

Captain Samuel G. Moore of the *Morning Star*

Theodore W. Livingston

Entering port on April 23, 1857, the missionary brigantine *Morning Star* caught the eye of everyone along the Honolulu waterfront. Seamen judged her handsome and able; a businessman wished for three just like her, for packet service to California; islanders—many of them Christians with a proprietary interest in the vessel—exclaimed, *Nani loa! Nani loa! He moku maikai!* (Beautiful! Beautiful! A lovely vessel!).¹

A week later, nearly three thousand people gathered on Market Wharf to welcome formally the *Morning Star*, and, as a part of the same celebration, to bid God-speed as she departed on her first cruise to the Marquesas. Church women presented a banner twenty feet long, bearing on a white field the vessel's name, with a star and dove symbolizing light and love, to fly from the mainmast.²

Many recalled a similar service on the same dock five years before when islanders and New England Christians who had united in a joint effort as the Hawaiian Missionary Society, bade *bon voyage* to evangelists bound for the Caroline islands. Kamehameha III had dispatched with them a letter to "all chiefs of the islands in this great ocean to the westward"³ commending the Christian religion. Partly with the aid of this introduction, bases were established at Kusaie and Ponape, in the Carolines, and the next year, 1853, James Kekela, the first Hawaiian to be ordained a minister, began his forty-three years of service in the Marquesas. Those first white and brown missionaries had sailed aboard a little schooner, the *Caroline*, but a shortage of funds in the treasury of the Hawaiian Missionary Society forced her sale after only three years, and whaleships passing through Micronesia became the only link with Honolulu. Not only was such communication uncertain in the extreme, it also tended to identify the missionary enterprise with the whalers, whose philosophy of life and attitude toward islanders often were greatly at variance with those of the Christian workers. A lament regarding the non-arrival of supplies and mail was heard at Missionary House, Boston, and the American

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Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions formulated a plan to support the labors of its offspring Hawaiian Missionary Society.

A fast vessel would be needed, capable of carrying a dozen or more missionaries and their goods through the storms and more frequent calms of the central Pacific. She would need to be built solidly, for repair facilities would be virtually non-existent, and a handy rig would be necessary among the coral reefs of still uncharted archipelagos.

The vessel would be far more than a mere carrier of goods and personnel: she would be to thousands of islanders the personification of the Christian message. Her appearance, the deportment of her crew, her regularity of visits would have as great an influence, for good or ill, as anything the resident missionaries might say or do. It was considered essential that her reputation be far different from that of white men's slave ships, and a large percentage of the whalers and traders.⁴

Following the example of the London Missionary Society, it was suggested that the vessel's construction and operating expenses become a project of the Sunday Schools, that it be a "Children's Missionary Ship." Response was immediate. The sale of ten-cent "shares" produced 30 per cent more than the needed \$18,000, and a contract was signed with Jotham Stetson, of Chelsea, Massachusetts, to build a ninety-foot brigantine. Launched on November 12, 1856, she was christened *Morning Star*,⁵ and turned over to Captain Samuel G. Moore.

After reaching Honolulu that April day in 1857, Captain Moore earned a good reputation, both in shipping circles and among the churches. The first Marquesan voyage was followed by a seven months' passage to Micronesia, supplying the mission stations in the Carolines, helping to establish work in the Gilberts and Marshalls, and serving to refresh the flagging spirits of the missionaries. The latter, naturally, were jealous for the good name of their long-awaited *Morning Star*, and would have been quick to notice any shortcomings in her skipper. Instead, they took special pains to report to Honolulu and to Boston their complete confidence in the skill and spirit of Captain Moore.⁶

The return of the *Morning Star* in January, 1858, caused another wave of interest among the people of Hawaii, who had come to look upon the little brigantine with particular interest and pride. Safe passage of many difficult reefs, discovery and positive location of one uncharted island, and completion of all assigned tasks a month ahead of schedule combined to add to the captain's reputation.

Thus, while perusing the pamphlets and articles written by the ABCFM for use among the churches,⁷ one is puzzled by a sudden and unexplained change in command. Jane Warren, first to write a book about the *Morning Star*, apparently felt that some explanation was required, lest it be thought that a cloud of dishonor had accompanied the abrupt termination of the services of the skipper:

Here we must take leave of Captain Moore, who now relinquished command of the *Morning Star*, and returned to America. How different the impression which had been

made by him upon those heathen people, from that which has been made by too many American captains! To the missionaries he had been a Christian brother and friend, and by his example had recommended the religion they taught. He will ever retain their grateful remembrance and cordial esteem.⁸

This eulogy increases the desire to learn more about Captain Moore and of the circumstances surrounding his relinquishing of command after only a year and a quarter of service.

Turning to the Honolulu newspapers, it quickly becomes apparent that the story of Captain Moore involves not only the life of one relatively insignificant figure in history but also the difficulties encountered by Christian missions in the Pacific, as new policies and programs were pioneered to meet new situations.

Henry M. Whitney, editor of the *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, on March 4, 1858, made the announcement to the public:

Rarely has it been our lot to witness so much disappointment and surprise as pervaded our community when it became known during the early part of this week that Capt. Moore had been removed from the command of the *Morning Star*, by orders received from Boston. This fine little vessel is regarded as public property, as much as any naval vessel; hence the interest everywhere manifested in all that pertains to her and her movements. What adds to the mystery is, that no specified charges accompany the dismissal, but merely the general one of utter incompetency for the command of his vessel. It is supposed, however, that the first officer, whom Capt. Moore very properly discharged in Rio, for insulting or insubordinate conduct, has influenced the action of the directors of the vessel in Boston, resulting in the dismissal of Capt. M. During his three visits to our port, and the accompanying voyages, Capt. Moore has endeared himself to those who have made his acquaintance, and has established for himself a reputation which no false charges or insidious attacks can destroy. Wherever these charges have emanated they will soon be made public, for the *reputation* of an able shipmaster is of too much value to be damaged without good cause. We much regret that the *Morning Star* has lost the services of one so capable of her command; and the cause of missions in this ocean, one who has shown such a deep interest in its promotion. And we trust that before he leaves for Boston, which we understand will be by the first vessel, our citizens will give him some unequivocal expression of their regard for him as a shipmaster and gentlemen.⁹

The *Advertiser* article continued, quoting from the previous day's *Friend*, a monthly published by the Rev. Samuel C. Damon, Chaplain to Seamen for the Congregationalists. Damon had broken the news, which had come just as the *Morning Star* was ready to depart for her second visit to the Marquesas, and stated that the mail came from Boston, "bringing positive and peremptory orders for her commander to resign and proceed immediately to Boston, and for the vessel to be detained until a new commander shall be sent out, the agents here not being allowed any discretionary powers in the premises."¹⁰

Editor Charles Gordon Hopkins of another weekly, *The Polynesian*, took up the cudgel on Moore's behalf in less polite, but more colorful language:

On receipt of this more spirited than spiritual ukase from the missionary Sanhedrin, the first, the natural, the universal exclamation of all who hear it, was: "in the name of God, then; what is the matter; what *has* the Captain been doing that he should be turned out of the vessel summarily and then *ordered* home, like a whipped schoolboy to face the music of this imprudent 'prudential committee'?" . . . We can solve the quandary

in one of two ways, either the "prudential committee" has been most shamefully imposed upon by wilful and malicious misrepresentations of the character and competency of the captain, or else "too much learning has made it mad" . . .¹¹

Doubtless, Captain Moore was the subject of considerable conversation during the week of waiting for the next issue of the *Advertiser*. Two letters of explanation appeared on April 11. The first was written by E. W. Clark and S. N. Castle, the official representatives of the ABCFM in Honolulu. The second letter was signed only by Mr. Castle; it was an *addendum* to the first, penned after the publication of Hopkins' peppery *Polynesian* editorial.

Clark and Castle first noted an inaccuracy in Damon's March 3 announcement in the *Friend*. Captain Moore, they wrote, was not being called to Boston, as though to answer charges. He simply was dismissed at Honolulu, with the assurance of kindest personal feelings, and with the guarantee of homeward passage (timed to his own convenience) and six months' wages.¹² There followed a listing of "the facts known in the case:"

The *Morning Star*, as is well known, came near being lost on first leaving Boston, and it may be owing to the superior judgment and skill of the captain that she was not lost; but this circumstance aroused the fears and suspicions of those interested in the vessel, and unfavorable remarks were made by some who pretended to be wise in such matters.

On her way the vessel put into Rio to repair a foreyard. This was thought to be necessary by the captain, the mate and the carpenter. But the builder of the vessel, after hearing of the circumstances, expressed a different opinion. The first officer, for sufficient reasons, was discharged there with no very kindly feelings to the captain, and the second officer put in his place. The mate returned to Boston. A letter from Boston, written soon after his return, says, "the first mate of the *Morning Star* who left her at Rio Janeiro has returned home, and has many a thing to say illustrative of his view of Capt. Moore's insufficiency for his post. Of course we receive them with much allowance. I hear the insurers are dissatisfied with their bargain." This was written before the vessel arrived at these islands.¹³

Mr. Castle's *addendum* spelled out more clearly how these early difficulties of Captain Moore had aroused anxiety on the part of the *Morning Star*'s underwriters, anxieties which were not relieved by the reports of the highly successful voyage to the Marquesas:

. . . Since the issue of the *Polynesian*, I think it proper to add that so far as I know no such reason as "general incompetency" is alleged [*sic*] for the removal of Capt. Moore from the command of the *Morning Star*. The *reason* offered is the refusal of the underwriters to insure the vessel under his command. In consequence of the reports in reference to the perilous condition of the vessel at Cape Cod and going into Rio Janeiro, a letter was written to Capt. Moore, which he received on his return from the Marquesas last year, which was not pleasing to him and which influenced a reply quite as unsatisfactory to the Prudential Committee, and which he probably would not have so written had he taken a little further time for reflection. But however unsatisfactory this correspondence may have been to the parties, and whatever might have been its result, ultimately, the reason stated for his removal was that upon application for a renewal of the insurance policy, December 22nd. it was refused, and this refusal was doubtless predicated upon the unfavorable reports above alluded to. . . .¹⁴

There follows another review of Captain Moore's excellent reputation in the Pacific, summarized by the statement:

Could all which is known to us here have been known to the Prudential Committee and the underwriters, I do not doubt that the vessel would soon be upon her voyage with Capt. Moore as her master and insured, if insurable under any command.¹⁵

Mr. Castle then mentioned how a number of merchants and seamen of Honolulu had volunteered to insure the vessel themselves. This practical way of showing confidence in Captain Moore was appreciated fully, but Castle believed that action contrary to the Prudential Committee decision could scarcely improve the situation. Going on to explain the composition of the Committee, and something of its difficulties in administering a global enterprise, he concluded by saying, "I cannot join in censure of the Committee in Boston, believing that, though mistaken, they have been influenced by no other motive than the desire to promote the general good."¹⁶

In the following issue of *The Polynesian*, on March 13, Hopkins replied to these explanations:

We have no wish to pursue the subject farther, although much may be said from the moral point of view about sacrificing a worthy man and injuring him and his good name and prospects solely and purely upon rumor, when good and reliable information could have been obtained. As we do not believe the committee endowed with "plenary inspiration" we take the liberty to interpret such an act as a *wrong* and not as a mistake. . . .¹⁷

Following this editorial was inserted a statement from the dismissed Captain. It is—as far as can be determined—the only word published by Moore in the entire affair, and reflects a conciliatory tone upon which the matter was dropped by the Honolulu press:

To the Public

Some surprise having been manifested in Honolulu, by the sudden and unexpected manner in which I have been deprived of the command of the *Morning Star*, I desire, briefly, to express my views on the subject. The only charge brought against me in the report of the sub-committee in Boston was a "want of confidence in my competency to navigate the vessel among the islands of Micronesia." In reference to this I would only remark "the tree is known by its fruit." How far this charge can be sustained I leave it for the public to judge. To the editorial corps of this city, and to my friends in general, I wish to express my thanks for the kindly expression of their lively sympathies. I wish also to say, that I do not anticipate lasting injustices at the hands of the Prudential Committee, believing them to be Christian gentlemen—actuated by noble and generous impulses.

S. G. MOORE

Honolulu, March, 1858

P.S. The Advertiser and Friend will please copy.¹⁸

Permission came from Boston by the next mail for the committee in Hawaii to select an interim skipper, and the *Morning Star* sailed at once for the Marquesas, under the command of Thomas Johnson, who had joined the vessel as Second Officer, and, since Rio de Janeiro, had been First Mate.¹⁹

Thus, the *Morning Star* went on her way, delayed hardly at all by the "crisis on her quarterdeck." But what of Captain Moore? Was the Prudential Committee as *mistaken* as Mr. Castle suggested, or as *wrong* as Mr. Hopkins believed, or had there, indeed, been sufficient grounds for the underwriters'

insistence upon his dismissal? What had happened at Boston and at Rio? Why had the good reports of Moore's Pacific service carried, apparently, so little weight? What had been the nature of the unsatisfactory correspondence between Moore and the Board? Were there other testimonies to the captain's incompetency? Should a decision of such delicacy and importance have been made in Boston with, apparently, no formal consultation with the Hawaiian Missionary Society? Finally, within the policies of the ABCFM, was there no opportunity for appeal by Captain Moore, no "Court of Last Resort"?

Further light on such questions cannot be found in the published materials; it becomes necessary to dig into primary sources, particularly the correspondence of the Micronesian Mission to the ABCFM.

In choosing a skipper for this vessel, the Prudential Committee of the ABCFM could be expected to utilize all of the experience and common sense which rested with its membership of merchants, shipowners, and ministers. Certainly he would be a man who had demonstrated competence at sea and a consistent allegiance to the Christian faith. It might be thought a simple matter to engage, in Boston, such a qualified captain-churchman. Actually, it appears that there was no abundance of applicants. Even if motivated by strong religious conviction, a prudent captain would not lightly put his name to a contract without first assessing the unusual demands that would be placed upon him. Not to mention his sense of accountability before God, he constantly would be reminded of his 100,000 interested owners, and his obligation to them. The agents—the ABCFM, and its Prudential Committee—would expect a great deal of their captain, perhaps more than any man could render. Missionaries, frequently aboard, would be quick to observe and quick to report his and his crew's conduct during each moment at sea and ashore on the Pacific islands.²⁰ Finally, but important, there would be only a nominal salary, with no financial incentive for exceptional services. Indeed, such an ideal skipper would have been rather difficult to find; Samuel G. Moore was the man finally selected. Coming from Putnam County, New York,²¹ Moore had begun his working life as an apprentice in the publishing firm of Harper and Brothers. Later he served as editor of a country newspaper, but resigned and went to sea because of weakened eyesight.²² Inasmuch as he subsequently spoke of himself as "twenty years a wanderer," he probably was in his forties when given his first command, the *Morning Star*.²³ From his correspondence with the Board, it is known that he was appointed only a few days before the launching of the *Morning Star*,²⁴ and that he was not the first choice of the Prudential Committee.²⁵ Even after having made the appointment, there must have been some reservation on the part of Dr. Rufus Anderson, Secretary of the ABCFM. Just one day before departure, he penned a note to the Rev. Hiram Bingham, Jr., who with his bride Clarissa would be aboard, bound for Micronesia. Dr. Anderson asked Bingham to send him a confidential

judgment of Moore's qualifications to command, based on observations during the voyage.²⁶

These reservations of the committee must have turned to alarm when, upon clearing Boston, the vessel nearly was wrecked, virtually before their eyes. Sailing from India Wharf on December 2, 1856, with no chance for a shake-down cruise, *Morning Star* encountered a sudden easterly storm which nearly put her ashore near Race Point, but she managed to anchor just off the breaker line. Two other vessels were caught in the same fix; both were driven ashore and wrecked. After three days of continuing gale, the *Morning Star* was towed clear by a steamer, and Captain Moore set a course for Cape Horn.²⁷ This near-disaster might have been attributed to the "stage fright" of a first command, or to the violence of the unusual storm from an unexpected quarter. But Moore gave the appearance of being rattled because of his handing to someone for posting (when the steamer came to tow the *Morning Star*) a letter of explanation to the Committee which he had failed to address, stamp, or even to sign!²⁸

The next word came to Boston from Rio de Janeiro. One letter told of the decision to put in for repairs to the sprung fore-yard—a decision verbally endorsed by his officers, carpenter, and passenger, Mr. Bingham.²⁹ The second reported the discharge of Thomas Provost, First Mate. Provost, a qualified captain himself, had been offered the command of the vessel before it went to Captain Moore, but, strangely, had demurred in favor of the position of First Officer.³⁰ According to Moore, Provost had been insubordinate in word and action all the way from Boston, and had asked for discharge from a vessel which, he allegedly asserted, would never weather Cape Horn under Moore's command.³¹

All of these issues were raised by Dr. Anderson in a letter to Moore dated April 2, 1857,³² but which did not reach him until summer, after he had returned from the Marquesas. This was the first half of the mutually unsatisfactory correspondence mentioned by Samuel Castle.

That Moore should take umbrage at what he considered unwarranted aspersions on his professional reputation is understandable. He replied both cogently and convincingly, but, regrettably, couched his long letter in bitter and florid expressions that could scarcely have been received with equanimity. What rankled Moore most was that his decision to repair the fore-yard in Rio was challenged by persons "in high quarters" who could not possibly have known the actual circumstances.

July 16, 1857
Honolulu

Rev. Dr. Anderson,

Dear Sir: Your favor of April 2nd was timely received and before closing this report [of the first Marquesan voyage] I desire to make a few remarks which have been suggested by its perusal. It is painful to be compelled to vindicate one's own line of conduct at all times and under all circumstances; but in the present instance, it being necessary to combat preconceived prejudices, it is superlatively so. In your letter you say, "doubt is expressed here, in high quarters, as to the actual necessity of going into Rio Janeiro." I presume, Sir, that by the phrase "in high quarters", you refer to men who stand high in the sea-faring community, and are every way qualified

to judge in reference to matters connected with the management of a ship, in all its various detail—perhaps retired shipmasters. Now with all deference to those gentlemen's opinion, I am prepared to show that, however qualified they may be to judge truthfully on *actual survey*, yet in this case to condemn or deny the propriety of a course of action, and be ignorant of the extent of the causes that led to it, is to say the least, extremely premature.³³

Reiterating his own earlier report of the incident, Captain Moore wrote how he had received the unanimous opinion of his officers and carpenter that it would be a risk to attempt Cape Horn without repairs to the fore-yard, damaged, it was alleged, because of faulty design and construction. Continuing his letter, the captain asked:

Now what course should I pursue? Here are my crew and passengers gathered around, there [sic] countenances indicating a profound sense of impending casualty; augmented as it were by the Mate's scandalous insinuations that the vessel would never round Cape Horn. The Carpenter of the ship condemns the yard. He is an experienced seaman as well as Carpenter. Shall I oppose this decision? Let me see, was I ever on board a ship where a yard was fished? Yes, and as strongly too, as a carpenter could fish it. Did it answer the purpose of getting into port? No it did not, the fore-yard of the ship *Nimrod*, Capt. Fowler, of Sag Harbour, broke. I grant that it was possible I might have fished that yard in such a manner that in ordinary circumstances it might have performed the voyage. But then, again, suppose it had broke in that hurricane off Cape Horn? Who can realize the magnitude of distress that would have been brought upon my passengers and crew—yes, and upon those very men who now sagely condemn my procedure, would be the first to cry out against my want of judgment, especially, if they had any relations on board. Justice to myself and family, justice to that great volume of God's Word, demanded that I should go into Rio Janeiro, and I am glad that I done so, and would do the same again under the same circumstances.³⁴

It was Samuel Castle's understanding that the people "in high quarters" included Jotham Stetson, *Morning Star's* builder.³⁵ Apparently, at least part of the committee had been led to believe that the spar—being of such excellent quality—could not have failed unless mishandled by a poor skipper. Subsequent word from Bingham,³⁶ from John Pomeroy, the carpenter,³⁷ and—from the next skipper of the *Morning Star*³⁸ abundantly testified in favor of Moore in this regard. Construction was definitely shown to be shoddy. Thus, if the insurance company was heavily influenced by mistaken men "in high quarters," Moore was indeed wronged.

Capt. Moore then outlined the friction that had developed between him and First Mate Provost:

It may be a matter of surprise to the gentlemen in the missionary rooms why Mr. Provost and myself should disagree so soon on the voyage. The cause I can explain. Our schools have been different. I will just state one instance in which we differ in opinion. He says grease on a new rope don't injure it—I say it does. He says it is not wrong for an officer to make himself familiar with the men—I say it is and the result of such a course of conduct proved it, at Rio, to be wrong. . . . At the time Mr. Provost and the sailor quarreled I called all hands upon the quarterdeck . . . I represented to them the disgrace that would attend us if we disagreed among ourselves, of the confidence expressed in us by our friends, and what the American Board expected. I earnestly besought them to act like men and brothers. In the evening I called Mr. Provost aside with the intention of earnestly expostulating with him, in reference to his familiar intercourse with the men—going into the forecabin and talking and

smoking with them, etc., but he would not listen to a word—"give me my discharge," he says, "I don't want to go any further in the ship."

We disagreed and separated; so did Paul and Barnabas. Will it cause more regret than that which is expressed in reference to the constant bickering between clergymen of the same denomination? "Fight on," said a man in Putnam County who was proverbial for his blasphemy, after reading a piece in the Independent, "when you all get to hell the devil will decide who is right."

That Mr. Provost has made false representations I believe, but this don't alarm me. To endure the aspersions of enemies with patience and wait for justice in her slow but steady advance is equally the part of the Christian and the hero. . . .³⁹

Fortunately, the Committee in Boston was not solely dependent upon the conflicting views of Provost and Moore as it made its deliberations. The men had also before them the confidential evaluation of Captain Moore written by Hiram Bingham, Jr. One might wonder whether the young minister would be qualified to pass judgment on the ability of a sea-captain. The fact that ten years later he would be named skipper of the *Morning Star II*—is indicative of a latent skill with ships and men, combined with a soundness of judgment, which the Prudential Committee would already have recognized. It is not difficult to believe that Bingham's report played an important—perhaps decisive—part in the formulation of a verdict. Therefore, rather extensive portions are here included:

Honolulu, April 27, 1857

Rev. R. Anderson, D.D.

My dear brother,

In your favor of Dec. 1, 1856 [the day before *Morning Star* sailed] you speak of being "desirous of knowing with certainty, the qualifications of Capt. Moore to command the *Morning Star*, and from my opportunities of forming a judgment you request that I would write freely and confidently upon the subject."

I am happy to say that the more fully I become acquainted with the man the better pleased I am with his qualifications. He has of course his defects, but the chances of finding among Sea-Captains a better man would be very small.

In the first place, I believe him to be a truly Christian man, although he has not been *so active* in his labors for the good of his men as he might have been. His influence however had been good, especially since our entrance into the Pacific. . . . During the earlier part of the voyage he frequently grieved us by the readiness with which he gave way to his feelings when irritated. But in this there has certainly been a change for the better. I should judge his disposition to be naturally irritable.

He lacks mostly in that manly bearing which is so essential to demand respect in under officers and sailors. This is owing in part to the want of many of the refinements in the etiquette of Sea Life, in part to an *apparent* want of confidence in his own nautical skill, to an apparent lack of self confidence, to apparent fear in the moment of danger, to an apparent lack of that intelligent mien which belongs only to the *well* educated man, and in part perhaps to the novelty of his situation as commander.

He secures more respect now than formerly, but still lacks in *discipline*. . . I think it is owing in part to his wish to be remembered as a *kind* Master. . . .⁴⁰

Bingham felt that the near-disaster at Boston was due partly to faulty judgment on the part of the captain. But concerning the fore-yard and Mr. Provost at Rio de Janeiro, he supported Captain Moore's position entirely. Navigation and general seamanship were considered average—customarily aided by a healthy prudence. It was a time of sudden, unexpected danger that

gave Bingham his most serious doubts, doubts which would be noted most carefully by the Committee. This "moment of truth" came during a severe squall off Cape Horn.

The only further instance of an apparent want of requisite seamanship of which I deem it worthwhile to speak was his "luffing to" during the white squall when all hands were aloft endeavoring to furl the topsail to the best of their ability and which it seemed well nigh impossible to do until the fury of the blast should in a measure abate. By thus suddenly and unexpectedly "luffing to" the lives of all aloft were in *great jeopardy*. The fluttering of the sail and the shaking of the topsail yard were so great that I expected to see the men precipitated to the ocean. The second officer immediately descended with nearly all his men, and refused to risk his life or that of the men if the captain continued to luff to. The Capt. then kept her off. Then the officer again encouraged his men to make the attempt. They had no sooner reached the yard than the Captain began to luff again. The first officer (Mr. Johnson) stood by him and continued to urge him in the name of God not to luff up but "to keep the ship off," assuring him that sufficient time had not elapsed to make a sea that would harm us while scudding before the wind. He then kept her off, and in the course of an hour the sail was furled, together with the jib, when the boat was safely "hove to" for the night. I have been thus particular because it is in emergencies of this kind when the skill of a commander is apparent. The squall was indeed sufficiently terrible to make even a stout heart quail, and if in such circumstances a man be perfectly self possessed we have a fine test of his qualifications.

But perhaps it does not become *me* to judge of seamanship.

That I think him sufficiently well qualified in this respect, to be the commander of the *Morning Star*, is evident from the fact that I feel *safe* with him as Capt. and should not be reluctant to double Cape Horn again with him if duty called. . . . But to sum up, I think you may congratulate yourselves upon having secured so competent a man as I think Captain Moore to be. I shall long remember him with emotions of good will, and shall gladly proceed with him to Micronesia.⁴¹

Bingham's qualified expression of confidence in Captain Moore was seconded by the crew, upon reaching Honolulu; instead of their leaving the *Morning Star*, as was their privilege, "so attached were the sailors to their captain, to the vessel, and the missionary work that . . . they preferred to reduce their wages from \$18 to \$15 per month and remain in the vessel during her trip to the Marquesas and back again."⁴² The events of that cruise helped establish Moore's reputation in Honolulu.

Curiously, the Prudential Committee and the underwriters appear to have given little credence to such expressions, or even to the unanimous vote of satisfaction by the Board of Directors of the Hawaiian Missionary Society, which ostensibly was responsible for the actual operation of the vessel.⁴³ Word of this vote reached Boston on October 17, allowing more than two months to anticipate the problem of insurance renewal. Had there been a strong sentiment to retain Captain Moore, such explorations might have led to (1) a provisional continuation of the policy pending a report of the important Micronesian voyage, then nearing its end, (2) a new policy with another company in Boston, or (3) a post-haste request to seek a policy in Honolulu, or even San Francisco.

The apparent lack of vigorous effort in such directions leads, inevitably, to the assumption that a Moore-must-go sentiment was held by the Prudential

Committee, prior to the ultimatum of the underwriters. If so, then the insurance issue became an expediency which freed the Committee from the onus of having to fire—on rather tenuous grounds, and without full discussion with the Hawaiian Missionary Society—the captain they had hired a year before.

These opinions might have been changed had there been, in 1857, air mail service and the telephone. With a time-lag of four to five months for an exchange of correspondence with Honolulu (and much longer for other areas of its far-flung enterprise involving hundreds of missionaries and their work), it is understandable that the Prudential Committee of the ABCFM would often have to take firm action with the realization that situations might already have changed to the point of making that action inappropriate.

The only alternative would have been a much broader delegation of authority to the Hawaiian Missionary Society. That day had not yet come to the missionary movement, and the relationship of the “older churches” to the “younger” made clear that “important” issues would be settled in Boston.

Thus, there was an implacable sense of finality to the wording of the Committee’s action: “Resolved that Capt. Samuel G. Moore cease to be the commander of the *Morning Star* as soon as the vessel shall have returned to the islands.”⁴⁴ Had Captain Moore been a regularly appointed missionary, either ordained or lay, he would have been privileged to appeal his case beyond the Prudential Committee to the full Board of Commissioners.⁴⁵ But Moore’s appointment included no such safeguard; his status was simply that of an employee, and there was no recourse. When he reached Boston, the last hope of reconsideration would have been dashed when he learned that a successor, John Brown, of New London, already had been appointed and was on his way to the Pacific.⁴⁶

Captain Moore’s final correspondence reveals an exceptional magnanimity, and a continuing concern for the cause of missions which, he hoped, would be advanced by the publication of his memoirs.⁴⁷ He wrote 350 pages of manuscript, but they seem never to have been printed. Soon Captain Moore dropped from sight, a wanderer whose most cherished task had been cut short by a combination of circumstances not entirely of his own making.

Superficially, it might be said that Captain Moore’s brief term of service contributed little or nothing to the cause of missions in the Pacific. A deeper view would recognize him to be like a subordinate member of a team pioneering in any field. Not all can achieve fame; not all can see the goal achieved. The heroine of this enterprise, humanly speaking, was the *Morning Star* herself. Committee members might make mistaken judgments, as they forged new policies for new situations; missionaries might labor faithfully, or they might falter; captains and crewmen might fail to fulfill high expectations. But all the while, the rallying point, the connecting link, the unifying factor was the

Morning Star. Instead of clamoring for reconsideration, or laboring his case in the Honolulu press, Moore apparently decided that one man's career was less important than the continuing work of the vessel among the islands. Indeed, this is the genius of the entire Micronesian Mission history; during the next century, as seven *Morning Stars* served many workers, no single figure emerged to dominate the tradition, like Patteson of Melanesia, Livingstone of Africa, or Grenfell of Labrador. Rather, generation after generation served Micronesia without being compared to the memory of a single giant. Moore's great contribution to the movement may have been the fact that he did *not* become a "hero".

Another intangible but real contribution made by Captain Moore was the opportunity his case gave the Prudential Committee for trial-and-error development of policies regarding the operation of the missionary vessel. The twelve men who gave at least half a day each week to the work of the Committee, with no compensation, had no precedent to guide them. If nothing else, the Committee had learned much about the kind of man needed for this difficult job, and how to work with him in his many demanding relationships.

Certainly to the credit of these policies and personnel choices, is the fact that over the entire 105 year-history of the *Morning Star*, no lives were lost in accidents at sea.

Later literature suggests a tradition of mutual respect among captain, missionaries, and Board. A similar tradition may also be found in the records of the other two Pacific ship-ministries which have continued to the present day: the *John Williams I-VII* and the *Southern Cross I-IX*. By contrast, in records of the shorter-lived *Dayspring I-III* of the New Hebrides, the captain and crew are scarcely mentioned; apparently they were considered employees rather than co-workers. At the other extreme, in the case of the *Fukuin Maru I-VI* of Japan's Inland Sea: Captain Luke Bickel was such a commanding figure—both as skipper and as missionary—that upon his sudden death, the whole program went into partial decline.

A more tangible—though undocumented—influence of the Moore episode was the added pressure placed upon Boston to hasten the granting of greater recognition and responsibility to the churchmen of Hawaii. The clamor raised in Honolulu after Captain Moore's dismissal, and the concrete proposal of local businessmen to underwrite the vessel's insurance,⁴⁸ undoubtedly helped impress upon the Board that the time was soon coming when the Hawaiian churches could stand on their own feet. Thus, in 1863, Dr. Rufus Anderson was sent to the islands to assist in the transfer of virtually all authority and responsibility to the Hawaiian Evangelical Association, which also absorbed the Micronesian and Marquesan activities of the Hawaiian Missionary Society.⁴⁹ The ABCFM continued, on a grant-in-aid basis, to assist certain projects, including much of the expense of the *Morning Star*.⁵⁰ This transfer of control to an indigenous church, after only forty-three years of missionary endeavor, was one of the most rapid in Church history.

From the resources available to this writer, no sure verdict can be reached regarding the competence of Captain Moore. Rather, it appears, in the last analysis, to be one of the unfortunate incidents—so common to our own experience—where both sides, while meaning well, find themselves entangled in unresolvable problems.

The real lesson of this study seems to be the common commitment to a cause which, despite the trauma of Moore's dismissal, enabled the work to go on.

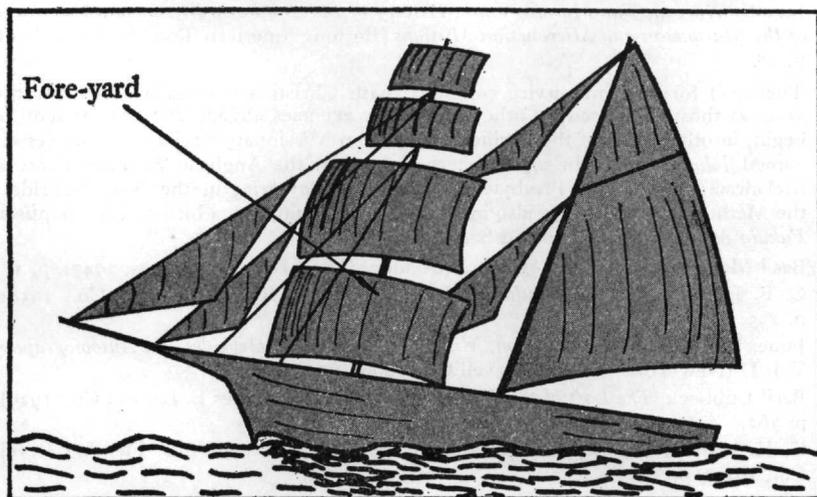
Captain Moore had made mistakes—mistakes which may well have justified the loss of his command. He had luffed with men aloft, but he had gone on to win those same men's confidence.

The Prudential Committee, too, had made mistakes—if not of judgment certainly of procedure—mistakes which irreparably hurt Captain Moore, but which provided wisdom for more perfect subsequent service.

Thus, concerning both Captain Moore and the Prudential Committee, it seems appropriate to close with the words Moore used to describe himself, when under fire: "my mistakes don't reach down to my heart."⁵¹

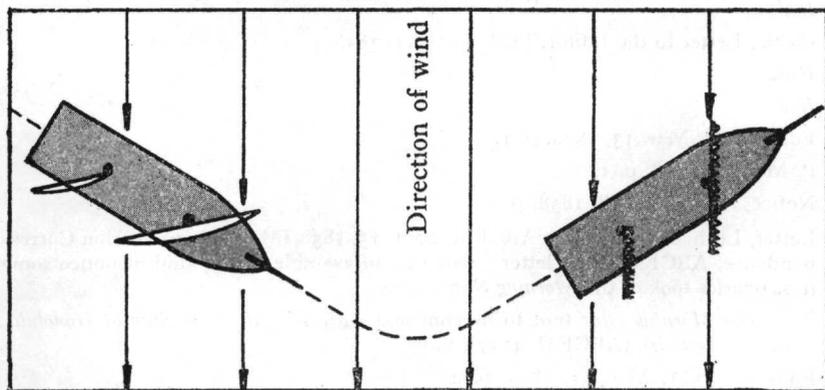
Glossary

Brigantine: A two-masted sailing vessel: the forward mast is square-rigged, the after mast rigged fore and aft.



To fish a spar: To "splint" and wrap with cordage a cracked spar.

"Luff-to": When the skipper of a sailing vessel wishes to slow down, or when he is being overpowered by strong winds requiring that pressure be relieved immediately, he "luffs-to" or "heads up" into the direction of the wind. When luffing, the wind passes on both sides of the sails, causing them to flap. In a gale such flapping of canvas and flailing of spars is extremely violent. Therefore, to luff with men aloft, especially during a gale, is to put them in great jeopardy.



NOTES

- ¹ —. *The Morning Star at Honolulu, Sandwich Islands* (Boston: American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, 1857), p. 3.
- ² *Ibid.*, p. 5.
- ³ Jane S. Warren, *The Morning Star: History of the Children's Missionary Vessel and of the Marquesan and Micronesian Missions* (Boston: American Tract Society, 1860), p. 18.
- ⁴ The need for efficient service combined with Christian witness were exactly the same as those expressed by other missionary agencies already at work, or soon to begin, in other parts of the Pacific: the London Missionary Society, and its vessels named *John Williams*, in southwestern Polynesia; the Anglican *Southern Cross* in Melanesia; the Scottish Presbyterians and their *Dayspring* in the New Hebrides; the Methodist *John Wesley*, also in Western Polynesia; and, a bit later, the Baptists' *Fukuin Maru* in Japan's Inland Sea. See:
 Basil Matthews, *The Ships of Peace* (London: The Livingstone Press, 1947), p. 18.
 C. F. Fox, *Lord of the Southern Isles* (London: A. R. Mowbray & Co., 1958), p. 255.
 James Paton, ed., *John G. Paton, Missionary to the New Hebrides, An Autobiography*, Vol. II (New York; Fleming Revell Co., 1896), p. 2.
 Basil Lubbock, *The Last of the Windjammers* (Boston: Charles E. Lauriat Co., 1929), p. 362.
 C. K. Harrington, *Captain Bickel of the Inland Sea* (New York: Fleming Revell Co., 1919), pp. 78 fw.
- ⁵ *The Holy Bible*, II Peter 1: 19.
- ⁶ Warren, p. 209.
- ⁷ *Report of the ABCFM*
The Missionary Herald
 Bingham, Hiram Jr., *Story of the Morning Star, the Children's Missionary Vessel* (Boston; ABCFM, 1866).
- ⁸ Warren, pp. 18-19.
- ⁹ Editorial, PCA, Mar. 4, 1858, p. 2.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*
- ¹¹ Editorial, P, Mar. 6, 1858, p. 1.
- ¹² Clark and Castle, Letter to the Editor, PCA, Mar. 11, 1858, p. 2.
- ¹³ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁴ Castle, Letter to the Editor, PCA, Mar. 11, 1858, p. 2.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁷ Editorial, P, Mar. 13, 1858, p. 1.
- ¹⁸ P, Mar. 13, 1858, p. 1.
- ¹⁹ Notice, PCA, Mar. 18, 1858, p. 2.
- ²⁰ Letter, Luther H. Gulick to ABCFM, Sept. 15, 1858. (Micronesian Mission Correspondence, ABCFM) This letter is cited as an example of the kind of notice some missionaries took of the *Morning Star's* crew.
- ²¹ —. *The Morning Star* (not to be confused with *The Morning Star at Honolulu, Sandwich Islands*), (ABCFM, 1857), p. 6.
- ²² Editorial, PCA, Mar. 11, 1858, p. 2.

- ²³ Letter, Capt. Samuel G. Moore to ABCFM, June 7, 1859, Micronesian Mission Correspondence, ABCFM.
- ²⁴ Letter, Capt. Moore to ABCFM, Nov. 4, 1856.
(Hereafter, unless otherwise cited, all correspondence is from the Micronesian Mission Correspondence, ABCFM)
- ²⁵ Letter, Capt. Moore to ABCFM, Jan. 26, 1857.
- ²⁶ Confidential Report, Hiram Bingham, Jr. to ABCFM, Apr. 27, 1857. (with Micronesian Mission Correspondence, ABCFM)
- ²⁷ Hiram Bingham, Jr., *Private Journal of Voyage in the Morning Star*, Vol. I. 1856-1857, pp. 1 fw., Honolulu, Hawaiian Mission Children's Society Archives.
- ²⁸ Letter, Capt. Moore to ABCFM, Jul. 16, 1857.
- ²⁹ Letter, Capt. Moore to ABCFM, Jan. 21, 1857.
- ³⁰ Letter, Capt. Moore to ABCFM, Jul. 16, 1857.
- ³¹ Letter, Capt. Moore to ABCFM, Jan. 26, 1857.
- ³² Letter, Capt. Moore to ABCFM, Jul. 16, 1857.
- ³³ *Ibid.*
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*
- ³⁵ Castle, Letter to the Editor, PCA, Mar. 11, 1858, p. 2.
- ³⁶ Confidential Report, Bingham, Jr. to ABCFM.
- ³⁷ Letter, John Pomeroy to ABCFM, July 16, 1857.
- ³⁸ Letter, Capt. John Brown to ABCFM, May 25, 1858.
- ³⁹ Letter, Moore to ABCFM, July 16, 1857.
- ⁴⁰ Confidential Report, Bingham, Jr. to ABCFM, April 27, 1857.
- ⁴¹ *Ibid.*
- ⁴² Fifth Annual Report, Hawaiian Missionary Society, 1856, p. 11.
- ⁴³ Letter, H. Bingham, Jr., to Anderson, Aug. 6, 1857.
- ⁴⁴ Letter, R. Anderson to Capt. Moore, Dec. 31, 1857.
- ⁴⁵ American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, *Special Report of the Prudential Committee on the Control to be Exercised over Missionaries and Mission Churches* (Boston; ABCFM, 1848), p. 23.
- ⁴⁶ Inferred from the fact that Capt. Brown took command in May, 1858.
- ⁴⁷ Letters, Capt. Moore to ABCFM, May 23, 1858-June 9, 1859.
- ⁴⁸ Letter to Editor, PCA, Mar. 11, 1858, p. 2.
- ⁴⁹ Rufus Anderson, *History of the Sandwich Islands Mission* (Boston, Congregational Publication Society, 1870), closing chapters.
- ⁵⁰ Inferred from subsequent sale of "shares" to build new vessels as needed.
- ⁵¹ Letter, Capt. Moore to ABCFM, July 16, 1857.