WHEN UNITY IS TORN ASUNDER: THE DISTRESSING CASE OF THOMAS AND LUCIA HOLMAN

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Missionaries pose problems from a historical, social, and even religious perspective. They are the ground troops in a multifaceted war for souls. They carry the banner of a particular type of European or American culture, a conviction that their interpretation of God and the millennium is the only correct one, and a fanatical opposition to other points of view, be they religious, economic, military, or political. At first glance historians and anthropologists have found them to be cardboard figures with facades that reflect the bias of the viewer. Missionaries are imperialists of varying hues; they are the destroyers of indigenous culture; they are the best of a bad lot during the early contact years; they are stiff-necked, corrupt, dedicated; adventurers in sheep's clothing. One thing they are not is representative of human foibles in the nineteenth century.

On second glance we often are able to construct a theory to justify our respective views.[1] I suggest we take yet a third glance to determine who the missionaries were as human beings, their goals and misgivings, their fears and their faith. Such a look will not alter the result of their activities; it will not justify the disruption of indigenous cultures, but it may provide the historian, the anthropologist, the religious apologist with the reality of what the missionaries thought they were doing at the time they were doing it.

An event in the first year of missionary activity in Hawai'i provides such a portrait. An account of it is presented here with the goal of illuminating the aspirations of the pioneer company (1820) to those islands

Pacific Studies, Vol. 15, No. 2--June 1992

through the records of an excommunication trial. This account presupposes the reader's familiarity with Calvinist theology as it discusses the expectations placed on members of the mission and the failure of two individuals to meet those requirements.[2] The trial and the issues leading to it demonstrate the insecurities, spirit of conformity, and religious zeal that afflicted early Protestant missionaries to Hawai'i. The verdict of excommunication and the expulsion of the offenders from the missionary family reinforced these traits into a spirit of orthodoxy that restricted the admission of Hawaiians into the church until the revival of 1837-1838.

I

The year was 1821 and already the small, pioneer band of missionaries struggling to establish itself in the Sandwich Islands was in disarray. The members were shattered. "If it were the enemy," Hiram Bingham observed, "we could have set ourselves to the battle & *in the name of our God* defy his assaults. But from within, the door is opened, & great does he deem his advantage!" Indeed, it was not the devil, nor the intransigence of unbelieving Hawaiians that left the mission family in such a defenseless position. It was, rather, the seemingly purposeful defection of Dr. and Mrs. Thomas Holman, "who after the most unwearying and faithful efforts to reclaim them still manifest[ed] a determination to pursue a course obviously wrong."[3]

Thomas and Lucia Holman were members of the pioneer missionary company sponsored by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions for service in Hawai'i. The company's departure from Boston in 1819 was in danger of indeterminate delay because the evangelists lacked a physician. Samuel Ruggles thought of his sister, Lucia, and her suitor, a physician practicing in Cooperstown, New York. If the doctor could be persuaded to join the missionary cause, events could proceed on schedule; Lucia could marry, and the Ruggles would have the company of kin on this awesome endeavor.

Lucia Ruggles at twenty-six years of age was an independent and strong-minded woman. She was not indifferent to religion or the cause of foreign missions. Her brother, Samuel, was a teacher at the Foreign Mission School at Cornwall, Connecticut, and she had been active in the Society of Butternuts, a fund-raising organization for the Cornwall school, prior to opening a girls' school in Cooperstown, New York. There Miss Ruggles met Dr. Thomas Holman, a recent graduate of Cherry Valley Medical School in New York. The couple fell in love but

could not marry due to the debts incurred by the doctor's unsuccessful practice. Then a solution appeared in the guise of becoming missionaries. Reportedly refusing his father's offer of three thousand dollars to clear his debts, Dr. Holman signed on with the American Board.[4] The Prudential Committee acting on behalf of the American Board assumed the debts, purchased the necessary medical books, instruments, drugs, and supplies, and sent Holman to Cornwall for training.

Upon initial acquaintance, all seemed to be well between the doctor and his new associates. Hiram Bingham stated that Holman presented "very solid testimonials as a discreet, solid, & pious young man, devoted to the cause of Missions and qualified to be useful both as a Christian and a physician among the heathen." Holman's missionary training commenced in May 1819. By August, however, Herman Daggett, the school's master, observed to Samuel Worcester, secretary of the Prudential Committee, that the doctor had a disposition given to complaints and that he needed to learn humility. Even Samuel Ruggles told Lucia's fiance that if he could not bring himself to live in harmony with the mission family and the rules under which the group lived, he had better stay at home.[5] This would prove to be an important consideration. Members of the pioneer missionary company to Hawai'i expected to emulate the early Christian church, holding all things in common and creating a family community based on mutual consideration and trust. If Holman did not lose his abrasive manner, the harmony of the mission would be disrupted.

Of course, if Holman had taken Ruggles's advice, he would have lost his bride and regained his debts. The couple married in September and departed aboard the *Thaddeus* in November 1819. Bingham later placed much of the blame-for the disruptions caused by the Holmans on the staff of the Foreign Mission School. Bingham asserted they should have withheld their approval of Holman's candidacy until they knew he could resist temptation and walk the true path. But the staff had had no real choice. If they had rejected Holman the entire enterprise would have been held back for want of a doctor. Besides, they must have reasoned, the doctor's brother-in-law was Samuel Ruggles, a man of proven integrity and religious zeal. Surely that would mean something.[6]

The expectations of both the Christian life and the missionary calling were quite clear. The Calvinist tradition, in particular the legacy of Jonathan Edwards and the New Divinity, stressed the unity of will between the regenerate Christian and God.[7] The converted soul ceased to want his or her own--selfish--desires but sought only the more perfect purpose of God's glory. So great would be the love of God that the

converted would willingly suffer damnation if it would further God's plan, but he or she would not choose damnation or any other path. It was truly a case of the right hand not knowing what the left was doing. Within this context, an individual might receive a call to foreign mission. Such a call required selfless devotion and certain martyrdom in foreign climes.

Theologically, then, the missionary did not look for personal happiness or gain, but for the furtherance of God's kingdom. This point was institutionalized by the American Board in 1815 when the sixth annual meeting declared that every missionary employed by the American Board was to be solely dependent on the board for support and that any earnings by a missionary or his wife became the board's property for the greater object of the missionary cause. Further, the American Board stated that at any missionary station with more than one missionary, all salaries, presents, and possessions would be part of a common stock. There would be no individual ownership of property or supplies and no individual wealth. All was subsumed within the greater cause of mission.[8]

The instructions issued by the Prudential Committee to those missionaries departing for the Sandwich Islands in 1819 bound the participants even as they admonished the small band. The instructions emphasized that "if a Christian is devoted to Christ, the minister is especially devoted & the missionary even more so." The first point stressed to each individual, "if you have renounced the world, be sure it is without reserve. It is hard enough to live the divine life here. What will you do there if you aren't devoted heart, soul & body to Christ?" The contract between the evangelists and the American Board was based on this renunciation and was considered valid only so long as the individuals conformed to the instructions, which reiterated the 1815 ruling. The Prudential Committee realized that "living so close to one another and so far from the world, there will be disaffections. Brotherly love may only continue via much vigilance, much prayer, crucifixion of self & sanctifying grace." It was expected that the missionaries would do all within their power to strengthen the ties of their fledgling church and mission family even as they fulfilled the tasks of bringing literacy, "civilization," and "Eternal Life" to the unbelieving Hawaiians.[9]

The mission to Hawai'i, however, did not involve just the American Board, the missionaries, and the Hawaiians. It encompassed the millennial hopes of the entire New England Christian community. "Beloved Members of the Mission, Male and Female, this Christian Community

is moved for you, and for your enterprise. The offerings, and prayers, and tears, and benedictions, and vows of the Churches are before the throne of Everlasting Mercy. They must not be violated; --they must not --cannot be lost."[10]

The mission family was bound together in a great enterprise, but the binding was not as strong as the majority of members had hoped. Thomas and Lucia Holman allegedly began almost immediately to disrupt the unity other members of the young mission family found so vitally important. During the voyage the Holmans began to express their intention of acquiring property in Hawai‘i and then returning to America. The doctor stated that he had not understood the instructions at the time of embarkation and that he "did not now nor did he ever feel it to be his duty to engage to hold his *earnings* or his *art,* at the disposal of the Board or of the mission, in such a sense that he could not if he pleased acquire personal property & return at pleasure to his native land."[11]

Such sentiments shocked Bingham and the others. Holman now clearly stated that he had never intended to spend his life in the field, and that while his services to the mission would be free, others must pay. "But," sputtered the Reverend Mr. Bingham, "the plan of this mission, & the unequivocal instruction of our Patrons do not allow us to set up private wealth as an object." The doctor responded, "You know very well the situation we were in, when those instructions were given. --I did not understand them; & I question whether you did yourself at the time." Bingham protested that he "did understand them--they were such as I was looking for, --such as I had long desired, & such as I was glad to hear." "But I," asserted Thomas Holman, "do not feel myself bound by them any further than they accord with my original plan. I felt willing to spend a few years in the practice of physic among the heathen, --& if my services would aid the mission, & promote the civilization of the natives, I should be glad of it. But why should you feel concerned about my earnings unless you think I can earn more than the rest." There was little more to be said in the face of such blatant fractiousness. The mission family could only hope that if it behaved with kindness and forbearance and received the assistance of divine blessing, the young man might be "reclaimed, reformed & saved."[12]

The doctor's bride also gave cause for concern. The couple's absorption in each other and the groom's extreme attentiveness to his wife's every desire were offensive to the others. Public displays of affection seemed an affront to the greater purpose of the journey. Despite such

secular interests, however, Lucia Holman was not unaware of the great work, and if she did not completely relinquish her past life, neither did she cling to it.

"This year," confided Mrs. Holman on 31 December 1819, "has witnessed the most trying yet interesting scenes of my life. A new course is marked out for me to pursue: new hopes, new joys, and new sorrows are before me. I often review with pleasure the past scenes of my life, tho this pleasure is mingled with regret that they are never more to be realized." As to her new tasks among the Hawaiians, the young woman exclaimed, "Yes, with the eye of faith I can look forward to the day when the sons & daughters of [Hawai'i] . . . shall become the true & humble followers of the Prince of Peace." Later, Mrs. Holman decided that she was not the one to effect such a change, but aboard the *Thaddeus* her sentiments and apprehensions were little different from those of her missionary sisters.[13]

Mrs. Holman did deviate, however, in her shipboard activities. She did not attend the sessions led by Mrs. Bingham and Mrs. Thurston to instruct the ladies in grammar, rhetoric, and geography. She, too, had been a teacher and felt no need of the lessons, especially when she suffered from seasickness. But the absence was noted and served to isolate Mrs. Holman from the other ladies.

Mrs. Holman also had poor relations with Hiram Bingham. Bingham accused Mrs. Holman of hoarding fruit that her brother, Isaac Ruggles, had given her in Boston. She defended her position, but the seeds of suspicion were planted. Dr. Holman later accused Bingham of telling his wife that she was "an improper person for a missionary" during one of their conversations regarding the fruit.[14]

Whether or not the Holmans had any aptitude for mission, they seemed to have had none at all for diplomacy. By the time the *Thaddeus* arrived at Kailua-Kona on the "Big Island" of Hawai'i in 1820, the couple had alienated most of the company. Only the Ruggleses could still be counted as friends. The others hoped for the best. Ironically, it would be the technology of medicine that first attracted the attention of Kamehameha II (Liholiho) and enabled the missionaries to establish their first toehold in the Sandwich Islands.

II

Liholiho was cautious when the New Englanders asked permission to establish a mission station at Honolulu. There were rumors, encouraged by the king's English advisor, that the Americans would interfere with

Hawaiian politics and disrupt amicable relations with Great Britain, Perhaps their intention was to incite a rebellion or monopolize Hawaiian commerce. The evangelists explained that they merely wanted to teach a new religion. But, having only abolished the state religion in the fall of 1819, the king had no desire for a replacement. The missionaries offered literacy, which elicited some interest, and the services of a doctor. The last caught Liholiho's attention. The doctor, he decided, would remain with the court. The others were given permission to stay in the islands for one year.[15]

Not wishing to leave the Holmans alone in their new situation, the Reverend Asa Thurston and his wife, Lucy, also remained at Kailua-Kona. In retrospect, Bingham and Thurston testified that Holman selected the Thurstons and Thomas Hopu as companions. The doctor, however, recalled that ballots were cast and that Thurston was not pleased when the assignment came to him. The remainder of the mission family went on to O'ahu, but "it was expected, it was said & the Dr. understood it so . . . that with respect to the family proceeding to [O'ahu] in case of fever, or in other cases of urgency, it would be his duty to visit them." The cases of "urgency" were primarily the confinements of several wives. It was the expectation of such events that had made the inclusion of a physician so important to the company.[16]

Meanwhile, Dr. Holman attended one of the king's wives and several of his servants, all of whom recovered. Had the doctor failed, his life could have been forfeit. Inasmuch as he succeeded, the Holmans received gifts and provisions that they only occasionally shared with the Thurstons. The doctor also enjoyed some influence with the king but did not utilize this advantage in extending the Gospel. "Never . . . had a medical man a better opportunity to make a good impression as a pioneer of science, civilization, and Christianity, than he enjoyed," Bingham wrote, but the doctor threw away such opportunities, Relations between the Holmans and the mission family remained strained. Thurston and Bingham corresponded on the doctor's growing alienation and spirit of divisiveness.[17]

The Holmans and the Thurstons often shared only the barest civility. Lucy Thurston wrote Sybil Bingham of an altercation over the issue of sharing water, at which time Dr. Holman clearly stated his intentions to live in his own dwelling, "that it was not his intention to remain a member of the mission--that at a future period he intended to return to his native country--that the medicines in his possession he considered *his own*." Holman also spoke of "the dignity of his profession--the superiority it bore contrasted with Mr. T's--& his being made instrumental of

this mission's being received & so comfortably situated." It was all very upsetting to people believing in the unity of Christ.[18]

While Dr. Holman concerned himself with his secular profession, his wife fluctuated between her Christian commitment and human frailties. Even aboard the *Thaddeus,* "at a time when each of the family needed the support of the others, [Mrs. Holman] allowed herself to express a seeming regret that she had embarked." The others expressed no verbal doubt of their calling and kept their fears to themselves. Hiram Bingham remonstrated with Mrs. Holman on this topic with some good effect, but when the doctor learned of the conversation, he found the reproof to be an "ungentlemanlike abuse of a delicate female."[19]

Lucia Holman's second thoughts became stronger as she encountered her first mission station. The culture shock was intense for the entire mission party, but, once again, Mrs. Holman was the only one to express a desire to leave the mission family. She verbalized her reactions to Lucy Thurston. "I do not find things here as I expected," Lucia confided to her colleague, "I do not feel for the heathen in being among them as I formerly did--reading or hearing of their miseries-- If there are any that do feel for [the Hawaiians]," she went on, "& possess that self-denying spirit which is necessary to live among them & do them good, I am glad of it-- It is for *them* to do the work-- But, as for myself I do *not* possess these feelings & consequently cannot be useful among them--& I intend to embrace the first opportunity to return to my native land." Mrs. Holman had gone beyond a mere apprehension that she did not possess the proper spirit. She now declared "she would never be willing to exercise that degree of self-denial, which was called for" by the situation. Such thoughts might be honest, and the conclusions logical, but they were not appreciated.[20]

Lucia Holman's ambiguous commitment was further taxed by physical privations. She complained of her discomfort while the others endured their disappointments in silence. Kailua-Kona is on the dry side of Hawai'i island. Water was five miles away from the mission station. There was no arable garden land and few fresh provisions. The stress of environmental change, physical labor, and mental tension took its toll on an already tenuous commitment. Lucia's position became increasingly ambiguous as she began to complain of her health and the desire for plentiful water, good food, and agreeable company. At the end of the summer she wrote that in all her "trials of sickness and privations by sea & land, I have never regretted my undertaking," and, yet, unlike others in the company, she would be pleased to return home again.

"Could any female," Lucia further reflected, "have known before she left home, *all* the trials and afflictions through which she must inevitably pass, she would not *of herself* have strength or grace to enlist in so great an enterprise. I think," she went on, "I may say the same of men." Two months later Mrs. Holman elaborated on that theme, saying that "it was pride & selfishness and the desire of a great name that influenced every one of the mission family to come out here."[21]

The doctor had an overabundance of pride and a fractious nature, but his wife possessed a tongue both loose and sharp. It is difficult to say which behavioral traits were the most distressing to the mission family, Both represented the enactment of private doubts and fears that the family sought to deny. They were a small band in a strange place. They could not go back; such an act would deny their calling and perhaps their conversion. It was not a question of making a mistake, but of eternal salvation. The charge of seeking fame was easily denied, but the greater issue of coming out for personal gain--that is, the assurance of salvation--raised the question of motive. If the motivation was even slightly self-interested, then all sacrifice was for nought and damnation more than probable. It was, indeed, a psychic disaster to listen to the Holmans. Such a situation could not continue.[22]

III

The tension between the Holmans and the mission family reached crisis proportions when the Holmans moved to Lahaina, Maui, without the approval of the church. The move touched on four issues, but the major point was authority. The ostensible reason for the move was Lucia Holman's health. The couple went to Lahaina rather than Honolulu because that was where the king granted them permission to travel. In the uproar of moving, Dr. Holman failed to appear for Maria Loomis's confinement. For flouting authority, placing the missionary enterprise in jeopardy, and endangering the life of Mrs. Loomis, the Holmans were placed under censure.

If there is blame to be fixed, it would seem to revolve around Lucia Holman and the high regard her husband had for her. Unlike the resourceful Lucy Thurston, Lucia felt increasingly overwhelmed by her calling and was quickly disillusioned. She did not have any particular affinity for the Thurstons and later wrote Samuel Ruggles that isolation among the Hawaiians was preferable to "the society of [those] who feel and conduct towards me as if a stranger." In short, Mrs. Holman was unhappy and unsuited to her new environment. In fact, she had

expressed her desire to depart almost upon arrival, causing Bingham to respond "in his usual taunting way get away if you can!" (Bingham denied this alleged conversation.) Dr. Holman testified the move was necessary to protect his wife's health. Bingham and Thurston said Mrs. Holman never mentioned her health problems to her Christian sisters and even admitted her conduct had nothing to do with her health. In a letter to her brother, Lucia insisted that the removal was her desire, "and at first quite contrary to the will of my husband."[23]

From the church's point of view, if the Holmans insisted on leaving Kailua-Kona, they should have appealed for permission from the church and the king, and moved to the main station at Honolulu. The family believed the doctor had made his plans for Lahaina without even informing the Thurstons. This would leave the Thurstons in isolation and raise Liholiho's suspicions, because the mission family at Honolulu believed the king was jealous of Kalanimoku and Ka'ahumanu, who were at Lahaina.[24] By angering the king the Holmans placed the entire missionary enterprise in jeopardy. Later, the charge was also made that Dr. Holman was becoming increasingly discontented "as he saw the good name of the leaders rising, & gaining influence."[25]

Dr. Holman denied leaving Kailua-Kona by devious means. "Did I not," he queried, "more than once or twice ask the counsel of brother Thurston on the subject?" But Thurston replied, "in an unfriendly, unbrotherly manner, Thus, 'I don't know' & would not converse with me at that time any more on the subject." The doctor also stated that he had made a written request to Honolulu regarding the move to Lahaina and received no reply. The choice of Lahaina was made by the king. The doctor admitted he had moved without mission family permission, but if he had waited, Holman feared the king might have changed his mind.[26]

The charge that Holman had placed his own interests above those of Mrs. Loomis's health was a harsh one. The doctor declared, however, that he did not attend her confinement because he was told he was not needed, an assertion both Bingham and Thurston denied. Mrs. Loomis delivered without complications, fortunately.[27]

On 13 July 1820 the brethren issued a united remonstrance signed by Hiram Bingham, Daniel Chamberlain, Samuel Ruggles, and Elisha Loomis. They wrote of the fine work Holman was doing but stressed his duty to the mission and his acceptance of the general instructions before the company's departure from Boston. After arriving at Lahaina, Holman responded that he was pleased to be on Maui "and should you see fit to withdraw me from your fellowship & support yet I am *confi-*

dent that God . . . will continue to provide all things necessary for my *usefulness, wants & happiness.*" Lucia Holman's entreaty that her husband should not be censured "for the faults that I have committed" did not soften the tone of Thomas's defiance. The church suspended Dr. Holman from all privileges on 8 August 1820 and placed him under censure pending a fuller investigation. In the interim, the doctor was expected to continue to fulfill his medical obligations.[28]

Lucia Holman continued to waffle. Shortly after the move to Lahaina, she tried to mend fences with Lucy Thurston. "I verily believe that great good can be affected among [the Hawaiians] with proper means--but I need not tell you never to expect that from me. I only ask your charity to believe that I do not intend to do any harm." Indeed, this contrite woman was "willing to live forgotten among mankind if I can live in peace--enjoy the pleasures of a quiet conscience--void of offense towards God & man." Not surprisingly, her plea fell on deaf ears. Thomas Holman wrote that his wife did not receive the interest or sympathy she had expected, causing a decline in both her health and spirits. "Should she continue in this frame of mind, with no more prospect of relief, I shall feel it my absolute duty to return [to the United States] with her."[29]

The evidence seemed to be mounting that the Holmans were looking for a way out of their obligation. Surely the removal to Maui was indicative of this intent. Lucia Holman disagreed. "We never thought nor spoke of separating from the Mission," she wrote prior to her husband's suspension. "No! Far be it from me or my dear husband to wish to separate from this family." But should the brethren decide to separate, "I will feel myself happy to be alone."[30]

Alone the Holmans would soon be. The mission family tried to sort out why the Holmans had moved--whether from maliciousness or misunderstanding. Daniel Chamberlain concluded by November that the Holmans' version was not to be trusted since it changed almost daily. Bingham blamed Mrs. Holman for urging her husband to measures that could only result in censure. Dr. Holman continued to assert that he was doing his duty and was, therefore, neglected and abused.[31]

The entire issue was crucial to the identity of the mission. The mission family as a whole accepted fully the philosophy of the American Board as expressed by Dr. Leonard Woods of Andover Theological Seminary on the occasion of the departure of missionaries to Asia in 1812. A "Christian presents himself a living sacrifice unto God; and counts it a privilege to do and to suffer any thing for the advancement of his cause," a point that had been rearticulated in the Prudential Commit-

tee's instructions issued in 1819 for the Sandwich Islands mission.[32] Missionaries did not belong to themselves, but to God. Their work among nonbelievers was dedicated to saving souls and, by so doing, providing an example of the godly life for Christians at home.

Initial contact with the Hawaiians had been a traumatic experience requiring renewed dedication to the object of the mission in order to cope with culture shock and a new environment. The Holmans threatened the psychic unity of the group. If the doctor who had been equally charged with this duty could so openly flout church authority and even suggest abandoning the mission, then every member was at risk. And, in accordance with their theological and cultural beliefs, that risk of failure would mean not only public humiliation, but also eternal damnation. The Holmans could not be permitted to continue their disruptive behavior, but at the same time the missionaries felt it their duty to make every effort to bring Thomas and Lucia to repentance and a renewal of their commitment.[33]

At length, the family made a decision. Chamberlain questioned Holman closely to demonstrate that the doctor's position was without merit. During the questioning Dr. Holman stated: "Mr. Chamberlain I'd have you know that the blood that runs in my veins was born free, & I'm determined, it never shall be bound by any man." To which the Reverend Mr. Bingham responded, "We do not wish to change the current of your blood, we only wish you to behave decently." But the time of reconciliation was past. "Your brethren having suspended you from the fellowship without excluding you from the pale of the church, have long waited for you to wipe away the stain & heal the wound, which you have brought upon this little branch of Zion, upon the cause of missions, & on the cause of Christ in general; --but they have waited in vain-- They have sat down by the turbid waters of Babylon, & waited & wept in vain." Only Samuel Ruggles argued that Dr. Holman be given more time to repent. With sadness and determination, Bingham and Thurston drew up the letter of excommunication, charging Thomas Holman with "walketh disorderly" (2 Thess. 3:6), "slander & railing" (1 Cor. 5: 11), and "covetousness" (1 Cor. 5: 11). The motion to "publicly, & solemnly, deliver [Thomas Holman] over into the visible kingdom of Satan & declare you and to the world, *that you are, & of right ought to be excommunicated from the church of Christ,* & no more entitled to the fellowship or the privileges of his kingdom on earth" passed by unanimous vote on 31 January 1821. That same date Lucia Holman was placed under suspension.[34]

Mrs. Holman had received her first admonition on January 16 and

made no effort to repent. The church charged Mrs. Holman with persuading her husband to move to Lahaina and declaring that if such was grounds for dismissal she would rejoice. Such actions were unbecoming in a church member, and in a female missionary they constituted "walking disorderly." Lucia was also charged with possessing an improper spirit and manner that manifested itself as "evil speaking." Her greatest crime, however, was the same as the doctor's. "Any feelings, conduct or expressions, inconsistent with the full exercise of holy benevolence, are contrary to the duties which we owe to God & to each other as subjects of this kingdom. Every particular branch of it must be governed by the same laws that regulate the whole." When a member departed from the path of duty, every effort must be made to reclaim him or her. But neither Lucia nor Thomas Holman wanted to be reclaimed.[35]

The decision of excommunication and suspension was a difficult one. Maria Loomis wrote that the "subject is too painful to dwell on. It is deeply felt by every member of the family." Bingham lamented "the defection of Dr. Holman. --Lord what is man!" Samuel Whitney was less forgiving. He found Dr. Holman's continued residence with the family an inconvenience since he did not care to share a meal with one under excommunication. Whitney was also Ruggles's associate on Kaua'i, and could scarcely speak with him on the subject.[36]

The church submitted a report of the charges and proceedings to the Prudential Committee. Dr. Holman submitted his version of the dispute, and the family included its response. In a letter to Bingham, Thomas Holman struck a conciliatory tone, but stated his belief that "I have not been properly treated, as a brother, a friend, or a stranger, or even a menial servant of a commonly good character." In his response to the charges submitted to the Prudential Committee, he continued this approach rather than dealing directly with the charges. An unsigned letter from a mission family partisan insisted that Holman's "paper is altogether offensive in its aspect & character. He seems to think his own case will appear fair, if he can attach disgrace to Mr. Bingham." The writer concluded that Thomas Holman did not exhibit "a single expression of genuine grief on account of the unhappy spectacle presented to the heathen--or of sorrow that he was compelled to leave a mission, to which he had publically devoted himself, & to which he was bound by the most solemn ties."[37]

The Prudential Committee considered the Holman case at their meeting of 7 June 1821. The committee found that Dr. Holman's reasons for leaving Kailua-Kona were not satisfactory; that he be required to turn over all medicines, medical books, surgical supplies, and other Ameri-

can Board property; and that "no person can be considered as belonging to the mission at the Sandwich Islands unless upon the principles expressed in the Public Instructions of the Committee delivered in Boston, Oct. 15, 1819." It remained only to find a suitable ship for the Holmans' departure and to attempt to reclaim Lucia Holman before she, too, was irretrievably lost.[38]

Mrs. Holman, however, remained out of the fold. "We laboured, but in vain, to make her sensible of the dishonor she had brought upon the Church," Elisha Loomis reported. "She maintains that she has conducted herself aright--that she is unconscious of having slandered the members of the church--that she has been wronged--and esteems it her highest happiness that she will one day be able to make known her sufferings to the Christians of America." The latter plan was one the American Board had hoped to avoid; such publicity would be harmful to the missionary cause.[39]

In fact, Lucia Holman was enjoying her return to the secular world. Maria Loomis noted that the doctor's wife was receiving presents of every description from the antimissionary faction and left in excellent spirits, seemingly "quite insensitive to the injury she has done & is still doing to the cause of Christ." Hiram Bingham expressed his distress at Lucia's "pleasure in *going home;* --the complacency shown in the multiple attentions of the sea-captains towards her--the confidence expressed in God--the joy also at leaving the mission family." The reverend had hoped the family could bear the dispute with none the wiser. It would seem, then, that the sorrow was not just for the lost sheep and the disruption of family unity, but for the more secular concern of bad publicity.[40]

The Holmans departed for Canton aboard the *Mentor* and ultimately made their way back to Boston via England, arriving in May 1822. Lucia Holman became the first American woman to circumnavigate the globe. The brethren in Hawai'i were "not sorry [the Holmans] have left this place. The extent of the injury they have done this Mission, and the cause of Christ can never be fully known till the great day when all men must give an account to God."[41]

IV

"The conduct of Dr. Holman gives great pain in this country," observed Jeremiah Evarts, "so far as it is known. The distressing issue is indeed known universally; but the particulars not at all by the public at large." Indeed, Mr. Evarts hoped some good might come out of the Holman

case. It demonstrated what can happen when one "departs from a mission and shows himself before the whole Christian world, destitute of common integrity."[42]

Destitute became an operative word in Thomas Holman's life. The doctor tried to open a practice in Bridgeport, Connecticut, but the onus of excommunication denied him both patients and society. He appealed to the American Board to vindicate him. When that body reiterated their position and pointed out that under the circumstances Holman was obligated to reimburse his expenses, he became angry and demanding. "I do not feel under any obligation whatever 'to reimburse the treasury of the Board' any *expenses* of my *outfit*, passage etc.--but on the other hand, the Board is morally and legally bound to remunerate me for the time spent in their employ, and for my services to the Mission family, from the time of my leaving America to the time of my quitting the Sandwich Islands."[43]

Holman's arguments fell on deaf ears insofar as the American Board was concerned, but several "good men" including Pastor Waterman of Bridgeport supported the doctor's case. The American Board chose not to respond to Holman's accusations, because any attention given to the case not only deflected from the greater cause of foreign mission, but also provided ammunition to the enterprise's enemies. The board sadly concluded that Thomas Holman's hindrance to the cause was far greater than his service had been, for he had caused "incalculable trouble, shame, confusion, distress, & wasting of spirits." He died 20 March 1826 at the age of thirty-three, a failure as a doctor, as a missionary, and as an aspiring man of property.[44]

The widow Holman, however, achieved worldly fame and property. Lucia returned to her birthplace of Brookfield, where she met and married Daniel Tomlinson, a prominent, propertied man. After that gentleman's death in 1863, Lucia Ruggles Holman Tomlinson moved to New Milford, Connecticut, where she died twenty-three years later. In an ironic twist, Lucia outlived the entire pioneer missionary company and it was she who represented them for a nostalgic public.

V

There is no question that Thomas Holman was in clear violation of the Public Instructions issued in 1819, and it is highly improbable that he misunderstood them. The basic concept that a regenerate Christian must eschew worldly gain was well known. The expectations for a foreign missionary were even higher. The description of the missionary call

was also well publicized via the *Panoplist,* the *Memoirs of David Brainerd* (c. 1747), David Bogue's *Defense of the Cause of Mission* (1811), and other reading material. Dr. Holman knew the requirements; so did his wife.

It is also clear that the doctor had never possessed a missionary spirit. His dislike for authority was immediately apparent, as was his argumentative nature. It was his profession and family connections that secured his place in the company, and his need for money that made him accept it. It is evident that the doctor wanted to do more than pay his debts. Otherwise, he would have accepted his father's offer and stayed home. Thomas Holman was being honest when he said he wanted only to acquire property in Hawai'i and then return to the United States.

Indeed, Thomas Holman was generally honest about his intentions, but his wife was not. To be fair, Lucia Holman seems not to have been entirely sure what her intentions were. She liked the romantic notion of uplifting islanders; she also liked the thought of returning to America with wealth. Most of all, she liked the idea of being married and receiving her husband's attentions. All of Lucia's aspirations were tied to the mission. The altruistic notions were encouraged by brother Samuel; the avaricious ones by husband Thomas.

Lucia Holman might have been more enthusiastic about the mission and thereby influenced her husband in a more service-oriented view if the Ruggleses had shared the station at Kailua-Kona. It had never really occurred to Lucia that Samuel and Nancy Ruggles would not be her companions. The desire to be closer to her brother suggests one reason why Lucia wanted to leave Kailua-Kona and why she made no effort to bridge the gap with the Thurstons or dissuade her husband from his acquisitive proclivities. It was undoubtedly a bitter pill for Lucia Ruggles Holman when her brother signed the documents against her and her husband.

If the case had been simply a legal matter, it would have been quickly settled. But the situation can be likened only to a divorce. The others had taken their vows as a church and a mission family with the utmost seriousness and truly believed they were fulfilling Gods will. The disruption of that unity, the breaching of those sacred vows, cast everyone's position in doubt. Excommunication became the only way of restoring psychic unity and redirecting the company's focus to the task at hand.

The scars of the Holman apostasy remained, appearing each time a candidate applied for the position of missionary, each time an unbe-

liever applied for baptism. They made the mission family cling more closely to each other and anguish over the repatriation of members for reasons of health or unsuitability. Thomas Holman also carried those scars, as he spent his last years seeking vindication. Only Lucia Holman seemed to remain untouched in the furor, glad for the service foreign mission had done her and just as glad to leave it.

VI

The Holman case is more than a family squabble in which the black sheep are ejected from the manse to make their way in the world. It is a mirror that reflects the fears, convictions, and tenuous unity of the first missionary company to Hawai‘i. It is a crystal ball that projects the difficulty these pious men and women had in accepting the sincerity of indigenous conversions to Calvinism. If they had been fooled by members of their own culture, how could they trust themselves to correctly assess the religious conviction of a people whom they did not begin to understand? The instructions they had received on their departure to be cautious in accepting professions of faith became an article of law in the work of the Sandwich Islands mission.[45]

The repercussions of the Holman apostasy were equally felt by subsequent missionaries. Works became an important test to determine whether a candidate’s religious conviction was genuine. The decision of Ka‘ahumanu and other prominent chiefs to patronize missionary instruction, particularly in the schools, and to suppress vice in June of 1825 paved the way for their baptism in December. The first laws of the Hawaiian kingdom were issued shortly thereafter.[46]

Yet, even changes in behavior could not reveal the true faith of the candidate. In 1826 William Richards, a member of the second company who later became the first minister to join the government (1838), wrote the American Board that he “had been growing particularly anxious lest the people should settle down satisfied with the more outward performance of the duties of Christianity, to the neglect of that which alone can save the soul.”[47]

Missionaries are in the business of saving souls. Their methods are determined by their theology and their personal interpretation of that theology. The early missionaries to Hawai‘i were bound by a rigid Calvinism that did not allow flexibility in its implementation. The Holman affair increased the propensity of these missionaries toward a literal interpretation of the signs of conviction and conversion among the Hawaiians. On 24 April 1828 Bingham reported there were fifty

Hawaiians in the church, a small return for eight years of work.[48] We will never know what the results might have been if the fear of apostasy had not dominated the collective psyche of the mission family. Neither will we know the extent to which the low number of Hawaiian church members affected missionary attitudes towards the Hawaiian people, an important point when one considers that during this same period missionaries became trusted advisors to Hawaiian chiefs.

NOTES

1. This article has been developed from a paper read at the Rocky Mountain Regional Conference of the World History Association in July 1990 entitled "The Holman Window to Enigmatic Martyrs." A discussion of the incident within the broader context of the structural and personal motivations that resulted in the formation of the first two companies of missionaries to the Sandwich Islands may be found in Sandra Wagner-Wright, *The Structure of the Missionary Call to the Sandwich Islands 1790-1830: Sojourners among Strangers* (San Francisco: Mellen Research University Press, 1990). The author would like to thank David C. Purcell, Jr., for his comments. For general accounts of missionary activity in Hawai'i, see Harold W. Bradley, *The American Frontier in Hawaii* (1942; reprint, Gloucester, Mass. : Peter Smith, 1968); Gavan Daws, *Shoal of Time* (Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1982); Ralph S. Kuykendall, *The Hawaiian Kingdom,* vol. 1. (Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1978). Apologists for the cause of missions include Samuel C. Bartlett, *Historical Sketch of the Missions of the American Board in the Sandwich Islands, Micronesia, and Marquesas* (1876; reprint, New York: Arno Press, 1972); Oliver W. Elsbree, *The Rise of the Missionary Spirit in America* (1928; reprint, Philadelphia: Porcupine Press, 1980); Joseph Tracy, "History of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions," in *History of American Missions to the Heathen from Their Commencement to the Present Time* (Worcester, Mass.: Spooner & Howland, 1840). For a focus on the political and economic motivations of missionaries, see Aarne A. Koskinen, *Missionary Influence as a Political Factor in the Pacific Islands* (Helsinki, 1953); Clifton J. Phillips, *Protestant America and the Pagan World* (Boston: Harvard East Asian Monographs, 1969). Institutional motivations for the entire missionary enterprise to Hawai'i are discussed by John A. Andrew, *Rebuilding the Christian Commonwealth* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1976). For a discussion of the particular experience of women involved in the Sandwich Islands mission, see Patricia Grimshaw, *Paths of Duty: American Missionary Wives in Nineteenth-Century Hawaii* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1989).

2. The pioneer company of missionaries to Hawai'i subscribed to Samuel Hopkins's theology of disinterested benevolence, in which the believer's will is so subsumed in Gods will that he or she would cheerfully accept a descent to Hell if it would further Gods work. One of the most difficult aspects of this theology is that if a candidate chooses salvation to avoid damnation, rather than from true conviction, he or she is worse off than if conversion had not been experienced, because conversion should only occur when the individual's will has merged with God's, not for personal gain. For a full discussion of the particular Calvinist theology of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) from 1810 to 1825, see Wagner-Wright, *Structure of the Missionary Call.*

3. A note on sources: This article is based primarily on two reports sent from the church at Honolulu, O'ahu, to the American Board at Boston. Hiram Bingham and Asa Thurston to Samuel Worcester, 15 Feb. 1821, TS, Hawaiian Mission Children's Society Library, Honolulu (hereafter cited as HMCSL). Hiram Bingham and Asa Thurston, "History of the Defection of Dr. Tho. Holman," 11 May 1822, Missionary Letters (hereafter cited as ML), HMCSL. Aside from statements by the Holmans, there is no evidence refuting the charges.

Hiram Bingham, "'Journal of Mr. Bingham's Tour to Atooi [Kaua'i]," 1 Oct. 1821, ABCFM-Hawaii Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University (hereafter cited as ABCFM-H), HMCSL. Elisha and Maria Loomis, Journal, 28 Nov. 1820, Journal Collection (hereafter cited as JC), HMCSL.

4. Bingham and Thurston, "History of the Defection," p. 16.

5. H. Bingham to Samuel Worcester, 11 May 1819, ML, HMCSL. H. Bingham to Jeremiah Evarts, 2 Nov. 1820, ML, HMCSL. Andrew, *Rebuilding the Christian Commonwealth,* 113. Albertine Loomis, *Grapes of Canaan* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1951), 72. Char Miller, *Fathers and Sons* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982), 35.

6. Bingham to Evarts, 2 Nov. 1820.

7. Jonathan Edwards first described the phenomenon of the First Great Awakening in 1740. He sought a return from Puritan declension and contractual relationship with God to a recognition of God's absolute sovereignty. He introduced the concept that the truly converted will demonstrate their change of heart by their fruits, or deeds. Edwards's followers became known as the New Divinity Men and included Joseph Bellamy and Samuel Hopkins, who attempted to build a complete and consistent system of practical, evangelical Calvinism. The impetus for the Second Great Awakening (1790 to 1840) was initially based on their work.

8. *Panoplist,* November 1815, p. 341.

9. Heman Humphrey, *The Promised Land . . . Sept.* 29, *1819* (Boston: Samuel T. Armstrong, 1819), ii-iv, viii-ix.

10. Ibid., xv.

11. Bingham and Thurston, "History of the Defection," p. 26.

12. Ibid., pp. 27-29.

13. Lucia Holman, *Journal,* Special Publication, no. 17 (Honolulu: Bishop Museum, 1931), 10. For a discussion of the activities of missionary wives while in transit to Hawai'i, see Grimshaw, *Paths of Duty;* Wagner-Wright, *Structure of the Missionary Call.*

14. Thomas Holman to Prudential Committee, 14 May 1822, ABCFM-H, HMCSL.

15. Bradley, *American Frontier,* 126. Kuykendall, *Hawaiian Kingdom,* 1:103.

16. Bingham and Thurston, "History of the Defection," pp. 29-30. Thomas Holman to Prudential Committee, 21 Nov. 1820, ML, HMCSL.

17. T. Holman to Prudential Committee, 21 Nov. 1820. H. Bingham, *A Residence of Twenty-One Years in the Sandwich Islands* (1849; reprint, Rutland, Vt.: Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1981), 104.

18. Bingham and Thurston, "History of the Defection," pp. 40-41.

19. Ibid., pp. 7-8. Bingham went on to say that such a response "has been the fate of every brother or sister who has had the kindness to remind [the Holmans] of their faults." Lucy Thurston, Journal (Printer's Copy), p. 48, ML, HMCSL. Bingham and Thurston to Worcester, 15 Feb. 1821, p. 41.

20. Bingham and Thurston to Worcester, 15 Feb. 1821, p. 41.

21. L. Holman, *Journal,* 37-38. Daniel Chamberlain to S. Worcester, 14 Nov. 1820, ML, HMCSL.

22. See Henry N. Wieman and Regina Wescott-Wieman, *Normative Psychology of Religion* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1935). It is suggested that the conversion process brought the regenerate Christian into a cultus that provided a sense of permanence and continuity. Such proclivities would be especially strong among those who both accept a missionary calling and represent a cultural enclave surrounded by nonmembers. Unity among the members was of primary importance to maintaining religious and cultural identity. Thus, the Holmans' behavior threatened to upset the delicate balance upon which the members of the mission family based their existence.

Samuel Ruggles reflected the general feeling of the missionary company two months after their arrival in Hawai'i: "What would the missionary of the cross do if it were not for the consolation contained in the promises of God. These to him are sweet and refreshing. Without *them* before him, he would soon faint and die; but with them he may go to his work and cheerfully labor and toil." Samuel and Nancy Ruggles, Journal, 8 May 1820, JC, HMCSL. The missionaries had to keep their focus on their purpose and ignore their environment in order to succeed. The Holmans made it difficult to overcome the reality of the mission family's situation on isolated islands among strange people.

23. Bingham and Thurston to Worcester, 15 Feb. 1821, pp. 111-112. L. Holman to Samuel Ruggles, 14 Nov. 1820, ML, HMCSL.

24. Ka'ahumanu and Liholiho were co-rulers, she with the title of *kuhina nui.* With the support of the five Kona chiefs and her genealogical connections, Ka'ahumanu was able to exercise almost complete political authority, easily dominating the less aggressive king. At this time she and her primary supporters were residing at Lahaina. Since the king had granted the missionaries permission to stay, they were concerned that if they seemed to ally themselves with those who were possibly his political opponents, the king would deport the mission family. For a description of the political situation, see Kuykendall, *Hawaiian Kingdom,* vol. 1.

25. Bingham and Thurston, "History of the Defection," pp. 46-48. Bingham and Thurston to Worcester, 15 Feb. 1821, p. 76.

26. Bingham and Thurston to Worcester, 15 Feb. 1821, pp. 68-69. T. Holman to Prudential Committee, 14 May 1822.

27. H. Bingham to S. Worcester, 11 Oct. 1820, ML, HMCSL. Bingham and Thurston to Worcester, 15 Feb. 1821, p. 70. Bingham and Thurston, "History of the Defection," p. 67.

28. Bingham and Thurston to Worcester, 15 Feb. 1821, pp. 61-62, 73, 84. L. Holman to Ruggles, 1 Aug. 1820. Lucia Holman further insisted, "You may be assured that my *dear* husband was not unfaithful to me on this subject when I *entreated* him to come [to Lahaina]." Bingham to Worcester, 11 Oct. 1820.

29. Bingham and Thurston, "History of the Defection," p. 54. T. Holman to Prudential Committee, 21 Nov. 1820.

30. L. Holman to Ruggles, 1 Aug. 1820.

31. Bingham to Evarts, 2 Nov. 1820. D. Chamberlain to S. Ruggles, 14 Nov. 1820, ML, HMCSL. T. Holman to S. Worcester, 21 Nov. 1820, ML, HMCSL.

32. Woods, the Abbott Professor of Christian Theology at Andover, clearly presented the public's expectations of missionaries in his 1812 charge. "The fervant, devoted Christian presents himself a living sacrifice unto God; and counts it a privilege to do and to suffer any thing for the advancement of his cause. . . . The sacrifice of property and pleasure; stripes, imprisonment, and death lose their terrors, and become more attractive than any earthly good. . . . This is the principle which governs and animates the church of Christ." Leonard Woods, "A Sermon Deliver[e]d at the Tabernacle in Salem, February 6, 1812 . . . ," in *Pioneers in Mission,* ed. R. Pierce Beaver (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1966), 257-258.

33. Initial contact between the Hawaiians and the New England missionaries was traumatic for the evangelists. Nakedness and noise seemed to be the biggest shock. Sybil Bingham wrote her sisters, "You cannot tell how the sight of these poor degraded creatures, both literally and spiritually naked, would affect you." Nancy Ruggles exclaimed that although she had been aware of the plight of the heathen, "half of their real wretchedness was never told me." Mercy Whitney commented on the "incessant noise. . . . We hear continual yelling and screaming of natives all day as they swim or run around." And Lucia Holman complained, "I have got so tired with the noise and sight of these naked creatures that I could almost wish myself as far from them as you are." S. Bingham, Journal, 31 Mar. 1820, JC, HMCSL. Samuel and Nancy Ruggles, Journal, 1 Apr. 1820, JC, HMCSL. M. Whitney, Journal, 30 Apr. 1820, JC, HMCSL. L. Holman, Journal, 3 Apr. 1820, JC, HMCSL. Noise, nakedness, and the reality of another culture made the missionaries cling *more* closely to each other and to their purpose. See Wieman and Wescott-Wieman, *Normative Psychology;* Wagner-Wright, *Structure of the Missionary Call.*

34. Bingham and Thurston to Worcester, 15 Feb. 1821, pp. 102, 125-132. Bingham and Thurston, "History of the Defection," pp. 68, 100, 111. H. Bingham to J. Evarts, 31 Jan. 1821, ML, HMCSL.

35. Bingham and Thurston to Worcester, 15 Feb. 1821, pp. 113-114.

36. E. and M. Loomis, Journal, 16 Jan. 1821. Samuel Whitney, Journal, 13 Jan. 1820, JC, HMCSL. H. Bingham to Rev. William Jackson, February 1821, ML, HMCSL.

37. Bingham and Thurston, "History of the Defection," p. 22. Unsigned to the Prudential Committee, n.d., ML, HMCSL.

38. J. Evarts for the Prudential Committee, Minutes re Holman, 7 June 1821, ML, HMCSL.

39. E. and M. Loomis, Journal, 14 Aug. 1821.

40. Ibid., 2 Oct. 1821. Bingham, "Journal of Mr. Bingham's Tour," 1 Oct. 1821.

41. E. and M. Loomis, Journal, 2 Oct. 1821.

42. J. Evarts to Sandwich Islands Mission, 5 Jan. 1822, ABCFM-HEA, HMCSL.

43. T. Holman to Committee for the ABCFM, 12 Sept. 1823, ABCFM-H, HMCSL.

44. H. Bingham, L. Chamberlain, and E. Loomis to J. Evarts, 9 Mar. 1824, ML, HMCSL. J. Evarts to Sandwich Island Mission, 11 Oct. 1823, ABCFM-HEA, HMCSL.

45. Samuel Worcester had issued the instructions that applied to the pioneer company in 1812. Those pertaining to the standards for baptism that brought admission to the church were clear. "You will allow sufficient time for trial, and for the reality of conversion to be attested by its fruits." The Reverend David L. Perry reinforced this direction in his 1819 charge to those departing with the pioneer company to the Sandwich Islands. "Be not hasty in forming your opinion of the spiritual attainments of the heathen; and do not suddenly receive them into communion with the church. One apostate may do more injury than hundred who are without." Samuel Worcester, "Instructions Given by the Prudential Committee . . . February 7, 1812," in *First Ten Annual Meetings of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions* (Boston: Crocker and Brewster, 1834), 41. David L. Perry, "The Charge," in Humphrey, *The Promised Land,* 34-35.

46. For further information, see Kuykendall, *Hawaiian Kingdom,* 1:122.

47. Richards, arriving with the second company in 1823, was strict in the admission standards at his station at Lahaina. In 1828 he wrote the Prudential Committee that by New England membership standards, the church would have 150 members, but he took pride in the fact that none of his church's fifty members had ever been disciplined. Asa Thurston, a member of the pioneer company stationed at Kailua-Kona, insisted that none should be baptized until he or she had been well instructed in grace and the fruits of their repentance were well established. William Richards to Rufus Anderson, 20 May 1828, ML, HMCSL. Asa Thurston to unknown, 10 Dec. 1828, ABCFM-H, HMCSL.

48. Membership figure from Bradley, *American Frontier,* 145.