

Letter to Joseph J. Freeman, 14 November 1849

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Kolobeng 14th Nov^r 1849

The Rev^d J. J. Freeman

My Dear Sir,

We have indulged the hope for several months past that you would find it convenient to visit us, but having lately heard from M^r Moffat that you seemed inclined to make Kuruman your farthest point North. I now take the liberty of entreating you to reconsider your resolution. I hope our Kuruman friends will press on your attention the superior claims of the stations in this quarter to those of the French bretheren by which you propose to return. But before I urge any other consideration I may mention that before undertaking my late journey I expected to return in time to meet you at the Kuruman before the departure of M^{rs} L. my journey was much longer than I expected and M^{rs} L. wanted 2 months here along - I have been eight months from home this year - Two of these were spent in trying place Paul with the tribe of Mokhatla

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there is always a great deal of work to be done after an absence from a station - our house is yet unfinished - But were there no other considerations the oxen are altogether unfit to travel - one half have been worked for six months and have done & endured more than oxen ever did before The others have all been affected by a disease which renders them unable to travel

For your coming I have to urge - that when you have visited the colonial stations you have only seen one end of the chain, and as your advice at home will probably vitally affect the onward movement of the whole you ought for your own satisfaction to see the other end This is the more necessary because the Directors

seem by our expression in the Report for /47
to have imbibed our erroneous impression
as to the position a missionary occupies when
beginning with a new tribe - It is stated
that I had been under the necessity of returning
to Mabotsa - a step I never dreamed of - for
although put to shifts from the beginning
till now for vegetables & corn, the uniform
kindness of the people endeared us to them

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and I am fully persuaded that any missionary may
live in perfect security ^ with any tribe in so far as the natives
are concerned if he have only a decent smack
of common sense. So strong is my conviction
on this point I do not believe there is any necessity
for two Europeans to be present with any one tribe
and I should consider giving countenance to a colleague[-]
-gue to settle here as inflicting a wrong on some
other tribe which might otherwise be enjoying
his services - Then again you stated, I think
most truly in a speech delivered in Cape Town
that since the failure of the Niger expedition
this must be considered the key to the interior
Now we have sailed on the southern end
of a navigable highway to a large tract of
country - this discovery belongs to Missionaries
Will you not come in & give your advice
as to how we are to take advantage of it
If I incur any expense I have the rod of "

a

vote of disapprobation

" in committee over my
head - and then the world we have beyond
in the North - (is that to be left to traders
& boers) presses hard on the other side
I do most sincerely wish you may be

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induced to come for many reasons but hope
you will be guided by His counsel who
cannot err.

Affectionally yours

David Livingstone

The Rev^d J. J. Freeman

Kuruman

or elsewhere

D. Livingstone
14 Nov. 1849