CHAPTER EIGHT

EVALUATIONS OF FOREIGN MISSIONS

In forty years, American foreign missions grew from the dream of a secret society of less than a dozen students, into the foremost of a network of voluntary societies that had become the religious establishment in America. At first ignored by others or ridiculed as fanatics, the missionary enterprise attracted attention and criticism as it expanded. This new movement defined itself as it responded to criticism, changing in response to what it deemed constructive criticism, and taking positions in opposition to other criticism. The promoters of missions made specific claims for the reflex influence, that need to be evaluated. Did this missionary piety in fact produce more candidates for ministry, more financial giving to other benevolent causes, and more revivals? In concluding this study of the reflex influence of missions, we will examine the criticisms of the American Board, and its response, and the evidence to support the claims of reflex influences. Finally, we will review and evaluate the reflex influence of missions on the American church.

I. CRITICISMS OF MISSIONS AND RESPONSES

Criticism of the Missionary Enterprise

Although criticism of the missionary enterprise was constant, three controversies stand out. First, the Unitarians of eastern Massachusetts criticized missions, as part of the ongoing debate over orthodoxy. Second, an 1827 article in the London Quarterly Review created controversy. Finally came the controversy surrounding the publication of Herman Melville's (1819-1891) Typee and Omoo in 1846 and 1847 respectively.

Unitarian Criticism. The Unitarians accused the founders of modern missions of fanaticism,[1] which was expressed in the absurdity of trying to teach simple natives, "the doctrines of Calvin with all their mysteries, palpable contradictions, and metaphysical evasions."[2] As late as 1838, Heman Humphrey (1779-1861) observed in an ABCFM anniversary sermon, that critics, "look upon the missionaries as at best an amicable class of fanatics, who are throwing away their lives, and spending a great deal of money for nothing."[3] The Unitarians rejected the doctrine of "no salvation outside of Christ." They reflected, "we think

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[1] "Means of Promoting Christianity," Christian Disciple n.s., 1 (1819): 199.

[2] H. R. C., pseud., Review of Report of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, 1834, Christian Examiner 3d ser., 1 (1835-36): 224.

[3] Humphrey, Sermon, 1838, ABCFM, 6.

that every individual will be required to have lived, according to the light which he has received, or has had opportunity of receiving."[4]

Foreign missions would also fail, the Unitarians said, because they were done in the wrong way. Native peoples needed to be instructed in the ways of civilization first, before they could receive the intellectual message of Christianity. They needed to learn trades and crafts, cleanliness and the wearing of clothing, not reading and writing.[5]

As the Unitarians saw it, foreign missions were expensive, poorly managed, and had little success. Missionaries preached to the poor and outcast, but in order to change society one needed to influence the upper class. A few philosophers, teaching "the purer and more rational faith of the Gospel," to enlightened Muslims and polytheists, would, they believed, be much more effective.[6] Without any specific complaint, they questioned the "want of judgment and competency in the managers," of missionary societies.[7]

The advocates of missions replied to these criticisms with Scriptural defenses of the universality of Christ, and descriptions of immorality among non-

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[4] "On the Causes by Which Unitarians Have Been Withheld from Exertions in the Cause of Foreign Missions," Christian Examiner 1 (1824): 184.

[5] "Extracts from Tennant's Indian Recreations," Christian Disciple 1 (1813): 23; H. R. C., Review of Report of ABCFM, 1834, 222-27.

[6] "On Causes Unitarians Withheld," 189-92.

[7] "Associations for Benevolent Purposes," Christian Examiner 2 (1825): 249.

Christian peoples, which would call forth God's judgment. In other words, the non-Christian could not be saved "according to the light which he has received," because in most cases he or she was not moral by any standard. Enoch Pond, in his first missionary discourse, answered some of the Unitarian objections. To those who said that others had their own religions and didn't need Christianity, he asked if his readers would be willing to exchange: "If the superstitions of the heathen are good for them, why would they not be good for you?" He also pointed to the command of Christ to preach the Gospel.[8] With regard to expense, he pointed out that Americans were spending less than one cent per person on missions. Furthermore, the task was not to convert the world, but to proclaim the gospel to all the world, and by that criteria, the missions were succeeding. There was also "success" measurable in converts, churches, literacy, and improved social conditions.[9]

London Quarterly Review. In 1827 a review appeared in the popular London Quarterly Review, which initiated a debate lasting several years. Most of the article was a review of the book, Voyage of His Majesty's Ship *Blonde* to the Sandwich Islands, in the Years 1824-1825. This book was compiled by Mrs. Maria Graham from the journal of the ship's chaplain and from journals and interviews with several crew members. Although the chaplain, Rev. Mr. Bloxam,

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[8] Pond, Missionary Discourses, 13.

[9] Ibid., 14-15.

and the leader of the expedition, Lord Byron, came away with a favorable impression of the mission at Hawaii, the book and review did not. The reviewer commented,

> It is greatly to be feared, indeed, that these (we doubt not, well intentioned) men are creating much mischief among these simple-minded islanders. They have so little judgment, and are so little acquainted with the human heart, as to let their zeal out-run discretion on many occasions.[10]

The reviewer accused the missionaries of fanaticism, meddling in local politics, discouraging productive labor by having people in school and church all the time, a lack of common sense, and encouraging civil war by preaching that "all men are equal." Hiram Bingham was singled out as the chief malefactor.

Jeremiah Evarts carefully rebutted every criticism made by this review in an article in the North American Review in January 1828. First, Evarts noted that the book and review were shaped by the opinion, "that men gradually rise to juster views of the Deity, without the aid of revelation, by the operation of their own minds." Evarts rebutted, "We ask for the proof of this doctrine. All Scripture is against it. Much history is against it. The present state of the heathen world is against it."[11] Evarts accused the book and review of containing misunderstandings, misinterpretations of events, exaggeration, erroneous

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[10] "Sandwich Islanders," London Quarterly Review 35 (1827): 438.

[11] [Jeremiah Evarts], "American Missionaries at the Sandwich Islands," North American Review 26 (1828): 69.

information, lies, and at least one forgery. In them "rhetoric and history, fiction and fact are jumbled together."[12]

Evarts and the missionaries could easily trace the misinformation to the anti-missionary foreigners of Honolulu, who wanted to defame the mission in general, and Bingham in particular, for their own immoral advantage. The missionaries had heard these slanders before, *"and in the same words,"* from the lips of foreigners in Honolulu, and they could prove these stories were lies.[13]

Having refuted all of the charges against the mission, in one case pointing out nine or ten errors in one short piece, Evarts explained the real reason behind the attack on missions:

> We must pause here to apprize our readers of the true grounds of opposition to the labors and character of the missionaries, as it has existed for the last three years. . . .
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> 1. Among the visiters and foreign residents at the Sandwich Islands, there are not a few whose love of gain is much stronger than their love of morality. These people have the sagacity to see, that if the influence of the mission prevails, so as to discourage or put an end to drunkenness, there will be fewer purchasers of rum; and that, if the mass of the people learn to read and write, and become intelligent, it will not be so easy . . . to make profitable bargains out of them.
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> 2. Most visiters at the islands have been in habits of licentious intercourse with the native females. This intercourse is, through the influence of christianity, becoming more difficult.
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> 3. The remaining cause of . . . opposition, is an apprehension that, as the missionaries are Americans . . . this influence will ultimately clash with that right of guardianship and protection, which is claimed for the British.[14]

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[12] Ibid., 74.

[13] Ibid., 102.

[14] Ibid., 82-83.

A review of the literature of this debate initiated by the London Quarterly Review, which appeared in the Spirit of the Pilgrims in 1832, saw in the efforts to discredit the missionaries an alliance of two forces. First there were foreigners in Honolulu, exploiting the Hawaiians economically and sexually. Also, "There are men of infidel notions, and there are enemies to those fundamental doctrines which the missionaries embrace and preach," whose prejudices prepared them to give credit to the tales of the first group, and to circulate them.[15] An odd alliance had taken place between the doctrinal opponents of orthodox Calvinism, and the opponents of moral reform brought about by missions.

Herman Melville. The novel Typee, by Herman Melville, which appeared in 1846, renewed the debate over missions. In this story, a run-away sailor found himself in the valley of Typee, on one of the Marquesas Islands. The innocent and simple natives there lived peaceful and harmonious lives, in sharp contrast to those who lived in civilization. The book praised the innocent uncivilized native, and condemned civilization. Christianity and civilization were equated, with the missionaries being the chief devils in destroying all that was good before them. Melville's sharpest words of condemnation were reserved for the Hawaii Mission. This was a "romantic" critique of missions, condemning them as the representatives of civilization, in contrast to earlier "enlightenment" critiques, that

[15] "Slanders upon the Missions in the Islands of the Pacific," Spirit of the Pilgrims 5 (1832): 592-93.

despaired over missionary efforts to evangelize without first civilizing. Typee was a mixture of fact and fiction. The story was based on Melville's experiences, with considerable expansion for entertainment value, and descriptive material from other sources, including missionary accounts.

Hiram Bingham, in his book, A Residence of Twenty-one Years in the Sandwich Islands, after describing the cruelty and fear in which the non-Christian people of the Marquesas Islands lived, added a note:

> I have not altered my views of heathenism or Christianity since the uncivilized *"Tipee"* has sought, through the presses of civilization in England and America, to apologize for cannibalism, and to commend savage life to the sons and daughters of Christendom, instead of teaching the principles of science and virtue, or the worship of our Maker, among idolators, man-eaters, and infidels.[16]

To the friends of mission, Melville was discredited by his admission of "unblushing licentiousness"[17] with the beautiful Fayaway and the maidens of Typee. They soon learned that Herman Melville had lived in Honolulu for three months, as part of the foreign community, imbibing the sentiments of some of its most anti-missionary elements. Melville was soon united in a Unitarian wedding to a young woman of Boston, demonstrating a clear link between the two parties

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[16] Bingham, Twenty-one Years, 466 n.

[17] Friend 5 (1 June 1847), 86--quoted in: Daniel Aaron, "Melville and the Missionaries," New England Quarterly 8 (1935): 406.

vehemently opposed to missions--the foreigners of Honolulu and the Unitarians of Boston.[18]

The American Board did not respond directly to Melville's criticisms, which came in the form of fiction but had the appearance of facts. However, friends of missions did respond in other journals. When Melville published Omoo, a more direct attack on missions in Polynesia, the New Englander replied,

> 'Rope-yarn' may do very well in the forecastle, or during the hours of the night-watch, but when it is spun out in the pages of a book with reiterated protestations of correctness, and 'the author's peculiar opportunities for acquiring correct information,' it becomes quite another affair; and then the follies and inaccuracies of a mere romancer, otherwise unworthy of notice, require the juxtaposition of truth.[19]

Summary. As a global information gathering agency, the American Board was well prepared to respond to criticism with facts. The critics, whether expressing the views of the enlightenment or romanticism, tended to have a higher view of human nature. The friends of mission welcomed the opportunity to demonstrate the truth of the orthodox doctrine of original sin. The debate over missions reinforced among its supporters the conviction of the truth of orthodox doctrine, and kept alive the feeling that there was a religious "war" going on, requiring discipline and militancy among the faithful.

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[18] Mentor L. Williams, "Some Notices and Reviews of Melville's Novels in American Religious Periodicals, 1846-1849," American Literature 22 (1950): 119-27. See also: Phillips, Protestant America, 110-11.

[19] [W. O. Bourne]. "Missionary Operations in Polynesia," New Englander 6 (1848): 44.

Criticisms of Fund Raising

The American Board's calls to a consecrated use of wealth, and its perpetual need for more money, created an ethical tension. If more money in the collection plate would mean more preaching of the Gospel, and as a result perhaps another immortal soul in heaven, did this "greatest good" justify the use of appeals for funds that were less than noble? The collective answer of mission leaders was "No!" But what were the right and wrong appeals? Criticisms of several aspects of American Board fund raising, from within the movement, generated discussion, and the formulation of policy.

Public Opinion. Advocates of mission wanted to both shape and use "public opinion." This in fact became a use of social pressure to gain support from persons who were not genuinely in favor of missions. It created reluctant givers. In the spring of 1813, "Japheth" wrote a satirical article in the Panoplist on the discomfort of a non-supporter of voluntary societies. Probably written by a supporter of societies, poking fun at opponents, this article does shed some light on what was going on in the fund raising process. "Japheth" commented,

> But when the minister rides up to my door, I am afraid of seeing some subscription, some constitution of a charitable society, in which *money* is the prime requisite of membership. . . . This practice of giving is becoming so customary among us, that any one who refuses his support to charitable purposes will feel himself in some danger of being counted niggardly.[20]

[20] Japheth, pseud., "On Giving Money to Charity," Panoplist n.s., 5 [8] (1812-13): 493-94.

Many societies were making the rounds, asking for support. People who did not believe in these causes, might give for inappropriate reasons, and be resentful. When the secretaries urged the promotion of a "missionary spirit" first, and collection of funds second, they were addressing this issue of motivation. But social pressure, as described by "Japheth," continued to produce giving for the wrong reasons.

Inappropriate Praise for the Wealthy. Jeremiah Evarts, writing as "A.B." in the May 1814 Panoplist, criticized the way in which charities such as the American Board gave too much praise to prominent people who gave too little: "Christians sometimes expose the best of causes to ridicule by their extravagant exultation at a comparatively trifling subscription to a charitable object."[21] This excessive praise for those who could give most easily, was a common criticism. Coming as it did from the leadership of the Board, this criticism got the attention of the leaders of auxiliaries and associations who were the perpetrators of this practice. The Parable of the Widow's Mite admonished the promoters of missions to look at the heart of the giver, not the size of the contribution. The missionary movement was intended to call forth devotion and self denial, not just dollars.

Listing of Donors. The American Board came under increasing criticism for publishing the names of all contributors, with the amount of their donation.

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[21] [Jeremiah Evarts], "On Religious Charities," Panoplist 10 (1814): 224.

This appeared to be in violation of Matthew 6:3: "But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth." An article in the February 1816 Panoplist replied with Matthew 5:16: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." The Board justified what could be considered a manipulative policy by arguing that the good example of some encouraged others, and that the published record constituted the donor's receipt.[22]

Pity. With regard to methods of fund raising, the "Address to the Christian Public" of 1812 explicitly rejected, "any desire to profit by means of appeals to the passions."[23] "Pity" was understood to be a less desirable motive than "love." Most ministers of this period were familiar with the sharp distinction between benevolence and pity Jonathan Edwards had made in The Nature of True Virtue. The use of natives to evoke pity was considered by some to be exploitation of the natives. Others considered it manipulation of the motives of the giver.

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[22] [Jeremiah Evarts], "Thoughts on Publishing Charitable Donations," Panoplist 12 (1816): 80-83. See also: A. D. C., "To the Editor," 22 (criticism of practice); [Jeremiah Evarts], "On Giving Publicity to Acts of Charity," Christian Spectator 1 (1819): 181-83; "Is it Lawful to Give Alms Before Men?" Christian Spectator 1 (1819): 569-75 (responses). See also "Donations," MH 17 (1821): 23-24; "Instances of Liberality in Aid of the Missionary Cause," MH 17 (1821): 159-60; "Remarks on the Best Manner of Publishing Donations" MH 18 (1822): 159; "On Publishing Charitable Contributions" RI 10 (1825-26): 266-67.

[23] Evarts, "Address, 1812," 52.

Disinterested benevolence, as a response to the benevolence of God in Christ, was the proper reason for giving.

Henry Lyman's Condition and Character of Females, and the appeals to children by John Scudder, contributed to the increased use of the appeal to pity throughout this period. This was a "humanitarian" argument that attracted support from people who might not share all of the doctrinal beliefs of the missionaries. It was a more "concrete" appeal--for this-worldly salvation--that children easily understood. It presented the missionary society in the role of a reform society. It is ironic, that at the very time the Board leadership was emphasizing the priority of evangelization over civilization, the Board's promoters were appealing for funds on the basis of the misery of the non-Christian world in this life. Of course, the Board argued that social change would only come when people were transformed by the Gospel. Also, many persons who became supporters of missions on humanitarian grounds, might grow in appreciation of the spiritual aspects of missions, and consequently grow in faith. However, many did not make the transition from pity to disinterested benevolence.

Ebenezer Porter's Critique. Ebenezer Porter, preaching professor at Andover Theological Seminary, preached on 3 April 1823 in the seminary chapel on Signs of the Times. His intention was to warn the soon-to-be-ministers of the dangers of inappropriate promotion of benevolences. At the request of the students, the sermon was published.

Porter warned, "there are dangers to be guarded against, in our great system of benevolent operation."[24] He explained that people sometimes do the right things, but for the wrong reasons:

> The simple act of giving money to a religious object may be regarded as a truly religious act, while the motive may be such as God cannot approve. . . . The beggar's hunger may be effectually relieved by bread given from ostentation, as from Christian benevolence. If I contribute to send the preaching of the gospel to a heathen, the value of the benefit to him depends not at all on the temper in me, which prompted the contribution. . . . But in respect to the spiritual state of the *giver*, the motive is of infinite importance; because on this absolutely, and this only, the moral worth of the action depends.[25]

Porter argued that in raising funds for the proclamation of the Gospel, the teachings of the Gospel should not be dishonored.

Porter noted that some persons were contributing for the wrong reasons: "Worldly men may aid these charities from the impulse of conscience, from social sympathies, or from regard to personal reputation."[26] None of these motives constituted a convergence of the desires of the giver and the aims of the society. Nor were they acts of gratitude to God for salvation. Porter denounced, "A kind

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[24] Ebenezer Porter, Signs of the Times: A Sermon Preached in the Chapel of the Theological Seminary, Andover, on the Public Fast, April 3, 1823 (Andover: Flagg and Gould, 1823), 7.

[25] Ibid., 9.

[26] Ibid., 10.

of implied and indefinite understanding, that whatever has the appearance of respect for religion, *is* religion."[27]

Porter was concerned that people were treated as if they had true religion, and might come to think that they lacked nothing in the area of religion, solely on the basis of their giving money. He quoted with disgust from a letter by a missionary in Bengal to American children, "'Let me know what you will *give,* and *then I shall know how much you love Jesus.'"*[28] Porter complained, "Shall such sentiments be uttered by Christian missionaries, and be repeated in the periodical publications of a Christian country? . . . Would Jesus himself have said this?"[29]

Porter saw the benevolent societies showing great honor to contributors, as if the giving of money for religion implied that the giver had true religion. He sarcastically pointed out:

> Yes, in this boasted nineteenth century, this age of overflowing benevolence,--this dawn of the millennium, Christians must be flattered by votes of thanks, by a cautious respect to their pride and their opinions, and must be complemented with *offices,* to secure their cooperation in the cause of their Redeemer.[30]

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[27] Ibid.

[28] Ibid., 13.

[29] Ibid., 13-14.

[30] Ibid., 22.

With regard to the publication of the names and gifts of contributors, Porter did not condemn the practice, but did point out that it appealed to "a vain love of applause."[31]

Another danger to which Porter alerted his hearers, was the watering down of the gospel, for the sake of financial support:

> Are there not many who promote the cause of missions on the general assumption that religion is a *good thing,* is friendly to the interests of philanthropy, and civilization, and social order; who, the moment you avow your belief of the gospel, as Jesus and his apostles gave it to the world, will abandon your society, and stigmatize it with the charge of sectarian narrowness? . . .
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> But your Society must have funds, and therefore your doctrinal views must not be repulsive to popular taste.[32]

Porter disapproved of descriptions of heathen wretchedness that called forth pity. He distinguished between Christian love and pity:

> But what is pity towards objects of wretchedness? Is it the same as love to Jesus? In itself, it is an *instinct,* found in every man, good and bad, who is not a monster. It is found in many animals towards the suffering of their own species. And shall the exercise of this *instinct* be identified with holy love?[33]

Porter believed that there was a danger of confusing the excitement of working for a great cause, with true religion. "This intrinsic enjoyment of action,

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[31] Ibid., 19 n.

[32] Ibid., 16-17, 18.

[33] Ibid., 13.

the Christian may mistake for pious feeling."[34] Even if involved in a great cause, an individual still had to face one's own personal relationship with God.

Ebenezer Porter did not propose any changes in the outward form of the missionary enterprise. He did warn his students to be sensitive to the dangers and hypocrisies inherent in the system:

> Surely this is not the time to talk of remitting our efforts. No,--they must be increased a hundred fold. . . . And there must be anniversaries, and addresses, and subscriptions. The names of the benevolent, and their good deeds must be made known, as examples to others. Christians *must* encounter all the dangers of leading on these public movements; but Christians must *take care of their hearts.*[35]

Ebenezer Porter's criticisms were based on a deep concern for the personal piety of both supporters and promoters of the missionary cause. The strength of his arguments, and his prominence, required the leaders of the missionary movement to take his concerns seriously. His criticisms would not necessarily lead to any change in the form of the fund raising enterprise, but they spoke to the enterprise's spirit.

Responses from the Board. The American Board, as it came increasingly under the leadership of former students of Ebenezer Porter, responded to his and other criticisms of fund raising practices. As a young assistant secretary, Rufus Anderson prepared Hints to Collectors, twelve pages of simple instructions

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[34] Ibid., 21.

[35] Ibid., 26.

for the American Board's thousands of volunteer collectors. He instructed collectors to "Rely solely on proper motives."[36] Collectors were told to "Read often the eighth and ninth chapters of the second epistle to the Corinthians," and to think on the motives to be drawn from, "The love and condescension of the Lord Jesus Christ, who, 'though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we, through his poverty, might be rich.'"[37] The Collector was to appeal for support on the basis of the right motives, but to accept whatever support was given, not judging the motives of the contributor.[38] When the Foreign Mission School was closed in 1827, the Missionary Herald mentioned as one reason for that action, the exploitation of the youths for fund raising purposes. The Missionary Herald said that these activities, "make the young men feel as though they were *mere shows,* a feeling which is too accurate an index of their real situation."[39] Although other reasons for the closing would have been sufficient, the Board made this public criticism of its own methods and motivations in fund raising.

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[36] [Rufus Anderson], Hints to Collectors, 6th ed., (Boston: Crocker and Brewster, 1827), 5. From 1825 to 1835 the ABCFM produced at least 47,500 copies of this tract, in at least eleven editions.

[37] Ibid., 4. The reference was to 2 Corinthians 8:9.

[38] Ibid., 6.

[39] "Foreign Missions School," MH 23 (1827): 25.

In 1848 the American Board made some changes in how it handled appeals for special objects. The members of the mission in Sri Lanka had criticized what they considered improper motives for supporting individual boarding school students. The Board discontinued the practice of sponsorship of individual children, citing as reasons the difficulties in administering the program and the discouragement often felt by the contributors in America. However, the members of the mission, while troubled by inconveniences in the system, had a more basic objection. The Missionary Herald explained, "They regard the charity based on the presentation of such objects as one derived from inferior motives, upon which the missionary cause cannot safely rely for its proper maintenance."[40]

The missionary movement had to be conducted in accordance with its grand purposes. The policies of the Missions could not be shaped by what would generate feelings of pity among supporters in the United States. In stead the feelings of supporters had to be brought into conformity with the movement's objects.

Criticism of Voluntary Societies and Their Agents

Voluntary Societies and Social Control. The creation of an interlocking network of national voluntary societies, led by the ABCFM, had its critics. William Ellery Channing (1780-1842), a leading Unitarian spokesperson, in an 1829

[40] ABCFM, Prudential Committee, "Children's Fund for the Education of Heathen Youth," MH 44 (1848): 177.

article, after giving some praise for voluntary societies, described the two great dangers: (1) the threat to the "sacred right to private judgment," through social pressure, and (2) the accumulation of power in a few hands.[41]

Calvin Colton (1789-1857), a member of the Society of Inquiry at Andover and Presbyterian minister who in 1836 converted to the Episcopal Church, that year anonymously published Protestant Jesuitism. This was a resounding condemnation of voluntary societies in general and the temperance movement in particular. He described the latter as an "ultra" movement--"He who dissents from their opinions is proscribed as a heretic; persecuted as an enemy of his race."[42] Benevolent societies, he said, were founded and directed by a small handful of people, and used by them to exert power over others:

> From a purely benevolent institution, based upon human motives, or the higher aims of religion, as the case may be, the association is gradually converted into an engine of power, and the policy henceforth is to retain and augment these advantages, under the appearance of pursuing the original purpose.[43]

Colton agreed with the Unitarians that foreign missions showed few results because they did not appeal to the upper classes. He also upheld the old school Presbyterian principle:

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[41] William Ellery Channing, "Remarks on Associations," in The Works of William E. Channing, D.D. (Boston: American Unitarian Association, 1890), 143, 148.

[42] [Calvin Colton], Protestant Jesuitism (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1836), 61.

[43] Ibid., 97.

> *That the Church of Christ, as a society, in its own proper organization, is the only and the very society, under the commission given by Jesus Christ, which he has authorized to be employed by his professed disciples for the reformation of morals and manners in the world, and for the gradual and ultimate subjection of all mankind to the laws and principles of the Bible.*[44]

This view, that missions and benevolent activities should be conducted by the church, not by voluntary societies, was also finding expression in the community of Congregationalists and new school Presbyterians.[45] However, much of the criticism of voluntary societies in that community centered on the use of agents.

Debate over Agents. As voluntary societies multiplied, so did agents. By 1837 a general dislike of agents had developed in much of the church. An article in the Literary and Theological Review that year described: "The adroitness of some, the effrontery of others, and the strenuous devotedness of all to their respective objects, and in some cases without respect to the rights of churches and pastors."[46] Some regional church bodies passed resolutions against agents. The article complained that too many sermons were given to promote some cause, neglecting the message of the Cross of Christ. The article continued its description of agents:

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[44] Ibid., 131.

[45] See: "An Inquiry Concerning Voluntary Societies," Literary and Theological Review 4 (1837): 81-124. For a rebuttal of this view see: Enoch Pond, "Voluntary Societies," Literary and Theological Review 4 (1837): 393-421. For a defense of the first article and rebuttal of the second, see: Hollis Read, "The Pastoral Office and Charities," Literary and Theological Review 4 (1837): 574-83.

[46] "An Inquiry Respecting the Agency System" Literary and Theological Review 4 (1837): 281.

> Dependent, in many cases, for their support on their success, they are exposed by this system to the temptation of resorting to questionable expedients for effecting their objects. Hence, the exaggerated statement of facts, the flattering encomiums on those who give, the denunciation of those who refuse.[47]

This article directed most of its criticism at anti-Slavery and other reform societies.[48] However, such criticisms of agents in general effected the American Board's operations.

When Horatio Bardwell resigned from full time work as an agent in 1836, he mentioned this growing antipathy to agents:

> There is a prevailing opinion among the pastors + churches, in my field, that for all the standing objects of benevolent action, there is no need of agents to go into the detail of the work, but that the pastors themselves are competent for this, + that it belongs to the function of their office.[49]

Bardwell expressed the opinion that the American Board's organization of auxiliaries and associations was far enough developed in southern New England to function with only part time supervision by an agent. He believed that this act

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[47] Ibid., 288.

[48] The advocates of abolition believed that the anti-agent feeling was directed against them. An 1839 Emancipator article noted, "We do not recollect anything like a combined and general clamor against the employment of itinerant agents to promote the objects of various societies, until about the time that the American Anti-Slavery Society sent forth its agents on the breadth of the land. Then the pastors of churches became all at once alarmed at the multiplicity of agents abroad, and fearful lest their influences should be withdrawn and their office rendered useless, unless they put forth their resolutions against the whole system."--"Report of the American Board of Missions," Emancipator 4 (19 Dec. 1839): 135.

[49] Horatio Bardwell to ABCFM Prudential Committee, [between 15 March-7 June 1836], ABC, ser. 12.1, vol. 4.

of economy by the Board would encourage pastors to exert themselves for the cause. For a couple of years the experiment worked; but then it became evident that the Board's auxiliaries were in need of a professional prompter.

The American Board responded to these criticisms in its revision of the agency system in 1848. The change in names--from General Agent to Field Secretary--was to be accompanied by a change in attitudes and modification of practice. The policy statement explained:

> We go to the fundamental principle of the present system of associated efforts in the Christian Church; viz. That the Pastor is always the officially responsible person for his own church + society. That system of agencies, which, in all its practical details, most effectually recognizes this principle, will be the most acceptable to pastors + people, + most effectual in the long run. The system which overlooks it, + brings in the agent as, for the time, a substitute for the pastor, + a coordinate power, + not his mere auxiliary, must at length become weak + unpopular; + this is found to be the effect of the too frequent presence of the agent, + of his being supposed by the people to represent a distinct + independent interest from that of the pastor.[50]

The field secretary was to assist the pastor in promoting missions, and must not under any circumstances be a substitute or "coordinate power" to the pastor. Field Secretaries were to preach less, travel less, consult with local pastors more, and pay more attention to the non-fund-raising aspects of their work.

Pastor and people also needed to change their thinking, "they should be induced to depend less upon the presence of the agent."[51] The field secretary, in

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[50] "Reorganization of the Agencies," 4-5. ABC, ser. 12.1, vol. 8, no. 13.

[51] Ibid., 8.

consultation with the pastor, was to enlist one or two men and women in each parish to superintend the annual subscription. The pastor was expected to take the responsibility of finding a mission speaker.

These changes, near the close of our period of study, moved the American Board further along the road to a closer relationship between mission board and church. This journey was in response to the criticism first expressed by the old school Presbyterians, but renewed by others after their departure. The changes were designed to give pastor and people more "ownership" and identification with the missionary movement.

Abolition and the American Board

Abolitionists criticized the ABCFM from within, and after the creation of the AMA in 1846, from both within and without. The Board had resolved in 1841 that nothing should distract the Board from its *one object* of evangelization, but neither should the Board sustain any relationship with slavery. The anti-slavery petitions presented to the American Board in the 1840s sought to further clarify that policy by raising three issues: (1) the soliciting and receiving of funds from slaveholders; (2) the employment of a slaveholder as a missionary or in any other capacity; and (3) allowing slaveholders to be received as members--and consequently receive communion--in the mission churches of the Board.

In reply to the first criticism, the secretaries published a tract, On Receiving Donations from Holders of Slaves. They stated that it simply was not practical to determine how every contributor earned money:

> The Board and its officers do not profess to know, and cannot generally know, the character and motives of those who contribute to its funds, or the sources of their income. To make inquiries on these points would probably, by most persons, be deemed impertinent.[52]

Furthermore, slavery was not the only sin by which a person might gain wealth. And in an interdependent economy, the slave owner was not the only one to benefit from slave labor.

The abolitionist response, expressed by Gerrit Smith, was to insist that Board fund raisers "are clearly bound to admonish their contributors to *give right.*" In visiting those portions of the country where there were many robbers (i.e., slaveholders), Board agents should make "abundant and solemn testimonies against the crime of insulting God with sacrifices which are the fruit of robbery."[53] This the Board felt no obligation to do.

A petition to the Board in 1842 alleged that one of their missionaries was a slaveholder. John Leighton Wilson (1809-1886), from South Carolina, became the owner of two slaves by inheritance, and thirty by marriage. He offered freedom to all of them before his departure as a missionary to West Africa in

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[52] ABCFM Secretaries, On Receiving Donations from the Holders of Slaves (Boston: Perkins and Marvin, [1838]), 3.

[53] Gerrit Smith, "Letter to John Tappan," 79.

1834, and his wife's slaves chose to go to Liberia. His two slaves did not accept the offer of freedom, and remained on his father's plantation in South Carolina. Wilson explained to Rufus Anderson in an 1836 letter:

> The reason that they are continued as slaves is, that the laws of my native State will not allow me to set them free on the soil, and they are unwilling to go elsewhere. . . . And I must do violence to their feelings and wishes to dislodge them from the place of their attachment. Will it be said that I ought to set them free, regardless of the law of the country? The consequence would be that as soon as it was known that they had a certificate of freedom, they would be arrested and exposed to public sale.[54]

In July of 1843 Wilson sent certificates of freedom to his two remaining slaves, but one, John, chose to remain on the Wilson plantation.

Wilson offered to resign in 1843 because of the embarrassment and probable loss of financial support to the Board caused by his employment. However, Anderson and his associates believed Wilson had acted with integrity, and supported him. Anderson and company employed what might today be called a "contextual ethic." They did not doubt that slavery was wrong. But in some cases it might be a person's moral duty to retain slaves, rather than to force them out. The Board had chosen persons of piety and integrity, and preferred to trust such persons, rather than to impose uniform standards on

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54 letter quoted in full in "The American Board and Slavery," Emancipator 6 (24 March 1842): 187. See also Hampden C. DuBose, Memoirs of the Rev. John Leighton Wilson, D.D., Missionary to Africa, and Secretary of Foreign Missions (Richmond: Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1895), 100.

them. This personal loyalty was more important than the bottom line on a financial report.

An anti-slavery petition in 1844 raised the subject of slaveholding members of mission churches among the Choctaw Indians. The matter was referred to the next annual meeting. The ABCFM annual meeting in Brooklyn in 1845 witnessed the Board's most extensive debate on slavery, lasting an afternoon, evening, and the following morning. The Board adopted a new statement on slavery, probably written by David Greene.[55] Yes, there were slaveholding members of the churches in the Choctaw and Cherokee missions. The issue of discipline and excommunication had been raised, and the Board took a liberal view:

> As the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper are obviously designed by Christ to be means of grace for all who give credible evidence of repentance and faith in him, these ordinances cannot scripturally and rightly be denied to professed converts from among the heathen, after they shall have given such evidence.[56]

Once a person had repented and turned to Christ, further reformation would follow gradually, by the Holy Spirit working through preaching and the sacraments.

The report on slavery then commenced a controversial new argument. It quoted Scottish churchman Thomas Chalmers (1780-1847), "Distinction ought to

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[55] "Report of the American Board," Emancipator 10 (12 Nov. 1845), 113.

[56] AR 1845:55.

be made between the character of a *system,* and the character of the persons whom circumstances have implicated therewith." The report continued:

> Slavery, says he, we hold to be a system chargeable with atrocities and evils; . . . yet we must not therefore say of every man born within its territory, who . . . by inheritance is himself the owner of slaves, that, unless he make the resolute sacrifice and renounce his property in slaves, he is, therefore, not a Christian, and should be treated as an outcast from all the distinctions and privileges of Christian society.[57]

In the discussion on the floor, Edward Beecher (1803-1895) presented a theological argument for a doctrine of "organic sin." Some sins were social or organic, rather than personal or individual. Slavery was an organic sin; as a legal institution it was a "sin of the body politic." Beecher argued, "Social evils are removed by degrees, and God intended to bring the Bible to bear upon them, till light should be infused into the minds of men, leading them gradually to throw off these evils."[58] Beecher condemned slavery as a sin of society, and advocated efforts for its removal. But the individual slaveholder need not be excommunicated as a sinner.

In the floor debate, Anti-Slavery Society Secretary Amos A. Phelps (1805-1847) objected, "Why condemn the thing, and excuse the man who does it? . . . We do not thus in the case of drunkenness, of polygamy, or any other sin--and why in this?"[59]

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[57] AR 1845:59-60.

[58] "Annual Meeting of the American Board," BR 30 (18 Sept. 1845), 151.

[59] "American Board," (17 Sept. 1845), 82.

The report was approved unanimously.[60] The doctrine of organic sin was much debated in the following months.[61] To hard line abolitionists it was an evasion of responsibility. But more moderate anti-slavery people, like Edward Beecher, his brother-in-law Calvin E. Stowe (1802-1886), and corporate members Leonard Bacon and Joel Hawes, espoused the new doctrine.

Abolitionist criticisms continued. Would the Board admonish the missionaries who had admitted slaveholders into church communion? Would the Board continue to give financial support to churches with slaveholding members? To Rufus Anderson these criticisms were a threat to his doctrine of devolution. The judgment of missionaries was to be trusted; the churches, once organized,

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60 Only corporate members of the Board could vote, but any honorary member could speak. This accounts for the wide open discussion, followed by an undramatic and unsurprising vote. Attendance at the 1845 meeting consisted of 85 corporate members and 427 honorary members.

61 For the full debate over organic sin see: Calvin E. Stowe, "The Bible Method of Dealing with Organic Social Wrongs," BR 30 (16 Oct. 1845): 165 (his speech at the Board meeting in support of the report); Edward Beecher, "Dr. Beecher on Organic Sins," BR 30 (16, 23, 30 Oct., 6, 13, 20, 27 Nov., 4, 11, 18, 25 Dec. 1845): 166, 170, 174, 178, 182, 186, 190, 193, 197, 201, 205; 31 (1 Jan. 1846): 1 (his argument at the Board meeting--greatly expanded--in support of the report); Amos A. Phelps, "The Bible Method of Dr. Stowe, Dr. E. Beecher, and the American Board," [title varies] BR 30 (4, 11, 18, 25 Dec. 1845): 194, 198, 202, 206; 31 (8, 15, 22, 29 Jan., 5, 12, 19, 26 Feb. 1846): 6, 10, 14, 18, 22, 26, 30, 34 (his rebuttal of the arguments of Stowe and Beecher); Calvin E. Stowe, "Dr. Stowe's Reply to Mr. Phelps," BR 31 (9, 16, 30 April, 7, 14, 21 May 1846): 58, 62, 70, 74, 78, 82. For a later criticism of organic sin see: George W. Perkins, Scriptural Missions: a Sermon Preached by the Rev. G. W. Perkins at the Annual Meeting of the American Missionary Association at Hartford, September 26, 1848 (New York: AMA, 1848). For a discussion of Edward Beecher's role in this controversy, see: Robert Merideth, The Politics of the Universe: Edward Beecher, Abolition, and Orthodoxy (Nashville: Vanderbilt University, 1968), 107-16.

were to be self-governing; the Board should be saying less--not more--about how the mission churches handled their internal affairs. At the request of the 1847 annual meeting, the secretaries presented to the 1848 meeting a lengthy report on "Control of Missionaries and Mission Churches." This was a strong statement of Anderson's mission policy:

> The Mission Churches in foreign lands, connected with the missions under the care of the Board, do not come properly under the jurisdiction of any body of men in this country. This is true of course so far as the Board is concerned, since that is not a body having ecclesiastical authority; and it is believed to be equally true in respect to all ecclesiastical bodies. . . . We can claim no jurisdiction over them because we planted them. . . .
>
> The religious liberty which we ourselves enjoy, is equally the birthright of Christian converts in every part of the heathen world, on coming into the spiritual kingdom of Jesus Christ, which they claim as soon as they are prepared for it. . . .
>
> Nor may we expect or require of the mission churches, as the condition of giving them the gospel and its institutions, that they shall always think, judge, and act as we do.[62]

The American Board secretaries had presented their Magna Charta of devolution. They stood for the integrity and independence of the mission churches, and refused to meddle in their affairs, even over the issue of slavery.

To abolitionists, the whole document was simply an evasion of responsibility regarding the one great issue of the day. Charles K. Whipple (1808-1900) said, "the one great object of this document was to persuade the remonstrants against slavery, that its continued allowance in the mission

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[62] Rufus Anderson, David Greene and Selah B. Treat, "The Control to be Exercised Over Missionaries and Mission Churches," AR 1848:75-76.

churches was both right and unavoidable, and thus to stop 'agitation' of that subject."[63] Anderson and the abolitionists each had their eyes set on different goals, and each with single-minded determination pursued their goal. Neither could yield to the other's priority, and so they could not agree. Thorough investigations of the Cherokee and Choctaw missions followed, and the controversy persisted until 1860.

The American Missionary Association, after its formation in 1846, continued to encourage the efforts of abolitionists within the ABCFM.[64] In an address at the 1848 anniversary of the AMA, former ABCFM missionary James T. Dickinson (b. 1806) attacked the Board from another angle:

> Most missionary societies . . . have . . . proceeded more and more upon the idea that Money is the great means of human improvement. . . . Fields are entered as are most 'interesting' to the readers of missionary news, and are cultivated in such ways as will . . . draw forth the most sympathy, and increase to the utmost the amount of funds. Those missions which are most productive in the great staple--missionary intelligence suitable for monthly concerts--are most fostered, while other missions which afford little or nothing in this way, are given up.[65]

Dickinson did not object to "the art of presenting such intelligence;" abolitionists were also skilled in this art. His concern was that the desire to raise money

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[63] Charles K. Whipple, Relation of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions to Slavery (Boston: R. F. Wallcut, 1861; reprint, New York: Negro Universities, 1965), 59.

[64] AMA. Annual Report 1847:12-14.

[65] James T. Dickinson, "Comparison of Home and Foreign Missions," AMA Annual Report 1848:24-25.

influenced how missions were conducted. He explained, "There are greater questions for the friends of missions to consider than the question of money. *When, where, how,* on what *principles* to work, are greater questions."[66] The letters of missionaries at work in the United States promoting the pure gospel of abolition, would not be as "interesting" as letters from China, but their work was more important. Dickinson argued that America was a more important mission field because of its rapidly increasing population, and the power it would have in the future.

Referring to the Mexican War, the anticipated extension of slavery, and the American Board's silence on the subject, Dickinson criticized those who, "by their supineness, allow an atrocious system to extend its heathenizing influence over half of Mexico."[67] Dickinson concluded:

> We have heard much of Juggernaut, and what we have heard is true. . . . But . . . in our own country . . . you may find many Juggernauts, and of the worst kind, in the shape of slave auctions and slave-breeding estates. . . . In conducting missions let us not suppose that we can Christianize others while we heathenize ourselves.[68]

Dickinson was arguing for home missions over foreign missions. This argument was based on Matthew 7:3: "And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?" He

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[66] Ibid., 25.

[67] Ibid., 26.

[68] Ibid., 26-27.

used the humanitarian argument for missions--the argument being increasingly used by the American Board. Slavery was America's "juggernaut." Dickinson did not identify missions with conversion and salvation, but with the "forward . . . march of mankind," and with "civilization and progress."[69] This AMA criticism of the ABCFM went beyond challenging the tolerance for slavery within the Board's operations. AMA advocates like Dickinson questioned the priority of foreign missions over domestic, and the priority of personal salvation over social reform.

Action verses Devotion

In the latter part of the period covered in this study--after 1835--some American religious leaders pronounced the Second Great Awakening to be over, and called for a renewal of piety. Mission leaders called on people to deepen their piety, in order to give missions the support they needed. This was a reversal of the reflex influence argument that dominated earlier. In stead of promoting missions, which would result in an increase of piety, they were promoting piety, which would result in an increase of missions. This presents us with a puzzle. If missions produce piety, and piety produces missions, one would think that the missionary movement and the Second Great Awakening would never run out of steam. But they did. How could this be?

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[69] Ibid., 27.

An article reprinted in the Religious Intelligencer in 1830, pointed to an answer. The Second Great Awakening was a time of *active* piety. It was a time of circulating subscription lists, producing and distributing tracts, and sending out missionaries. It was a time of meetings, of great organizations, and great causes. But was it possible to spend too much time at the meeting hall, and not enough time in the prayer closet?

> Amidst the religious hum and bustle of the day, there is great danger of neglecting our personal, spiritual concerns. When the mind is continually on the whirl, it has no time, no relish for those deep and holy exercises, that close and ardent communion with God, so desirable to the Christian, and so necessary to his growth in grace.
>
> If the last age was remiss in action, the present one is remiss in devotion. In our anxiety for the regeneration of the world, we forget ourselves.[70]

Sharper criticism came six years later from Horatio Southgate (1812-1894), Episcopal missionary, former member of the Andover Brethren, and frequent critic of the ABCFM. In an article in The Literary and Theological Review, Southgate said,

> The distinguishing peculiarity of the religion of the present day is its visible activity; while there is, on the other hand, a manifest repugnance to contemplative piety. . . . Zeal, not the sacred fire of the soul, but showy, palpable zeal, is becoming the grand criterion of Christian character. . . . The spirit of the commercial and intellectual world is turned in upon the Church. It is, to a fearful degree, the animating spirit of Christian action. The same hurry and bustle; the same impatience of protracted process of labor; the same enthusiasm of sympathy, which pervade the marts of

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[70] "Personal Piety," RI 15 (1830): 162.

> business, the school-room and the popular assembly, are also a main spring in the holy enterprises of the Church.[71]

In Southgate's view, the church had been conquered by the spirit of the world. The missionary enterprise had been secularized. Contemplative piety had been drowned in a sea of "hurry and bustle."

These views were echoed by Hartford Congregational pastor Horace Bushnell (1802-1876). Bushnell complained in an 1844 article, "Piety has now become more nearly, perhaps too nearly, synonymous with action."[72] He declared, "Bustle cannot save the world."[73] To Bushnell the missionary societies were large engines, powered with money, and filled with activity. Where was the piety, without which all the activity was a charade? Bushnell commended the mustard seed of the Gospel, and advocated the principle of slow steady growth: "It commands the church first of all to live,--demands of every Christian, who will add strength to the cause of Christ in the world, that he contribute first of all a holy life."[74] Bushnell used the Parable of the Talents to call Christians to be good stewards of their intelligence and other non-monetary gifts. The active religious

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71 Horatio Southgate, "The Spiritual Character of the Missionary Enterprise," Literary and Theological Review 3 (1836): 174-75.

72 [Horace Bushnell], "The Kingdom of Heaven as a Grain of Mustard Seed" New Englander 2 (1844): 605.

73 Ibid., 609.

74 Ibid., 608.

world of the voluntary societies was, to Bushnell, pre-occupied with *doing* and too little concerned with *being.*

Bushnell, Southgate, and the Religious Intelligencer article of 1830 did not dispute the importance of piety in producing missions, or the ability of missions to promote piety. All three articles were pointing to a defect in the piety of missions and the Awakening of which it was a part. On the one hand, it is natural to expect piety to express itself in action. That is a sign of the genuineness of the piety. But on the other hand, over-emphasis on action had led to a neglect of the inner and personal practice of that piety. That was to cut the heart out of the missionary movement.

A concern to nurture piety, as a prerequisite of missions, was also expressed by the Board's supporters. In 1848 Jonathan B. Condit (1808-1876) addressed the relationship between piety and missions in an ordination sermon for two ABCFM missionaries. He preached on the text, Isaiah 54:2: "Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations; spare not, lengthen the cords, and strengthen the stakes." Condit interpreted the text as did other mission preachers: lengthening the cords referred to the expansion of the church through missions; strengthening the stakes referred to the

deepening of the piety of the church. He affirmed a "close alliance between the internal vigor and external enlargement of the church."[75]

Condit then demonstrated that piety was necessary in order to have the consecration of people, the consecration of property, and the prayer necessary for missions. The missionaries were a reflection of the churches and families from which they came. Only where there was strong piety would there be recruits for missionary service, for, "Only under the strong influence of the love of Christ do they estimate this an obligation and a privilege."[76] All plans, appeals, and arguments for increased giving to missions would be of no avail, "till under the influence of holy love, this principle--we are not our own, our property is not our own but Christ's, shall rule in the hearts of the people."[77] The outward perpetuation of the monthly concert would have no effect without the right inner attitude: "The life of such a meeting depends on the all-pervading power of the cross in the heart."[78]

The missionary movement was carried out through the consecration of people, the consecration of property, and prayer, which is to say that it was an expression of piety. If the piety of the sending church should decline, the

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[75] Jonathan B. Condit, "Eminent Holiness Essential to Success in the Missionary Enterprise," NP 22 (1848): 193.

[76] Ibid., 196.

[77] Ibid., 197.

[78] Ibid., 198.

missionary movement would falter. Condit concluded, "What is required that the American churches may prosecute with increased vigor and success, the work of missions? It is a large measure of the spirit of Christ, consisting in faith, love, humility, and self-denial."[79] The influence between missions and piety could and did work both ways. The problem being addressed by Condit, Bushnell, Southgate, and the Religious Intelligencer article, was the neglect of the inner aspect of piety. If the wellspring in the prayer closet were neglected, the Living Waters could not be dispersed over the whole earth.

II. CLAIMS OF REFLEX INFLUENCE

The claims of reflex influence, as outlined in chapter one, were that support for missions deepened the supporters' piety; this would be evident in the way the person felt, and also in observable improvements in the church. The Board outlined these observable improvements in a Statement in 1831:

> It is capable of being shown with certainty, that our churches are better supplied with ministers, that there are more candidates for the ministry, and more persons preparing for the sacred office, than there would have been, if we would have kept all our ministers home. The same investigation would show, too, that we contribute more for the circulation of Bibles and Tracts, and for the establishment of Sabbath Schools, and for the institution of Domestic Missions, than we should do, in case none of our wealth were devoted to foreign missions. Our present revivals, too, rose

[79] Ibid., 202.

> with foreign missions, and have been increasing in power and glory, as missions have been extending among the heathen.[80]

These three claims--more ministers, more money for domestic missions, and more revivals-- were repeated, in various forms, by advocates of missions throughout this period. These claims are not here examined statistically. Even if a correlation between support for foreign missions and these other factors were demonstrated, it would not prove that the foreign missions caused the other. The fact that these claims were consistently made over this forty year period, and that critics of the missionary movement did not challenge these claims, is strong supportive but not conclusive evidence of their truth. However, specific instances can be noted to substantiate these general statements--specific persons who were influenced to go into ministry by the foreign missionary movement; specific cases where there was more money available for the church and other benevolences after the promotion of foreign missions;
specific congregations where revival followed promotion of missions.

More Ministers

Joseph Brown (1809-1880), from Rockbridge, Virginia, wrote in 1834:

> The first knowledge, which I remember to have received, concerning the condition of the heathen, was by hearing my mother read to us from the

[80] ABCFM, Prudential Committee, Statements Respecting the Necessities and Claims of the Missions and Missionaries under the Direction of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, April 1831 (New York: Sleight & Robinson, 1831), 5.

> Religious Intelligencer, the accounts from the missionaries to the Sandwich Islands. At an early period there was a vague impression made on my mind, that at a future day I would become a missionary to the heathen, and while every other dream of youth, has passed away, as a dream, this has continued to become, as my life advanced, a more and more steady and permanent, and definite desire, and purpose of my soul.[81]

Brown was a Presbyterian pastor in Virginia, 1834-47, and was a missionary and teacher to people of color before during and after the Civil War.[82]

Oliver S. Powell wrote to the ABCFM in 1834, "When about 8 years of age I read the life of D. Brainerd + became acquainted with H. Obookiah. Abiding impressions were made upon my mind in favour of a missionary life at that time."[83] In his letter of application to the Board, Powell described his early conversion in a revival, and added, "Soon after this about the time of the establishment of the Sandwich Islands mission, I became a constant reader of the Miss[ionary] Herald + from that time began to think + talk much of becoming a missionary."[84] Powell became a pastor of Presbyterian churches in western New York State.

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[81] Joseph Brown to ABCFM, ABC, ser. 6, vol. 7, no. 49.

[82] Joseph H. Dulles, ed. Princeton Theological Seminary Biographical Catalogue, 1909 (Trenton: MacCrellish & Quigley, 1909), 108-09.

[83] Oliver S. Powell and F. S. Powell to ABCFM, 6 Dec. 1834, ABC ser. 6, vol. 11, no. 50.

[84] Ibid.

Richard Webster (1811-1856), who made his "solemn surrender to God" in 1830 and joined a Presbyterian Church, wrote his spiritual autobiography in the third person a few years later:

> He was pursuing the study of law--+ contributing to the column of the Religious paper--+ in April 1831, while looking over some periodicals on which to write editorial remarks, he read the Am[erican] Quart[erly] Register, containing an Essay on deciding Early to be a missionary--+ a letter from Dr. Scudder.--They both contained much that was entirely new--+ the fact of their being 600,000,000 without the gospel affected him greatly--The emotion was not transient--it made him pray earnestly for the raising up of men--+ the thought was suggested, ought you to become a minister?[85]

After graduating from Princeton and serving as a home missionary, Richard Webster was pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Mauch Chunk, Pennsylvania for nineteen years.[86]

John N. Whipple wrote in 1835, "When I was about sixteen years old, while reading the memoirs of Harriet Newell, I was thoroughly impressed to learn the learned languages + become a missionary to the heathen."[87] Young Whipple had to stay on his Vermont farm to help his father, but the still voice of conscience called. "The more I prayed the more I felt that I must prepare myself

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[85] Richard Webster to ABCFM, 28 Dec., 1833, ABC, ser. 6, vol. 13, no. 17.

[86] Dulles, Princeton Biographical Catalogue, 101. Mauch Chunk is now known as Jim Thorpe.

[87] John N. Whipple to ABCFM, ABC, ser. 6, vol. 13, no. 24.

eventually for the ministry."[88] Whipple went to Bangor Seminary, became a Congregational minister, and in 1860 was serving a church in Brunswick, Ohio.

Joseph Brown, Oliver Powell, Richard Webster, and John N. Whipple all described their interest in missions in letters of application to the ABCFM. Many other candidates to the Board described an interest in missions that predated their call to ministry, and often predated their Christian commitment. Many of these men became pastors in the United States.[89]

More Money

When small congregations were challenged to give to Foreign Missions, and responded, they were sometimes surprised by how much they were able to give. This sometimes gave them the courage to pass a subscription to call a pastor. Artemas Bullard reported what happened when he preached at one small church that gave $35.00 to the ABCFM:

> They were surprised at what they had done when the amount was announced. . . . They now think they can support a pastor all the time with $100 from the H[ome] M[issionary] So[ciety]. . . . The [$] 35.00 they gave to

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[88] Ibid

[89] John Ross to ABCFM, 1 July 1814, ABC, ser. 6, vol. 3, no. 8; R. H. Lilly to ABCFM, 19 May 1829, ABC, ser. 6, vol. 6, no. 309-10; Josiah B. Clark to Artemas Bullard, 29 Nov. 1836, ABC, ser. 6, vol. 8, no. 16½; Edward P. Emerson to ABCFM, 13 June 1830, ABC, ser. 6, vol. 8, no. 63; Thomas Gordon to ABCFM, 26 Aug. 1836, ABC, ser. 6, vol. 9, no. 14; Duncan S. McCormick to ABCFM, 3 July 1832, ABC, ser. 6, vol. 11, no. 3; William C. White to David Greene, 2 July 1831, ABC, ser. 6, vol. 13, no. 26; Thomas Wickes to William J. Armstrong, March [1837], ABC, ser. 6, vol. 13, no. 30.

the Board is worth more to them than $100 given to them would have been.[90]

Frederick E. Cannon (1800-1891), an American Board agent, reported on the increased giving of a small congregation in Youngstown, New York. As of 1838 they had never given a dollar to any benevolent object except their county Bible Society. After receiving a written appeal from the agent, one member, who had some property, "publicly gave the pledge that he would pay the Board $100 during that year, provided the rest of the church would pay a like sum." The pledge was accepted and the congregation responded. Cannon noted in 1840 that the congregation had recently given $270 to the Board, $50 to each of three other societies, and had recently called a pastor.[91]

It seemed natural that persons who had been aroused to give to distant missions, should begin to notice and give attention to needs closer to home. When the Boston Female Society for Missionary Purposes in 1817 shifted its attention from foreign missions to a city mission, they explained in their annual report, "The multiplied exertions in favor of more distant objects have at length led us to look at home."[92] This first women's missionary society saw no discontinuity between its earlier work of raising funds for the translation of the Bible in India, and its later work of ministry to prostitutes, Afro-Americans, sailors,

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[90] Artemas Bullard to Benjamin B. Wisner, 14 Aug. 1833, ABC, ser. 12.1, vol. 5.

[91] Frederick E. Cannon, "Agency Reports," MH 36 (1840): 75-76.

[92] Vaill, Mary Webb, 63.

working mothers, and those in prison in Boston. Persons who were inspired by the idealism of foreign missions and became its supporters, in time expanded their understanding of missions to include those closer to home.

More Revivals

Accounts of revivals in the Second Great Awakening seldom mentioned foreign missions as a cause. However, in some cases it did happen. The revival at Mount Holyoke Female Seminary following the departure of Fidelia Fiske for Persia is one example.

The Presbyterian Church's 1816 "Narrative of the State of Religion" reported that the previous year's recommendation for monthly concerts of prayer had met with "a very general attention." The Narrative continued, "Several conversions to God in individual cases, and several revivals of religion in societies, may be traced to these seasons of social prayer."[93] This document also noted that in New Hampshire, "Concerts for prayer have been attended, and blessed to the conversion of careless sinners, and to the comfort and edification of God's own people!"[94] That same year, in Sandisfield, Massachusetts, the monthly concert for prayer was identified as the place of origin of a revival which led two hundred persons to hope they had received salvation.[95]

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[93] GAJ 621.

[94] GAJ 623.

[95] "History of the Concert of Prayer," 132.

An account of a revival of religion in North Bridgewater, Massachusetts[96] in 1817, attributed the awakening of religion to the monthly concert:

> Among the means employed for this purpose we may notice the Monthly Concert of Prayer, in which our church about this time united. While thus attempting . . . to bring before the Throne of grace the affecting case of a 'world' that 'lieth in wickedness,' we began to realize our own great need of those divine influences, which we had associated to implore.[97]

In Frederick Cannon's description of the Youngstown, New York, church, mentioned above, he stated, "Two years ago, I found the church consisting of two male members and a handful of women." After one of the male members challenged the rest of the congregation to match his gift to the ABCFM, other changes occurred: "Scarcely had they got their hearts and hands engaged in this effort, when the Lord poured out his Spirit upon the place, and gave them a revival of religion, which brought in more than sixty members to the church."[98]

For ABCFM Agent Artemas Bullard there was no clear distinction between missionary sermons and revivals. Wherever he went, he talked about missions, and he talked about the need for a personal relationship with God. He briefly described one weekend of preaching where communion, missions, and revival were somehow all blended together in a harmonious whole:

> I was at Hamilton last Sabbath at communion season. Did all the preaching from Saturday eve till Monday night. It was a deeply interesting time.

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[96] now Brockton, Mass.

[97] "History of the Concert of Prayer," 132.

[98] Cannon, "Agency Reports," 75-76.

> Several were hopefully converted while I was preaching. At the close of the service on Monday, about $100 was subscribed to the board for 1833.[99]

The following year Bullard's promotion of missions evidently started a revival of some duration in Lexington, Kentucky. In March of 1834 he reported that he "returned to Lexington again to labour in the revival that commenced when I was there the first time."[100] Bullard described how the revival began:

> When I was there the first time I met the Lexington Girls Working So[ciety] consisting of 14 or 15 girls. This was their annual meeting + they paid me $40, as the fruit of their labours. After communicating what information I could, I urged them to secure an interest in Christ themselves. None were then pious. In three weeks from that time I met them again + found half of them professors of religion + the rest will be pious soon I have no doubt.[101]

The revival spread far beyond the Working Girls Society, to include several medical and law students, some of whom had indicated an interest in becoming ministers and missionaries. Bullard enjoyed laboring in revivals, considered it compatible with his job as agent, and most frequently was involved with revivals among students.[102]

The foreign missionary movement appealed to people who were not necessarily evangelical, because of its humanitarian benefits. However agents like Bullard were never backward about the proclamation of the gospel, including

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[99] Artemas Bullard to Benjamin B. Wisner, 10 Jan. 1833, ABC, ser. 12.1, vol. 5.

[100] Artemas Bullard to Benjamin B. Wisner, 10 March 1834, ABC, ser. 12.1, vol. 5.

[101] Ibid

[102] for example in Marietta, Ohio, Artemas Bullard to Benjamin B. Wisner, 19 Feb. 1835, ABC, ser. 12.1, vol. 5.

the need of all to repent and find eternal life in Jesus Christ. Besides deepening the piety of the believer, the movement caught the attention of the uncommitted, and raised the kind of questions that caused them to examine their relationship with God.

III. CONCLUSION

Some of the effects of the foreign missionary movement persist to this day: (1) the existence of a Women's Fellowship--originally the Female Missionary Association--in almost every church; (2) an annual stewardship appeal to secure pledges--formerly subscriptions--in almost every church, using theories and methods developed in the foreign missionary movement; (3) national denominational bureaucracies, with a national headquarters--formerly the "Missionary Rooms"--and full time national staff--formerly the corresponding secretaries of the various voluntary societies; (4) "Social action," the most common name for political lobbying on behalf of the oppressed by the church, using the same methods first exercised by Jeremiah Evarts in opposing Cherokee Removal; (5) the pastor's job description including involvement in numerous committees and activities within and without the church; (6) "specialized ministries," that is, ministers paid by the church to do something other than pastor a church or teach in an institution of higher education; (7)

"brotherhood," or inter-racial harmony, as a concept inseparably linked to Christianity, and embodied in the life of the larger church.

If we confine ourselves to the period under study, we see other reflex influences of the foreign missionary movement more clearly: (8) the monthly concert for prayer for missions, in which information on the world was shared in the context of worship; (9) a radical change in religious literature, with an abundance of periodicals, tracts, and children's literature, more interesting, and more interested in the world, than what had gone before.

With some of the changes in the first half of the nineteenth century, it is difficult to determine whether the foreign missionary movement influenced events, or was influenced by the times. Missions were so intimately related to the spirit of the times, that one can only say that the foreign missionary movement carried forward certain trends that were characteristic of the period. These included: (10) increased activity and influence of women; (11) greater interest in children as children.

Looking at the voluntary association movement as a whole, in which the foreign missionary movement was a leader, it developed a style of church life that was compatible with the spirit of the times. It promoted a disregard for doctrinal distinctions at the same time that it worked through the structures of the

developing denominations. It changed the nature of the ministerial occupation and the character of parish life, creating "the activity church."[103]

But what about the piety of the people? Did the foreign missionary movement influence the individual's relationship with God, and how that relationship was cultivated and expressed? Missionary piety was rooted in the Calvinist and Puritan heritage. But it was more active--more compatible with the spirit of enterprise of the new nation, and the desire to be "practical" and "businesslike." At the same time, the new piety was sensitive to the "feminine" aspects of religion--to submit and surrender, and then to co-labor with a loving and nurturing God. Women, children, the poor, and the non-Christian were all valued more. All were equals at the foot of the Cross; all could find ways of being *useful.* The foreign missionary movement was an energetic, democratic, compassionate, and activist expression of Christianity.

The four aspects of missionary piety, here described, were not new, but were given new applications. Prayer and reading became more directly related to action. The missionary vocation gave to people at home a more aggressive understanding of the Christian vocation. The consecration of a portion of one's property to the service of God became a practical necessity.

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[103] Charles Roy Keller, The Second Great Awakening in Connecticut (New Haven: Yale University, 1942; reprint, N.p.: Archon, 1968), 228.

The reflex influence of missions reached far beyond these four disciplines. The readers of native Christian biography changed their attitudes toward other races. The conversion to "brotherhood," which was a pre-requisite of a conversion to missions, created a counter-force to the dominant racism of American society. Missionary piety extended into political action on behalf of the Cherokee, and many of the friends of mission persisted in this activist piety on behalf of the slave, in spite of the neutrality of the Board secretaries after Evarts. Appeals to women on behalf of women overseas, created a consciousness of a global sisterhood, and the accomplishments of female missionaries encouraged women in America to attempt more at home. The reflex influence was something beyond even Anderson, Armstrong and Greene's ability to control.

In his 1846 tract, The Redeemer's Last Command, John Scudder addressed theology students on the subject of reflex influence, with arguments that did not differ significantly from the beginning of this period. This reflex influence was not a reason for conducting missions, but, "blessings are only to be found while in the path of duty."[104] When the church did its duty in foreign missions, it was blessed. Scudder outlined five reflex influences of foreign missions.

(1) The spirit of foreign missions was necessary to maintain the doctrinal purity of the church. The great example was provided by the churches of New

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[104] Scudder, Redeemer's Last Command, 91.

England, formerly blighted by the doctrines of Unitarianism and Universalism. "Humanly speaking, nothing saved the churches in New England from being overwhelmed with this malaria of the second death, but the spirit of foreign missions."[105]

(2) Churches that gave to foreign missions had more funds for domestic missions and local operations. Dr. Scudder described a church deeply in debt, that was able to pay its bills only after it began giving to missions. "When they began to exert themselves for those who are abroad, God put it into their hearts to exert themselves for those at home."[106]

(3) Foreign missions were necessary for the church to "maintain a highly elevated state of piety." Scudder quoted references to people being "drawn out of themselves," and whose "hearts were enlarged."[107]

(4) Foreign missions promoted piety among children, and led to the conversion of some.

(5) Foreign missions promoted a "spirit of prayer." Missionary intelligence describing the needs of others moved Christians to more frequent prayer for them.[108]

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[105] Ibid., 94.

[106] Ibid., 96-97.

[107] Ibid., 98, 99, 100.

[108] Ibid., 90-103.

A person who wants a deeper relationship with God cannot pursue it as a selfish enterprise. Surrender to God and conformity to the will of God will result in active exertions for the good of others. In living as one prays, one's prayers become more vital.

In an 1842 sermon, "Spiritual Prosperity in a Congregation," ABCFM corporate member Joel Hawes explained, "The design of God . . . in the organization of the church, is not its own edification alone."[109] A congregation could prosper spiritually only as it reached out with the gospel of salvation, both to its community and to the world:

> No fact is established by a greater amount of experience than this. The way to have much religion at home, is to carry much of it abroad. The way for a church to grow strong, is to go out of itself, and learn to feel and act for the salvation of a dying world.
>
> The grand design of the Savior, in establishing a church on earth, is, that it might fulfill his purpose of love, in causing his gospel to be preached to every creature; and every local church that acts on this principle, or answers, in any good degree, this great end of its existence, has the promise of the continual presence of the Redeemer to secure both its prosperity and its perpetuity. When was it ever known, that a church, acting in a spirit of enlarged benevolence, devising and executing liberal things for the good of mankind, became feeble or fell under spiritual decay? And when, on the contrary, was it ever known that a church was prospered, whose members were indifferent to the calls of benevolence, and took no active part in helping forward the great object of the world's conversion?[110]

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[109] Joel Hawes, "Spiritual Prosperity in a Congregation" National Preacher 16 (1842): 81.

[110] Ibid., 84.

The American foreign missionary movement was a source of spiritual renewal--deepening of piety--for the sending church. It was a living demonstration of the teaching of Jesus, "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it." (Matthew 16:25). "Losing" their lives by sending their sons and daughters, their money, and their prayers abroad, all for the glory of Jesus Christ, the friends of mission and their churches received numerous spiritual blessings.