REFLECTIONS ON THE WOMAN'S
FOREIGN MISSIONARY MOVEMENT
IN LATE 19th-CENTURY AMERICAN
METHODISM

By Theodore L. Agnew

In the largely uncollected archives of the Agnew family, there is said to be a photograph showing a six-year-old boy, dressed in quilted Chinese clothing, standing beside a diminutive woman similarly clad. She was Miss Sarah Faris, the boy's aunt, now living in retirement in a home maintained by the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions. This slim contact with a missionary on furlough, plus family tales of other uncles and aunts who had served in the China mission field, made it seem natural to that boy that twentieth-century American Protestantism should be concerned for the being and health of souls abroad.

Through later years, with many parental hours at official board and ladies' aid, the boy learned by a process of Christian nurture the ways of those who were Methodists by choice. Still later he became acquainted with the Woman's Society of Christian Service, reserving the third Tuesday night so that his working wife might attend her Susanna Wesley unit meeting of the Wesleyan Service Guild; he was aware that the other unit, largely made up of single women, met for luncheons and was named for Isabella Thoburn, who, he learned by casual reading of The Methodist Woman, was an early missionary to India. Yet he somehow never appreciated the full scope of "woman's work" until he commenced this study.

Thus it was with not little astonishment that he read of the deep tribulation which came to the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in May, 1888. During previous months lists of delegates chosen by annual conferences and their associated lay electoral conferences appeared in the Christian Advocate, including five obviously feminine names as representatives. Letters and editorials spoke in tones of outrage, or tempered approval. One of the women casually reported to her branch of the foreign missionary society her plan to attend the General Conference on her way to a world missionary meeting in London. The home missionary ladies...
meanwhile resolved their pride that “our dear old mother Church” was “welcoming her daughters to a seat in her highest legislative body,” and affectionately greeted those “so honored of God and the Church.”

Yet the General Conference action seemed puzzling. The bishops departed from their custom and, in the course of delivering the episcopal address to the General Conference, advised the assembly that an unprecedented issue awaited its decision—whether to seat the duly chosen women. A special committee recommended that they not be admitted; debate followed, with “strong” leaders appealing to precedent, logic, and the needs of the situation as they argued both sides of the question. At length the General Conference resolved that the five women were indeed not to be seated, but graciously voted to pay their traveling expenses! All realized that the issue would return, as indeed it did. This is not the place to go into the details of the 1888 action or the church’s subsequent course in which it accepted female assistance in the General Conference; I intend to tell that story in another research paper.

Yet the five delegates, who were of course immediately dubbed the “elect ladies,” continue to intrigue the student of the place of women in the church. Almost without exception they were then, or had earlier been, associated with the activities of the Woman’s Foreign Missionary Society. Take for instance Mrs. Angie F. Newman, who claimed the distinction of being the first woman elected a delegate, thanks to the fact that the Nebraska Annual Conference met on September 21, 1887, a week ahead of the next conference similarly minded. Mrs. Newman had for eight years been successively organizer of auxiliary (local) societies, Nebraska correspondent for the WFMS paper, and delegate from the Western Branch to an annual meeting of the executive committee of the Society.

Other women were elected delegates during consecutive weeks in September and October, 1887. The laymen of the Rock River Conference named their stellar lady, Miss Frances E. Willard, one who chose not to limit her activity to missions but whose great fame was earned as organizer and president of the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union. A week later the Pittsburgh Conference laymen

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5 Address of the Bishops, ibid., 51.
6 HWF. IV (October 1872), 353:1-2 (January 1873), 398:2:400:1; VI (February 1875), 800:2:802:1; VII (October 1876), 847:1-848:1; VIII (October 1876), 94:2: IX (July 1877), 1:1-2:2.
7 Mary Earhart, Frances Willard, From Prayer to Politics (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1944).
chose Mrs. Lizzie Van Kirk, who had served as WFMS secretary for the annual conference and had been a delegate to the General Executive Committee meeting in 1884. The laymen of the Minnesota Conference, convening the following week, elected Mrs. Mary C. Nind, who had long been active in the work of the old Western Branch and had presided over the more recently created Minneapolis Branch. Only the fifth woman delegate, Mrs. Amanda C. Rippey, chosen at the Kansas Conference in April, 1888, cannot be positively identified with the WFMS.

Reflection on the backgrounds of the “elect ladies” is instructive. First, however, the name of Mrs. Rippey may appropriately be replaced in our considerations—though the General Conference could not do so, of course—by that of Mrs. Jennie Fowler Willing. Like Miss Willard, Mrs. Willing was from the Rock River Conference. In Mrs. Willing we see a member of the small founding group of the Society, a great organizer and first corresponding secretary for the West, indefatigable writer of letters to the editor and of guest editorials, a woman constantly alert for new ways of promoting the work, until she would have been a cause of envy for imaginative advertising executives of the next century. Mrs. Willing has the further advantage for our purposes of being from the Midwest, Mrs. Rippey’s section. This means that the annual conferences in the eastern states had seen fit to neglect the women, while the midwestern conferences were proving receptive to them. Even Pittsburgh was an Ohio Valley town, and the proposal in 1816 to locate a book depository there, while premature, was regarded by such westerners as Peter Cartwright as potentially a victory for their interests.

Not only did the Middle West provide the geographical focus for much women's uplifting activity, but 1869 was a chronological center for several quite different movements. Before that year was over two rival woman suffrage organizations had been formed, as well as an important unit of the woman's club movement. These reaped much publicity in an age of increased attention by newspapers and periodicals to aspects of the female movement. Most significant for our purposes, the church was clearly witnessing the development of a new training ground for lay leadership. How had it come into being? The Woman's Foreign Missionary Society dated its founding from

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8 HWF, XVI (December 1884), 122:1; XVII (June 1886), 17:2.
9 HWF, III (September 1871), 184:2; X (June 1879), 282:1-283:2; XIV (January 1883), 166:1-167:1; XV (December 1883), 123:1.
10 CA, May 3, 1888, 303:2.
11 HWF, I (June 1869), 5:1 ff.
12 1816 General Conference Journal, 159-162.
a duly called gathering of women at Tremont Street Church, Boston, on Tuesday, March 23, 1869. Despite heavy rain and imperfect notice, the six ladies who attended resolved to meet again a week later, at which time the somewhat larger number formally organized, adopting a constitution and enlisting first members. "Matters now assumed a regular form," they later recalled. Shortly they had a periodical, *The Heathen Woman's Friend*, and soon after that came the new auxiliaries, arranged by the end of the year into six subdivisions which in time were called Branches.  

Thus the WFMS structure anticipated in part the regional organization of unified Methodism after 1939. Further reflections now present themselves, being organized for convenience into ten points. This decalogue, like its Mosaic prototype, will be arranged into two tables, of which the first relates to the United States generally and the second specifically to American Methodism. The First Table begins with the observation that the WFMS could hardly have come into existence at a more auspicious time, economically speaking. Post-Civil War prosperity was at its peak, being symbolized in the ceremonial driving of the golden railroad spike which on May 10, 1869, united the east and west coasts. Good times, it may be observed further, make for prosperous churches and other societies designed to improve one's fellowmen. As has been shown by the researchers of Robert H. Bremner and Merle Curti, American philanthropy was, at the close of the Civil War, already well organized and had had at least a generation of systematic activity for bettering man's lot, both at home and abroad.  

Secondly, the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society was formed at a time of ebullient American nationalism. Not only had the nation recently survived its bitterest test; its leaders, calling eventually for preservation of the Union and an end to human slavery, had provided the rationale for an American mission in the world. God's "almost chosen people," President Lincoln had called the citizens of his country. In 1869 they, or some of them, had had half a century of experience in creating national societies for noble ends. Examples are the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, the American Tract Society, and the American Sunday School Union. While most Methodists chose to support strictly

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denominational structures for similar goals, the church did aid the American Bible Society and thus cooperated partially with the "benevolent empire," as the network of agencies was dubbed.\textsuperscript{18}

A third element in the American background for the WFMS was a certain cultural superiority on the part of the dominant social groups and of the nation as a whole. This feeling had appeared as soon as the European colonist met the aboriginal American. In the 1820's, in several mission stations in western and southern states, Methodists had enjoyed the somewhat mixed blessing of attempting to uplift the "poor children of the forest," as Peter Cartwright referred to the Potawatomi Indians of Fox River Missions.\textsuperscript{19} Still more sharp were racial attitudes regarding America's Negroes and her recently arrived Chinese immigrants. If white Americans felt thus about ethnic groups in their own midst it is not surprising that they saw in Africa and Asia only peoples to be elevated. And the very name of the WFMS periodical, \textit{The Heathen Woman's Friend}, spoke volumes for this fundamental posture of condescension.

A fourth observation about the United States of the 1860's is that society was consistently dynamic. The nation, increasingly urban, gloried in its constantly enlarging cities. The case of Chicago, extreme as it is, indicates an ultimate in its ninefold increase in the period 1860-90.\textsuperscript{20} Here were located the editorial office of the \textit{Northwestern Christian Advocate} and a book room, while a few miles to the north, in the new suburb of Evanston, was Northwestern University with its female college (headed by Miss Willard), as well as Garrett Biblical Institute. The American people continued, as they had done since colonization began, to be socially mobile. Indeed, Rowland Berthoff has suggested that this mobility is the principal key to understanding our society.\textsuperscript{21} Yet, paradoxically, this feature did not prevent the formation in the principal American cities of a new elite, tied to commerce and increasingly to industry.\textsuperscript{22} In such a social scene, what better than to found a new benevolent church agency, located principally in cities and towns, enlisting—though not limited to—the local elites?

The fifth characteristic of the Americans of the 1860's was their prevailing optimism. Present in almost every portion of the nation, except perhaps among some supporters of the late Confederacy, this feeling strongly affected attitudes toward missions. It was indeed "the great century" in the expansion of Christianity, to use Kenneth

\textsuperscript{19} Peter Cartwright, letter dated June 15, 1827, \textit{CA and Journal}, August 3, 1827, 189: 3.
\textsuperscript{20} \textit{U. S. Eleventh Census}, I, 434-435.
Scott Latourette’s graphic phrase. And the dominant intellectual tone remained hopeful, despite rumblings from the writings of Charles Darwin—whose works were duly though on the whole unfavorably reviewed in the Methodist journals—or those of Karl Marx, who seems to have been less noticed. All told, the atmosphere in Methodist circles was filled with calm confidence in the destiny of Christianity. Where the famed Ten Great Religions of the Unitarian James Freeman Clarke brought elements of comparative religion and at least a half-objectivity to the discussion, Methodists preferred the facts and vigorously expressed opinions about Christian superiority in Doomed Religions: a Series of Essays on Great Religions of the World. The nine contributions to this collection included a chapter on Parseeism by the Rev. J. M. Thoburn, longtime superintendent of Methodist work in India, and one on “Lifeless and Corrupt Forms of Christianity,” by the Rev. Charles H. Fowler. Both gentlemen eventually were elected bishops. The editor of the collection was the Rev. John Morrison Reid, secretary of the general Missionary Society.

We now turn the tables, as it were, moving from a consideration of matters generally applicable to the American scene to those more specifically related to Methodism. Prosperity in the world’s goods was easy to notice at the occasion of the Centennial of American Methodism, held in 1866. The Rev. Dr. Abel Stevens, fresh from the publication of his four-volume History of the Methodist Episcopal Church, produced a commemorative volume which lingered over details of growth. During the year preceding the celebration, with the war scarcely finished, the American Methodist Ladies’ Centenary Association had been formed—at Evanston, be it noted—with “Mrs. Bishop Hamline” president, “Mrs. Rev. C. H. Fowler” secretary, and Frances E. Willard corresponding secretary, among other officers. This association determined to carry out the General Centenary Committee’s suggestion that buildings be erected at the theological seminaries, especially adopting Garrett Biblical Institute and, as their project, the erection of Heck Hall (to be, not a mere dormi-
tory, but a comfortable "home for the students").28 The Ladies' Association also commissioned Dr. Stevens to commemorate Barbara Heck further by including her along with others in a new volume, The Women of Methodism.29 Thus the ladies adopted a variety of measures; when they successfully completed them, they could count themselves a proper group of bustling Americans, hasting to do good.

Like their male counterparts, the female Methodists had also acted as patriotic members of the national community. It had been no mere coincidence that, when secession threatened and then came in the winter of 1860-61, voices like those of Peter Cartwright rose to defend the nation. "Though the heavens fall, this Union MUST be preserved," he trumpeted in speech and Advocate letter.30 Nor is it surprising that the Illinois Annual Conference, meeting in 1863 in Springfield, should have raised the nation's flag over the host church, adopted fervently loyal resolutions, and permitted the state's governor to administer to them an oath of allegiance to the Union.31 Likewise the General Conference in 1864 sent a delegation to the White House to offer the church's fealty, calling forth Lincoln's oft-quoted tribute to the Methodists—"the Methodist Episcopal Church . . . is, by greater numbers, the most important of all. It . . . sends more soldiers to the field, more nurses to the hospitals, and more prayers to heaven than any. God bless the Methodist Church! bless all the churches! and blessed be God! who in this our great trial giveth us the Churches!"32

In this atmosphere it was fortunate that the Methodist ladies could recall the succession of wartime editorials in their magazine, The Ladies' Repository. Here the respective editors, D. W. Clark and I. W. Wiley, had hailed Lincoln's first inaugural, steadily supported the Union, called for firm leadership in 1862, all but openly endorsed the President's reelection in 1864, and simultaneously rejoiced and wept at the events of April, 1865.33 Most instructive, therefore, must have been Dr. Clark's editorial of August, 1862, which he labeled "An Appeal to Christian and Patriotic Women upon Their Duties in Relation to the War." You are properly involved, he told the ladies; thus you must "lend your aid" to suppressing "the crime of this rebellion." You must "kindle anew the spirit of patriotism," he continued, and must "contribute to the right formation of public opin-

28 Smart, "Heck Hall," 507.
29 " Literary Notices," LR, XXVI (May 1866), 317; reviewed, 349.
33 LR, XXI (April 1861), 258; XXII (February 1862), 128; XXIV (November 1864), 702; XXV (June 1865), 363-384.
ion” (though he neglected, of course, to mention voting). Help the soldier and his family, said Clark, but above all pray.34

With the women thus mobilized, it should be no surprise that the Woman’s Foreign Missionary Society in its turn breathed the spirit of national pride, or that (as we have seen) the Ladies’ Centenary Association busily worked at its manifold projects. And we can easily understand how Mrs. Mary C. Nind, with a son and a married daughter on the mission field in the early 1880’s, organized “flag festivals” at which contributions were received for procuring and sending the nation’s banner to fly over a designated mission station. Thus, reported Mrs. Nind, every missionary sent by the WFMS would “be able to look upon the stars and stripes of her native land which she has left to carry the gospel to her benighted sisters.”35

This benevolent purpose happily blends the patriotic and the cultural aspects of the missionary ladies. A further comment or two relating to cultural matters may be added. Convinced as these nineteenth-century Methodists were of the correctness of their understandings of God’s ways, they were still receptive to new measures. For example, a good number of the early leaders of the mission movement of the 1860’s were also devotees of Mrs. Phoebe Palmer, a layman’s wife and sweet preacher of sanctification.36 This new development of Methodism’s traditional holiness emphasis, coupled to an urban focus of revivalistic activity in the late 1850’s, has been credited by Timothy L. Smith with a dual accomplishment—realigning the forces of “heart” religion, and infusing anew a spirit of social concern in the church. Far from withering into mere “personal” religion and vague yet emotional appeals to the “spirit,” such leadership anticipated the social gospel and provided in the foreign field an appropriate area of godly activity.37

Other aspects of Methodism in relation to society come to mind, a large fourth point to the Second Table. Most observers of the nineteenth-century church seemed to agree that organization was probably Methodism’s strongest characteristic. Early turned toward the mission approach, the church had seen its general Missionary Society—the “parent society,”38 the ladies called it—with proper filial gestures of respect—establish itself thoroughly, in the support of both home and foreign missions. This society, along with editorships of the leading Advocates and other periodicals, and a few influential college presidencies and seminary professorships, provided a dimension of the Methodist “power structure” between 1860 and

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34 LR, XXII (August 1862), 492-497.
35 HWF, XIV (April 1863), 236-1-2. (June 1883), 255:1-2: XV (July 1883), 18:2.
36 J. A. Roche, “Mrs. Phoebe Palmer,” LR, XXVI (February 1866), 65-70.
37 Timothy L. Smith, Revivalism and Social Reform in Mid-Nineteenth Century America (New York, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1957), esp. chs. VIII, X.
1890. If not always the road to the episcopacy, although it was so for several, the Missionary Society brought a ready-made respectful audience in General Conference debate and an influential constituency in general.

The ladies, or at least some of them, had interesting relationships to this power structure. Not only was the Ladies' Centenary Association properly deferential to the bishops' ladies, but the new WFMS duly enlisted as president "Mrs. Bishop Osmon C. Baker," and included among its forty-four vice presidents the wives of eight other bishops, the spouses of at least three future bishops, and "Mrs. General C. B. Fisk" of St. Louis and "Mrs. Gov. Wm. Claflin" of Boston. Slightly more tenuous, yet indicative of a kind of interlocking directorate, are other relationships. Mrs. Angie Newman, WFMS Nebraska leader in the 1870's, had lost by death her first husband, Frank Kilgore, in 1856. Kilgore's sister was the first wife of Henry W. Warren, pastor of a succession of important Massachusetts churches before he was elected bishop in 1880. The wife of Warren's brother William, who was longtime president of Boston University, served as editor of the WFMS paper, The Heathen Woman's Friend. And the William Warrens' interest in missions had been shaped by his filling an appointment at the Mission Institute in Bremen from 1861 to 1866.

Somewhat similarly, Mrs. Jennie Willing was a sister of Charles Henry Fowler, who served as president of Northwestern University from 1873 to 1876, filled the editorship of the Christian Advocate for a quadrennium, next was corresponding secretary of the Missionary Society (1880-84), and was then elected bishop. Evans-ton gossip had it in the 1860's that Charles Fowler first wooed, and then broke off with, Frances Willard, marrying instead the daughter of Chicago's leading minister, the Rev. Luke Hitchcock.

One could generalize about a denomination so thoroughly middle-class that its male lay delegates from Kansas to the 1888 General Conference could be identified respectively as "banker," "president Kansas loan Co.," and "lawyer." We may note further the evidences of comfortable living implied in the frequent references to camp meetings and WFMS activities at fashionable resort areas such as DAB. Warren's second wife was Elizabeth Fraser Iliff, widow of John Wesley Iliff, Colorado cattle rancher for whom Iliff School of Theology was named in 1889.

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39 HWF, I (June 1869), 4:2.
40 The Nebraska State Journal (Lincoln), April 16, 1910, I A:1; Harris Elwood Starr, "Warren, Henry White," Dictionary of American Biography (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1928-1936), XIX, 475-476. Hereafter this work will be cited as DAB. Warren's second wife was Elizabeth Fraser Iliff, widow of John Wesley Iliff, Colorado cattle rancher for whom Iliff School of Theology was named in 1889.
41 HWF, I (June 1869), 8:2; Robert E. Moody, "Warren, William Fairfield," DAB, XIX, 490-492.
44 Earhart, Frances Willard, 54-57.
45 CA, May 3, 1888, 362:3.
as Martha’s Vineyard, Ocean Grove, and Lake Chautauqua. One contributor pointed to “Camp-Ground Opportunities” for the Society, while another noted results in New England, where “Our camp-meetings have been missionary Pentecosts.” 46 A summer editorial by Mrs. Warren observed: “In these days of hammock-swinging, story-reading, wood-rambling, sunset-watching, and miscellaneous diversion,” the members should “now and then stop resting and think a little,” should plan meetings and how to go about “awakening some interested woman of ability”; in general, she concluded, “do not forget the society, even for one month.” 47

Such ladies would of course have servants, or depend on the letter-writing skills of a daughter, or even perhaps (as in one of Mrs. Willing’s fictional sketches) employ a poor but honest, and genteelly-educated, girl who might eventually rise to marrying a professor. 48 And the ladies’ Republicanism can be assumed. Mrs. Angie Newman, for instance, proudly wore her McKinley button while on a world tour with her daughter as a companion, descanting to British fellow-passenger or to Arab chieftain on the truths of tariff protection. 49 A WFMS branch commended Mrs. Rutherford B. Hayes’ restriction of Sabbath carriage-riding while in the White House. 50 A report from Des Moines epitomized much in early 1886; a good “sister” had gained four new WFMS members by being vigilant for opportunities. Her son told more that he knew when asked why had he hurrahed for Blaine. “Because papa’s for Blaine,” he replied. The next question: “Well, what is your mamma?” The response was quick: “Oh, she is a heathen woman’s friend.” 51

Yet it was the “woman question” which was the touchstone of it all. The movement for women’s rights had always seemed to most Methodists, especially to the males who wrote for the church periodicals, a thing foreign, or at least Unitarian. When Mrs. Willing described the attributes of an ideal minister’s wife in an article for The Ladies’ Repository in 1871, her sentiments were criticized shortly by another parsonage lady as being “strong and mannish.” 52 Other contributors worried lest females lose their proper outlook through too earnest searching for employment or for entry into the professions. Yet some were willing to grant that the world had a place for women physicians, preferably a practice in a mission hos-
pital overseas. And Frances Willard's sister-in-law, with general approval, hailed the widow of Bishop Hamline as a thoroughly effective class leader.

Frances E. Willard epitomized to some the ultimate dangers of female striving. They granted that she ennobled the university at Evanston, "our Athens of Methodism in the North-West," as she described their town. Thus she could be seen, writing down her intense thoughts in her "rest cottage," looking up to acknowledge a waved greeting from Professor Daniel P. Kidder as he rode horseback to his homiletics class, or dreaming of foreign travel even as she dropped a silent tear at seeing the gray in her widowed mother's hair. Yet her critics seemed to sense correctly her future. Even as Miss Willard and Mrs. Willing, and Mrs. Emily Huntington Miller, another Evanston lady, were inspired at Lake Chautauqua by the Rev. John H. Vincent to go home and found the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, Miss Willard was on the way to her "Do Everything" policy of the 1880's, to nervous or physical exhaustion in the 1890's, and to death before the age of sixty. True, her WCTU would turn it into martyrdom, to be recognized by the state of Illinois statue in the National Capitol. But those with long memories could eventually point to her predilection for the causes of labor, of the Populists, even of socialism. One of her severest critics, the Rev. James M. Buckley, long-time editor of the Christian Advocate, still could share (perhaps without recognizing it) one enthusiasm with her. Both were avid bicyclists and wrote extolling the merits of that novel form of recreation. Yet Miss Willard, for all her toughness —she preferred at one time to be called "Frank"—was quick to retreat from the still unresolved General Conference crisis of 1888, when her mother had a timely return of a chronic illness.

We are ready for our final point in the Second Table, having strayed only a bit from the missionary ladies. It is, briefly, the proof of Methodist conformity to American optimism in the sheer success of the women. Formed with their own enthusiasm and some clearly

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64 Mary B. Willard, "Woman's Work in the Church, Another Version," LR, XXXII (April 1872), 280-282.


66 Earhart, Frances Willard, passim, esp. 143-145 and chs. XI, XIII, XXII.

67 Frances E. Willard, A Wheel Within a Wheel (New York: F. H. Revell Co., 1895); CA, July 7, 1898, 1086:1-1087:2 et seq.

68 Earhart, Frances Willard, 76; CA, May 3, 1888, 293:1.
expressed fears on the part of the general Missionary secretaries, the WFMS had managed to organize, to conduct annual meetings, to write succinct and persuasive quadrennial reports for the General Conference, to withstand efforts by very highly placed persons to transform them into a mere department of the Parent Society, and to produce a monthly magazine which Bishop C. D. Foss described as "the best missionary paper in the world." Furthermore, they had imaginatively invented many schemes for raising money. Regular membership dues had been set at two cents per week or a dollar a year; life membership, $20; honorary manager, $100; and honorary patron, $300. But the Heathen Woman's Friend teemed with reports of special techniques, the aforementioned flag festivals, mite boxes, teas, young ladies' socials, and missionary fairs. One young woman would bake cookies to sell, another would dedicate the slips from her prize begonias, still another would extol the merits of selling waste paper, even Christian Advocates and, yes, files of the Heathen Woman's Friend.

Another source of strength, and proof of optimism, was the close identification permitted by the WFMS with specific mission causes. From the beginning an auxiliary was allowed to take responsibility for a specific part of the work, or a local benefactor might give $30 which supported an individual orphan in India for a year, with the privilege of renaming her for some relative or friend, or indeed for oneself. A branch organization would have its several areas of concern specifically assigned, with a total financial goal to which it was committed. And the annual meeting of the General Executive Committee would be an anxious time until it became certain that the year's total had been met. Especially sweet was the report in November and December, 1873, that the WFMS had raised $54,000 that year, while the Parent Society's funds had increased by $52,000; thus, exulted Mrs. Warren, "for every dollar raised by women . . . the General Society received a new dollar."

Perhaps equally important was the educational value of the WFMS work. The needs of the missions, constantly reiterated and emotionally recounted, had much impact on the sentiments of church people. In addition to the regular auxiliaries, the ladies were soon organizing societies for "young ladies" and a few years later "mite

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59 E. Wentworth, "Editor's Table," LR, XXXIII (June 1873), 472:2; HWF, XIII (November 1881), 119:1.
60 Constitution of the WFMS, HWF, I (June 1869), 3:1.
61 HWF, I-XX (1869-1889), passim, esp. XII (December 1875), 139:1-2.
62 See, for example, Jennie F. Willing, "Our Orphans," HWF, II (March 1871), 105-1; Mrs. M. A. Thomas, "Sketches of Orphan Girls," HWF, III (September 1871), 176-2, the latter a sketch of Sundari, renamed "Jennie F. Willing," at the Bareilly orphanage.
63 Editorial, HWF, V (December 1873), 572.2.
bands” for children. By the middle 1880’s new efforts were creating auxiliaries among “colored sisters.” “Let us have more,” said the Topeka Branch corresponding secretary who reported one such success. Attention was likewise going to the foreign language population, with Margarethe (Maggie) Dreyer employed as organizer among the Germans of the several Western branches. Der Heiden Frauen-Freund, likewise edited by Mrs. Warren, appeared in February, 1886, in order to meet the needs of the new recruits.

Yet the WFMS could never rest easy, even within the church. Try as they would to work smoothly with the rest of the Methodist system, the ladies never quite succeeded. They might seek funds only in severely restricted ways, never in congregational meetings, and when they were officially adopted as a proper part of the structure, their access to an annual conference session was likely to be scant. Let us only “think our evening secure,” a Michigan lady wrote in 1881, “when suddenly a telegram from Dr. [R. S.] Rust, Dr. [C. H.] Fowler, Chaplain [C. C.] McCabe, or some of the other comets or meteors of the great connectional work of Methodism moves us out of our inheritance, and puts us in a less desirable corner.” She continued, “But we are only women, you know, and have been used to it for ages and ages.”

Yet the Woman’s Home Missionary Society, formed in 1884, seemed to have the desired charm. Made a completely regular part of the system, the WHMS was able to reach the local church, and it had its set of emotion-stirring causes in the Southern freedmen, the Western Indians, and the Utah Mormons—“the heathen among us,” as some said. Besides, the WHMS had the undivided support of the Missionary Society and of the bishops; and it drew off some of the erstwhile leaders of the WFMS, notably Mrs. Willing and Mrs. Newman. Here the Home Mission women were sharing the kind of structure created by the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in 1878 for its Woman’s Missionary Society. Conservatism and connection-

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64 HWF, VII-XIV (1875-1883), has numerous references to Young Ladies’ societies organized by Mrs. Willing and others; see also Frances J. Baker, The Story of the Woman’s Foreign Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1869-1885 (Cincinnati: Cranston & Curtis, New York: Hunt & Eaton, 1885), 60-63.

65 HWF, XVII (July 1885), 19:2.

66 Baker, Story, ch. VI; HWF, XVII (February 1886), 170:8.

67 Constitution of the WFMS, cited; Mary Sparkes Wheeler, First Decade of the Woman’s Foreign Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, with Sketches of Its Missionaries (New York: Phillips & Hunt, Cincinnati: Walden & Stowe, 1881), 124-127; Discipline, 1884, para. 294; HWF, XIII (October 1881), 34:2.

68 Mrs. T. L. Tomkinson, Twenty Years’ History of the Woman’s Home Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church 1880-1900 (Cincinnati: Published by the Woman’s Home Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1903), esp. 72; WHM, III (December 1888), 187:2; IV (March 1887). Mrs. Angie F. Newman’s pamphlet, Heathen at Home, published in 1878, despite its similar title to the quoted phrase, refers to opponents of women’s mission work.

69 HWF, X (August 1878), 34:2-35:1.
alism appeared to share with optimism in holding the key to the future.

With the decalog finished, we have left only brief addenda. The missions cause has undergone several reevaluations in the twentieth century, notably that of the early 1930's with the Laymen's Mission Inquiry and its key volume Re-thinking Missions. In the most recent decades the phrase has shifted to "the younger churches." Christianity is indeed, to use another Latourette phrase, in "a revolutionary age." In this atmosphere further study of the missionary past is called for, and appropriately the subject has enlisted the interest of academic historians such as Harvard's John K. Fairbank, who, with his graduate students, promises to aid our understanding. Yet I must hope as well that the General Board of Missions will swiftly move to complete the multi-volume study begun so handsomely a decade and more ago by Wade Crawford Barclay.

We cannot leave the ladies, even today, without recording that the missionary society was described in 1883 as "the telephone of the church." This hint of modernity fits well with Mrs. Warren's "Twenty Years" editorial in The Heathen Woman's Friend. Most inspiring to her in 1889 was the thought of "the bond which the FRIEND forms between our far-away work and ourselves." She continued, "When our loved missionaries sail away to the East or to the West, they carry with them one end of this chain, and we, holding fast to the centre, feel the vibrations of activity from either limit, and our faith becomes stronger, and our endeavor more persistent." Details of the means employed appear in one of Mrs. Nind's financial reports: "... new hats, cloaks, and dresses have been given up, many miles have been traveled, needles have been plied by loving hands, articles have been sent ... for sale by those who had no money at command, hundreds of letters have been written, thousands of leaflets distributed, earnest appeals made, prayers of faith offered, and God has honored all." She closed—as may we—"yours rejoicingly."

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72 I am particularly grateful to Mr. Irwin T. Hyatt, Jr., one of Fairbank's students and instructor of history at Emory University, for illuminating insights in several conversations growing out of our mutual interest in women's missions.
73 Wade Crawford Barclay, History of Methodist Missions, I-III (New York: The Board of Missions and Church Extension of The Methodist Church, 1949-1957). I am informed that the General Board of Missions has assigned the responsibility for continuing the work to Dr. Tremayne Copplesstone.
74 HWF, XV (July 1883), 7:2.
75 HWF, XX (June 1889), 320:1-321:2.
76 HWF, XII (March 1881), 211:2.