# CHAPTER THREE

## THE STORY OF THE AMERICAN BOARD

The story of the reflex influence of missions in the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions cannot be told without first reviewing the early history of the Board. The formulation of policy by mission executives, the experiences of missionaries, the development of native churches, and the encounter of missions with native societies, all influenced the domestic activities of the foreign missionary movement. Key personalities and important events in the history of the ABCFM provide a framework for the account of the Board's domestic activities.

### I. INCUBATION OF AMERICAN FOREIGN MISSIONS, 1795-1810

#### A New Epoch: 1795

Preaching to the Massachusetts Missionary Society (MMS) in 1809, Samuel Worcester declared, "THE TWENTY-FIRST OF SEPTEMBER, SEVENTEEN HUNDRED AND NINETY-FIVE, will long be held in grateful remembrance, as a distinguished epoch in the annals of Christendom."[1] On that

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[1] quoted in S. M. Worcester, Samuel Worcester, 2:72.

date representatives of the various denominations of dissenters in Britain along with evangelicals of the Church of England united in forming the London Missionary Society. This Society was devoted to sending the Christian Gospel--not any particular denomination--to the non-Christian nations. The formation of the London Missionary Society ignited excitement among evangelical Christians worldwide and inspired the organization of similar societies in Europe, the United States of America, and South Africa, in close communication and consultation with the London society.

Although the event of 1795 galvanized international Protestantism for foreign missions, this was not their first such venture. Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, British societies had provided funds, and British Calvinists in North America recruited the missionaries to preach to the American Indians on a small scale.

The Awakenings of the mid-eighteenth century produced the zeal needed in the trans-Atlantic community to create and sustain modern missions. Also, in American revivals, persons of all races responded, and efforts were begun to reach all races with the Gospel. Jonathan Edwards, an important figure in both the Great Awakening and the development of modern missions, wrote An Humble Attempt, and edited The Life of David Brainerd. David Brainerd (1718-1747) was a missionary to the Indians in the middle colonies, and his Life, widely used for devotional purposes, transmitted a missionary spirit to future generations.

In England, Baptist William Carey (1761-1834) read Edwards' Humble Attempt and was moved to call in 1792 for the establishment of an association to send missionaries to the non-Christian world.[2] As a result, the Baptist Missionary Society was formed, and the following year Carey began a mission in India. This action of one sect of dissenters inspired other English Christians to do likewise. In 1794, Melvill Horne, Anglican chaplain in Sierra Leone, published Letters on Missions, in which he called on British Christians to set aside their sectarian differences to unite in the work of Christian missions. London's Evangelical Magazine reviewed Horne's book and published several other articles on missions,[3] which led directly to the formation of the London Missionary Society.

American Christians quickly joined the movement begun in London in 1795. Under the leadership of Presbyterian John Rodgers (1727-1811), the New York Missionary Society (NYMS) was organized in 1796. Soon to follow were the Northern [New York] Missionary Society (1797), Missionary Society of

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[2] George Smith, The Life of William Carey, D.D. (London: John Murray, 1887), 39.

[3] [David Bogue], "To the Evangelical Dissenters Who Practice Infant Baptism," EM 2 (1794): 378-80; [Thomas Haweis], Review of Letters on Missions, by Melvill Horne, EM 2 (1794): 476-78; Edward Williams, "Missions to the Heathen," EM 2 (1794): 509-11; "An Address: To Christian Ministers, and All Other Friends of Christianity, on the Subject of Missions to the Heathen," EM 3 (1795): 11-15; "Address to the Serious and Zealous Professors of the Gospel," EM 3 (1795): 160-63.

Connecticut (1798), Massachusetts Missionary Society (1799), Standing Committee on Missions of the Presbyterian Church (1802), Missionary Society of Rhode Island (1803), Western Missionary Society (Pittsburgh Synod) (1803), Standing Committee on Missions of the Dutch Reformed Church (1806), and many others.[4]

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[4] Chaney, Birth of Missions, 158-74; NYMS, Address and Constitution; "An Account of the Institution, Progress, and Present State of the New York Missionary Society," New York Missionary Magazine 1 (1800): 5-15; Jonas Coe, "A Short History of the Formation and Progress of the Northern Missionary Society of the State of New York," New York Missionary Magazine 1 (1800): 89-109; Missionary Society of Connecticut, "Constitution of the Missionary Society of Connecticut, with an Address from the Board of Trustees," New York Missionary Magazine 1 (1800): 166-87; Missionary Society of Connecticut, "An Act of Incorporation of the Trustees of the Missionary Society of Connecticut," CEM 3 (1802-03): 300-02; "Missionary Society of Connecticut," CEMRI 6 (1813): 339-43; "A Brief Abstract of the Proceedings and Founding of the Massachusetts Missionary Society," New York Missionary Magazine 1 (1800): 434-40; Nathanael Emmons, To All Who Are Desirous of the Spread of the Gospel ([Boston]: N.p.,1799); Hampshire Missionary Society, "Constitution," CEM 2 (1801-02): 317-19; "Piscataqua Missionary Society Created by Piscataqua Association of Ministers," CEM 4 (1803-04): 393-97; New Hampshire Missionary Society, "Constitution, with an Address to All Christian People," CEM 5 (1804-05): 37-40; Missionary Society of Rhode Island, "Constitution," CEM 5 (1804-05): 393-97;

These societies defined their missions variously as including one or more of four groups: (1) settlers on the frontier, (2) American Indians, (3) persons of African ancestry, (4) overseas missions. All of them conducted missions on the frontier; several conducted Indian missions; only the Presbyterian Church was effective in preaching to the African-American population; none went overseas.

For fifteen years, from the organization of the London Missionary Society in 1795 to the organization of the ABCFM in 1810, American church leaders promoted missions. Periodicals spread the news of missions. Prayers were offered for the advancement of Christ's kingdom, at the quarterly "Concerts for Prayer" in many parishes. Funds were raised through subscriptions and annual congregational collections. Missionary sermons and missionary biographies circulated. Preachers and writers lifted up the missionary as the model of Christian self-denial and disinterested benevolence. All of this had an influence on devout Christians in the generation growing up in this period. They had heard the sermons and read the articles on missions. They searched their souls to understand what "duty" would have them do.

Mills and the Brethren

Samuel Nott, Jr. (1787-1869), of the first company of missionaries, later recalled the generational conflict surrounding the foundation of the ABCFM. American foreign missions began with young men and women, personally

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"Vermont Missionary Society," CEMRI 2 (1809): 305-08.

committed to missions, who first had to convince their elders to organize and support their venture. Nott wrote regarding "the fathers who adopted their cause," "It may have been with slow steps, but they entered fully and heartily into the views and purposes of the young men."[5] Nott also identified the source of the commitment of both generations: "In both cases, it was not a mere *missionary spirit,* but rather an essential piety taking the direction of missions."[6]

For the older generation, people like Worcester, Morse, and Woods, missions was one element in an overall struggle to reform the church. They also conducted revivals, fought Unitarianism and irreligion, brought religion to the frontier, developed their denominational structures, founded schools of higher education, and worked to reform morals. For some members of the younger generation, there was one inescapable duty to be done: to proclaim the Gospel to the world. This younger generation brought foreign missions into being, and held leadership positions in the movement until 1866.

Samuel John Mills (1783-1818) was the key instigator of American foreign missions. He grew up in Torringford, Connecticut, where his father, also named Samuel John Mills (1743-1833), was pastor of the Congregational Church. In a revival at Torringford in 1798, young Samuel came to see how great was his sin and his need for God's grace, but he did not experience that grace. He

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[5] Anderson, Memorial Volume, 56.

[6] Ibid.

continued in a state of religious torment until two years later, when after receiving counsel from his mother he experienced a sense of the glorious sovereignty of God. Then he went out to contemplate his new discovery,

> He retired a small distance into the woods, that he might be the more at liberty to contemplate the character of God, and adore and extol his holy and amiable sovereignty. . . . Every thing was gilded with light and glory; and now and then as he gazed at the splendor and majesty of the divine character, he would still exclaim, 'O glorious sovereignty!'[7]

The next time he saw his father, young Mills said, "that he could not conceive of any course of life in which to pass the rest of his days, that would prove so pleasant, as to go and communicate the Gospel salvation to the poor heathen."[8] Young Mills entered Williams College in the Fall of 1806, where he was soon active in a revival.

Mills shared his thoughts on a missionary life with a few friends at college, and found that James Richards (1784-1822) and Gordon Hall (1784-1826), were also interested. On 7 September 1808, five students, Mills, Richards, Ezra Fisk (1785-1833), John Seward (1784-1873), and Luther Rice (1783-1846), formed a secret society, whose object was "to effect, in the person of its members, a mission or missions to the heathen."[9] They called themselves "The Brethren."

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[7] Gardiner Spring, Memoirs of the Rev. Samuel J. Mills (New York: J. Seymour, 1820), 15-16.

[8] Ibid., 18

[9] Calvin Montague Clark, "The Brethren: A Chapter in the History of American Missions," 14. Society of Brethren Papers, Andover-Newton Theological School, Newton Centre, Mass.

Most accounts of the origin of American missions refer to a "Haystack

In order to avoid being ridiculed as fanatics, members were sworn to secrecy, and the Constitution and minutes were written in a cipher. Ezra Fisk later reminisced,

> The reasons of the secrecy to which I referred were the possibility of failure in the enterprise--public opinion then being opposed to us, in accordance which good men often said, the enterprise of foreign missions of which we talked, was the result of overheated zeal--would be soon forgotten, there was enough to be done at home, etc. Under these circumstances *modesty* required us to conceal our association lest we should be thought rashly imprudent and we should injure the cause we wished to promote.[10]

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Prayer Meeting." The tradition is: "At a stated prayer meeting, held at hours when most students are either engaged in sport or are doing nothing, the idea was presented. Driven by an approaching thunderstorm from the grove where the meeting had usually been held, they took shelter behind a neighboring haystack, and there, in the language of one who was present, 'Mills proposed to send the gospel to that dark and heathen land, and said we could do it if we would.' The subject was then discussed, and as the storm was passing away, Mills said, 'Come, let us make it a subject of prayer under this haystack, while the dark clouds are going and the clear sky is coming.' So they prayed, and continued to pray and consult together through that and the following season."--Mark Hopkins, "Historical Discourse," in Memorial Volume, Anderson, 17. However, accounts differ on who was in the haystack, when, and what for. The best sources indicate the meeting occurred in the Fall of 1808 (7 Sept.), as the Brethren discussed the constitution of their society--Edward D. Griffin, A Sermon Preached September 2, 1828, at the Dedication of the New Chapel Connected with Williams College, Massachusetts (Williamstown: Ridley Bannister, 1828), 24 n.; C. Clark, "The Brethren," 4; Richard Donald Pierce, "A History of the Society of Inquiry at Andover Theological Seminary, 1811-1920" (B.D. thesis, Andover Theological School, 1938), 14. Others locate the Haystack meeting in the Fall of 1807, when Mills shared his missionary dreams with Hall, Richards, and Fisk--S. M. Worcester, Samuel Worcester, 2:86; Joseph Tracy, History of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (New York: M. W. Dodd, 1842), 23; implied in G. Spring, Memoirs of Mills, 29. However, 1806 is the date on the monument at Williams College, and has been commonly accepted--John N. Hewitt, Williams College and Foreign Missions (Boston, New York, Chicago: Pilgrim, 1914), 40.

[10] Pierce, "Society of Inquiry," 15.

If they were to go out as missionaries, someone had to be found to send them and support them. To achieve this goal, the Brethren talked about missions with other students, and with ministers and active Christians off campus. They had two missionary sermons republished--John H. Livingston's 1804 sermon to the New York Missionary Society, The Triumph of the Gospel, and Edward D. Griffin's (1770-1837) 1805 missionary sermon to the Presbyterian General Assembly, The Kingdom of Christ. They distributed these sermons, and also read them to families and small groups of Christians, as a way of starting discussion on missions. The Brethren made a short list of influential evangelical pastors, and resolved to press their missionary concerns on these pastors until they would provide the leadership to organize a mission. The Brethren visited these pastors frequently, found summer jobs in their parishes, and took every opportunity to talk to them. Their list included Worcester, Griffin, and Morse.[11]

Mills graduated from Williams in 1809, and went to New Haven to study theology at Yale. At the home of his friend and fellow theology student, Edwin W. Dwight (1789-1841), he met a Hawaiian youth, Opukahaia (ca. 1792-1818), known in New England as Henry Obookiah, who was learning English from Dwight. To young Mills, Opukahaia was sent by divine Providence, to be the nucleus of a mission to his homeland.[12] Mills took the Hawaiian youth to his father's home in Torringford. There, in the context of a Christian home, the

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[11] Ibid., 13.

[12] G. Spring, Memoirs of Mills, 50.

Hawaiian learned reading, writing and spelling from young Mills' brother, the catechism from young Mills' mother, and how to do farm work from the father.

Mills, Hall and Rice joined James Richards at Andover Seminary in 1810, where the Brethren reorganized. They soon recruited five more students, including Adoniram Judson, Samuel Newell, and Samuel Nott, Jr., into their secret society of persons committed to personal service as missionaries.[13]

The young men who joined the Brethren had similar backgrounds, experiences, and aspirations.[14] Richards, Hall and Rice grew up on farms in Massachusetts. Judson and Nott, like Mills, were the sons of pastors in small

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[13] Pliny Fisk (1792-1825) also joined the Brethren in 1810, apparently before entering college--Society of Brethren Papers, box 1.

[14] For James Richards see: [Benjamin C. Meigs], "Memoir of the Rev. James Richards, American Missionary in Ceylon, who Died August 3, 1822," MH 19 (1823): 241-47; "Further Notices of the Rev. James Richards," MH 20 (1824): 233-36; J. Hewitt, Williams, 56-65; [Loomis], Memoirs of American Missionaries, 70-74; William Buell Sprague, Annals of the American Pulpit (New York: Robert Carter and Brothers, 1857), 2:596-601. For Gordon Hall see: Horatio Bardwell, Memoir of Gordon Hall, A.M: One of the First Missionaries of the Amer. Board of Comm. for For. Missions at Bombay (Andover: Flagg, Gould, and Newman; New York: J. Leavitt, 1834); J. Hewitt, Williams, 8-23; Bennett Tyler, "Rev. Gordon Hall," in American Missionary Memorial, ed. Hamilton Wilcox Pierson, 41-54 (New York: Harper, 1853); [Loomis], Memoirs of American Missionaries, 42-47; Sprague, Annals 2: 531-38; Ebenezer Porter, "Recollections of Gordon Hall," AQR 2 (1829-30):209-11. For Luther Rice see: James B. Taylor, Memoir of Rev. Luther Rice, One of the First American Missionaries to the East, 2d ed. (Baltimore: Armstrong and Berry, 1841); J. Hewitt, Williams, 65-74; [Loomis], Memoirs of American Missionaries, 64-66. For Adoniram Judson see: Francis Wayland, A Memoir of the Life and Labors of the Rev. Adoniram Judson, D.D. (London: James Nesbit, 1853), vol. 1; [Loomis], Memoirs of American Missionaries, 47-52; Woods, Andover, 136. For Samuel Nott see: Henry Clay Trumbull, Old Time Student Volunteers: My Memories of Missionaries (New York, Chicago, Toronto: Revell, 1902), 11-18; [Loomis], Memoirs of American Missionaries, 63-64. For Samuel Newell see: Sprague, Annals, 2: 538-42; [Loomis], Memoirs of American Missionaries, 52-63; Woods, Andover, 137.

rural communities in southern New England. Samuel Newell spent his early childhood on a farm in Maine, but by the age of ten both his parents had died. At age fourteen the orphan Samuel walked to Portland, and got a ride on a ship to Boston, where he became a servant to a wealthy family.

The three sons of pastors, and James Richards, son of a Congregational deacon, were raised in devout orthodox homes. Gordon Hall's parents were respectable people, but not subjects of experiential religion. Luther Rice's mother taught him the Lord's Prayer and parts of the Westminster Catechism, but his father was not interested in religion.

Most of the Brethren had been converted to evangelical Christianity in their late teens. James Richards became hopefully pious at age thirteen, but did not join the church until six years later. Nott professed his faith in 1805 at age eighteen. Gordon Hall was converted in the revival at Williams College in 1806. Rice, like Mills, went through an extended period of religious anguish--not until a year and a half after his "conviction" of sin at age eighteen did he find the peace of submission. Adoniram Judson held deistic views until after his graduation from college. In September of 1808 he began to question these views, and was admitted to Andover Seminary as a "special student" because he was not yet pious. He committed himself to God on 2 December 1808. Newell professed his faith in October 1804 in a congregation whose theology was less demanding than some. In the theological confusion of the Boston area in that day, Newell often questioned if his faith was genuine.

In most cases the parents of these young men supported their religious interests, however, Luther Rice's father was an exception. When Luther established the family altar in the home, with his mother and youngest sister, and started a group for social prayer among members of his local church, his father opposed. This family conflict led the son to leave the family farm and seek an education in order to enter the ministry.

For all of the Brethren, the cost of a college education called for sacrifices and hard work. James Richards' ambition to prepare for the ministry by attending college had to be postponed until he was twenty-two years old, because of his family's limited means. The friends of Samuel Newell's master contributed the money for his preparatory education, and he worked for his expenses at Harvard College. In spite of the necessity to work, some of the Brethren did very well. Adoniram Judson and Gordon Hall graduated first in their respective classes at Brown in 1807 and at Williams in 1808.

In one way or another, all of the Brethren were exposed to missionary activity and the missionary spirit during this period of incubation. Samuel Mills' father was a trustee of the Missionary Society of Connecticut, and went on preaching tours of Vermont, and his mother avidly read missionary literature. Judson's father, also named Adoniram Judson (1752-1826) promoted missions and had preached in Vermont for the MMS. While at Andover, in September 1809, the younger Judson's mind was affected by reading Claudius Buchanan's (1766-1815) missionary sermon, Star in the East, and in February 1810 he

resolved to be a missionary. Young Rice as a new Christian promoted the sale of the Massachusetts Missionary Magazine, which in turn stimulated his interest in missions. When Samuel Nott went to Union College, in Schenectady, New York, he came under the influence of its president, his uncle, Eliphalet Nott (1773-1866). Uncle Eliphalet was an advocate of foreign missions and other benevolences, and had given the missionary sermon at the Presbyterian General Assembly in 1806. Young Samuel began to seriously consider a missionary life on 17 October 1808, but did not make a firm commitment until after he met Judson at Andover.

These students had been caught up in the emotions of the revivals, either at home or at college. The young missionary movement had touched them, through their parents, through printed sermons and periodicals, and through their classmates. Individual aspirations became a group commitment. The Brethren united in frequent prayer and deliberations, resulting in a life-time commitment to foreign missions.

## Formation of the American Board

When the church that Gordon Hall was serving in Woodbury, Connecticut, renewed its request that he settle as their pastor, the young preacher travelled to Andover to consult with the Brethren. Was anything to come of the vows they had made at Williams College or not? The students consulted with their professors. On 25 June 1810, Moses Stuart (1780-1852), professor of sacred

literature, called to his home the students committed to missions, some faculty, and some area ministers. The men of the older generation were of mixed opinions. But Worcester and Griffin, who had been cultivated by the Brethren, and Stuart, spoke strongly in favor of the project.[15] It was agreed to lay the matter before the General Association of Massachusetts, meeting that week.

On 28 June 1810, a paper written by Judson and signed by four students was presented to the General Association meeting in Bradford. Although respectfully asking for guidance, the paper was also a challenge, implying that if their elders were not willing to support them, they would apply to the London Missionary Society. They asked, "whether they may expect patronage and support from a Missionary Society in this country or must commit themselves to the direction of a European society."[16]

On the twenty-ninth, the General Association, recognizing that this project would require a larger financial base and a broader group of supporters than any of the existing small societies, established an "American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions." A Board of five persons from Massachusetts and four from Connecticut was appointed, with the understanding

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[15] Elnathan E. Strong, "The Founding of the American Board," MH 106 (1910): 247. Jeremiah Evarts was in Andover at the time, and also spoke strongly in favor--Anderson, Memorial Volume, 52. However, another source indicates he may not have been in attendance at the meeting--See E. Tracy, Memoir of Evarts, 96.

[16] FTR, 10.

that the General Association of Connecticut could name the Connecticut representatives in the future. Through the efforts of the students, a Board of sympathetic elders had been created to sponsor their mission abroad.

## II. WORCESTER ADMINISTRATION, 1810-1821

### First Mission

The ABCFM held its first meeting on 5 September 1810, and elected Samuel Worcester corresponding secretary. Born and raised on a farm in Hollis, New Hampshire, Worcester had been a strong advocate of orthodoxy in a struggle with Universalists in his first parish at Fitchburg, Massachusetts. After his installation as pastor at Salem, Massachusetts, he became active in the Massachusetts Missionary Society. He was the prime mover of its periodical, the Massachusetts Missionary Magazine from its beginning in 1803 until its merger with the Panoplist in 1808.

The newly created Board had missionary candidates, but lacked funds. Board members took every opportunity to appeal for donations, but as of September 1811, they had raised less than $1,000.

Adoniram Judson was sent to England to consult with the leaders of the London Missionary Society. The American Board wanted to know if the missionary candidates could be sent out under joint sponsorship of the two societies, should the American Board lack sufficient funds. Judson's ship was captured by French privateers, but he escaped from a French prison and

reached London just in time for the annual meeting of the LMS. Contrary to his instructions, Judson returned to the United States with appointments for himself and his colleagues as missionaries of the London Society. The ABCFM felt compelled to give them similar appointments, and increased their efforts in order to not lose their candidates.[17]

Mary Norris (1758-1811), widow of wealthy Salem merchant John Norris, died on 21 March 1811, leaving $30,000 to the ABCFM. The Norris family promptly challenged the will, and it was tied up in the courts. But the Board proceeded, confident that at some unspecified time in the future they would have sufficient funds to begin a mission.

As the year 1812 began, the missionary candidates were ready and waiting, but the Board did not have the cash to send them. The Prudential Committee (the Executive Committee of the ABCFM) issued a circular, dated 3 January 1812, in which they expressed their despair that the mission might not take place, and outlined a new plan for raising funds. They stated that they,

> have reason to fear that preparations for the intended Mission from this country to Asia, must be given up, unless the pecuniary means for carrying it forward are furnished during the present year. In this emergency, the Committee have formed the determination of sending an authorised Agent to many of the large towns in the United States, for the purpose of conferring personally with the Friends of Mission in those towns.[18]

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For a thorough discussion of whether or not Judson received a reprimand from the Board, see: Wayland, Memoir of Adoniram Judson, 1:56-57, 60-63.

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William Bartlett, Samuel Spring, and Samuel Worcester, "To All Whom it May Concern [3 Jan. 1812]," in John Frost to Society of Inquiry, 12 June 1812, SIA, ser. 2, box 2.

John Frost (1783-1842), an 1810 graduate of Andover, was employed as agent from November 1811 until mid-1812, forming auxiliary societies and receiving contributions from New England and New York.

Late in January, Hall and Newell rushed back from Philadelphia, where they had been attending medical lectures, with the news that a ship would be sailing to Calcutta, leaving Philadelphia in two weeks. The Prudential Committee met on 27 January. Another opportunity might not come for some time, but they only had $1,200 available, and they needed $5,000.[19] After much prayer, the Committee decided first to ask the missionaries to go without their wives, if it would not be "incompatible with indispensable engagements."[20] Then they resolved to send them with the funds to support two missionaries, with the understanding that if funds were not forthcoming, the other two would have to transfer to the London Board. They proceeded to plan an ordination service for 6 February.

Three days later the Committee met again. Nothing more was said about the wives staying behind. The would-be missionaries insisted that a fifth young man, Luther Rice, go with them. The Committee felt, "The Case was a very trying one." They "still felt a very heavy embarrassment from the want of

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19 J. Tracy, History, 32. According to S. M. Worcester, Samuel Worcester, 2:121, they had only $500 and needed from $8000 to $10,000.

20 PC 1:17.

funds."[21] With the ordination one week away, Rice was included. Arrangements were made for a ship sailing from Salem to India to take some of the missionaries.

At first only Samuel Worcester on the Prudential Committee believed that the missionaries should be sent--but he prevailed. Worcester's son later reported a conversation between his father and Prudential Committee member Samuel Spring (1747-1819) before the embarkation of the missionaries:

> *Spring:* Brother Worcester, I fear you are going too fast. I doubt if we shall have the means to pay the sum, which we must borrow.
> *Worcester:* There is money enough in the churches!
> *Spring:* I know that, very well. But how can you get at it?
> *Worcester:* The Lord has the key. And before the missionaries shall have reached their field of labor, we shall have enough to pay their outfit, and to continue their support.
> *Spring:* Well, brother Worcester, I don't know but it may be so. But it seems to me, that you have *all the faith there is in the world.*[22]

A large congregation of evangelical Christians assembled on short notice for the ordination service at Salem on 6 February. Before the day was over, Nott, Hall and Rice had left for Philadelphia.

Not everyone believed that the Prudential Committee had done the right thing. Among others, Board member Timothy Dwight decidedly disapproved,[23] and Samuel Mills feared his Brethren were moving too fast. But the Committee had acted on faith that the money would come. The departures of the ships were

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[21] PC 1:18.

[22] S. M. Worcester, Samuel Worcester, 2:122-23.

[23] Anderson, Memorial Volume, 58-59.

delayed two weeks, which gave abundant opportunity for the missionaries and the Board to speak and to gather funds. In the three weeks from the decision of 27 January, $6,000 was collected.[24]

Nine years later, Samuel Worcester evaluated the events of that winter as an important lesson in faith, that would thereafter shape Board policy:

> A lesson of immense importance was indelibly impressed upon the minds of the Prudential Committee; and upon the principle then adopted--*of following as Providence leads;--trusting in the same sovereign Providence, with assiduous attention to the proper means, for the needed supplies;--* have the operations of the Board ever since been conducted.[25]

The Prudential Committee had acted not with worldly prudence, but with faith. They prayed and worked, and the Lord provided.

Five missionaries, three with wives, were sent. As the first American missionaries sailed from America to British India, the United States declared war on England. By the end of the year, Harriet Newell was dead, Adoniram and Ann Judson and Luther Rice had become Baptists, and withdrawn from the care of the American Board, Samuel Newell was emotionally depressed on Mauritius, while Gordon Hall and Samuel and Rosanna Nott were in Bombay, petitioning for permission to stay in India, evading deportation, and then being held under house arrest. Samuel Nott was frequently seriously ill, and by 1815 the Notts left India for health reasons. Each packet of letters received from the missionaries

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[24] J. Tracy, History, 34.

[25] Samuel Worcester, "Letters from the Rev. Dr. Worcester to the Treasurer," MH 17 (1821): 190.

was a new chronicle of disaster. But enthusiasm for foreign missions was building in America. As prospective missionaries and local pastors, on fund raising trips, reached beyond the major commercial port cities into the hinterland, they found broad support. The Board was accumulating a sizeable balance in its treasury, but hesitated to send out more missionaries until peace came.

## Case for Missions

The American Board declared its principles to the people, refuted early criticism, and appealed for support, in a series of published statements during its first four years.[26] Samuel Worcester opened the Board's "Address of 1810" with two Scripture passages:

> The Redeemer of men, who, although 'he was rich, for our sakes became poor,' just before he ascended upon high to give gifts unto men,

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[26] Samuel Worcester, "Address and Form of Subscription [1810]," FTR, 13-14 (authorship attributed--S. M. Worcester, Samuel Worcester, 2:110); Samuel Worcester and Jeremiah Evarts, "Address to the Christian Public, November 1811," FTR, 25-30 (authorship attributed--S. M. Worcester, Samuel Worcester, 2:120; E. Tracy, Memoir of Evarts, 99); Leonard Woods, A Sermon Delivered at the Tabernacle in Salem, Feb. 6, 1812, on the Occasion of the Ordination of the Rev. Messrs. Samuel Newell, A.M., Adoniram Judson, A.M., Samuel Nott, A.M., Gordon Hall, A.M., and Luther Rice, A.B., Missionaries to the Heathen in Asia Under the Direction of the Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (Boston: Samuel T. Armstrong, 1812); Samuel Worcester, "Instructions Given by the Prudential Committee of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions to the Missionaries to the East, February 7, 1812," FTR, 38-42;Jeremiah Evarts, "Address to the Christian Public, November 1812," FTR, 47-53 (authorship attributed--S. M. Worcester, Samuel Worcester, 2:234; E. Tracy, Memoir of Evarts, 99); Timothy Dwight, A Sermon Delivered in Boston, Sept. 16, 1813, Before the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, at Their Fourth Annual Meeting, 2d ed. (Boston: Samuel T. Armstrong, 1813);Evarts, "Address 1813," FTR 67-78.

> gave it in special charge to his disciples to 'go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.'[27]

Missions were undertaken in obedience to the command of Christ to "preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). Christ presented an example worthy of imitation, in that he "became poor" (2 Corinthians 8:9)--that is, denied himself, as an act of love for humanity. The reader could also deny self to give monetarily for the proclaiming of the Gospel to the world.[28]

The Board saw the missionary movement as a sign of, and a necessary preliminary to, a this-worldly millennium, which would come, "not by *miracles,* but by *means.*"[29] Christian union, world peace, the world-wide spread of the Gospel, and an increase in human happiness, were all signs of the coming kingdom.[30] The Board also advanced the idea, "in every human being you see a brother or a sister."[31] The missionary movement was opposed to racism. When the American Protestant saw in a person of color a child of God with an immortal

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[27] S. Worcester, "Address [1810]," 13.

[28] S. Worcester, "Address [1810]," 14; Woods, Sermon Feb. 6, 1812, 11-24; Evarts, "Address 1813," 73-74.

[29] T. Dwight, Sermon, 1813, ABCFM, 20. For other discussion of the millennium see: S. Worcester, "Address [1810]," 13; S. Worcester and Evarts, "Address, 1811," 27-28; Evarts, "Address, 1812," 48; T. Dwight, Sermon, 1813, ABCFM, 7, 25.

[30] Evarts, "Address, 1812," 50; S. Worcester, "Instructions to the Missionaries to the East, 1812," 39.

[31] Woods, Sermon, Feb. 6, 1812, 13. See also: S. Worcester and Evarts, "Address, 1811," 25.

soul, who could have an experience of Jesus Christ, only then would the American Protestant become a friend of mission.

The Board also expressed a concern for those "perishing for lack of knowledge."[32] They combined a high estimate of the exclusive claims of Christ with a benevolent concern for the eternal fate of other human beings--in other words, they combined a love for Christ and a love for humanity. When Samuel Worcester extended the right hand of fellowship at the ordination of the first missionaries, he drew a connection between orthodox doctrine and missions:

> We are not of the number of those, who hold the religion of Bramah to be as good for the people of India as the religion of Jesus. . . . No, dear Brethren, we have not so learned Christ. We know upon the word of God, that . . . righteousness has no fellowship with unrighteousness, light no communion with darkness, Christ no fellowship with Belial . . . and that 'there is none other name under heaven, given among men,' by which to be saved, than the name of Jesus. We believe, in a word, that the blood of the Son of God was not unnecessarily shed; that the ministry of reconciliation through him was not unnecessarily instituted. We are, therefore, not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, nor do we esteem it of little importance to mankind, but we glory in it.[33]

For Samuel Worcester, the missionary enterprise was the logical consequence of the war for orthodoxy. If one had "so learned Christ," with the orthodox--His divinity, incarnation, and atoning death--and believed in a God of love, one would support missions. Neglect of missions was a sign of neglect of the basic

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[32] S. Worcester and Evarts, "Address, 1811," 26. See also: S. Worcester, "Address [1810]," 14; Woods, Sermon, Feb. 6, 1812, 41.

[33] Woods, Sermon, Feb. 6, 1812, 41.

doctrines of orthodoxy. Missions and orthodoxy were so intimately connected, that promotion of either would promote the other. The sharp line being drawn between truth and error in Boston extended all the way to India.

Christian Unity in Action

In 1812 the ABCFM was transformed from a Congregational agency subject to two state Associations, into an independent and interdenominational body with members distributed from New Hampshire to Pennsylvania. This change took place because the Board was forced to seek legal incorporation by challenges to the Norris will. As a result of the act of incorporation passed in the Massachusetts legislature on 20 June 1812, the Board became a self-perpetuating body, with membership determined by the Board itself, not by the General Associations of Massachusetts and Connecticut. The Board had that year invited the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church to form "an institution similar to theirs, between which and them may be such a co-operation as shall promote the great object of missions amongst unevangelized nations."[34] The General Assembly replied in 1812 by commending the work of the American Board to its member churches. When the newly self-perpetuating Board met in 1812, it expanded itself from nine to twenty-four members, including eight Presbyterians from the middle states.

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[34] GA I, 515.

As the first "national" benevolent society, the ABCFM supported the development of a network of cooperative national benevolent societies. In 1812, Samuel Worcester and Jeremiah Evarts, corresponding secretary and treasurer of both the American Board and the Massachusetts Missionary Society, in their capacity with the MMS sent Brethren member Samuel Mills on his first of two journeys of exploration to the west. Reports from these tours stimulated interest in the distribution of Bibles,[35] resulting in the organization of the American Bible Society (ABS) in 1816. Leaders of the American Board established the American Education Society (AES) in 1816 to provide financial aid for "pious young men" preparing for the ministry--including missionary service. Leaders of the American Board were also active in Tract and Sunday School Societies.

This inter-related network of voluntary societies, of which the American Board had a leading role, brought together Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Reformed, and others in varying combinations to promote the advancement of the kingdom of God in the United States and around the world. Not only did they labor for the kingdom, but their Christian unity was interpreted as a sign of the coming millennial kingdom.

## Renewed Missionary Activity

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[35] Samuel J. Mills, and Daniel Smith. Report of a Missionary Tour Through That Part of the United States Which Lies West of the Allegany Mountains (Andover: Flagg and Gould, 1815). See also: William Peter Strickland, History of the American Bible Society, from Its Organization to the Present Time (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1849), 33-34. For the influence of Mills and foreign missions see page 26. See also, E. Griffin, Sermon, 1828, Williams College, 25 n.

The year 1815 brought peace, and a flurry of activity by the Board. In April, the state Supreme Court decided in favor of the Board with regard to the Norris will. Five more missionaries were ordained in June, and departed for Sri Lanka, then called Ceylon, in October. In November, Opukahaia and two other Hawaiian natives were taken under the patronage of the Board.

The Connecticut Congregationalists who were providing an education to the Hawaiians, asked the Board to establish a school for educating in the United States youth from non-Western societies.[36] On 1 May 1817 the Foreign Mission School was opened by the Board, at Cornwall, Connecticut, with mostly Hawaiian and American Indian students.

Cyrus Kingsbury (1786-1870) began a mission to the Cherokee in 1817, and a mission to the Choctaw in 1818. The missions justified financial aid from the federal government by teaching the arts of civilization. The Board echoed the policies of previous Indian missions, working to make the Indians, *"English in their language, civilized in their manners, and Christian in their religion."*[37]

Catharine Brown (ca. 1800-1823), a Cherokee about eighteen years old, was baptized on 25 January 1818. After eight years of prayers and sacrifice,

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[36] The students were referred to as "heathen youth," meaning that they came from societies that were neither Christian, Jewish, nor Muslim.

[37] FTR, 160. These were the words of Ard Hoyt, missionary, reported in the Annual Report for 1817. For the emphasis of the immediate missionary predecessors on civilization see: Gideon Blackburn, "Letters," Panoplist 3 (1807-08): 39-40. Samuel Worcester also favored the use of English--See: Samuel Worcester to Jeremiah Evarts, 1 July 1815, ABC, ser. 1.5, vol. 2.

someone had finally been "hopefully converted" as the result of the Board's missionary labors.[38] Catharine was soon leading prayer meetings among her fellow students, and in two years was teaching her own school.

In 1819 the Board approximately doubled its missionary force, by starting new missions to Hawaii and Palestine. These highly popular missions generated widespread financial support.[39] The Hawaiian youths had travelled widely to promote a mission to their homeland. The death of Opukahaia in 1818, followed by the publication of his Memoir, produced strong support for this mission. When the first missionaries arrived at Hawaii they learned that the king had recently died, and the new king had abolished the old religion. They promptly reported to their supporters in America the message they received before they had set foot on Hawaiian soil: "TAMAHAMAHA IS DEAD;--THE TABOOS ARE BROKEN;--THE IDOLS ARE BURNT;--THE MOREEAHS ARE DESTROYED; AND THE PRIESTHOOD ABOLISHED."[40] The missionaries and their supporters perceived that God had prepared the way, and was blessing their enterprise. Contributions increased; volunteers for missionary service

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[38] Anderson, Catharine Brown, 13-14. That she was the first convert in any of the missions is indicated in S. M. Worcester, Samuel Worcester, 2:417.

[39] Regarding Hawaii, see: John A. Andrew III, Rebuilding the Christian Commonwealth: New England Congregationalists and Foreign Missions, 1800-1830 (Lexington, Ky.: University of Kentucky, 1976), 97.

[40] Hiram Bingham, Daniel Chamberlain, Samuel Whitney, Samuel Ruggles, and Elisha Loomis, "Joint Letter of the Missionaries to the Corresponding Secretary [23 July 1820]," MH 17 (1821): 111. The deceased king's name was usually spelled "Tamehameha."

increased dramatically; Missionary Herald circulation increased from 7,000 to 10,000, as the reports of the missionaries to Hawaii were published in serial form.[41]

The mission to Palestine aroused wide-spread interest because it was the land of the Bible, and because of millennial expectations connected with Jerusalem and the conversion of the Jews.[42] The Board published a record 14,000 copies of the February 1822 issue of the Missionary Herald,[43] which contained missionary Levi Parson's (1792-1822) account of his visit to Jerusalem during the Easter season, the first published accounts of the Holy Land as seen through an American's eyes.

Samuel Worcester died, 7 June 1821, while visiting the Cherokee Mission. In eleven years, the ABCFM had evolved from the dream of a handful of students in a secret society, to an enterprise with national support and a global mission. In 1821 the ABCFM had receipts and expenditures approaching $50,000, and permanent funds in excess of $30,000. It employed twenty-three ordained missionaries, and a total missionary force of eighty-three, at nineteen stations in seven missions. There were handfuls of "hopefully converted" Christian natives at several missions, and later that year three

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[41] E. Tracy, Memoir of Evarts, 160.

[42] AR 1819, in FTR, 229-30.

[43] PC 1:170.

natives of Sri Lanka were licensed to preach.

## III. EVARTS ADMINISTRATION, 1821-1831

### Jeremiah Evarts

Jeremiah Evarts, corresponding secretary of the ABCFM from 1821 to 1831, was a transitional figure between the older generation of American Board founders and the younger generation of the first missionaries. At the time of the ordination of the first missionaries in 1812, thirty-one year old Evarts was closer in age to those receiving the laying on of hands than he was to those giving it. However, he shared with the older generation one important trait. Evarts, like Worcester, Woods, and Spring, had broad interests in an almost endless list of causes. This breadth of interest was evident in the life of the American Board under his leadership, just as the single-minded focus of his successors on world evangelization was evident in their administrations.

Jeremiah Evarts grew up on a farm in northern Vermont, at what was then the frontier. He entered Yale College in 1798, where he became an interested reader of missionary intelligence after the New York Missionary Magazine began publication. After a friend joined the church, Evarts met with college president Timothy Dwight on 13 March 1802, to ask, *"What shall I do to be saved?"* and soon after, "found peace in believing."[44] Evarts studied law and was admitted to

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[44] E. Tracy, Memoir of Evarts, 19.

the bar, believing he could serve God and work for a moral social order through the legal profession.[45] After writing numerous articles for religious magazines,[46] Evarts in 1810 became editor of the Panoplist. As an editor, Evarts expressed his evangelical and millennial opinions on education, against intemperance, war, and slavery, for prison reform, more ministers, Sabbath observance, Sabbath Schools and missions. He was active in voluntary societies dedicated to many of these purposes, as well as to Tracts, Bibles, and Seamen.[47] He was elected treasurer of the ABCFM in 1811. In January 1821 the Panoplist became the Missionary Herald, owned by the ABCFM and totally devoted to missionary news, with Evarts

continuing as editor. The Board elected him Corresponding Secretary in 1821.

System and Policy

In the years of Evarts' leadership, the Board did not undertake new initiatives so much as it strengthened existing missions and attempted to

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[45] E. Tracy, Memoir of Evarts, 38; John A. Andrew III, From Revivals to Removal: Jeremiah Evarts, The Cherokee Nation, and the Search for the Soul of America (Athens, Ga. and London: University of Georgia, 1992), 20-21.

[46] Over the years Jeremiah Evarts wrote many articles in a number of periodicals using a variety of pseudonyms, including, "C.Y.A." (Collegii Yalensis Alumnus), "Coke," "Philalethes," "A.B.," "A.M.," "V.A.," "Agenor," "Antipas," "Benevolus," and others. He wrote most of the material in the Panoplist, volumes 6-16, including most of the reviews--E. Tracy, Memoir of Evarts, 45, 93.

[47] E. Tracy, Memoir of Evarts, 64-91, 317.

establish consistent policies. The only new mission begun in this period was a modest start in Canton, China, in 1830.

System in Domestic Operations. In 1823 the Board finished its fiscal year in the red for the first time. However, the Board would complete the year with a positive balance only once in the next eight years. In November 1823 the Missionary Herald announced a new fund raising plan. The goal was to cover the country with regional "Auxiliary Societies," which would have oversight of local "Associations," two in every parish, one for men and one for women. The association members, as "Collectors," were to canvass their communities for subscriptions to foreign missions.[48] Using seminary students, missionaries awaiting departure, and supportive pastors as agents, the Board steadily built up its network of organization. At the end of Evarts' period of leadership, the Prudential Committee voted to obtain "permanent agents" to work full-time to promote missions and gather funds in specific areas. Because of instability in leadership following Evarts' death, the first permanent agents were not appointed until 1832.

Policy on the Mission Field. Gradually the policies regarding the conduct of missions evolved out of experience in the mission field. Evarts' visit to the Cherokee Mission in 1822, and the suggestion of a council of Choctaw chiefs in

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[48] "Systematic Charity," MH 19 (1823): 367.

1823, led to a reduction and decentralization of the staff of Indian missions.[49] Following the invention of a Cherokee alphabet by Sequoiah (ca. 1770-1843), and the insistence by the Cherokee that their kinsman David Brown (d. 1829) translate the Bible from the original Greek into Cherokee,[50] the Board resolved to make greater use of the Indian languages.[51]

Jeremiah Evarts continued to believe that missions to the Indians should have the three-fold goal of promoting Christianity, civilization, and the English language. However, religious conviction placed priority on evangelization, and the practical experience of the missions led to a lessening involvement in the other two goals. Evarts articulated this shifting emphasis in an 1826 letter, in reply to a proposal for greater emphasis on English and civilization:

> The advantages of communicating the English language has always been a favorite and familiar topic with us; yet experience has proved to our full conviction, that it is a more difficult thing to teach English, even to the children, than we had at first supposed; and that it is wise for some of the persons at every missionary establishment, to learn the language spoken by the Indians at that place. This is useful on every account; but especially as the medium of communicating divine truth to the minds of the adult population. . . .
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> There is abundant, proof . . . that the word of God, brought home to the mind of an Indian, is capable of producing an entire moral change; and this change operates with more power in promoting civilization, than all other causes whatever. . . .

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[49] E. Tracy, Memoir of Evarts, 172; J. Tracy, History, 132.

[50] J. Tracy, History, 167. David Brown was brother of Catharine and a student at Cornwall and Andover.

[51] See Rufus Anderson's discussion of the language question--Rufus Anderson, Foreign Missions: Their Relations and Claims (New York: Scribner, 1869), 98-101.

> Schools, farms, and shops are good auxiliaries; and without them a good state of society cannot exist. . . . But all these things will not civilize a single tribe, if made to occupy the principal place. At least, such are the results of our reasoning and experience.[52]

For pragmatic reasons, Evarts placed greater emphasis on evangelization, and less on civilization and the use of English in Indian missions, than his immediate predecessors. On this matter, Evarts held a transitional position between his predecessors and those who would succeed him.

These changes in policy were reflected in the changing composition of the missionary force. Originally, a missionary was understood to be an ordained minister. However, the Indian missions and the mission to Hawaii were virtual colonies, with teachers, farmers, and others, who had a civilizing mission. By 1822 the male assistant missionaries outnumbered the ordained missionaries employed by the Board. Then, as the Board began emphasizing evangelization over civilization, the number of male assistants was kept down, and by 1831 ordained missionaries were more numerous again.[53]

Christian Unity and Its Limits. Samuel Mills and Edward D. Griffin, who in 1815 were both in Newark, New Jersey, and Presbyterian, were of the opinion that the Presbyterian Church had enormous resources for missions, that could

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[52] E. Tracy, Memoir of Evarts, 250-51.

[53] For discussion of the shift away from civilizing missionaries, see: Anderson, Foreign Missions, 96-98.

only be tapped by a Presbyterian missionary society.[54] Their efforts led to the organization of the United Foreign Missionary Society in 1817 at New York, under the joint sponsorship of the Presbyterian Church, the Reformed Dutch Church, and the Associate Reformed Church. The UFMS devoted itself to Indian missions. It absorbed the New York and Northern Missionary Societies, and in 1825 the Western Missionary Society.

The UFMS and the ABCFM were soon in competition, appealing to the same constituencies for missionaries and for funds. A large proportion of the UFMS missionaries were New England Congregationalists--nineteen of the thirty-two members of the two largest missions established by this Board, both to the Osage Indians.[55] UFMS agent Peter Kanouse (b. 1784) reported of his fund raising travels in 1823,

> From other places where the prospect of success seemed to invite, I obtained nothing. Particularly was this the case in many of the most populous and wealthy towns on my route; all of which had been visited, just before my arrival, by Agents from the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions.[56]

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[54] G. Spring, Memoirs of Mills, 100.

[55] UFMS. Annual Report 1820:19-20; 1821:20.

[56] UFMS. Annual Report 1823:63. By 1822 the UFMS also found itself competing in some areas with the Western Missionary Society--UFMS, Auxiliary Society Committee, Minutes, 30 March 1822, ABC, ser. 24, vol. 1.

In 1826 the UFMS and the ABCFM merged; in effect, the UFMS was absorbed by the American Board. At its annual meeting that year, the ABCFM added twenty-six new members to the Board, giving non-New Englanders a majority of the membership for the first time. The UFMS brought into the American Board missions to the Osage, Seneca, Tuscarora, and Maumee Indians, and at Mackinaw. In 1827 the Chickasaw Mission of the Synod of South Carolina and Georgia was also transferred to the American Board. As a result, American Indian missions accounted for one-third of the Board's expenses in the mission fields.

In spite of its catholic rhetoric, the American Board was not prepared to serve all denominations. Baptists already had their own Board. In 1824 Evarts explained to an Episcopalian who had offered himself to the Board, "We deem it improper for us to send out any missionaries who did not regard our other missionaries as ministers of the Gospel, and was not willing to unite with them in the ordinances of religion." Evarts encouraged him to work for an Episcopal missionary society, "and assured him that our missionaries would rejoice to co-operate with him in any works of benevolence."[57] Mutual recognition of members and ministers was at this point the limiting factor. In fact, the American Board,

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E. Tracy, Memoir of Evarts, 188-89. A similar policy of willingness to co-operate with missionary societies of other denominations, rather than include them in the ABCFM, was expressed regarding the Cumberland Presbyterians in a letter, Benjamin B. Wisner to Artemas Bullard, 3 April 1833, ABC, ser. 7, vol. 1, pp. 86-87. The issue there was theological differences.

with only a few exceptions, never expanded its constituency beyond the Reformed family of churches.

Summary. Jeremiah Evarts once commented in a letter to Samuel Worcester, "If we are to be the instruments of doing anything worth mention for the church of God and the poor heathen, we must exhibit some of that enterprise which is observable in the conduct of worldly men."[58] By 1830 Evarts was administering an enterprise with annual receipts in excess of $100,000, and with a missionary force of 225, supervising about 600 native teachers with over 50,000 students in mission schools, and churches with 1,100 native Christians.[59] The ABCFM was fast becoming a big business, and Evarts worked to give it a life that was both business-like and pious.

## Human Equality in Missions

Jeremiah Evarts saw in all persons, "immortal beings, for whom Christ died."[60] A belief in human equality permeated all of his actions and those of the Board under his leadership.

Women in Mission. Single women were sent as teachers to the Indian missions beginning with Judith Chase in 1818. The first to be listed by the Board as an "Assistant Missionary" was Ellen Stetson (1783-1848) in 1821. The

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[58] Letter dated 31 March 1815, quoted in E. Tracy, Memoir of Evarts, 107.

[59] AR 1830:103-04.

[60] [Jeremiah Evarts], "On the Condition of Blacks in This Country," Panoplist 16 (1820): 489.

first single woman to go overseas and teach school was Betsey Stockton (d. 1865), a former slave of corporate member Ashbel Green, who went to Hawaii in 1822. The next to go overseas, the first to be reported as an "Assistant Missionary," was Cynthia Farrar (1795-1862), who went to Bombay in 1827.[61] However the number of single females sent overseas was small.

It should not be surprising that single women were first sent out as assistant missionaries under Evarts' leadership. As a college junior at Yale, Evarts had written an essay on the question, "Are the Abilities of Females Inferior to Those of Men?" While recognizing that the sexes had different spheres of activity based on differences in their physiology, Evarts asserted that men and women were equals--certainly equals in mental abilities. And women should receive greater opportunities for education and service.[62]

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[61] For information on Judith Chase see: Fred Field Goodsell, You Shall Be My Witnesses (Boston: ABCFM, 1959), 155. For Ellen Stetson see: Worcester Willey, "Obituary Notice of Miss Stetson," MH 45 (1849): 140. For Betsey Stockton see: PC 1:160, 210-11; John A. Andrew III, "Betsy Stockton: Stranger in a Strange Land," Journal of Presbyterian History 52 (1974): 157-66; Betsey Stockton, "Letters," Christian Advocate 1 (1823): 88-89, 423-26; 2 (1824): 232-35, 563-66; 3 (1825): 36-41, 188-89. For Cynthia Farrar see: PC 2:91; R. Pierce Beaver, "Cynthia Farrar," in Notable American Women, ed. Edward T. James, 1:600-01 (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap, 1971). See also--R. Pierce Beaver, All Loves Excelling: American Protestant Women in World Missions (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968), 67-69. In 1819 John and Fanny Scudder were allowed to take with them the colored woman, Amy, as a domestic servant--Jared B. Waterbury, Memoir of the Rev. John Scudder, M.D.: Thirty-six Years Missionary in India (New York: Harper, 1870), 30. Betsey Stockton's status was ambiguous. Although she was not formally listed by the Board as a missionary, Andrew argues in his article that once the missionary ship left sight of America, she was treated as an equal by the mission.

[62] Andrew, From Revivals to Removal, 16.

The Mischief-Making-Man-of-War. At the Hawaiian Islands young women were routinely exploited sexually by the crews of visiting ships. In 1825, Leoiki (b. ca. 1809), a sixteen year old girl attending the missionary school, was sold by the local chief to Captain Buckle, of the British whaleship *Daniel,* for the equivalent of $160. She pleaded with the missionary William Richards (1793-1847) to intercede for her, that she not be taken on board the ship where she would be raped by the whole crew. But his pleas could effect no change, as there was no law against such an action.[63] Soon afterward, a law was passed, prohibiting women from visiting ships in port.

On 14 January 1826, the *U. S. Dolphin,* under the command of Lieutenant John "Mad Jack" Percival (1779-1862), arrived at Honolulu. Percival demanded the suspension of the law against prostitution, and threatened the life of missionary Hiram Bingham (1789-1869) if he should try to interfere. On 26 February 1826, "six or seven sailors from the Dolphin, armed with clubs," entered the room of an ailing Hawaiian chief, and "demanded that the law should be repealed." More sailors arrived, a riot began, and moved to the missionary residence. Bingham, "fell into the hands of the rioters, by several of whom he was seized, some of them holding a club over him in the attitude of striking." At this point the natives intervened, enabling Bingham to escape.[64] After continued

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[63] J. Tracy, History, 170.

[64] AR 1827:79.

intimidation, the chiefs let it be known that the law against prostitution would not be strictly enforced. Besides the *Dolphin,* known in the islands as the "mischief-making-man-of-war," several other ships at Lahaina bullied the authorities into a similar relaxation of the law.

Jeremiah Evarts was outraged by this unjust exploitation of the Hawaiian people. He also saw the opposition of foreigners living on the islands, and the crews of visiting ships, as the gravest threat to the mission. Foreign residents and visitors worked together to exploit the Hawaiians economically and sexually, and opposed all efforts for reform by chiefs and missionaries. Finally, his sense of his own nation's honor was offended. Percival's actions should, Evarts believed, cause every American to feel the shame that he felt.

Evarts began a media campaign, using the Missionary Herald, and encouraging friendly articles and letters in other periodicals. He was confident, "every man is justly held amenable to the great law of public opinion."[65] Then the Prudential Committee made a formal complaint to the navy department. As a result, a court of inquiry was held at Charlestown, Massachusetts, 1 May to 5 June 1828. The decision of the court was never made public; the Board assumed that Percival received a reprimand.[66] Another result of this complaint was the sending of the *U. S. Vincennes,* which arrived at Honolulu, 14 October

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[65] AR 1827:77.

[66] AR 1828:60-62; J. Tracy, History, 226-27.

1829, bringing gifts and apologies to the Hawaiian government. The sloop brought a letter from president John Quincy Adams, which declared, "Our citizens who violate your laws, or interfere with your regulations, violate at the same time their duty to their own government and country, and merit censure and punishment."[67]

The "Percival Affair" had consequences effecting the domestic phase of missions for the remainder of this period. The American Board increasingly appealed for support on the basis of its labors to improve the condition and character of women everywhere. Meanwhile, the battle for "public opinion" persisted, with the foreign community in Hawaii and their friends in the United States repeatedly ridiculing the missionary enterprise in the American press, and the friends of mission responding in kind.

Confrontation of Racism in Connecticut. The Foreign Mission School was not without its problems. The marriage of Cherokee student Elias Boudinot (ca.1803-1839) to a local girl, Harriet Gold (1805-1836), the second such inter-racial marriage at Cornwall, led to the open expression of racist feelings in the community. Evarts was horrified, and lamented,

> Can it be pretended, at this age of the world, that a small variance of complexion is to present an insuperable barrier to matrimonial connexions?

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[67] J. Tracy, History, 226.

> or that the different tribes of men are to be kept forever and entirely distinct?[68]

Evarts defended the marriage, against the opposition of the community and the school's agents. Afterward, he called for an investigation of the school. As the Hawaiians had left, and the personnel and resources for training native leaders now was present on all the mission fields, the school was closed in 1826.

The Cherokee, Advocacy, and National Honor. The federal government was determined that the Indians of the Southeast should be removed west of the Mississippi River. Missionaries of the American Board supported the rights of the Cherokee and Choctaw to remain. The Prudential Committee, while disclaiming any desire to get entangled in politics, decided to send Evarts to Washington in January of 1829 to urge the federal government to adopt a more just and humane policy. The Committee directed Evarts,

> That he express it as the decided opinion of the Board, that the Indians should not be solicited, much less compelled to leave their lands, except upon terms fully explained, well understood, and voluntarily accepted; and that any other course of proceeding would be repugnant to the plainest principles of justice, violate the express stipulations of treaties, and would bring reproach upon the character of our country.[69]

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[68] quoted in E. Tracy, Memoir of Evarts, 223. For more on the Foreign Mission School and its closing, see John A. Andrew III, "Educating the Heathen: The Foreign Mission School Controversy and American Ideals," Journal of American Studies 12 (1978): 331-42; Carolyn Thomas Foreman, "The Foreign Mission School at Cornwall, Connecticut," Chronicles of Oklahoma 7 (1929): 242-59.

[69] PC 2:187-88.

This was not Jeremiah Evarts' first trip to Washington to plead the case of the Cherokee. He had made similar trips in 1823, 1824, 1827, 1828, and would go again in 1830, and Samuel Worcester had made a similar trip in 1819.[70] Besides lobbying in Washington, Evarts aroused support for the Cherokee by writing a series of letters on the subject in the National Intelligencer, using the pen name "William Penn." In the winter of 1829-30 Evarts held public meetings in major cities, and organized petition campaigns to urge Congress to honor its treaties with the Indians.

Identification with the cause of the Cherokee had taken the American Board into politics. The network of supporters that sustained the American Board with money and prayers, was enlisted to petition--and pray for--Congress. Petitions were signed and prayers offered at some Monthly Concerts of Prayer for Missions.

Evarts was motivated in this controversy by a concern for the Cherokee and also a concern for "national honor." He wrote,

> The character of our government, and of our country, may be deeply involved. Most certainly an indelible stigma will be fixed upon us, if, in the plenitude of our power, and in the pride of our superiority, we shall be guilty of manifest injustice to our weak and defenceless neighbors.[71]

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70 E. Tracy, Memoir of Evarts, 129, 188, 190, 267-75, 304-08, 319-29, 353-67.

71 Jeremiah Evarts, Cherokee Removal: The "William Penn" Essays and Other Writings, ed. Francis Paul Prucha (Knoxville: University of Tennessee, 1981), 49.

ABCFM missionaries were prohibited from attending a treaty council in 1830, at which the Choctaw gave up their lands.[72] American Board missionaries Samuel A. Worcester (1798-1859)[73] and Elizur Butler (b. 1794) were arrested and placed in the Georgia State Penitentiary in 1831 for not recognizing the sovereignty of Georgia over Cherokee territory.[74] The following year the Supreme Court of the United States found in favor of the missionaries, but President Andrew Jackson refused to enforce the decision. Ultimately, the Choctaw were removed in the winter of 1831-32, and the Cherokee in the winter of 1838-39.

Summary. Jeremiah Evarts held to an understanding of "brotherhood" that clearly included the sisters. In the 1820s he dared to send out a black female ex-slave as a missionary teacher to Hawaii, scolded the pillars of a rural Connecticut community for their squeamishness over miscegenation, called on the U.S Navy to censure a war hero for the behavior of his sailors while in port,

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J. Tracy, History, 239. See also: AR 1831:82-83; George E. Lankford, "Trouble at Dancing Rabbit Creek: Missionaries and Choctaw Removal," Journal of Presbyterian History 62 (1984): 51-66.

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nephew of the late Corresponding Secretary Samuel Worcester.

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"Arrest of the Missionaries of the Board in the Cherokee Nation," MH 27 (1831): 165-66. See also MH 27 (1831): 79-84, 229, 248-54, 281-84, 299-302, 332-34, 363-65, 395-97; 28 (1832): 18-22, 43-48, 129-30; 29 (1833): 109-14, 183-86; AR 1831:65-75; AR 1832:92-96; AR 1833:96-101; J. Tracy, History, 249-54, 266-67, 280-82; William G. McLaughlin, "Civil Disobedience and Evangelism Among the Missionaries to the Cherokees, 1800-1830," Journal of Presbyterian History 51 (1973): 116-39.

and directly challenged a popular President of the United States over the immorality of his public policy. Evarts was an American Wilberforce, leading evangelical Christians into their first political crusade out of love for justice, and for humanity.

The reflex influence of missions had expanded more than anyone could have anticipated. Praying for the oppressed and signing petitions had become part of American evangelical piety. The proclamation of the gospel of racial equality had become an inseparable element of the missionary movement. The future leadership of the Board would not be able to escape from the political implications of this gospel as applied by much of its constituency to the issue of slavery. Politics had become an expression of the piety--the Christian conviction and millennial vision--of many evangelical Christians.

## IV. ADMINISTRATION OF THE BRETHREN GENERATION, 1831-1850

Worn out by his lobbying efforts and travels to arouse public opinion, Jeremiah Evarts left on a recuperative trip to Cuba in February 1831. Evarts died on his return journey, 10 May 1831, at Charleston, South Carolina. Elias Cornelius (1794-1832) accepted the position of corresponding secretary late in

December 1831, left almost immediately on a fund raising tour, and died at Hartford, 12 February 1832. Next the Board elected Benjamin B. Wisner (1794-1835), to be one of three "co-equal" secretaries with Rufus Anderson and David Greene (1797-1866), who had been serving as assistant secretaries since 1823 and 1828 respectively. Wisner began work in November, 1832, but served only twenty-seven months before his death from scarlet fever 9 February 1835. William Jessup Armstrong (1796-1846) filled the third secretaryship in November 1835. From 1835 to 1846 the Board had a period of stable leadership under the direction of Anderson, Greene, and Armstrong. In the division of labor of three co-equal secretaries, Rufus Anderson was foreign secretary, Benjamin Wisner and then William Armstrong were domestic secretaries, and David Greene was secretary for American Indian missions and
editor of the Missionary Herald.

Secretaries

Cornelius, Wisner, Anderson, Greene and Armstrong were all of the same generation as the first Brethren, the students who initiated foreign missions.[75]

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[75] For information on Elias Cornelius see: [Bela B. Edwards], "Life and Character of the Late Mr. Cornelius," AQR 4 (1832): 249-64; [Bela B. Edwards], "Remarks Upon the Character and Public Life of Mr. Cornelius," AQR 5 (1832): 9-18; Sprague, Annals, 2:633-43. Information on Benjamin B. Wisner is from: Samuel H. Cox, "Memoir of Wisner," in Missionary Remains, 106-43 (New York: Taylor & Gould, 1835); Sprague, Annals 2:682-87; Warren Fay, A Sermon Delivered at the Funeral of the Rev. Benjamin B. Wisner, D.D. (Boston: Crocker and Brewster, 1835). Information on Rufus Anderson is from: Robert Alan Schneider, "The Senior Secretary: Rufus Anderson and the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, 1810-1880" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard, 1980); Augustus C. Thompson and Nathaniel G. Clark, "Discourse

When the pioneer American missionaries were ordained in 1812, these future secretaries of the Board were aged seventeen, seventeen, fifteen, fourteen, and fifteen respectively. They were nurtured on the same piety as the first missionaries, although their backgrounds were more diverse.

All five of these secretaries were the products of small towns, and all of their parents were devout Christians except for Greene's father. Cornelius was the son of a physician, Wisner the son of a lawyer, Greene the son of a mechanic, Anderson and Armstrong the sons of ministers. All professed their faith while in college except Greene, who did not make a profession until a student at seminary. Greene's biographer did not mention a conversion experience, and Wisner definitely came to believe he was reconciled to God without benefit of any revival or religious experience. All five were ordained ministers, although Anderson and Greene never served a church. Cornelius and Wisner were New York state Presbyterians who served Congregational churches in Massachusetts. Armstrong, also Presbyterian, was raised in New Jersey, and carried out most of his ministry in Virginia. Anderson and Greene were New England Congregationalists.

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Commemorative of Rev. Rufus Anderson, D.D., LL.D." MH 76 (1880): 247-51; R. Pierce Beaver, "The Legacy of Rufus Anderson," Occasional Bulletin of Missionary Research 3 (1979): 94-97. Information on David Greene is from: Rufus Anderson, "David Greene," Congregational Quarterly 8 (1866): 325-30. Information on William Jessup Armstrong is from: [David Greene], "Memoir of the Rev. William J. Armstrong, D.D.," MH 43 (1847): 109-20; Nehemiah Adams, A Sermon Occasioned by the Death of Rev. William J. Armstrong, D.D. (Boston: T. R. Marvin, 1846); Hollis Read, ed. Memoir and Sermons of Rev. Wm. J. Armstrong, D.D. (New York: M. W. Dodd, 1853); Sprague, Annals, 4:610-14.

Rufus Anderson, at age fifteen, had attended the ordination of the first missionaries, was deeply impressed, and began to think of going to India as a missionary. Anderson became a member of the student Society of Brethren committed to missions at Andover, and both he and Greene offered themselves to the Board for missionary service. William Armstrong experienced a conversion to the missionary spirit at a meeting for prayer for the conversion of the world in January 1833. All five were active in the ABCFM before their appointment as secretaries. Anderson and Greene were assistant secretaries, and Wisner was a member of the Prudential Committee. Cornelius had been a frequent fund raising agent for the Board, then was installed as Samuel Worcester's associate pastor in Salem, enabling Worcester to spend more time on Board business. Later he put the American Education Society on a solid financial basis as its full time secretary. Armstrong organized the Central Board of Foreign Missions (CBFM), the ABCFM auxiliary for the Presbyterian Synods of Virginia and North Carolina, and then became its agent.

William Armstrong died in a shipwreck in Long Island Sound on 27 November 1846. David Greene was injured in a railroad accident in 1847, and resigned the following year. Rufus Anderson continued as foreign secretary until 1866, then served on the Prudential Committee until 1875.

Missions

The Board entered a period of missionary expansion in the 1830s. Some missions to the American Indians moved west with the Indians, and others closed, but new missions were started among the Ojibwa (1831), Pawnee (1834), Dakota (1834), and the Indians of Oregon Territory (1835). A mission begun at Cape Palmas, in Liberia, in 1834, to the indigenous population, moved to Gabon in 1843, and a mission was sent to the Zulu of South Africa in 1835. The Board began missions among Tamil speakers in South India at Madura (1834) and Madras (1836). In southeast Asia the Board selected Thailand for a mission (1831). The China mission expanded from Canton into Amoy (1842) and Foochow (1847).

The Board's missionary force, which in 1831 consisted of 61 ordained missionaries, 45 male assistant missionaries, and 126 female assistant missionaries, had almost doubled in 1850 to 127 ordained missionaries, 34 male assistants, and 204 female assistants. As these figures indicate, the Board was placing more emphasis on ordained missionaries to proclaim the gospel, and less on male assistants with civilizing missions.

In this period the Board also resisted increased reliance on women in mission. In 1835, Board missionary David Abeel (1804-1846) advocated the creation of a parallel women's board to support more women in mission to women, and philanthropist Sarah P. H. Doremus (1802-1877) began its

organization. But secretary Anderson vetoed the project, and a women's board related to the ABCFM was not established until after his retirement.[76]

When secretaries from the generation of the first Brethren assumed leadership of the ABCFM, they immediately began to express and to institute clear policy positions. These new positions were the result of twenty years of missionary experience and a piety that centered on the urgency of world evangelization. David Greene introduced new policies in Instructions that he gave on 10 June 1832 to Sherman Hall (1800-1879) and William T. Boutwell (1803-1890), missionaries to the Ojibwa. Hall and Boutwell were told, "The mission you contemplate will differ in many of its circumstances from any of those heretofore established by the Board among the Indians."[77] The Board had to develop a more economical way of doing Indian missions if it hoped to do more. Therefore the Ojibwa mission would have no "large secular establishments, agricultural or mechanical." Greene explained,

> These establishments . . . have contributed little to the diminution of expense, while they have rendered large mission families necessary, given to the stations an appearance of wealth and show, occasioned much perplexity and labor, and not unfrequently have been the occasion of reproach and objection on the part of opposers.[78]

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[76] Beaver, All Loves Excelling, 90-93.

[77] David Greene "Extracts from the Instructions of the Prudential Committee to the Rev. Sherman Hall and Rev. William T. Boutwell, Missionaries to the Ojibeways of the North West Territory of the United States." AR 1832:163.

[78] Ibid., 164.

Greene clearly instructed the missionaries on their central purpose:

> The great object of your mission, the object never to be for a moment lost sight of, is to preach the gospel of Christ directly to old and young, with the intention and earnest desire of being made the instruments of their speedy conversion.[79]

Missions were to be lean; gone were the "large secular establishments." There was no financial aid from the federal government, and no accompanying obligation to advance civilization. While earlier Indian missions had been shaped by a three-fold mission--to evangelize, civilize, and anglicize--now there was only one "great object"--the proclamation of the Gospel.

Hall and Boutwell were also instructed to learn the Ojibwa language and to study the Indian religions. After learning the language they were to give it a written form, and to translate elementary books and Scripture tracts. Greene gave the missionaries a list of questions to guide them in studying the Indian religion. They included, "Have they any conception of a Supreme spiritual Being? . . . Do they seem to have any Conscience which constrains them to do what they admit to be right? . . . Have they any notion of sin against God?"[80] These questions could be described as a search for natural (as opposed to revealed) religion. They were also a search for points of contact between Christianity and the native religion.

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[79] Ibid., 165.

[80] Ibid., 166.

In earlier Indian missions many missionaries and assistants never learned the language; they had established large mission stations as little islands of white American Christianity in Indian country, and tried to attract people to these "islands." For Hall and Boutwell, learning the language was neither optional nor simply desirable, but "indispensable." For them there was no "island;" they were to be totally immersed in Indian society. They had to know the language, to understand how Indians thought about God and religion, and to live more simply--more like the Indians--"content with the mere necessaries of life." The new leaders of the Board believed that these new missionaries, freed from any obligation to "civilize," could get closer to the people and therefore more effectively evangelize.

The following year, Wisner, Anderson, and Greene published "The General Objects of the Board Stated," as the conclusion of the 1833 annual report. They declared that all of the labors of the Board were directed to one grand object:

> The Board is, pre-eminently, a *society for preaching the gospel.* This is its primary and leading design--the grand object for which it exists. All its plans have an ultimate reference to the preaching of the gospel. The heathen are educated, and books are translated, printed, and distributed among them, that they may become attentive, thoughtful, intelligent hearers of the gospel.[81]

The Board did not have a distinct and separate mission to "civilize."

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81 [Benjamin B. Wisner, Rufus Anderson, and David Greene], "The General Objects of the Board Stated," AR 1833:139. See also: AR 1836:113.

In addition to this focus on the one "great object" of evangelization, there was a second new policy, which Rufus Anderson called "devolution." In a paper presented to the Board in 1841, Anderson advocated the raising up of a native ministry as soon as possible:

> The fact is important to be noted, that the elders, or pastors, whom the apostles ordained over the churches they gathered among the heathen, were generally, if not always, *natives of the country.* In this way the gospel soon became indigenous to the soil, and the gospel institutions acquired, through the grace of God, a self-supporting, self-propagating energy.[82]

This true theory of missions, Anderson said, was "simple, economical, practical, scriptural, mighty through God."[83] This principle of developing independent churches that would no longer need missionaries, churches that would be self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating, became a central principle of mission policy under Anderson's leadership. The first steps of "devolution"--the diminishing of missionary involvement--began before mid-century in Hawaii.[84]

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Rufus Anderson, "On Raising Up a Native Ministry Among the Heathen," AR 1841:44-45. See also, "Heathen Nations Must Be Rendered Independent of Christendom for Their Religious Teachers as Soon as Possible."--AR 1836:113; also, [Rufus Anderson], "Principles on Which Missionary Seminaries Are to Be Reared," AR 1837:151; Anderson, Foreign Missions, 101-05.

83

Anderson, "On Raising Up," 45.

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Clifton Jackson Phillips, Protestant America and the Pagan World: The First Half Century of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, 1810-1960 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University, 1969), 127-29.

In the 1846 annual report, the secretaries described another aspect of devolution. They cautioned their supporters against expecting the native Christians to be just like them:

> It may be remarked also that it hardly seems liberal or wise to bring every opinion and practice and institution of other communities to the standard of our own, and severely condemn whatever does not accord with it. . . . It surely is possible that what seems to us so wrong, others, in a different state of society, and with different training, and with other facts before them, may honestly think to be the best arrangement practicable.[85]

While native Christians were given abundant instruction and advice, they were ultimately responsible for determining how to live out their faith in their society.

Mission policy was developing to some extent in response to a new reality: the indigenous church. The numbers of professed Christians in the churches of the ABCFM missions increased, from 1,100 in 1830 to over 25,000 in 1850. Thirty-three native congregations in 1831 grew to eighty-seven in 1849. Four native preachers in 1832 were succeeded by a force of twenty-eight native pastors and preachers in 1850. By 1850 the mission churches in foreign lands were contributing over $8,000 to the ABCFM.

## Declension and Retrenchment

While the mission churches were receiving vitality through revivals, the church in the United States had entered a period of "declension." In 1836

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[85] AR 1846:228.

Nicholas Murray (1802-1861), writing in The Literary and Theological Review, lamented that the great age of revivals was over. He noted:

> With this withdrawal of special spiritual influences, there is a corresponding declension of vital piety. There remains much of the form of godliness for which we should be thankful. There is much activity and liberality in sustaining our various benevolent institutions; but the living energy, the spirit which vital piety imparts, is comparatively absent.[86]

This decline, observed in 1836, had been coming for some time. The fires of revival enthusiasm could not burn hot forever. The revivals created the benevolent societies; now, Murray observed, the activity related to benevolent societies was all that remained of the Second Great Awakening. This spiritual declension was followed by the American Board's biggest financial crisis of the century.

From 1823 through 1844, a period of twenty-two years, the ABCFM completed its fiscal year with a positive balance only three times. Indebtedness had become a way of life. As long as the Board's assets in Permanent Funds exceeded their deficit, they were able to maintain good credit. The leaders of the Board believed, quite simply, that proclaiming the Gospel around the world was the most important work to be done in the world. As they interpreted the Scriptures, God guaranteed them success, and they should move ahead in faith. Experience told them that when the friends of mission in America were well

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[86] Nicholas Murray, "Causes of the Present Declension of Religion," Literary and Theological Review 3 (1836): 489-90. Not everyone held a negative view of declension--See: [Horace Bushnell], "Spiritual Economy of Revivals of Religion," Quarterly Christian Spectator 10 (1838): 131-48.

informed about the good works and successes of the Board, and aroused to an awareness of the Board's financial need, the money would come.

However, in 1836 a financial crisis was brewing. The missionary force had expanded in six years from 46 ordained missionaries in 1830, to 115 ordained missionaries in 1836. Donations had also increased, but not as much. The deficit at the end of the 1836 fiscal year was $38,866.57.

The Board had been proud of its policy that no qualified missionary candidate was ever refused because the Board lacked funds. However, in early September 1836, the secretaries sent a letter to all missionary candidates, telling them to suspend preparations for departure until further notice. At the annual meeting later that month, the secretaries presented to the Board the severity of the crisis. The Board boldly directed the Prudential Committee and secretaries to send out the missionaries, and assured them that the money would come.

What came was the financial panic of 1837. Many of the friends of mission in the eastern commercial cities were financially embarrassed, and unable to honor the promises of financial support which they had made to the Board. With receipts dwindling, the Prudential Committee and secretaries had to write to all the missions, asking them to curtail expenses and to make cuts in planned expenses. The missionaries preparing to leave were detained again. Desperate appeals were made to supporters across the country, and through a herculean effort, donations were raised by 38% over the previous year, to $233,443.39. In spite of this, the deficit had deepened by about $2,500.

The policy makers of the Board understood that it was in the "progressive nature" of missions to grow;[87] once started, a mission needed more money every year, as the mission expanded, until the native church began to take over that financial responsibility. It was in their sight an immoral act to curtail the natural expansion of the missions. But if the Board lost its valued global credit, and if it lost the confidence of its supporters regarding prudent money management, it would have even less funds for mission.

The Board remained in a state of financial crisis for several years. Even the devout friends of mission could become dull to annual cries of financial crisis. Many of the detained missionaries decided that duty called them to help out the Board by finding another job. As others waited for years, moving from one temporary job to another, new applications dwindled. Interest in missions on college and seminary campuses evaporated.

The Board ended fiscal 1841 with its biggest deficit ever--$57,808.91. The year 1842 was a year of renewed impassioned pleas to once and for all resolve the crisis. They succeeded in raising donations by 30% to $277,495.04, and

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[87] [Jeremiah Evarts], "Address to the Patrons and Friends of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions," MH 23 (1827): 57-62; AR 1838:140-43; Rufus Anderson, The Work of Missions to Be Progressive (Boston: Crocker and Brewster, 1840); Rufus Anderson, "The Essentially Progressive Nature of Missions to the Heathen," MH 38 (1842): 113-16; Thomas H. Skinner, Progress, the Law of the Missionary Work: a Sermon Preached in Rochester, N.Y., Sept. 1843 Before the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions at Their Thirty-fourth Annual Meeting (Boston: Crocker and Brewster, 1843); Rufus Anderson, "Ability of the Board to Conduct Missions on a More Extended Scale," AR 1850:74-75; Anderson, Memorial Volume, 165-66.

reducing the deficit to insignificance. However, the original flame that had created the American Board, the enthusiasm of students, had been quenched. Anderson, writing in 1852 of the detention of missionaries in 1837, reported that the Board, "has not yet recovered from the paralyzing influence of it on the colleges, theological seminaries and churches."[88]

Rising Denominationalism

Growing denominationalism and militant anti-slavery agitation competed with the American Board for the attention and support of the friends of mission, and ultimately led to division.

Presbyterians. The Presbyterian Church was divided on the issue of how it should conduct foreign missions. Ashbel Green, a corporate member of the American Board and also advocate for a separate Presbyterian Board, identified three points of view. (1) Some believed that missions should be done by the Presbyterian Church, and so did not support the ABCFM. (2) A middle group wanted a church-related Presbyterian Board, but supported the ABCFM until such time as one was established. (3) Many whole-heartedly supported the American Board and opposed the creation of a Presbyterian Board.[89]

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[88] Rufus Anderson, "Statistical History of Benevolent Contributions in the Past Sixteen Years," AR 1852:17.

[89] Ashbel Green, A Historical Sketch or Compendious View of Domestic and Foreign Missions in the Presbyterian Church of the United States of America (Philadelphia: William S. Martien, 1838), 94-98.

Pittsburgh Synod created the Western Foreign Missionary Society (WFMS) in 1831, with former ABCFM missionary candidate and temporary agent Elisha P. Swift (1792-1865) as corresponding secretary. The ABCFM and this new society were soon in vigorous competition for financial support from Presbyterian congregations. Both Boards took the "high road," in all their public statements. American Board secretary Benjamin B. Wisner admonished Cincinnati-based ABCFM agent Artemas Bullard (1802-1855) in a letter dated 14 June 1834:

> You must not have war with the Western Society. . . . When people have chosen to act with them, be + appear to be satisfied; and if you have a fair opportunity, when their work is going on, help them. Show that your great object is to get people engaged in the work of For[eign] Missions and that how, or through what channel, is, in your estimation, of comparatively little importance. This is policy as well as duty.[90]

The Western Society had only good words for the ABCFM, but asserted that their new society was needed to increase the overall giving to missions.[91]

However, not all of the supporters of the two Boards were as kind, the competition was fierce, and the politicking at General Assembly was intense. A letter from Artemas Bullard, at General Assembly in 1835, to secretary David Greene, regarding the old school Convention prior to the Assembly, revealed the real feelings on both sides:

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90 Benjamin B. Wisner to Artemas Bullard, 14 June 1834, ABC, ser. 7, vol. 1, p. 231.

91 Western Foreign Missionary Society, Executive Committee, "Address," Foreign Missionary Chronicle 1 (1833-34): 6; "Introductory Remarks," Foreign Missionary Chronicle 1 (1833-34): 1-2; [Ashbel Green], "The Foreign Missionary Society of the Synod of Pittsburgh," Christian Advocate 10 (1832): 418-20.

> Dr. [Joshua L.] Wilson says I am a very bad man + that I am doing more to destroy Presbyterianism in the West, than any man this side of the mountains. He honored me with a whole speech before the Convention I understand. In one of his printed documents among other things dangerous to the ch[urc]h, he mentions Artemas Bullard + Absalom Peters with their palaver + money. I had no idea that I was worthy of such special notice. May the Lord grant me humility under such unexpected honor.[92]

In 1837, when the Presbyterian Church divided, the Pittsburgh Synod's Board became the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions (BFM), organically related to the old school General Assembly.

Rufus Anderson would later write that the old school schism had little impact on the American Board.[93] In fact, the magnitude of the American Board's financial crisis at that time dwarfed to insignificance the impact of the loss of old school support. But support from old school areas had been increasing, and now was lost. ABCFM auxiliaries in the states of Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia, which in 1837 gave $16,358.60 to the Board, soon declined to giving an average of $3,829.23 for the period 1840-1842.[94]

Reformed Churches. The Reformed Dutch Church also wanted to participate in Foreign Missions as a denomination. This was accomplished in a more gradual and harmonious way than was the case with the Presbyterians.

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92 Artemas Bullard to David Greene, 25 May 1835, ABC, ser 12.1, vol. 5. Absalom Peters was a secretary of the American Home Missionary Society.

93 Anderson, Memorial Volume, 99.

94 AR 1835-1842. The figures are: 1835: $8,940.32; 1836: $14,668.70; 1837: $16,358.60; 1838: $9,501.54; 1839: $7,792.24; 1840: $5,259.53; 1841: $1,098.74; 1842: $5,129.41.

According to a plan adopted in 1832, the Reformed Church raised funds through its own Foreign Missionary Society, and sent out missionaries through the Board. These missionaries were located together in Reformed missions. Reformed funds were channeled through the American Board to the Reformed Missions, with the ABCFM supervising the work. Efforts to establish a Reformed Dutch mission in the Netherlands East Indies failed, but missions were begun on this plan in Amoy, and the Arcot mission in India (1851). In 1857 these missions were transferred to the direct and independent control of the Reformed Dutch mission board.

The German Reformed Church also supported missions through the American Board beginning in 1838. This church had its own missionary society for raising funds, similar to the Dutch Reformed, and supported one missionary couple of German Reformed origin.[95]

Anti-slavery Agitation.

While the Brethren-generation leaders of the American Board focused on world evangelization, others of their generation focused on the abolition of slavery. The latter believed this was the one overriding moral, religious, political, social, and economic issue of the day. Abolitionists persistently petitioned the American Board to take a stronger position against slavery. Every annual

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George W. Richards, "The Beginnings of Foreign Missions of the Reformed Church in the United States," in Fifty Years of Foreign Missions of the Reformed Church in the United States, 1877-1927 (Philadelphia: Board of Foreign Missions, 1927), 9,12.

meeting of the Board from 1840 to 1849 was confronted by at least one anti-slavery memorial.

Some corporate members of the American Board, a number of missionaries, and numerous supporters held anti-slavery convictions. Joel Hawes (1789-1867), ABCFM corporate member, Hartford pastor, and father of a missionary wife in Turkey, had joined the anti-slavery society in 1837, following the assassination of abolitionist Elijah Lovejoy (1802-1837).[96] An anti-slavery society was organized within the Hawaii Mission in 1841.[97]

ABCFM missionary in Persia, Justin Perkins (1805-1869), shared his feelings on slavery in an 1841 letter to abolitionist Lewis Tappan (1788-1873).

> The condition of the Nestorian Christians, too, for whose salvation we are more particularly laboring, is such as often to remind us of the slaves in America. They are trodden down to the dust by their Mohammedan masters, not for difference of color, but for bearing the name of Christ. It is truly affecting to witness their degradation, and, often, their sufferings. There is, however, but a small comparison between the rigors and the horrors of their condition, and that of the southern slave. . . . Yes, though I blush, and my heart sinks within me at the acknowledgment, yet truth and candor compel me to say, that in all my travels and residence, in these *dark realms* of MOHAMMEDAN DESPOTISM, I have seen nothing in the shape of oppression to equal, and scarcely to bear a comparison with the rigors and abomination of that under which *millions* of immortal beings are at this

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Robert Cholerton Senior, "New England Congregationalists and the Anti-Slavery Movement, 1830-1860" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1954), 162.

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"Sandwich Islands," Emancipator 6 (3 March 1842): 208. A monthly concert for prayer for the abolition of slavery was begun in the mission, 29 May 1837--Jonathan S. Green, "Letter [29 May 1837]," Emancipator 2 (22 March 1838: 182. A resolution against slavery was passed at a meeting of the mission in May 1837--Harvey R. Hitchcock, "Missions and Slavery," Emancipator 3 (10 May 1838): 7.

> moment groaning, in our own CHRISTIAN, PROTESTANT, REPUBLICAN, AMERICA.[98]

Missionaries who prophetically condemned oppression in non-Christian countries, and were deeply affected by human suffering, could not fail to apply the same prophetic standards to their own country. Neither could the supporters of missions fail to see the parallels. Having come to believe that, "in every human being you see a brother or a sister,"[99] and that theirs was the age of action, many friends of mission joined the anti-slavery crusade. Most of the anti-slavery society's support came from the areas that most strongly supported the American Board--rural western New England and upstate New York.[100] While the reflex influence of foreign missions did not create the abolitionist movement, that

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Justin Perkins, "Letter from an American Missionary in Persia [22 Jan. 1841]." Emancipator 6 (24 June 1841): 29.

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Woods, Sermon, Feb. 6, 1812, 13.

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The bulk of the approximately quarter million members of the American Anti-Slavery Society in 1838 were from rural areas and small towns in western Massachusetts, southern Vermont, New Hampshire, upstate New York, and northeast Ohio--John R. McKivigan, The War Against Proslavery Religion: Abolitionism and the Northern Churches, 1830-1865 (Ithaca: Cornell University, 1984), 38. In the ten year period 1830-1839 the ABCFM received through Auxiliary Societies $1,025,500. Of this total, $321,700 (31.4%) was from western New England (Vermont, western Massachusetts, and Connecticut), $288,064 (28.1%) from eastern New England, and $241,557 (23.6%) from New York excluding Reformed Dutch contributions--AR 1830-1839. By 1840 the ABCFM listed 693 persons who had served the Board as missionaries or assistant missionaries, and gave the hometown or birthplace of 649. Of this latter figure, 256 (35.3%) were from western New England, 158 (24.3%) from New York state, and 134 (20.6%) from eastern New England--"Statistical View of the Officers, Missions, and Missionaries of the Board," MH 36 (1840): 18-36.

"influence" certainly created an ethos, ways of thinking, and patterns of organization that contributed strongly to abolitionism.

To the secretaries of the American Board, the anti-slavery movement was a distraction from the grand object of world evangelization.[101] Secretary William J. Armstrong drew criticism when he charged abolitionists with having a "violent, reckless, and wicked spirit."[102] Mostly the secretaries kept their thoughts to themselves, complaining in their private correspondence about those whom they called "ultras."[103] But their hostility was sensed by the abolitionists, who complained about the Board's "*studied silence* on the Subject of American Slavery."[104]

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During floor debate on slavery at the ABCFM annual meeting in 1845, Rufus Anderson impatiently "hoped a speedy action on this question."--"The American Board of Missions," Emancipator 10 (17 Sept. 1845): 82. In a similar situation the following year, Anderson was indirectly quoted as saying, "If these conventions were to be made scenes of dispute and wrangling on extraneous subjects, they had better be given up."--"Meeting of the American Board," Emancipator 11 (22 Sept. 1846): 86.

102

Gerrit Smith, "Gerrit Smith's Letter to John Tappan," Emancipator 3 (13 Sept. 1838): 79. See also editorial comment with same title--Emancipator 3:80.

103

For example: Armstrong wrote to the other Secretaries in May 1836, "This morning the Anti-Slavery Society held its annual meeting, + I had the honor (I am told) to be used up in pretty handsome style by Mr. Sec. Wright, for my unlucky disclaimer of abolitionism, last September. So we go. It would be a pity, if they had not something to fill up their report, + somebody to abuse, to keep up their interest in the cause of the oppressed. But I regret exceedingly that they should have an opportunity of striking at the A.B.C.F.M. through my poor sides."--William J. Armstrong to Secretaries of ABCFM, 10 May 1836, ABC, ser. 11, vol. 4, no. 41.

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AR 1841:58.

At its 1841 annual meeting, the Board adopted a carefully worded statement on slavery, which became the basis of Board policy for the next two decades. The report made two points. First, the ABCFM had been created and legally incorporated for one purpose and one purpose only, "to propagate the gospel among unevangelized nations." The report, signed by committee chairman Leonard Woods explained,

> The Board and its missionaries have taken care to confine their efforts to this *one object*. . . . It appears to your committee to be a duty of the first importance . . . to continue to pursue our *one great object* with undivided zeal, and to guard watchfully against turning aside from it, or mixing any other concern with our appropriate work, as a Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. There are indeed many other works of Christian benevolence to be accomplished. But the work of *this Board is one,* namely, *to propagate the gospel among unevangelized nations.*[105]

Having advocated specialization among benevolent societies, the report went on to make a second point: "*This Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions can sustain no relation to slavery,* which implies *approbation* of the system, and *as a Board* can have no connection with it."[106]

The 1841 statement on slavery marked the boundaries within which the anti-slavery debate in the Board was to be conducted. On the one hand, the issue of slavery should not be allowed to intrude on the *"one great object"* of the

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105 AR 1841:59-60.

106 AR 1841:60.

Board. On the other hand, the Board should not be in any way connected with slavery.[107]

As controversy continued, ABCFM leaders and abolitionists came to agree that a separation of missionary work would be desirable.[108] In 1846 New York philanthropists Lewis and Arthur Tappan (1786-1865) organized a meeting of several small anti-slavery missionary societies, which united to form the American Missionary Association. Established on explicitly anti-slavery principles, the AMA was a clear protest against ABCFM policies. It sponsored a diverse variety of missions, including (1) a mission in Africa, (2) missions to free persons of color in Canada, New York City, and Jamaica, (3) support of anti-slavery White churches and evangelists in the United States, (4) support of former ABCFM missionaries in Hawaii and Thailand, who had transferred to the AMA in opposition to slavery. The leading dissident ABCFM missionary was Jonathan S. Green (1796-1878),[109] who left the Board's service in Hawaii on 1 October 1842.[110] The AMA was soon receiving $20,000 annually, and American Board contributions in 1846 declined 12%.

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The account of the debate over slavery in the ABCFM is resumed in chapter 8, page 409.

108

The Board's annual report of 1844 encouraged dissenters to form their own missionary societies--AR 1844:68.

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brother of Beriah Green, who was quoted in chapter one.

110

Jonathan S. Green, "Letter from the Sandwich Islands [17 May 1844]," Emancipator 8 (27 Nov. 1844): 124.

Summary

In the 1830s and 1840s, the generation that gave birth to the American Board took charge. What was once the dream of a few youths nurtured by revivals, was now a global enterprise with an impeccable reputation for integrity, piety, and good business sense. Founded in secret for fear of being labeled fanatics, the American Board had become the "establishment." Its fame, organization, and loyalty of supporters, was envied by old school Presbyterians, abolitionists, and others. With respectability came social conservatism, which was expressed in a reluctance to deal with the issue of slavery, or to permit women to run their own mission board.

Revivals lived on in a new form as "missionary spirit." American Board leaders from the Brethren-generation worked to keep this spirit alive in their constituency. The piety of the people made possible this vast missionary enterprise. The Board was sustained by prayers, financial gifts, and lives dedicated to missionary service. In turn, the missionary enterprise nurtured the piety that sustained it.

With single-minded devotion to their one great purpose, the leaders from this generation persevered, through financial panics, church schisms, and anti-slavery agitation. They began new ventures. They made adjustments to the rising denominationalism and changing social concerns. They reshaped mission policy in ways that were Biblical, effective, and economical.

## SECTION V: A FOURFOLD REFLEX INFLUENCE

As an institution, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions was composed of missionaries, secretaries, agents, auxiliaries, associations, etc. But there was something more, because the missionary movement was more than an institution. There was the *missionary spirit.* As described in Chapter One, there was something about missions that lifted people and gave them joy. It was more than exciting; it was spiritually renewing. Through the reflex influence, the foreign missionary movement had a profound effect on the church in the United States. This was primarily an influence on and through the piety of the friends of mission.

The next four chapters will examine that piety as it existed at the beginning of the missionary movement, and as it evolved under the influence of that movement. Four aspects of piety will be examined in the order in which they appeared. First was prayer. With the publication of Jonathan Edwards' Humble Attempt in 1747, a movement of prayer for missions began a half century before the missions. Second came reading material. When the New York Missionary Magazine and the Connecticut Evangelical Magazine commenced publication in 1800, missionary literature began to sow the seeds of a new kind of devotional reading. Third came the missionary vocation, with the secret pact of five students at Williams College in 1808. Fourth, and last, came the popularization

of new patterns of financial giving. Only when the ordination vows had been said, and the ship was anchored in the harbor in 1812, did the money come in.

We will note within these four chapters some other recurring themes of the reflex influence of missions. (1) A more *active* direction was given to piety, corresponding to the spirit of the times. (2) All sectors of society found ways of participating in missionary piety. This included the rich and poor, urban and rural, men, women, and children--especially women. (3) The missionary appeal caused the supporters of missions to re-examine their attitude to persons of other races.