

# Southern Africa

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## Reference

GB 102 CWM/LMS/05

## Dates of Creation

1797-1950

## Physical Description

134 boxes

## Administrative / Biographical History

Work of the London Missionary Society started in Southern Africa in 1799, when Johanes Vanderkemp started a mission to the 'Kafirs'. Worked started in the Cape area and in 1802 Vanderkemp and James Read founded the mission station at Bethelsdorp. A General Superintendent of the Southern Africa stations was appointed by the LMS Board in December 1811.

Pioneer missions in Southern Africa included the mission to the Zak River (1799-1806), to the Griquas at Klaar Water (Griqua Town) on the Orange River (1802) and to the Namanquas at Warm Bath (1806-11). By 1818 there were 15 mission stations in Southern Africa. In 1820 John Philip was appointed as Superintendent of the missions and his administration

lasted until 1850. By this time mission work had extended to Pacaltsdorp, Theopolis, Hankey, Graham's Town (Grahamstown), Kat River and Kaffraria. Administratively, from the 1850s attempts were made to make the Cape missions self-supporting which was eventually to lead to the withdrawal of the LMS from the area.

The Bechuanaland mission was founded at Kuruman in 1816 and Robert Moffat began work in 1821. David Livingstone arrived in 1841 and was an important figure in the development of the mission but left the LMS in 1858. Kuruman became a mission centre, from which the missions to Matabeleland and later Central Africa were begun. The Chief Khama of the Bamangwato tribe and his successors were instrumental in supporting the Bechuana mission. The mission was the most successful of the LMS missions in Africa, in terms of converts and in training indigenous teachers and pastors.

The area of British Bechuanaland containing the mission stations of Kuruman, Taung, Tiger Kloof and Vryburg became part of South Africa after 1910, whereas the area north of the Molopo River became the Bechuanaland Protectorate [later Botswana]. Mission stations included those at Kanye, Molepolole, Palapye, and Serowe.

LMS work in Matabeleland began in 1859. Work centred around the stations at Inyati (1859), Dombodema and Hope Fountain (1870). Real success for the mission in church membership and education did not begin until after 1900.

After 1895 the LMS withdrew from the original mission field in Cape Colony and concentrated on two mission fields in Southern Africa - Bechuanaland [later Botswana] and Matabeleland [later Southern Rhodesia or Zimbabwe]. Work in the Cape was passed to the care of the Congregational Union

of South Africa.

In 1945, the main LMS mission stations like Kuruman, Kanye, Molepolole, Serowe, Inyati, Hope Fountain and Dombodema were in rural areas. It was not until the 1950s that the LMS began to establish churches and pastoral care within urban areas, often joint initiatives such as the United Church of the Orange Free State Goldfields. LMS administration also changed, with a move away from the District Committees which reported directly to the LMS Board to the establishment of mission councils. A Southern Africa mission council was formed in 1943. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, the LMS responded to proposals for greater union and ecumenism, and in 1967 the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa was inaugurated.

## Arrangement

Material is arranged into the following classes: Incoming correspondence: Matabeleland (1835-1899); Incoming correspondence: Southern Africa (1797-1927) and Incoming/Outgoing Correspondence, South Africa (1928-1939), which includes Bechuanaland, and Matabeleland correspondence from 1900; Southern Africa Correspondence (1940-1950); Journals (1798-1892), and Reports (1866-1939).

Southern Africa materials after 1940 can be found in the main Africa division, including correspondence (from 1950), reports and subject files. Miscellaneous papers are also catalogued under the Odds series in the Africa division. Photographs relating to Southern Africa also appear as files amongst the Africa photographs.

## Access Information

Open

## Archivist's Note

Catalogued

## Related Material

Other LMS Southern Africa materials can be found in the miscellaneous or Odds series under the Africa division. Southern Africa photographs, including those for Bechuanaland and Matabeleland, can be found as files amongst the Africa photographs.