Sometimes, people who make significant contributions to important events are overlooked by later historians. Unfortunately, that has been the case with one of the founders of Methodism in Brazil, Annie Ayres Newman Ransom. Although histories of Methodism often credit Annie's father, the Reverend Junius Eastham Newman, and her husband, the Reverend John James Ransom, with fathering Methodism in that country, they seldom even mention her name. This is an oversight that should be corrected, because she, perhaps more than her father and as much as her husband, was responsible for the way the Methodist Church developed in Brazil.

Methodist interest in Brazil dates from the 1830s. In 1832, Bishop James Osgood Andrew commissioned the Reverend Fountain Elijah Pitts to investigate the possibility of starting Methodist work in South America. Pitts visited Rio de Janeiro in August, 1835, and reported that the country offered good opportunities for spreading the gospel. Soon the first missionaries were sent to Brazil, the Reverend R. Justin Spaulding and family from New England in 1836, and the Reverend Daniel P. Kidder and family from New York in 1837.

This first attempt to implant Methodism in Brazil was short lived. After Kidder's wife died of yellow fever in 1840, he left the country. The Spauldings left the next year. It would be thirty years before Methodism

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1. Perhaps the most thorough history of the beginning of the Methodist Church in Brazil is José Goçalves Salvador's História do metodismo no Brasil, vol. 1 (São Bernardo do Campo, SP: Imprensa Metodista, 1982). Other important studies are James L. Kennedy, Cincoenta annos de methodismo no Brasil (São Paulo: Imprensa Metodista, 1928); Eula K. Long, Do meu velho bai metodista (São Paulo: Junta Geral de Educação, 1968); Duncan A. Reily, História documental do protestantismo no Brasil (São Paulo: ASTE, 1984); Isnard Rocha, Histórias da história do metodismo no Brasil (São Bernardo do Campo, SP: Imprensa Metodista, 1967); and Rocha, Pioneiros e bandeirantes do metodismo no Brasil (São Bernardo do Campo, SP: Imprensa Metodista, 1967).

2. In 1845 Daniel P. Kidder published Sketches of Residence and Travels in Brazil, which was later expanded with James C. Fletcher's help into a very popular guide to Brazil. Editions appeared in 1857, 1866, 1867, 1868, etc. Cf., James C. Fletcher and Daniel P. Kidder, Brazil and the Brazilians Portrayed in Historical and Descriptive Sketches, 9th ed. (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle, and Rivington, 1879).
would return. Thus, it is common for Methodist historians to date the arrival of Methodism in Brazil, not to the 1830s, but to the time of its uninterrupted presence in Brazil in the 1860s or 1870s.

Annie Newman'sfather established the first Methodist congregation in Brazil. Junius E. Newman arrived in the port of Rio de Janeiro on August 5, 1867. He was a member of the Alabama Conference, who being dissatisfied with conditions in the south after the Civil War, left along with other southerners to make a new home in Brazil. He did not go to Brazil as a missionary, but rather, in 1865, Bishop William May Wightman released Newman from duties in Mississippi and Alabama and appointed him to work without financial support “in Central America or Brazil.”

Newman went to Brazil without his family, arriving with only one hundred dollars in his pocket. At first, he settled in Niteroi, near Rio de Janeiro. Apparently, he had wished to begin Methodist church services in his house, and perhaps to open a school, but was not able to do so. After about six months, Newman’s family joined him in Brazil, and approximately one year after his family’s arrival, Newman relocated to Saltinho (1869), near Limeira in what was the Province of São Paulo. This was in an area where many other displaced southerners were settling, near the modern Brazilian city of Americana. There, Newman began to preach to the colonists twice a month, and by October, 1869, he had written to the Mobile Conference, deploring his own inability to speak Portuguese well enough to preach in the language and urging the appointment of young missionaries who might become fluent enough in Portuguese to preach to the Brazilians.

By 1871 Newman was devoting much of his time to his ministry among the southern emigrants. In a letter written April 28, 1871, Newman claimed that “I am now so situated that I can leave home to preach almost as much as I did when I was ‘in the regular work.’” In that same letter, he requested to “be recognized as a missionary in Brazil,” without “compensation as such . . . [from] the Conference.” And on the third Sunday of August, 1871, he organized among the southern colonists the first Methodist church in Brazil.

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3 Brazilian Methodism celebrated its centenary in 1967, dating its “uninterrupted presence” in the country to Newman’s arrival in Rio de Janeiro.
4 Newman’s reasons for emigrating to Brazil are not clear. According to Judith MacKnight Jones (Soldado descansa! Uma epopéia norte americana sob os céus do Brasil (São Paulo: Jarde, 1967), 110, Newman left the United States because he could not reconcile the new social order with his reading of the Bible. See also Newman’s letter published in the Nashville Christian Advocate, December 11, 1869. James L. Kennedy gives a more pragmatic explanation: Newman had lost almost everything during the war, and decided to follow along with friends to Brazil in order to regain his fortune and to spread the gospel (Cincoenta annos de methodismo, 16).
5 Nashville Christian Advocate, December 11, 1869.
6 Nashville Christian Advocate, August 5, 1871.
At first, Newman's church included nine members, but gradually increased to "29 or 30." Soon, Newman had set up a circuit of five preaching stations, and was preaching among the colonists full time. Newman continued to appeal to the Methodist Episcopal Church, South to send young ministers to help preach to the Brazilians. He also continued to request recognition of his own work among the southerners in Brazil, until, in May, 1875, the Board of Missions "recognized the Rev. J. E. Newman, of Saltinho, District of Limeira, Province of San Paulo, as our missionary at that point."  

Newman remained active in his ministry to the colonists until his retirement in 1887 and his return to the United States in 1889. To our knowledge, Newman never fulfilled his ambition of preaching in Portuguese.

The first history of Methodism in Brazil, James L. Kennedy's *Cincoenta annos de methodismo no Brasil*, treats Newman's arrival and his work among the southern colonists as prolegomena, and traces the implantation of Methodism in Brazil to the work of Annie's husband, the Reverend John J. Ransom, who disembarked in Rio de Janeiro in 1876. At first Ransom stayed in Campinas, not far from Newman, but after learning some Portuguese and scouting out several areas in Brazil in search of the best place to initiate Methodist work, Ransom settled in Rio de Janeiro where he began holding preaching services in English and in Portuguese. In 1878, he organized the first Methodist church in the capital city with six English-speaking members. He started a Sunday School that was attended by approximately fifty people, and the next year, in March, 1879, Ransom received the first Brazilians into membership in the Methodist Church in Brazil.

On Christmas Day, 1879, Ransom married Annie Ayres, but she soon died. In 1880 Ransom returned to the United States where he spent a year...
recovering from his wife's death and awakening interest in the Brazilian mission.

When Ransom returned to Brazil in 1881, he was well rested and he was accompanied by three new Methodist missionaries: an educator, Martha H. Watts, the Reverend James L. Kennedy, and the Reverend J. W. Koger, who was accompanied by his wife and small child. As the superintendent of the mission, Ransom soon appointed Koger and Watts to the city of Piracicaba in the Province of São Paulo.11

At that time, Ransom was the only Methodist missionary in Brazil who was able to preach effectively in Portuguese, and in 1882 it was he who actually brought a number of the Brazilian citizens of Piracicaba to Methodism. But Ransom's main work was in Rio de Janeiro, where he preached in Portuguese, while leaving the work in English to Kennedy.

In 1884, Ransom began publishing Methodist literature in Portuguese for the Brazilians. His first venture was to publish Sunday School literature: *A Escola Dominical* and *Nossa Gente Pequena*. He also started printing in 1886 the *Methodista Catholico*, the title of which was changed to the *Expositor Cristão*, and which became the official voice of Methodism in Brazil. Further, Ransom was for several years the superintendent of the Brazil mission, and in 1884, as soon as Kennedy was able to manage the work in Rio de Janeiro by himself, Ransom moved to Juiz de Fora in Minas Gerais in order to spread Methodism to that province.12

Ransom was a tireless worker and although his time of service in Brazil was short, from 1876 until 1886, his missionary activity bore much fruit.

The Methodist Episcopal Church, South directed a very large part of its early missionary effort toward the Brazil mission. For over forty years, Brazil was the only South American mission field maintained by the Methodist Episcopal Church, South,13 and as late as 1907, the mission in Brazil was one of only five foreign missions worldwide supported by the denomination.14 In terms of the global effort of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, from the incipience of the support it directed to Brazil in 1876 to Brazilian church autonomy in 1930, the Brazil mission ranked second only to the China mission in the amount of money expended and missionaries sent to the field.

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14The others were the missions in China, Japan, Korea, and Mexico.
Yet, in spite of this prominent attention, the growth of Methodism in Brazil was slow. The first Brazilian ministers were not received into full connection with the Methodist Church until 1890. The so-called "Grande Plano" by which Methodism became economically self-sufficient in Brazil was not instituted until 1924, and complete autonomy from North American Methodism only came in 1930. From 1876 until 1900, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South sent approximately thirty missionaries to Brazil, and as a result of that effort, in 1900, the Methodist Church in Brazil numbered 2,774 members in a country with a population of 18,000,000.\(^{15}\)

This is not to say, however, that the missionary effort in Brazil was unsuccessful. Methodism made an impact out of all proportion to the size of its membership through education. And, in turn, Methodist mission schools helped establish the denomination in the eyes of society. Brazil's third president, Prudente José de Moraes Barros, himself helped bring Methodist education to his hometown of Piracicaba, had family members attend a Methodist mission school, and was friendly with several of the early missionaries. Although in 1890 the Methodists had only 23 church buildings, they had established 10 colleges and schools.\(^{16}\) By 1926, Methodist missionaries had helped found 41 schools in Brazil, 16 of them schools of higher education. Although Methodism at that time only numbered 124 preachers for all of Brazil, it could boast of 234 professors and some of the most influential schools in the country.\(^{17}\) Thus, fifty years after Ransom's arrival in Rio de Janeiro, Methodism in Brazil included one school for every 3.5 churches and supported approximately twice as many professors as preachers.

In a sense, Methodist inroads into Brazilian society were made through the schools. And it is in this respect, that Annie Ayres' influence on Brazilian Methodism has been overlooked. Martha Watts was the first missionary sent to Brazil as an educator, and she has received ample praise for her many accomplishments. Prior to her arrival, both Junius Newman and John Ransom, independently of each other, had planned and worked to start a mission school. But it was Annie who really opened the door for Methodist education in Brazil.

Annie Newman had been one of the first students of the Colégio Internacional, a southern Presbyterian school founded by George Nash Morton and Edward Lane.\(^{18}\) The southern Presbyterian missionaries had arrived


\(^{16}\)Kennedy, Cincoenta annos de methodismo, 101.

\(^{17}\)Kennedy, Cincoenta annos de methodismo, 422, 424.

\(^{18}\)The Reverends Morton and Lane had opened a night school by 1870 (cf., The Missionary 3 (1870): 181). In 1871, Morton began teaching Greek five nights a week to professors at a local college (The Missionary 4 (1871): 163) and at the beginning of 1872 Nannie Henderson
from the United States in 1869 and had worked with progressive elements of Brazilian society interested in coeducation and in the pedagogy of Horace Mann to found the school in Campinas. The emperor Dom Pedro II visited the school in August, 1875, soon before the arrival of John J. Ransom from the United States, and in January 1876, soon after Ransom's arrival, F. Rangel Pestana, one of Brazil's most famous educators, gave the commencement address there. Rangel Pestana, in fact, was one of the original signatories of the charter founding the Colégio Internacional. Others interested in the American system of education were the brothers Prudente and Manuel de Moraes Barros.

As mentioned earlier, within two weeks of disembarking in Rio de Janeiro in February 1876, Ransom had made his way to Junius Newman's house. Again, he did not start Methodist work immediately, but instead studied Portuguese at the Presbyterian Colégio Internacional in Campinas, where he also taught English and Greek. In 1876, the school had "perhaps the most beautiful building in the town," and approximately 100 students, serviced by three Presbyterian missionary families. Ransom's first Portuguese teacher when he arrived at the school was Junius Newman's daughter, Annie Ayres Newman.

Annie Newman had been born in Livingston, Sumter County, Alabama on December 25, 1856. She was only eleven when she arrived in Brazil, and thus learned the language well. Later, Ransom would write with admiration of Annie's ability to speak as educated Brazilians spoke. It was actually Annie Newman who first began translating Methodist literature into Portuguese. She translated some of the first hymns into Portuguese. She also translated Bishop McTyeire's Catechism on Church Government and the Wesleyan Catechism, No. 3 into Portuguese. Although John Ransom is the name most often associated with the beginning of Methodist publishing in Portuguese, for instance with the Compêndio da Igreja Metodista (1878), it was actually Annie Newman who did the earliest writing.

arrived from the United States, “appointed to teach a female school in connection with the mission” (The Missionary 5 (1872): 19, 140). The founding meeting of the Colégio Internacional was held in the missionaries' residence and was attended by some of the most influential Brazilians of the province of São Paulo. For an account, see The Missionary 5 (1872): 25–26, 130.

19 Jones, Soldado descansa, 261.
20 Jones, Soldado descansa, 232. Dom Pedro visited the school two more times.
21 Jones, Soldado descansa, 261.
22 Mrs. F. A. Butler, History of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society (Nashville and Dallas: Publishing House of the M. E. Church, South, 1904), 106.
23 Jones, Soldado descansa, 232.
24 Nashville Christian Advocate, September 25, 1880.
25 By all accounts Ransom became a true force in Methodist publishing in Brazil.
Annie Newman was such a gifted student and teacher that upon graduation she was sought after by several Brazilian schools. She accepted a position teaching at the Colégio Rangel Pestana, which was an elite women's school in São Paulo serving some of the outstanding families of the province. One of the students at this school was Prudente de Moraes' daughter, and it was while she was teaching at this school that the Barros brothers approached Junius Newman about opening a school in Piracicaba. Ransom later related the story in the following way: "It was then [1878] that Collegio Newman in Piracicaba began to be talked of. The citizens of the place knew of Miss Annie Newman through their daughters who had been at Colégio Pestana, and they urged the matter. With some reluctance she acceded to her father's plans . . . . In July, 1879, the Collegio Newman was opened."26

Annie Newman opened the school in Piracicaba with the help of her sister, Mary Newman, three regular assistants, and a temporary art teacher. Her father, as we remember, had hoped from his first years in Niteroi to open a school and had urged Annie ahead with the project. In order to support the project he actually moved his family to Piracicaba in 1879. Ransom had also urged the project and had directed an appeal to the first annual meeting of the Woman's Board of Foreign Missions (then, the General Executive Association of the Woman's Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South) meeting in Louisville on May 16–17, 1879, which, in response, had promised $500 toward "Miss Newman's school."27 The next year, the Woman's Missionary Society appropriated $1,000 for “school purposes” in Brazil.28

However, Annie Newman had not been anxious to open the school in Piracicaba, but as Ransom related, "with some reluctance, acceded to her father's plans." Ransom did not explain the reason for Newman's reluctance, but one can speculate that it had to do with her desire to get married, because on December 25, 1879, she married J. J. Ransom and took on "the work that would be hers as the wife of a Methodist missionary."29

Ransom had re-started Methodist work in Rio de Janeiro in January, 1878, and soon after their marriage Annie Ayers Ransom left Piracicaba and moved to Rio de Janeiro with her husband. By that time, the end of 1879, the Catete Methodist Church in Rio was well established with both Portuguese and English services, and a strong Sunday School. Ransom had started satellite congregations in Santana and Niteroi. Preaching was on Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and twice on Sundays. Ransom had also begun to publish Methodist materials in Portuguese, had organized a

26National Christian Advocate, September 25, 1880.
27Butler, History of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society, 74.
28Butler, History of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society, 81.
29Nashville Christian Advocate, September 25, 1880. Jones, Soldado descansa, 22 points out that 20 of the colonists married Protestant preachers.
library with 200 volumes, and planned to open a school. Annie became a full partner in all of the work.

As I stated, it is my opinion that Annie Ayres Newman Ransom was a key to solidifying Methodism and Methodist education in Brazil. Her connections, of course, with the Barros brothers were important. Also, the models of education that she brought together from the Colégio Internacional and the Colégio Pestana were significant, for they set the pattern of Methodist education in Brazil. But just as significant was her death. She died tragically just a few months after her wedding, in July, 1880. John J. Ransom had contracted yellow fever for a second time in March, 1880, and after nursing him back to health, Annie too contracted the disease and died. Ransom was heartbroken and returned to the United States to recover. Much seemed lost as the Newman school in Piracicaba had been forced to close without Annie and as the school in Rio might not start without her. But Ransom was a gifted speaker, and as he traveled throughout the south of the United States and spoke of needs and opportunities for the gospel in Brazil, Ransom personalized his appeal by narrating the story of his wife.

John J. Ransom's written testimony of Annie's accomplishments and death appeared in the September 25, 1880 issue of the Christian Advocate. The account has the sound and polish of a story often told and is of the length appropriate for a missionary sermon. After giving details of Annie's birth and trip to Brazil, Ransom described Annie's attainments as a student, writer and teacher. Obviously, Ransom was proud of Annie: "She was my first teacher of Portuguese, and ... I formed a high estimate of her intellectual worth and learned to admire the simplicity and purity of her spirit." He described her first job at Colégio Pestana in São Paulo as a time when Annie was "by patient study fitting herself for more extended usefulness," and then added a description of how Annie founded the school in Piracicaba. The townspeople, "urged the matter . . . but before taking upon herself the direction of the school, she returned to San Paulo to pursue, under the best masters, certain studies in which she was interested." In July, 1879, the Collegio Newman was opened.

Ransom described Annie's beauty of body and soul. He described her spiritual devotion, her strength, and her love of the Bible, writing that "she earnestly desired to aid in perfecting the Portuguese translation of the Holy Scriptures; her studies for some time before her death had been directed to this end, though no one beside myself knew of the fact, nor of the tireless industry she brought to bear upon the mastery of the original tongues of Scripture." She pushed herself: "The variety, the multitude, and often the complexity of her engagements, would appall a weaker or less orderly mind; but through it all she bore herself not only with lady-like composure, but with so sunshiny and so equable a spirit as could only be found in one whose every inspiration was at the Throne of Grace."
Ransom included other witnesses to Annie's faith, that of the oldest Protestant missionary in Brazil and that of her own father, who after describing her conversion at the age of six, went on to say of his daughter that “the innocence and beauty of her young life made a profound impression on my heart years ago, and I am sure I never saw its equal in any other one.”

After agreeing that “Annie's life from early childhood was the most lovely and the most beautiful I ever hope to see in this world,” Ransom then fixed attention on Annie's death. While helping him recover from yellow fever, Annie herself had been attacked by “a low remittent fever” which persisted for five months. The end was drawing near. But, in her last letter, written to her father, her thoughts turned to the school that they had founded. “I can well understand how you must have disliked to give up the work at Piracicaba,” she wrote. “I regret very much that it had to be done—especially since the Woman's Missionary Society seems really interested in the matter. I wish the school might have been saved, but that was impossible, and it remains to be seen whether our Church will ever establish a Mission there. At any rate, I think that your and our work in that place is sure to produce good results sooner or later.” Ransom then added that “then she laid aside her pen forever; but with its last use she gave her sisters of the M.E. Church, South, a proof of how deeply and tenderly she loved the work for which a few days later she was in some sense to lay down her life.”

Annie suffered for ten days. The opiates inclined her to talk and “she told of her Christian experience—how that when a child she had trusted in God with such child-like faith that she hesitated not to ask him for any needful thing.” Ransom and Annie prayed together—and then sang a hymn: “Just as I am—without one plea . . . O Lamb of God, I come, I come!” Then came the end, all poignantly described by Random.30

Again, it is my opinion that Ransom's heart rending account of his wife's death solidified the interest of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South for the mission in Brazil, for as a result of this appeal, Ransom was able to garner tremendous support for the work that he, Annie, and Junius Newman had already started. Thus, two southern conferences and the Woman's Missionary Society decided to support missionaries to Brazil, and in 1881 the missionaries James W. Koger and family, James L. Kennedy, and Martha Hile Watts, after hearing Annie's story, volunteered to go to Brazil and were appointed to do so.31 Watts' specific mission was to re-start the school at Piracicaba, which she did with the financial support of the Woman's Missionary Society and the local help of the Barros

30Nashville Christian Advocate, September 25, 1880.
brothers. There, she became the close friend of Prudente de Moraes, who later, as governor of São Paulo, took Martha Watts’ school as the model for the state school system that he was trying to develop, and who still later after becoming Brazil’s first constitutional president, offered Martha Watts the position of Minister of Education—which she refused to accept. Koger and his wife and small child also worked in Piracicaba, close to Newman and to the school that Annie had started. Meanwhile, after learning some of the Portuguese language, Kennedy accompanied Ransom to Rio, where for a third time Methodism opened work.

Ransom’s appeal of 1880 in memory of his wife also bore fruit in the 1883 adoption by the Woman’s Missionary Society of the Centenary Fund drive to raise money for a school in Rio de Janeiro to provide education for the young women of influential families in Brazil. Property for the Rio College, as it was initially called, was bought in 1887.

In *Cincoenta annos de methodismo no Brasil*, Kennedy wrote that “from the first days of its work in Brazil, the Woman’s Board of Foreign Missions (in the United States) understood the great importance of a boarding school for females in the country’s metropolis.” It took many years for the idea of a women’s college in Rio to become a reality, but it finally did so in the form of Bennett College, the place where government officials and generals sent their children to school. In 1887 money from the Cêntrena Fund was used to purchase land and a school was opened, but after an outbreak of yellow fever in Rio, the boarding part of the school was moved to Juiz de Fora. A few years later the property was sold and the money from the sale was used to open another school in Petrópolis, which at that time was the city where the leaders of the nation and the foreign diplomats had their summer residences. From 1895 until 1920 the Colégio Americano de Petrópolis served approximately 2,000 young ladies, some of them the children of Brazil’s most influential families. Meanwhile, a day school, the Colégio Americano Fluminense was maintained in Rio on rented property. Later, after Dr. Oswaldo Cruz rid Rio of yellow fever and the bubonic plague, several attempts were made to purchase new land and re-open a boarding school in the capital. Belle H. Bennett and other leaders of the Woman’s Missionary Society took on the project in 1913, and Colégio Bennett opened in 1921. At that time, the boarding school in Petrópolis and the day school in Fluminense were closed and the

32 The appropriation that the Woman’s Missionary Society had made in 1880 had been reserved (after Colégio Newman closed) for the next outgoing missionary (Butler, *History of the Woman’s Foreign Missionary Society*, 83). See also Kennedy, *Cincoenta annos de methodismo*, 319.
missionaries and professors from those schools were consolidated into Bennett. 36

Meanwhile, the school at Piracicaba, re-started in 1881 under the direction of Martha Watts, has today become a major university. As Kennedy related the school's early success, "soon, children started filling the school, and it was quickly recognized as the best school in town, frequented by the children of the best families of the place. The two brothers Moraes Barros were great admirers of Miss Watts and always remained firm friends and protectors of the school." 37

When attempting to explain the Methodist dedication to missions, denominational literature often points to the intrinsic missionary spirit that Methodists imbibed from Wesley's view that the world was his parish. 38 This is often accompanied in Methodist denominational literature by the tendency to view missionaries as heroes, true Christians filled with "sacrificial devotion to the service of Christ and the world." 39 Certainly, Annie Ayres should be remembered as a heroine of Brazilian Methodism. The role that she played in establishing the pattern of Methodist education among the children of influential Brazilians marked the future of the denomination in Brazil.

36 For history see Kennedy, Cincoenta annos de methodismo, 331-347.
37 Author's translation. Kennedy, Cincoenta annos de methodismo, 321.