

## CHAPTER EIGHT: THE MULTIPLE FRUIT OF MISSION

Samuel Nott, Jr. (1787-1869), one of the first American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions missionaries, who returned from India in poor health, in 1823 wrote the first book of children's sermons, in the preface of which he wrote, "a real desire that the gospel should be preached to every creature, will show itself at home."<sup>1</sup> For Nineteenth Century American Protestants the missionary was the ideal Christian. Not everyone could be a foreign missionary, but each person could discover a mission at home. Every Christian could take part in the advancement of the realm of God.

This chapter describes several facets of this diffused missionary spirit. First are three organized movements for the advancement of God's realm, (1) Sunday Schools, (2) a school for the deaf and dumb, and (3) Peace. Then follows a description of the expanding role of women in the life of the church, a movement closely related but not completely dependent on the missionary movement.

### PART A: THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

Robert Raikes (1736-1811), of Gloucester, England, was concerned about children working in factories who had no opportunity to go to school. In 1780 he hired four women to teach poor children on Sundays. Thus the modern Sunday School movement began: teaching literacy using the Bible. The movement came to America and quickly became popular in all denominations.

When the Nineteenth Century began, New England Towns had public schools, and Reformed Churches in Pennsylvania had parochial schools. Both public and parochial schools taught religion along with reading, writing and arithmetic. In both fees were charged which excluded the very poor. The function of the first Sunday Schools, in England, Pennsylvania and New England, was to provide education to the children of the poor, similar to what was provided in public and parochial schools.

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<sup>1</sup>quoted in: Review of *Sermons for Children: Designed to Promote Their Immediate Piety*, by Samuel Nott, Jr. *Christian Advocate* 1 (1823): 132.

Lay Christians organized and conducted the first Sunday Schools. Although leaders might be from a particular congregation, and they might use that church's building, the school was independent and in no way under the control of the church. The first Sunday School located in a Congregational Church opened in Bath, New Hampshire, in 1805. First Reformed Church, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in 1806 was the home of the first Sunday School in a Reformed Church. The first Sunday School in a Christian Church opened in Kittery, Maine, in 1826.

In Massachusetts Joanna Prince and Hannah Hill opened the first Sunday School in 1810 in Beverly. Prince taught a school in her mother's home on weekdays, and conducted the Sabbath School to reach children unable to attend during the week. Each Sunday the class met in her school room before morning worship and again after the afternoon services. Although Prince and Hill were both members of Joseph Emerson's Congregational Church, the school was non-denominational. Like the weekday school the Sabbath School taught literacy using religious literature.

Some ministers opposed Sunday Schools at first for several reasons:

- Clergy saw the lay led Sunday Schools as a threat to their authority.
- The teachers were not trained.
- Many teachers were women.
- The schools were either too sectarian (a Christian criticism) or too non-sectarian (a Reformed criticism).
- It was an inappropriate activity for the Sabbath.
- Those ragged children would make a mess of the church building.
- Sunday Schools are not mentioned in the Bible (a Christian criticism).

In spite of the objections, the movement spread rapidly. As public education became more widespread and more secular, the Sunday School assumed the distinct function of religious education, and included all children, not just the poor.

The first Sunday Schools used catechisms to teach reading and religion. After the first quarter of the Nineteenth Century, the Bible replaced the catechism, books of Bible Questions were published, and students memorized large portions of scripture.

The American Sunday School Union (ASSU), organized in 1824, began promoting a one year cycle of scriptures in 1825 and became a major publisher of children's religious literature. Sunday School libraries provided reading

material for children and their families throughout most of the Nineteenth Century, before communities established public libraries.

In Massachusetts, Congregationalists, Baptists, Episcopalians and Methodists united in organizing the Massachusetts Sabbath School Union (MSSU) in 1825 to promote Sabbath schools, and to provide inexpensive books. Two denominations soon withdrew, leaving the Congregationalists and Baptists, and the MSSU began publishing children's religious literature. In 1832 Baptists and Congregationalists dissolved the union; Congregationalists reorganized as the Massachusetts Sabbath School Society (MSSS). Congregationalists wanted to have at least one publishing concern in the country that was exclusively Congregational.

Under the direction of Asa Bullard (1804-88) from 1834-74, the MSSS sent missionaries to organize Congregational Sabbath Schools throughout the country. Congregational Sabbath School unions in other states became auxiliary to the MSSS. The MSSS revived interest in the *Westminster Catechism*, publishing 350,000 copies from 1835 to 1850.

The Reformed Church Synod organized the Sunday School Union of the Reformed Church in the United States in 1835, auxiliary to the ASSU. The synod appointed Abraham Berky<sup>2</sup> (1806-67) agent of the union and named a publishing committee. In 1840 the Reformed Church published a Sunday School hymnal.

Denominational Sunday School unions encouraged Sunday Schools to affiliate with their congregations in order to have a more unified ministry. This transition was well under way in Congregational churches by 1850. However in the Reformed Church the numerous union Sunday Schools in union churches made a denominational connection difficult.<sup>3</sup>

In the first half of the Nineteenth Century the Sunday School became the principle educational tool of the church. This organized expression of pietism, conducted to a large extent by women, lifted up the importance of children, and unleashed new creativity in the production of religious literature for children.

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<sup>2</sup>Berky soon returned to the parish, was supported by the AHMS as a home missionary in upstate New York, and later went into the Reformed Dutch Church.

<sup>3</sup>For more on the Sunday School movement go to Chapter 14, Part B, Sunday School.

## PART B: GALLAUDET AND THE DEAF AND DUMB

Alice Cogswell (b. 1805) had spotted fever as a child, and as a result was deaf and dumb. Her father, Dr. Mason F. Cogswell, a physician in Hartford, Connecticut, wanted to help her. He read about projects in France and England that enabled the deaf and dumb to communicate with signs, and wondered if he would have to send Alice overseas to receive this instruction, or if an institution could be created in America.

At the instigation of Alice's father, the General Association of Connecticut in 1811 requested the clergy to do a census of the deaf and dumb. Their report the next year indicated 74 such persons, enough to justify an institution for them in Connecticut. Funds were collected to establish an institution, but who would go to Europe to learn the new form of communication and bring it back to Connecticut?

The Cogswell's neighbor had a son, Thomas H. Gallaudet (1787-1851), a student at Andover Seminary. Gallaudet took an interest in Alice, and communicated some words to her using gestures. In April, 1815, Dr. Cogswell gathered friends to form an association that would found an institution for the deaf and dumb in America. All except Gallaudet were convinced that the person to go to Europe and head the institution was Thomas Gallaudet.

Following his graduation from Yale College in 1805, Thomas Gallaudet studied law, then tutored at Yale, then briefly went into business before entering Andover Seminary. Only after entrance into seminary did Gallaudet make a profession of religion and join a Congregational Church in Hartford. Licensed to preach and graduated from Andover in 1814, Gallaudet was reluctant to accept a call from a church because of poor health.

Gallaudet reluctantly accepted the call of his neighbor's association and went to Europe in 1815. Receiving a cold reception from philanthropists in England and Scotland, he found it necessary to go to France and to accept the help of a Roman Catholic. Abbé Sicard, director of the Royal School for Deaf-Mutes in Paris cooperated fully with Gallaudet and in three months he had mastered Sicard's sign language. One of Sicard's assistants, a deaf-mute, Laurent Clerc, came to America with Gallaudet for three years to assist in the work.

The Connecticut Asylum for the Education of Deaf and Dumb Persons

opened on 20 April 1817, supported by voluntary contributions and subsidized by the state. In his opening discourse Gallaudet claimed the asylum to be a sign of God's coming realm, partially fulfilling the scripture.

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,  
and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.  
Then shall the lame man leap as an hart,  
and the tongues of the dumb sing. (*Isaiah 35:5-6a*)

Delegations from other cities came to Hartford to observe, in order to establish similar asylums elsewhere. In 1821 Thomas Gallaudet married one of his students, Sophia Fowler, and they raised a family of hearing children that all conversed interchangeably with sounds or signs.

In 1830 Gallaudet resigned his position at the asylum to devote himself to writing children's religious books. He wrote nine volumes of scripture biographies, *The Child's Book of the Soul*, and several others widely used in Sunday Schools. The American Tract Society sold over 600,000 copies of Gallaudet's books, and the ABCFM translated them into at least nine other languages for use in mission schools.

In 1835 the secret Look Upward Press Onward Society (LUPOS) hired Thomas Gallaudet to investigate the spiritual needs of German settlers in the West (See Chapter 9, Part C., Initial Outreach of the Missionary Societies ). As the agent of LUPOS, he was instrumental in bringing missionaries from Basel to the Mississippi Valley.

Thomas Gallaudet also promoted public education, organized the first teachers' convention in 1830, and prepared textbooks. He served as chaplain of a prison in Hartford, 1837-45, and chaplain of the Retreat for the Insane at Hartford from 1838 to his death in 1851.

In the life of Congregational minister Thomas Gallaudet, the missionary spirit of the time found expression in love for children and for those on the margins of society.

## PART C: PEACE

In 1819 Jesse Appleton (1772-1819),<sup>4</sup> President of Bowdoin College, was dying. When William Ladd (1778-1841), a prosperous farmer, visited him, Appleton spoke with joy of all the new benevolent societies of the day, and of their work. He was especially enthusiastic about the Peace Societies. Ladd recalled, "This was almost the first time I ever heard of them. The idea passed over my mind as the day-dream of benevolence; and so everyone views the subject, who does not examine it." Ladd might have forgotten about this conversation had he not soon after read Noah Worcester's *Solemn Review of the Custom of War*. This short book, Ladd said, "riveted my attention in such a manner as to make it the principal object of my life to promote the cause of Peace on earth and good-will to man." The Nineteenth Century's principal apostle of peace had received his call.

The peace movement never attained the popularity of other movements of benevolence. But it was an integral part of the network of benevolent societies engaging the interest and support of the same people. Peace was clearly at the center of the millennial vision that motivated the whole missionary/benevolent enterprise.

and they shall beat their swords into plowshares,  
and their spears into pruning hooks:  
nation shall not lift up sword against nation  
neither shall they learn war anymore. (*Isaiah 2:4b-c*)

Christians disagreed on how God would use them to achieve this vision, but some felt compelled to action. Many more endorsed the dream if not the actions of the more militant advocates of peace. The organized peace movement in America began with David Dodge in New York and Noah Worcester in Massachusetts. William Ladd brought these two movements together and shaped a national movement.

David Low Dodge (1774-1852), organized the New York Peace Society in 1815. Dodge believed that the Gospel prohibited all war, revenge and fighting. In conscience he could neither vote nor hold office in a government that used any

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<sup>4</sup>Appleton had been the nominee of the trinitarians for professor of divinity at Harvard, who was defeated by Henry Ware.

form of coercion. Noah Worcester (1758-1837),<sup>5</sup> settled at Thornton, N. H., where his pastor, Experience Estabrook (1755-99), who opposed all war as immoral, introduced him to pacifism. In 1814 Worcester published his *Solemn Review*. He linked the peace movement to other benevolent enterprises moving toward the millennium. He advocated a Congress of Nations to standardize international law, and a World Court to settle disputes. In 1815 he organized the Massachusetts Peace Society. Although Worcester personally opposed all violence, his Peace Society was broad based, to include all who strove for peace.

In the midst of a “religious war” between Unitarians and Trinitarians, a handful of peace advocates from both sides of the schism met together in harmony. Unitarian Noah Worcester was the inspiration behind the Peace Society that met at trinitarian Old South Church in Boston. The object of the society was to educate people on the evil of war until the thought became odious in the minds of people, and to promote alternatives to war.

William Ladd, son of a merchant from Portsmouth, New Hampshire, had little interest in his studies at Harvard. In 1797 he left college to serve as a seaman on one of his father’s ships. By his third voyage he was captain. When his father died in 1806 Ladd returned to Portsmouth to manage the business. When the War of 1812 put an end to peaceful commerce, Ladd retired to a farm in Minot, Maine. There he made a profession of faith and joined the Congregational Church.

Following his encounter with the dying Appleton and his reading of Worcester’s *Solemn Review*, Ladd devoted the rest of his life to writing and speaking on behalf of peace. Ladd, like Worcester, was personally committed to non-violence, but promoted a broad based peace society educating for peace and a Congress of Nations. In 1828 he brought together the Massachusetts, New York, and other Peace societies into the American Peace Society (APS). It was an uneasy alliance of the strict non-resisters of New York and the broad peace advocates of Massachusetts. Ladd, the general agent of the APS, promoted its broad educational efforts. In 1837 Ladd’s Congregational Association in Maine granted him a license to preach “for the purpose of facilitating his labors in the cause of peace.”

Congregational minister Henry Clarke Wright (1797-1870) became an

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<sup>5</sup>One of four brothers who went into the ministry. We have already met Samuel of Salem and the ABCFM; Leonard of Peacham, Vermont, was the father of Samuel A. Worcester, missionary to the Cherokee; Thomas was of Salisbury, N. H.

agent for the APS in 1836. Wright took an increasingly strong non-resistance position at odds with Ladd's vision of the Society. Wright and the abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison called a convention in September, 1838, which established the New England Non-Resistance Society. Members of this new society pledged, "All human governments *at present existing*, are based on the principles of violence and retaliation. Therefore I cannot approve or maintain any of them." True non-resisters did not serve in the military, vote, hold office, serve on juries, or sue in court.

Two peace societies with two very different philosophies competed for several years. The Non-Resistance Society called on people to personally commit to non-resistance and no government. The Peace Society educated the populace on peace and advocated international alternatives to violence. Wright was the Non-Resistance Society's only agent, and when he left for Europe in 1843 the organization began to fall apart.

Congregational minister George C. Bekwith (1800-70), general secretary of the APS after Ladd's death, increased efforts to include non-pacifists in the Society, and promoted a Congress of Nations, World Court, and arbitration.

Although the numbers of peace activists were few, they influenced other movements of benevolence. The Foreign Missionary societies, although never identifying with the Peace Societies, saw themselves as heralds of peace. Gordon Hall (1784-1826), of the first company of ABCFM missionaries, claimed to be a total pacifist. In 1813, before he had the opportunity to preach to a native, he had convinced three British officers in India to resign their commissions. The Massachusetts Sabbath School Society published a children's book, *The Little Soldier: A Plea for Peace* in 1837. Written anonymously by Sarah Tuttle, this book described the horrors of war and presented all of the arguments of the APS.

Agents of the Peace Society encouraged representative church bodies to pass resolutions in favor of peace. The Christian denomination in 1854 declared,

There is nothing presented in international war that is in accordance with either the letter or the Spirit of the gospel, and we cannot but regard it as a direct denigration of both . . . War alone never settles a difficulty between two nations; nor determines which of the two nations is in the right.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>For more on the Peace Movement go to Chapter 16, Part C, The Peace Movement, 1861-1917.



Pietists were not the only persons who dreamed of peace. Inspired by the millennial vision, they organized with others, developing strategies to make the dream a reality.

## PART D: WOMEN IN MISSION AND IN THE CHURCH

### Female Missionaries

Sybil Moseley (1792-1848) wanted to be a missionary. In 1818 it was not enough for a woman to believe this was God's call; she also had to receive the "providential call" of a marriage proposal from a man preparing to be a missionary. In December, 1818, she received such a proposal. This presented Sybil with a dilemma. On the one hand this appeared to be the answer to her prayers; on the other hand she felt no affection whatsoever for this man. She sought counsel from a pastor who advised her that if the Lord wanted her to become a missionary, the Lord "would make a way for her heart to go as well as her feet." Sybil said "no."

Sybil taught school in Canandaigua, New York, and continued to pray for an opportunity to be a missionary. On 28 September 1819 she attended the ordination of the first missionaries going to Hawaii, at Goshen, Connecticut. Driving up to the parsonage the night before, Sybil had difficulty understanding the directions to her lodgings. A kind man, Hiram Bingham, took her there. Hiram was one of the missionaries for Hawaii. He made inquiries of a half dozen people who knew her, then asked Secretary Samuel Worcester to set up a private interview. Hiram and Sybil were married 11 October,<sup>7</sup> and embarked on 23 October.

Sybil's story demonstrated both the opportunities and limitations women faced at that time. The missionary movement opened to women opportunities unlike any they had before; but a woman was still dependent on a man for the opportunity. There was no shortage of women ready to respond to the "providential call." Such a marriage proposal was a call to consecration in God's service, a call to usefulness, and a call to adventure.

The missionary wife had an overwhelming task. Besides presiding over a model home carefully scrutinized by the natives, she also had the responsibility of teaching and evangelizing the female half of the population. Missionary women were sometimes forced by circumstance to carry out tasks of spiritual leadership

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<sup>7</sup>Thomas Gallaudet preached the sermon.

they were not allowed to do back home.

Missionary wives pleaded with the Board to send out single female missionaries to help them with home and children so they could do more missionary work. A few single women were allowed to serve as teachers in Indian missions. Betsy Stockton (d. 1865) was the first single woman to be sent overseas by the ABCFM, and also the first African American missionary. Assigned to assist a missionary family, she taught school in Hawaii for several years before returning home.

### Female Education

The supporters of missions, male and female, believed in female education. Previously, affluent women had received “ornamental” education – dancing, drawing, perhaps a little French – to make them attractive to suitors. Now Protestant educators advocated a regimen comparable to men’s. Education for both women and men should promote healthy bodies, inquiring minds, and devout souls. Women, as well as men, should cultivate their intellectual powers, to prepare themselves to be useful in the world.

Joseph (1777-1833) and Rebecca (Hassletine) Emerson opened a seminary for women in Byfield, Massachusetts in 1816. This school moved when Congregational minister Emerson received a new call to a church, to Saugus, Massachusetts, in 1821, and to Wethersfield, Connecticut, in 1824. One of Emerson’s students, Mary Lyon (1797-1849) established Mount Holyoke Female Seminary in 1837. Mount Holyoke used the same textbooks as men’s colleges, and courses were demanding. The school gave its graduates competence and confidence. Every advance that women have made in the professions has been made possible because female education in either women’s colleges or co-educational colleges, prepared women to do the job.

### Women Praying and Preaching

After her husband ran off with another woman, Nancy Gove Cram (1776-1816), a Free Will Baptist from Weare, New Hampshire, went west. After preaching through an interpreter to the Oneida Indians, she went to Charleston, New York in 1812. At the close of a funeral sermon by a Baptist minister, Cram knelt and prayed in public. Afterwards, people who had been deeply moved by her prayer asked her to hold meetings and preach. Cram’s preaching resulted in revival. Feeling unqualified as a lay person to serve communion or to organize a church, she found male ministers of the Christian denomination who organized her converts into a congregation.

Abigail Hoag Roberts (1791-1841), converted by Nancy Cram, immediately began speaking at her revival meetings, and continued after Cram's death to evangelize across New York and adjoining states. Her work resulted in the organization of at least four Christian congregations.

Churches of the Christian denomination did not ordain women in the first half of the Nineteenth Century. Christians made a distinction between proclaiming the Word, which women had been doing since the *Acts of the Apostles*, and exercising the authority of the office of pastor, which they believed was forbidden to women (*LTH* 4:8-11). However, women played a significant role in the life of the laity-affirming Christian denomination.

At the age of nine, Antoinette Brown (1825-1921) professed faith and was received into membership in the Henrietta, New York, Congregational Church. She participated actively in church life and pursued her education, never sharing with others her secret dream of entering the ministry. Following graduation from Oberlin College in 1847, she was allowed to study theology there, but at graduation was not given a degree because of her sex.

Following completion of her studies, Brown traveled across the northern United States speaking for Women's Rights and other reform movements. The Congregational Church in South Butler, New York, called her to be its pastor. She began her ministry in this small rural parish in the Spring of 1853. Without the support of the Congregational clergy or churches, the South Butler Church ordained Antoinette Brown to the Christian ministry on 15 September, 1853 (*LTH* 4:77-79), the first woman to be ordained into the ministry in America.

Antoinette Brown,<sup>8</sup> battled for women's rights and her own right to speak and preach throughout her life. Two weeks prior to her ordination, Brown attended a World Temperance Convention in New York City as a delegate from her congregation. She was not allowed to speak. Newspaper reports of this intelligent, modest young woman being hooted down by clergy, helped make it easier for other women to speak at public gatherings in the future. Brown became a celebrity with many invitations to lecture.

Antoinette Brown enjoyed the parish ministry. However she began to question some of the church's Calvinistic doctrine, including the doctrine of eternal punishment in Hell of all not predestined for heaven, including children. On her request, Antoinette Brown was dismissed from the ministry of the South

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<sup>8</sup>after her 1856 marriage her name was Antoinette Brown Blackwell

Butler Church on 20 July 1854. For the remainder of her life, Antoinette Brown Blackwell, now a Unitarian, did social work in New York City, wrote on social and philosophical subjects, and spoke for women's rights. Antoinette Brown Blackwell was the lonely pioneer. It would be over a decade before another woman would be ordained in America.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>For more on the ordination of women go to Chapter 13, Part C, Ordained Women.