

**THE IRONIES OF PENTECOST:
PHOEBE PALMER, WORLD EVANGELISM,
AND FEMALE NETWORKS**

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From the seventeenth-century Puritan Revolution through the Second Great Awakening of the nineteenth century, radical and evangelical Christianity offered new contexts of opportunity for women's participation in the full life of the church. Especially when doctrine encouraged women to seek personal inspiration in the scriptures and to expect a powerful encounter with the Holy Spirit, the way was open to such "dangerous" practices as their testifying in church, undertaking missions, and defying the commands of unregenerate husbands and fathers. When the Pentecostal events described in the revolutionary second chapter of Acts became central to the church's self-interpretation, the situation of women was bound to be affected, for had not Joel foretold that "your sons and daughters shall prophesy, and . . . on my menservants and maidservants in those days I will pour out my Spirit"? (Acts 2:17-18) Especially in early to mid-19th-century Protestantism, the working out of the "logic of Pentecost" becomes particularly striking. For women, a dramatically expanded set of responsible roles and possibilities for growth in leadership opened up. In carrying out, legitimizing, and enhancing the meaning and prestige of these roles, evangelical women created novel historical possibilities both for Christian and non-Christian women. One of the ironies of the Pentecostal movements, for example, was that they propelled some women to take up strenuous lives of travel, organizing, leading, and writing—lives whose shape and result would have ramifications far beyond the world of sectarianism.

To illustrate these dynamics and ironies, this paper proposes to study the transatlantic preaching missions of evangelists like Phoebe Palmer, Amanda Smith, and Elizabeth Atkinson (Mrs. Charles) Finney. Their work helped to develop important female networks in the nineteenth century, such that women's prayer groups, annual camp meetings, and Bible study groups came to be connected over long distances. The religious and "holiness" press continued these connections and helped to make possible the outward reach of women's religious groups—foreign missions, maternal associations, and Sunday schools; temperance, abolition, and moral reform groups; even, for some, women's rights, an idea at odds with the ideology of most of the female evangelists.

The irony here is of course that women who preached women's traditional role in religion and the family were nonetheless building the very

organizational structure by which this role could be undermined in future generations. By showing women what they could do and by saying that the Spirit *demanded* that they speak out if they were chosen, they were modeling ways of acting and being that were highly “exportable” to other cultural settings.

It is the thesis of this paper, then, that the outreach of female evangelists and preachers like Phoebe Palmer gave religious women a double message—woman’s “sphere” was not limited to the domestic realm when the Spirit gave a woman John Wesley’s “extraordinary” call.¹

The influence of these ideas in the 19th century was not confined to the U.S., but was very much international, especially transatlantic. There were connections in both directions—ideas, letters, publications, visitors, preaching missions, lectures. Frank Thistlethwaite’s claims in *The Anglo-American Connection in the Early Nineteenth Century* (1959), that the 1840 World Anti-Slavery Convention “marked the high point of transatlantic communication in feminism, as in antislavery,” and that “American feminists neglected, for a generation, their transatlantic communications,” show his own neglect of women’s role in evangelism, even though he had earlier devoted a whole chapter to religion and humanitarian endeavor.² Evangelism brought Britain and America together in “extra-national terms”: their “brisk traffic across the Atlantic,” he says, “was concerned with nothing less than world salvation.”³ Here, he asserts, was “a genuine Atlantic community.”⁴ Since female evangelists were very much a part of the movement for world salvation, it is here that we should look, for the

¹This thesis has now become commonplace, found perhaps earliest in Anne Scott’s influential *The Southern Lady: From Pedestal to Politics 1830–1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), esp. ch. 6; Nancy Cott in *The Bonds of Womanhood: “Woman’s Sphere” in New England 1780–1835* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale Univ. Press, 1977), argues also for the liberating effects of a religious commitment. Scholars of women’s religious history ascribe to variations on this view as well, such as Nancy Hardesty in *Women Called to Witness: Evangelical Feminism in the 19th Century* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984) and her essay with Lucille Sider Dayton and Donald W. Dayton, “Women in the Holiness Movement: Feminism in the Evangelical Tradition,” in Rosemary Ruether and Eleanor McLaughlin, eds., *Women of Spirit: Female Leadership in the Jewish and Christian Traditions* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1979).

A related view is Nancy Hewitt’s analysis of how women Finneyites in Rochester became “respectable” within a decade of their conversion to preaching and praying in public. See her “The Perimeters of Women’s Power in American Religion” in Leonard I. Sweet, ed., *The Evangelical Tradition in America* (Macon, Ga.: Mercer Univ. Press, 1984), 233–256.

For an interesting delineation of the opposing view—that women’s expanded role in religion “contributed nothing to the spread of feminist ideas”—see Olive Anderson, “Women Preachers in Mid-Victorian Britain: Some Reflexions on Feminism, Popular Religion and Social Change,” *The Historical Journal*, 12, 3 (1969): 467–484.

²Frank Thistlethwaite, *The Anglo-American Connection in the Early Nineteenth Century* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1959), 132, 133.

³*Ibid.*, 86.

⁴*Ibid.*

building of some of the connections among women that could later become the basis for an international feminist network. I should say that I have bracketed out of consideration here female missionaries to non-Western cultures. Such a topic is obviously very important, but, I think, somewhat different from evangelism and revivals in industrialized countries.

Female Evangelists on Women: What They Said and What They Did

Women evangelists were often embroiled in the controversy about women's right to preach, even though they did not often speak or testify on that subject, *per se*. Their justification included two kinds of argument, both strands common in other 19th-century discussions on the woman question then current. Nancy Cott has recently summarized these two opposing arguments for women's advancement: "On the one hand," she says,

women claimed that they had the same intellectual and spiritual endowment as men — were human beings equally with men — and therefore deserved equal or the same opportunities men had, to advance and develop themselves. On the other hand women argued that their sex differed from the male — that whether through natural endowment, environment or training, human females were moral, nurturant, pacific and philosophically disinterested, where males were competitive, aggrandizing, belligerent and self-interested; and that it therefore served the best interests of both sexes for women to have equal access to education, work and citizenship in order to represent themselves and to balance society with their characteristic contribution.⁵

These two positions, called variously "sameness" and "difference"; or "minimizers" and "maximizers"; or "equal rights" and "women's rights," can be detected in the two main arguments used to justify women preaching.

The argument from difference. The view that women evangelists had different talents and gifts from men was usually tied to some kind of pre-millennialist view. Pre-millennialists believed that the millennium, a thousand-year period of peace and plenty, would be *preceded* by the second coming and the fulfillment of the prophecies regarding "the last days." The very fact that many women were testifying showed, according to pre-millennialists, that this time was approaching. Women preachers were in fact a *sign* of an imminent second coming. This attitude toward the spread of female preaching is based on a reading of the prophecy in Joel 2:28-29 ("Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy . . . and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit" — King James Version). Olive Anderson gives detail on several British women evangelists who preached on "the last days," including Elizabeth Foster, Geraldine Hooper, and Octavia Jary.⁶ Phoebe Palmer used precisely this argument for women

⁵Nancy Cott, "Feminist Theory and Feminist Movements: The Past Before Us," in *What is Feminism?*, ed. Juliet Mitchell and Ann Oakley (New York: Pantheon, 1986), 50.

⁶Anderson, 479-480.

preaching in *Promise of the Father; or, A Neglected Speciality of the Last Days* (1859). One of her last publications was a pamphlet, entitled *The Tongue of Fire on the Daughters of the Lord* (1869).

The argument from sameness. The second position is a variation on the “sameness” or “equality” perspective: women and men are both human, and their rights and duties should be based on their common humanity. The often-used Pentecostal argument—the Holy Spirit was and is no respecter of sex—enunciates this position. Everyone can be visited by the Spirit’s tongues of fire; women therefore are the same as men in this context. Many who held this view were post-millennialists, who argued, in Anderson’s helpful summary,

that Joel’s prophecy had already been fulfilled at Pentecost, that “the last days” were to be understood broadly as the whole post-Christian dispensation, and that therefore one of the characteristics of the dispensation of grace was intended to be female ministry on equal terms with men. After apostolic times, however, it became “the lost ministry” (a favourite phrase), with disastrous results for the Church; only in their own age, which was witnessing the progressive triumph of truth and the revival of religion was this lost ministry evidently being recovered as the Kingdom of God was ushered in.⁷

This was Catherine Booth’s position in her pamphlet *Female Ministry* (London, 1859) and elsewhere; she continued adamant in her belief that one’s sex was irrelevant in Christianity. That belief was enshrined in Salvation Army doctrine from its beginning (as the Christian Mission) and became the “Women’s Charter” in the Army’s constitution.

It is interesting to note, however, that in the Associated Press obituary for Catherine Bramwell-Booth (dead in 1987 at 104), grand-daughter of William and Catherine Booth and daughter of Bramwell Booth, no mention is made of Catherine Booth as co-founder of the Salvation Army, nor of Evangeline Booth (her aunt) as first woman General of the organization. The article says only that Catherine Bramwell-Booth was appointed Commissioner, “the highest rank below the movement’s only general” in 1927.⁸ This is how women’s history is erased and lost.

As was true in other contexts in the nineteenth century, religious women could and did argue both ways for women. They used the text from Galatians to argue “we are all one in Christ,” neither Jew nor Greek, male nor female, slave nor free (Galatians 3:28); and they used other texts to argue woman’s particular competence of receiving the second blessing of holiness doctrine.

The model that female evangelists were showing to other women was clearly an exceptional one, one they might not counsel other women to follow. But all would say that if “total surrender to God’s will” led in the direction of the call to preach, the woman *must* follow it. John Wesley, interpreting St. Paul, wrote on June 13, 1771 to one of his female

⁷Anderson, 480.

⁸“Obituary: Salvation Army Leader in England,” *Durham Morning Herald*, Oct. 4, 1987, 20.

preachers, Mary Bosanquet, that "the strength of the cause rests there, in your having *an extraordinary call*."⁹ Phoebe Palmer, in the preface to *Promise of the Father*, poses the dilemma in terms of the "higher law" doctrine: "The will of the church and the will of Christ in conflict!"¹⁰

Women *must* speak when the Spirit commands, even though church order forbids it. Obviously, preaching or testifying to "promiscuous" (mixed sex) groups was only the most unconventional action of several that women evangelists engaged in. Travelling across the Atlantic, organizing large gatherings, soliciting speaking invitations, managing administrative detail, arranging for child care, publicizing the revivals—all these and more were necessitated in the position of female evangelist. These were not traditional female tasks.

In both the equality and difference positions, the words and actions of evangelical women helped to create structures of expanded possibilities for women both within and outside the Church, on both sides of the Atlantic.

Phoebe Palmer: International Evangelist par excellence

There were many female evangelists during the first half of the nineteenth century in both Britain and the U.S., and several who undertook international preaching missions. Elizabeth Atkinson Finney (the second Mrs. Charles Finney) is an example of one who was very effective on both sides of the Atlantic, but was careful never to step outside the bounds of prayer meeting or women's Bible class. Earlier, there had also been English women preachers who came to America, such as Ruth Watkins, a Primitive Methodist missionary, who came in the late 1820's.¹¹ And English female preachers such as Hester Ann Rogers often traveled from England to Wales or Ireland for revivals.¹²

Phoebe Palmer (1807–1874) is the best example of a woman evangelist with influence on both sides of the Atlantic. A life-long Methodist, she married Walter Palmer, a homeopathic doctor, when she was 20. She began her devotional career by participating in the Tuesday Meeting, a female prayer group begun by her sister Sara Lankford in the New York home where they and their husbands lived together. Three of Phoebe Palmer's four children died. Her "conversion," facilitated by Sara, took place after the death of the third. Palmer wrote later of finally understanding their deaths as a way of binding her to God: "God takes our treasure to heaven that our hearts may be there also."¹³ Hester Ann Roe Rogers

⁹John Wesley, letter to Mary Bosanquet, 1771.

¹⁰Phoebe Palmer, *Promise of the Father; or, A Neglected Speciality of the Last Days* (New York: W. C. Palmer, Jr., 1872), vi.

¹¹Richard Carwardine, *Transatlantic Revivalism: Popular Evangelicalism in Britain and America, 1790–1865* (Westport, Ct.: Greenwood Press, 1978), 107.

¹²*Ibid.*, 106.

¹³Quoted in Harold E. Raser, *Phoebe Palmer: Her Life and Thought* (Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen Press, 1987), 249. Cott, among others, has noted (in *The Bonds of Womanhood*, 90) the frequent correlation between women's conversion experiences and the deaths of their children.

(1756–1794), one of John Wesley’s preachers and a profound influence on Palmer, deals with the near death of one of her own children in a similar way.¹⁴

“The Tuesday Meeting for the Promotion of Holiness” by 1840 was sexually integrated, interdenominational, and nationally known; all were welcome; everyone, male or female, was encouraged to speak. Palmer was becoming widely known as a revival speaker. She developed her “altar phraseology” by which anyone could receive the “second blessing” by “laying all upon the altar” and willing a new life. It did not demand an instantaneous change, but a gradual learning of the new way. Her works, especially *Way of Holiness* and the periodical *Guide to Holiness*, brought her message to thousands. *Way of Holiness* was translated into French and German.

For the first twenty years of her ministry, she traveled and preached alone. Walter stayed in New York and supervised the house and servants. In 1853 she undertook her first Canadian tour; in Ontario she made over 500 conversions and nearly as many experienced “entire sanctification” or the “second blessing.” Only when she began to evangelize abroad did Walter travel with her and they develop their partnership as revivalists.

They decided to carry their message to England in 1859, since her Tuesday meeting was well known, and her holiness works sold well enough to demand English editions.¹⁵ *Four Years in the Old World* is Phoebe Palmer’s account of that journey.¹⁶ It is a huge book, a compendium of journal entries over four years, letters, and newspaper clippings from both the religious and secular press. It is both a travelogue and a spiritual diary, a record of their visitation at various pilgrimage places (e.g., Wesley’s home and grave, and “sacred” sites for Hester Ann Rogers, George Whitefield, and Mary Bosanquet Fletcher), as well as more usual tourist centers, both historical and geographical. The book is also a spiritual record, telling what the revival was like in each town, how many were saved, what was preached, and what kind of testimonials were given. It explains, over and again, Palmer’s theology of entire sanctification. It gives her position on moral issues: her opposition to drinking (and to receiving publicans at her services), to gambling, to theatre (President Lincoln was shot *because he went to the theatre*), and to Sabbath work (she refuses to hire a carriage

¹⁴*The Experience and Spiritual Letters of Mrs. Hester Ann Rogers with a Sermon, Preached on the Occasion of Her Death, by the Rev. Thomas Coke, LL.D. Also an Appendix Written by Her Husband* (London, 1841). It is worthwhile noting that the “spiritual letters” are often addressed to women, “My Dear Sister”; the concept of sisterhood which was first used by secular feminists in the early 19th century must surely be traced to the idea of “sisterhood in Christ,” as well as to the ideal of “Fraternité” of the French Revolution.

¹⁵Carwardine, 182–183.

¹⁶Phoebe Palmer, *Four Years in the Old World; Comprising the Travels, Incidents, and Evangelistic Labors of Dr. and Mrs. Palmer, in England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales* (New York: Foster & Palmer, Jr., 1867).

to go to church). Very interesting was her concern with practical matters: how to manage without a communion rail in Scotland, why a secretary to record names is necessary, where the "anxious" bench should be placed, and why one must testify immediately.

The communion rail incident in Glasgow is worth quoting in its entirety as it suggests how persuasive was her rhetoric. The chapel in Glasgow had no communion rail, and no space in front of the pews for people to stand. The first meeting was managed by asking converts to raise their hands in their seats. But kneeling at the communion rail was an integral part of the Palmers' ritual. They undertook persuasion of the trustees of the church:

We told them of one large church we visited, where a finely-drapered mahogany reading-desk and several pews were removed to meet the emergency of the work; and that the salvation of but one soul more than might otherwise be saved would repay the cost of the alteration a thousand times over, even though the trustees might require that the fixtures should all be reinstated. We asked whether Lord Nelson, Wellington, or Napoleon would have hesitated, if the success of a battle might depend on any sort of change of fixtures imaginable, in adapting the thing at once, irrespective of cost, risk, or trouble. Did not portions of your own noble army, in the Crimean War, sit up all night to cast up bulwarks, dig trenches, & c., all to secure an earthly victory? Most nobly did the brethren conclude at once to risk the matter. . . .

Early as four o'clock the next morning, carpenters were at work: by three o'clock the next afternoon, the place was cleared. Now we have a neatly-carpeted platform enclosed by a railing. Both the enclosure and the communion-rail are filled daily with seekers, and wonderful have been the displays of saving power.¹⁷

It is important to know that the Palmers gave their services free. They financed their work through the sale of Phoebe's books and Walter's successful medical practice.

A typical Palmer revival had a recognizable format and planned structure, the arrangements having been worked out carefully in advance with the host minister. Usually the Palmers stayed in one town for several weeks, with nightly services, but sometimes there were as many as five in one day, including prayer meetings at 5 and 6 a.m. Carwardine describes a Newcastle service, using contemporary quotations from the local press:

A circuit preacher opened the service with singing and prayer; Dr. Palmer then read and expounded on a chapter of Scripture. This was followed by "a brief and appropriate address" from the minister, after which Dr. Palmer announced the hymn and invited intending leavers to depart. Few did so, for the peculiar attraction of the service was yet to come. "Mrs. Palmer now modestly walks within the rails of the communion, not to preach according to the modern acceptance of that term, but simply to talk to the people. . . . She speaks deliberately. . . . Her voice is clear and musical." Her address (*not* a sermon) "on the duty of Christians to be holy, and to exert all their powers to bring sinners to Christ," was in style emphatically anecdotal and very heavily flavored with sentimentality. On completion of her address, her husband "in a very

¹⁷Palmer, *Four Years*, 177.

affectionate manner" invited penitents to walk forward to the communion rails while the rest of the congregation continued to sing hymns. Prayer and the recording of penitents' names brought the service to a close.¹⁸

Who came to these meetings? Phoebe Palmer liked to talk about how democratic their services were—that a social mix of old and young, rich and poor attended. In fact, most people who came were employed working class, artisans, and lower-middle-class. There were other revivals that attracted the bourgeoisie and aristocracy in England, the most famous being at Broadlands, the country estate of Lord Mount Temple.

What Palmer achieved in her preaching was a theological breakthrough, called the "altar phraseology," the view that holiness or "the second blessing" was dependent on the individual, not on "grace" alone. It was a process, not an instantaneous change. The individual made a personal decision; this enabled her to act and to will a new life.

According to Theodore Hovet, the doctrine also functioned as a re-interpretation of woman's role in 19th-century middle-class life.¹⁹ In the "altar transaction," a woman could lay all the details of house and children on the altar and thus be freed from worldly attachments and responsibilities. It is not that the woman should "neglect" her domestic responsibilities, but that they "should cease to be *absorbing*." At one point in *Promise of the Father*, Palmer even counseled a woman who had a gift for witnessing to find help for her home responsibilities, since the Lord's work was more important. Additionally, the altar phraseology encouraged the individual to become less emotionally dependent on husband and children, to become spiritually independent and to consecrate the domestic sphere to the inner life of "heart holiness." Thus, she gained a kind of freedom, not of "self-dependence," but of "situation" (to follow Hovet in using Charles Taylor's analysis).²⁰ As Palmer wrote in *Promise of the Father*,

The female part of the church have the advantage. Retired from the turmoil and perplexities of business life, the mind is, or may be, free from the anxiety and distraction of debts, or business competitions, with a reputation and religious influence that have not been scathed and trammelled by exposure to the storms and combative elements of business or political life, they are free to throw their whole souls most effectively into the work of God.²¹

One wonders how much of this is wishful thinking on Palmer's part with her full schedule of lectures, writing deadlines, and travel. Again, Palmer was modeling a very different role from that about which she was speaking and writing.

¹⁸Carwardine, 183–184.

¹⁹Theodore Hovet, "Phoebe Palmer's 'Altar Phraseology' and the Spiritual Dimension of Woman's Sphere," *The Journal of Religion*, 63,3 (July 1983): 264–280.

²⁰Hovet, 278–279.

²¹Palmer, *Promise*, 98–99.

Phoebe Palmer's International Influence

Frances Willard, Amanda Berry Smith, and Catherine Booth all traced their own "calls" or "second blessings" to Phoebe Palmer's revivals. Frances Willard is well known for her national and international work with the Woman's Christian Temperance Union and her strategy for supporting women's suffrage from the Christian evangelistic perspective. She spoke in her autobiography about having received the "second blessing" in 1866 in a revival in Evanston, Illinois, led by "Dr. and Mrs. Phoebe Palmer."²² Later she too wrote about women's right to preach in *Woman in the Pulpit* (1888).

Amanda Berry Smith was internationally known as "the colored evangelist" in the last quarter of the 19th century. Born a slave in Maryland in 1837, she moved to Pennsylvania when her father purchased the family's freedom. By the time she was 30, she had been married twice, had given birth to at least five children, all of whom died young, and had worked continually as a maid and washerwoman. In 1868, after having attended the Tuesday Meetings at Phoebe Palmer's house, she experienced "entire sanctification" at a service led by Methodist minister John Inskip. Soon she was preaching for the A.M.E. church in Philadelphia, New Jersey, and New York. She became involved in the holiness movement and participated in camp meetings as far away as Tennessee and Maine. An invitation to go to England began her international ministry, which lasted for over ten years and took her to the British Isles, India, and West Africa, working with Methodist missions, preaching and teaching. Smith's *An Autobiography: The Story of the Lord's Dealings with Mrs. Amanda Smith, The Colored Evangelist* is a wonderfully ingenuous account of her experiences, told with great detail and fervor. In Perth, Scotland, for example, she was told that she could only preach to women's groups, since speaking in a mixed group would be embarrassing for her as a woman. She protested that she was used to speaking before men, but those in charge wanted to protect her. Here is part of her account, detailed in her inimitable style:

When we got to the hall there were seven or eight men. I saw these ladies looked very sharp and surprised. I went on and opened the meeting with a lively hymn; and the Scotch can sing, depend upon it. Then I asked someone to lead in prayer; and one of

²²Noted by Nancy A. Hardesty, "Minister as Prophet? Or as Mother?", in *Women in New Worlds*, ed. Hilah Thomas and Rosemary Skinner Keller (Nashville: Abingdon, 1981, I, 88, who cites S. Olin Garrison, ed., *Forty Witnesses* (New York: Phillips & Hunt, 1888; reprint, Freeport, Pa: Fountain Press, 1955), 73. See also Ruth Bordin, *Francis Willard: A Biography* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1986), 156. Bordin, however, asks for caution in interpreting Willard's diaries from the time of her holiness experience. The fact remains, however, that Palmer was influential in Willard's life and her later international perspective. Ian Tyrell analyzes astutely the connections between millennialism, holiness, and international temperance work in *Woman's World/Woman's Empire: The Woman's Christian Temperance Union in International Perspective, 1880-1930* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1991), 23-26, et passim.

the lady workers did so, but it was very faint. Poor thing, I knew it was a struggle; fortunately it was not lengthy. So we rose, and I gave out the next hymn.

While they sang I noticed a great deal of quiet whispering and uneasiness: these good ladies were very nervous; I was greatly amused. Just before I began my address, one of them said to me, "Now, Mrs. Smith, there are those men; and they know quite well this is a meeting for women only; and they know they should not be in here. If you would like, I will speak to them, and have them go out." "Oh, no," I said, "I don't mind; I think they came with their wives; I saw one man bring the baby and give it to the mother, and if they behave themselves it's all right; I want to talk to the women about their souls, and their salvation; and that is what the men need as well."

"Then it don't embarrass you to have the men present?"

"Not in the least," I said. And she sat down, comfortably surprised; and I had no further trouble about the men coming to meeting with the women. They did seem glad. They would shake hands with me, and say, "Lord bless you," and they smiled, and I suppose they thought I had given them the best chance they had ever had to get into a mixed meeting.²³

For Amanda Smith, certainly, witnessing about the state of one's soul had nothing to do with one's sex.

When she left England, Smith traveled "overland" across Europe and the Mediterranean to Egypt, where she boarded a ship at Suez for India. Her account of her adventures, a black woman traveling halfway around the world in 1879, makes fascinating reading.²⁴

Catherine Booth has already been mentioned. She pointed to Phoebe Palmer's evangelistic work in England as the catalyst in her own thinking on women preaching. When Palmer was criticized in England for preaching as a woman, she was defended by Catherine Booth. Booth's work, *Female Ministry, or, Woman's Right to Preach the Gospel* (1859), has ever since been a cornerstone of Salvation Army doctrine on women's role in religion. Another connection between the two women was Palmer's gift of her home on east 15th Street in New York City to the Salvation Army, where it became the Army's first hospital in the United States.

Another woman important in the international holiness network was Hannah Whitall Smith (1832-1911). A generation younger than Phoebe Palmer, she nevertheless had many of the same connections (including a deep friendship with Frances Willard), although she was a life-long Quaker. She too became involved in the holiness movement after the death of a child. She gained fame on both sides of the Atlantic as an international

²³Amanda Smith, *An Autobiography: The Story of the Lord's Dealings with Mrs. Amanda Smith the Colored Evangelist* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1988; orig. pub. 1893), 278-279. Part of the series, "The Schomburg Library of Nineteenth-Century Black Women Writers."

²⁴For sources on Amanda Berry Smith, see, for example, John H. Bracey, Jr., "Amanda Berry Smith," *Notable American Women*, 3:304-305; and Sylvia Jacobs, "Three Afro-American Women: Missionaries in Africa, 1882-1904," in Rosemary Skinner Keller, Louise L. Queen, and Hilah F. Thomas, ed., *Women in New Worlds: Historical Perspectives on the Wesleyan Tradition* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1982), II, 277-278.

holiness evangelist and religious author who combined Quaker quietism and the doctrine of sanctification. Important in the "Higher Life" movement, she participated in revival meetings at Broadlands and at Keswick in the Lake District. Eventually she moved to England, and was a great influence on both secular and religious feminists, such as M. Carey Thomas, Lady Henry Somerset, and various British suffragists.

She advocated a "gospel of submissiveness" in the writings that gained her the greatest audience, *The Christian's Secret of a Happy Life* (1875). The work was translated into many languages, sold thousands of copies, and is still in print. One of her many biographers says of her fame in evangelical circles,

The signature H.W.S., attached to tract after tract, was in Hannah's own lifetime known not only throughout the European world but wherever there were missionaries capable of translating her works into native languages. Her Bible readings were in perpetual demand, whether she was in England or America, and she received thousands of letters clamoring for spiritual and temporal advice.²⁵

According to Debra Campbell, *The Christian's Secret* is "a practical guide to the annihilation of the will."²⁶ The book detailed Smith's own position, at least publicly, during the years when her children were young. One should note, however, that this work and most of her articles for the Holiness movement journal, *The Christian's Pathway to Power*, edited by her husband Robert, were written at *his* insistence. Within a year after the publication of the book, she was already moving in different directions, emotionally further away from her husband and the holiness doctrines she had espoused earlier.

Now spending more and more time in England (where her daughter had moved on her marriage in 1875), Smith became more involved in the women's temperance movement and other feminist causes. In England she renewed her friendships with wealthy women made in her evangelistic Higher Life campaigns, introducing Frances Willard and Lady Somerset, the leader of the British women's temperance movement. At first, she felt alienated from politics, writing as an anti-nationalist feminist:

I do not feel myself to be any different as an English subject than as an American. I have not the vote in either place, as I am not a citizen of either and have no call to be patriotic. In fact, I do not see how *women* can ever feel like anything but aliens in whatever country they may live, for they have no part or lot in any, except the part and lot of being taxed and legislated for by men.²⁷

²⁵James Thomas Flexner, *An American Saga: The Story of Helen Thomas and Simon Flexner* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1984), 160-161.

²⁶Debra Campbell, "Hannah Whitall Smith (1832-1911): Theology of the Mother-Hearted God," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 15,1 (1989), 88.

²⁷Barbara Strachey, *Remarkable Relations: The Story of the Pearsall Smith Women* (New York: Universe Books, 1982), 102.

In 1885, however, she published *The Maiden Tribute to Modern Babylon: The Report of the Pall Mall Gazette's Secret Committee* in England. It described the international prostitution trade, or "white slavery," as it was called. Josephine Butler and Frances Willard, among others, began to organize internationally on the issue. The campaign against "the traffic in women" was but one of many in which Hannah Whitall Smith became involved.

The difference between Smith and Phoebe Palmer is that although both lives were in opposition to their writing and preaching for women, Palmer was much less conscious about the contradiction inherent there. Smith understood this contradiction, and in her autobiography, *The Unselfishness of God and How I Discovered It* (1903), was able to shift her focus from annihilation of the will to "a purification that comes from service to humanity."²⁸ By the last three decades of her life, her public self and her private self were no longer at odds; she was both committed and conscious. Her work in the international network was in place: she joked that her epitaph would have to be, "Died of too many Meetings."²⁹ A lovely letter to her granddaughter Ray (Rachel) Strachey exists in which Smith talks of the next generation of women's rights advocates:

March 1, 1908

Thy account, Ray, of your enthusiasm over the suffrage victory (second reading passed) thrilled me through and through, and I actually wept some tears of joy to think that you girls have embraced the cause of Women's Liberty with such enthusiasm. I feel now that I can die in peace, and leave the Cause to your fresh and eager young hands.³⁰

The international feminist network by this time was indeed a reality.

Conclusions

Thus, a network on which women could later build was set in the nineteenth century by the personal connections of these evangelists, institutions such as camp meetings and revivals, and the religious press (an astonishing number of both denominational and thematic religious periodicals were available in this period), and organizations such as world mission societies and holiness groups.

Even if, as the "sameness" or "equality" doctrine argues, evangelistic women did not see themselves as different and separate from men, the fact remains that the structures and models were being built for eventual institutions which would more equally integrate the two sexes. Does Cott's thesis, that the two positions were often argued at the same time, hold true

²⁸Campbell, 81.

²⁹Quoted in Campbell, 95.

³⁰Ray Strachey, *A Quaker Grandmother: Hannah Whitall Smith* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1914), 131.

here?³¹ Were women evangelists arguing both, even though the two views are logically contradictory? Palmer's stated position on women was always on the side of the "difference" advocates, but ironically, her professional life was more of a model for the "equality" advocates, as it seemed to differ little from that of a man.

³¹Cott, "Feminist Theory and Feminist Movements," 50-52.