For the development of this model in 1870s Madagascar and Uganda, see Elizabeth E. Prevost, *The Communion of Women: Missions and Gender in Colonial Africa and the British Metropole* (Oxford, 2010), ch. 1.

them particular freedoms and a widening sphere for activity.²¹ Nevertheless, Anglo-Catholics drew on Roman Catholic enculturated models of mission, often suggesting that Catholic missions were more successful than 'puritan' ones and that Anglicans needed to emulate the success of Catholics while neutralizing the dangerous 'tyranny' embedded in their supposedly authoritarian governance. They did this by rejecting the cloistering of nuns while at the same time often embracing a separatist model for the education of their young female charges, temporarily removing girls from the moral dangers presumed to exist in their own societies in order to transform them into agents of moral and spiritual change upon their return. In this, Anglo-Catholic sisterhoods embraced the community orientation of Catholic mission practice while denouncing the supposed metapolitics of Catholic spiritual and social authority. They also radically transgressed the predominant Victorian vision of home by constructing an alternative, all-female organization of publicly active women, while they embraced Victorian gender imperatives by insisting that sisterhoods were the most effective agency for educating girls, thereby strengthening the traditional Victorian Christian home. The vertiginous crossing of multiple spiritual, political and gender boundaries made Anglo-Catholic missions a particularly fertile ground for reimagining the approaches that might be taken towards engineering spiritual and cultural transformation in a particularly fluid era of imperial cultural formation.

Supported also by near universal mid-Victorian admiration for Florence Nightingale and roughly a hundred volunteer nursing sisters who served during the Crimean War, including several of Sellon's 'Sisters of Mercy', advocates for the Hawaiian mission played on their wartime popularity: the first two nuns sent to Hawai'i were veterans of the hospitals at Scutari and were defended against critics by reference to their earlier heroism.²² Thus, despite overt evangelical hostility to Anglican religious orders, popular acceptance of the religious life and work of nuns grew; yet sisterhoods were actively disfavoured by the bishops because they proved resistant to episcopal attempts to manage them, a position modelled first by Sellon. Endorsing a larger legitimating ideology of home, at the same time sisterhoods

²¹ Eleanor Joy Frith, 'Pseudonuns: Anglican Sisterhoods and the Politics of Victorian Identity' (PhD thesis, Queen's University, Kingston, ON, 2004), 64–7, 77–80.

²² J. M. Ludlow, *Woman's Work in the Church: Historical Notes on Deaconesses and Sisterhoods* (London, 1866), vii–ix.

vigorously resisted assertions of the necessity of male governance. When appealing for sisters to undertake such work, bishops such as Webb of Grahamstown aimed at ensuring 'orthodoxy and continuity' as women carried English civilization to colonial homes.²³ Often, however, sisters treated such strictures with disdain, as exemplified by Emily Ayckbourn, Mother Superior of the Sisters of the Church, who in the course of considering a colonial mission stated that:

[Webb's] ideas about ... government (of sisterhoods by a father) are quite preposterous. Also his saying that it is for men to originate plans & women to carry them out. In real truth the only Sisterhoods (in [the] English Ch:) that have done well have been originated by women: and men have made such a mess of Religious Communities among themselves that it is absurd they should try to subject Sisterhoods now to their control.²⁴

Because she shared this attitude Sellon eventually found herself at odds with Staley, her most Anglo-Catholic of bishops, who came to condemn independent female governance in the sisterhood he had earlier endorsed. Whilst continuing to praise the sisters' work, he denounced the principles of their rule as 'radically unsound, and mischievous in their result on human character' because of the way mothers superior were led to reject 'quiet subjection to authority', thus "lording it over God's heritage".²⁵

Perhaps even more radical than the development of a new Anglo-Catholic approach to acceptable forms of femininity and gendered mission was the Hawaiian mission's attitude toward indigenous masculinity. Rather than condemning traditional masculine behaviours, Staley instead insisted on tolerating 'heathen' customs such as the hula dance, Hawaiian men's sports such as surfing, and the political independence and leadership of Hawaiian royalty. In this way, Staley's 'Hawaiian Reformed Catholic Church' directly challenged American Congregationalist condemnation of Hawaiian traditional culture. The evangelical claim to have raised the morality of Hawaiians, he argued, was a sham because fetishizing the rote recitation of

²³ Allan Becher Webb, *Sisterhood Life and Woman's Work, in the Mission-Field of the Church* (London, 1883), 3, 54.

²⁴ Ham, Surrey, St Michael's Convent, CSC7, Emily Ayckbourn, Diary and House Book, 7 June 1884.

²⁵ T. N. Staley to John Jackson (bishop of London), 23 August 1871, in Henry Codman Potter, *Sisterhoods and Deaconesses: At Home and Abroad* (New York, 1873), 60–7.

Scripture had achieved little but 'a fearful amount of unreality and hypocrisy'. Suppressing traditional cultural expression denationalized Hawaiians shaped by eons into 'laughing children of the sun'; Staley argued that such approaches were also destructive in any modern civilization where 'the old Puritan principle, ... if carried out, would put an end to the athletic pursuits and recreations of every Christian country in Europe'.²⁶ Staley's position, shaped as it was by the English public school ethos of 'playing the game', continued to cast Hawaiians in the role of immature dependents; nevertheless, it also included members of the Hawaiian royalty in equal positions of leadership, creating greater space for cross-cultural Christian collaboration.

By the end of the decade, however, Staley's campaign against evangelical influence in Hawai'i had made only theoretical progress, and the end of the American Civil War saw a resurgence of American resistance to supposed English aggression.²⁷ In this context the sisterhood of the SMHT proved, in the end, to be the most successful of the Hawaiian mission enterprises, precisely because it was the most blameless. Staley had launched a self-proclaimed battle with evangelicalism, stating that in Hawai'i, 'this remote spot of the globe', his church aimed to fight 'the battle between modern Puritanism and primitive Catholicism'. But the death in November 1863 of King Kamehameha IV, the church's chief patron, had been a critical setback, which was compounded by Staley's failure to raise sufficient funds to build the medieval-style Gothic stone cathedral favoured by Queen Emma.²⁸ When Staley, his family finances strained to breaking point and facing continuous, extensive opposition from virtually all local Anglican clergy, relinquished the bishopric in 1870, he did so having lost the confidence of Queen Emma, denounced by her for what she saw as a disgraceful failure of leadership and a near-traitorous willingness to turn the mission over to the American Episcopal Church.²⁹ The original confluence of interests between

²⁶ T. N. Staley, *A Pastoral Address* (Honolulu, 1865), 13–14, 40–1.

²⁷ Henry Boyd Restarick, *Hawaii, 1778–1920, from the Viewpoint of a Bishop* (Honolulu, 1924), 68, 91–2.

²⁸ *Occasional Paper of the Hawaiian Church Mission (Sandwich Islands)* (London, 1865), 29–32.

²⁹ London, LPL, Tait Papers 170, fols 178–9, John Jackson to Tait (archbishop of Canterbury), 4 April 1870; *ibid.*, fols 198–9, Manley Hopkins to Tait, 2 August 1870; Kanahela, *Emma*, 240–1.

queen and bishop, local Hawaiian and British Anglo-Catholic objects, which saw both aiming for independence, albeit for different institutions, had diverged in a way that exposed the importance of the mission as one element of a strategy designed by the Hawaiian royals to buttress indigenous governance in the face of aggressive American commercial power. However, despite Staley's withdrawal, Lydia Sellon proved unwilling to abandon the bonds she had forged with Emma and the mission of women religious she had created. Facing a diocese unable adequately to support itself and a demand from the archbishop of Canterbury for guaranteed financial support before a replacement bishop would be consecrated, Sellon underwrote the costs of creating an endowment for the diocese for five years. In this way she ensured that Staley would be replaced by Alfred Willis, also a bishop of advanced Anglo-Catholic sympathies, yet one who would have no right of visitation and thus limited episcopal control over her nuns.³⁰

Proximate failure in the Hawaiian mission, however, did not mean a failure to influence or a failure to persist. Its troubles and the parallel disastrous failure in Bishop Mackenzie's Zambezi expedition for the UMCA quelled much early optimism. But they also fomented a critical moment of reinforcement for the central value of stubborn independency among Anglo-Catholics, exemplified in the blameless lives of women religious who were publicized as being as committed to the poor, the heathen and the downfallen as they were to their religious devotions. The subsequent history of the UMCA, with its continuous emphasis on forming enculturated African churches served by unsalaried vowed brothers, which became one of the inspirations for criticism of the high costs and European clerical lives of mainstream missionaries in the 1880s, is one indication of the dynamism of the Anglo-Catholic connection.³¹ So too was the quiet work of the highly unworldly Bishop J. C. Patteson of Melanesia, who regularly denounced European violence and race prejudice, and who was killed on Nukapu Island in 1871 by islanders incensed over

³⁰ Andrew Forest Muir, 'Mother Lydia and the Support of the Hawaiian Mission', *Holy Cross Magazine* 62 (1951), 176–8.

³¹ Andrew Porter, 'The Universities' Mission to Central Africa: Anglo-Catholicism and the Twentieth-Century Colonial Encounter', in Brian Stanley, ed., *Missions, Nationalism, and the End of Empire* (Grand Rapids, MI, 2003), 79–107; Thomas Prasch, 'Which God for Africa: The Islamic-Christian Missionary Debate in Late-Victorian England', *Victorian Studies* 33 (1989), 51–73.

European abductions for the Pacific labour trade. Patteson and the Melanesian mission provided a model of operation on different lines than those of conventional voluntary missions. Envisioning himself and his missionaries as educated professionals immune from the unrealistic enthusiasms of evangelicalism, Patteson and other Anglo-Catholic missionaries instead believed that under the guidance of a reverent, transcultural, historically malleable church, a solid foundation for indigenous Christianity could be built.³² Patteson's widely publicized death was a turning point in Anglo-Catholic mission, inspiring a 'Day of Intercession for Foreign Missions' observed annually throughout the Church of England in honour of the 'martyr bishop of Melanesia'.³³ Anglo-Catholic and high church missions had a second phase of expansion in the 1870s: for example, the Wantage Sisters (Community of St Mary the Virgin, founded in 1848) and the All Saints Sisters of the Poor (founded in 1851) took up work in India in association with the Cowley Fathers, in Bombay [Mumbai] in 1874 and in Calcutta [Kolkata] in 1876, while sisterhoods also developed in South Africa under the direction of Bishop A. B. Webb, first in Bloemfontein (1874) and later in Grahamstown (1883), reinforced by the appointment in 1875 of the thirty-year-old R. S. Copleston as 'boy bishop' of Colombo, and the inauguration of the high church mission to Madagascar. Significantly, by then Anglo-Catholics had developed a missionary theory predicated explicitly on the idea of the spiritual equality of races in empire and classes in nation that assumed a common human intellectual, moral and religious potential. In this it mirrored core evangelical assumptions, but by contrast with these it rested on a professed respect for local traditions believed to make Anglo-Catholicism comparatively attractive to common people abroad and at home.³⁴

As missionary sisterhoods and then brotherhoods spread, they reinforced a cultural trend that turned away from the defining missionary emphasis of the earlier Victorian period on atonement-based theology, which had focused on a simple binary choice

³² J. C. Patteson to C. M. Yonge, 27 April 1864, in Charlotte M. Yonge, *Life of John Coleridge Patteson, Missionary Bishop of the Melanesian Islands*, 2 vols, 5th edn (London, 1884), 2: 93; Sara H. Sohmer, 'Christianity Without Civilization: Anglican Sources for an Alternative Nineteenth-Century Mission Methodology', *JRH* 18 (1994), 174–97.

³³ William Ewart Gladstone, 'Art. VI', review of Charlotte M. Yonge, *Life of John Coleridge Patteson, Missionary Bishop of the Melanesian Islands*, *Quarterly Review* 137 (1874), 458–92.

³⁴ Staley, *Pastoral Address*, 14.

(salvation or damnation), towards a wider embrace of human agency as critical to ameliorating the evils of the world, emulating an incarnate Christ and his earthly life.³⁵ Operating in mission fields lacking larger settler populations reinforced Anglo-Catholic missionaries' self-identification as visionary pioneers of a romantic antique Christianity, building what they imagined to be 'primitive' churches inspired by their reading of the earliest Church Fathers.³⁶ Such ideas reinforced in Anglicanism a willingness to accommodate indigenous culture and governance, attitudes later characteristic of renewed early twentieth-century interest in reformist theories of imperial trusteeship, and counter to the increasing advocacy by many mid-century commentators of deterministic race thinking stimulated by reactions to the Morant Bay uprising in 1865.³⁷ The strain of mid-Victorian thought that rejected deterministic race consciousness in favour of an enculturated 'civilizational approach' to understanding difference was reinforced by the growing influence, particularly in the universities, of strains of Anglo-Catholicism and an emerging orientalist historicism associated with the comparative religious scholarship of Anglicans such as Monier Monier-Williams and Friedrich Max Müller.³⁸ This comparative, historically informed approach to cultural difference continued to be widely insisted upon within the generally robust and extensive missionary culture of the mid-Victorian era, which demonstrated a resilient commitment to older forms of Christian universalism and environmental explanations for human behaviour, even in the face of emerging theories positing essentialist racial difference.³⁹

Within the culture of advanced Anglo-Catholicism, sisterhoods operated as a particularly resonant element providing a gendered

³⁵ Boyd Hilton, *The Age of Atonement: The Influence of Evangelicalism on Social and Economic Thought, 1795–1865* (Oxford, 1988), 292–6.

³⁶ Jeffrey Cox, 'Independent English Women in Delhi and Lahore, 1860–1947', in R. W. Davis and R. J. Helmstadter, eds, *Religion and Irreligion in Victorian Society* (London, 1992), 166–84, at 166–8.

³⁷ Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination, 1830–1867* (Chicago, IL, 2002), 438–40.

³⁸ Peter Mandler, "'Race" and "Nation" in Mid-Victorian Thought', in Stefan Collini, Richard Whatmore and Brian Young, eds, *History, Religion, and Culture: British Intellectual History, 1750–1950* (Cambridge, 2000), 224–44, at 231–3; Paul Hedges, 'Post-Colonialism, Orientalism, and Understanding: Religious Studies and the Christian Missionary Imperative', *JRH* 32 (2008), 55–75.

³⁹ Alison Twells, *The Civilising Mission and the English Middle Class, 1792–1850: The 'Heathen' at Home and Overseas* (Basingstoke, 2009), 13–15, 174–5, 214–15.

metaphor for pious, godly independence, transferable to cultures regardless of race. In this way Anglo-Catholic women's activities abroad opened new patterns in missionary contact with non-Western peoples as Anglo-Catholics sought to rise above both nation and empire. In many areas – in India and South Africa in particular – Anglo-Catholics came to be deeply associated with British imperial agendas, and throughout non-Western lands white English women traded upon the prestige and position of race and nationality. Nevertheless, their ambition to encourage gendered solidarity and their desire for racial crossings that would strengthen indigenous peoples in the face of corrosive Western commercial interests and settler colonialism drove the actions of an incipient women's movement which was at odds with much sentiment in both English missionary circles and British popular culture in the 1860s. By the 1880s, sisterhoods were an established presence in the field, primarily in South Africa, India, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, but also in Persia, Korea and the United States.⁴⁰

Anglo-Catholics challenged mid-century discourse on missions by proclaiming a superior model for missionary work. At the heart of this model was the figure of the Anglican nun fighting all obstacles and the odds set against her, in partnership with educated, culturally informed Anglo-Catholic priests set upon the task of transmitting the core traditions of Christianity supposedly traceable to the first centuries of Christian expansion. At the same time they encouraged the same kinds of cultural synthesis that, it was argued, had strengthened Christianity through a Hellenizing process in the second and third centuries of Christian growth. Despite the controversies swirling around them, Mother Lydia and Bishop Staley stood in Anglo-Catholic circles both as cautionary tale, for their excesses, and as inspiration, for their faithful efforts. By the 1870s British missions were settling into a new, late-century pattern, and the missionary movement – largely defined in the early nineteenth century by evangelical Nonconformist Congregationalists, Baptists and Methodists – was increasingly dominated by Anglican missions, both those of high churchmen and evangelicals, both camps using missions in their own contests for command of the Church of England itself.

⁴⁰ Susan Mumm, *Stolen Daughters, Virgin Mothers: Anglican Sisterhoods in Victorian Britain* (London, 1999), 129–30.

The story of Anglo-Catholic missions challenges prevalent ideas about the predominantly evangelical nature of foreign missions, and points to the complex ways that Christianity interacted with the 'worldly powers' of nations and empires to form ideas influential in the emergence of systems of imperial trusteeship and later of international humanitarianism in the twentieth century. In addition, an account of the ways that Anglo-Catholic missionary models challenged established evangelical missionary discourses about Westernization and the founding of missionary methods in the idealized Victorian family illuminates a debate that accelerated change in missionary practice. It resulted in both the normalization of women's missionary activity outside the bounds of missionary marriage and the expansion and professionalization of a university-based missionary culture. In this way, we can begin to see how Anglo-Catholic religious cultures, in addition to more thoroughly studied evangelical movements in the era, contributed to an expansion of women's public roles that presaged and ultimately supported women's enfranchisement. While it is tempting, then, to dismiss the Hawaiian mission as a failure, as evangelical controversialists and American interests in the Pacific did, the mission – using a metaphor so dear to mission supporters – sowed the seeds for future models of enculturated mission and expanded roles for women in the mission field, for Anglican Church independence from state and empire, and for the development of attitudes toward international and imperial reformism (outside England at least) along strongly humanitarian lines.