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“Faith in Money”: Mission Movement Fundraising and American Philanthropy, 1860-1930

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An abstract of
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Abstract

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By Scott P. Libson

Days after learning that John D. Rockefeller, Sr. had made a \$100,000 contribution to the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, dozens of Congregationalist ministers denounced their own denomination for accepting the gift. The protest “shows that faith in money as a solvent of all ills is tottering,” Charles Crane preached. He was greatly mistaken. The protests made hardly a dent in Americans’ faith that money could solve a wide range of problems. They may have been willing to find new ways to raise and spend charitable contributions, but their faith in money was unshakeable. In the end, that faith even led official church representatives to promote nonreligious organizations in the hope that the additional capital could solve more ills. Faith in money guided the transition from nineteenth-century religious charity to twentieth-century secular philanthropy.

Charity and philanthropy have always depended upon the donation of excess capital and time. It was no coincidence that American philanthropies rapidly expanded in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century when wage laborers and wealthy industrialists became increasingly prevalent. With so much new capital, philanthropies claimed they could solve almost any problem. While historians have shown how nineteenth-century religious charities prefigured twentieth-century secular philanthropy, few have closely explored how this transition occurred.

This dissertation examines fundraising practices among Protestant foreign mission boards between the Civil War and the Great Depression. In the 1880s, mission board officials adopted the slogan “the evangelization of the world in this generation,” an expression of postbellum beliefs in the urgency and possibility of foreign missions. Mission boards built extensive, centralized organizations to distribute American money in order to achieve this goal. Giving needed to increase rapidly, but for decades, attempts to multiply personal interest in and support for foreign missions largely failed. Officials eventually discovered they could best achieve certain foreign mission objectives outside denominational structures. Many missionaries, mission board officials, and donors consequently helped construct twentieth-century nonsectarian philanthropies, not as secular alternatives to foreign missions, but as partner organizations.

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I started graduate school six years ago without any intention of writing a dissertation on fundraising, philanthropy, or missions and, in fact, knowing very little about any of them. To get from that point to this is thanks to the people mentioned below and many others.

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Numerous friends, faculty, and colleagues at Emory University and beyond have encouraged me throughout the years. Randall Balmer and Robert Somerville sparked my initial interest in the academic study of religion when I was an undergraduate. My coursework at Emory was a time of profound intellectual growth thanks to extraordinary faculty members like Joseph Crespino, Leroy Davis, Leslie Harris, Jonathan Prude, James Roark, and others. My fellow Emory graduate students have regularly challenged me to think more critically and expansively. I would particularly thank Louis Fagnan, Colin Reynolds, and Michael Camp for their feedback and advice on portions of this dissertation and related projects. Erica Bruchko deserves special recognition for serving as both a graduate student

colleague and librarian extraordinaire. The History Department staff, especially Katie Wilson, has made my graduate school experience so much easier and more enjoyable than I could have imagined. Beyond Emory, I have benefited from the feedback of Anne Blankenship, Liz Harmon, and many others.

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Finally, my deepest appreciation goes to my wife, Dorothy Rhodes, and our son, Micah. To be married to a student or an academic is challenging. We keep strange hours, become obsessed with arcane details, and live in our studies, labs, and libraries. In the fifteen years Dorothy and I have been together, I have been a full-time student eleven years. She is relentlessly patient with me, has improved hundreds of pages of my often second-rate prose, and has twice moved away from her beloved New York City for me. I hope to make all of this up to her one day, but know I never will.

In the time that it took me to write and edit a single chapter, Micah learned to smile, to laugh, to sit up, to clap his hands, to wave, and to walk. He amazes me more and more every day.

Since I could never pick between them, I dedicate this dissertation to Dorothy and Micah both.

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Introduction: “Faith in Money”—The Constant of American Philanthropy

James Barton must have had a smile on his face as he opened the newspapers on the morning of March 15, 1905. He had managed to keep quiet, for the most part, since early February and the day had finally arrived for the public to read about his great accomplishment. Barton had spent over a year soliciting a donation to the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM or American Board) from John D. Rockefeller, Sr. A month before the news went public, Rockefeller had finally agreed to give \$100,000, one of the largest gifts in the American Board’s history and the single largest from a living donor. Barton could not resist telling many of his friends right away, contrary to the official American Board policy. On the morning of March 15th, he may well have been thinking the gift would be the greatest accomplishment of his career. It quickly became one of his darkest moments.

Within a week, a group of ministers from the Congregational Church had submitted their formal protest against the gift. The entire country soon began to debate the ethics of taking money from the man who, for many, epitomized callous and covetous corporate America. Famed Social Gospeler Washington Gladden spelled out the critics’ complaint. “It is often assumed, I fear, that we do not need to be very scrupulous about money which we can use in ‘doing good.’ That indifference is deadly. The ‘good’ that is done by lowering our ethical standards might better be left undone.”¹ Others disagreed. The *Washington Post*, for example, took the opposite position. “There is certainly no doubt that more good can be accomplished by accepting Mr. Rockefeller’s money and devoting it to noble purposes than by refusing it because of disapproval of his methods of obtaining it.”²

¹ Washington Gladden, “A Dissenting View,” *The Congregationalist and Christian World* 90, no. 13 (April 1, 1905): 424.

² “A Question of Money and Morals,” *Washington Post*, March 25, 1905.

Early in the controversy, Methodist minister Charles A. Crane (1853-1907) weighed in on the side of Gladden and the so-called “protestants” (i.e. those protesting Rockefeller’s gift). His words echoed the prophets of old, foreseeing divine justice and a new, more equitable world. His death two years later would save him from witnessing the full extent of his miscalculation. “The mission of the church is not to get money, but to help the oppressed and to defend them,” he told his congregants of the People’s Church in Boston. Turning away from abstract principles, he focused on the protestants. “Thank God for this protest. . . . It shows that faith in money as a solvent of all ills is tottering. . . . It shows that the superstitious worship of money is passing from some of us at least.”³

The “tainted money” protest failed months later when the Board formally refused to return the gift, but the debate about how to raise money ethically and effectively for foreign missions, the subject of this dissertation, would continue. Crane died too young to observe that transformation. In contrast, during his eighty years (1855-1936), James Barton not only saw foreign missions and American philanthropy change, he helped bring that change about. One can debate the degree to which the quest for money bordered on “worship,” either before or after 1905. At no point before the Great Depression, however, did “faith in money as a solvent of all ills” falter in the slightest. Indeed, the rock-solid belief that money could solve all ills produced the changes in fundraising for American philanthropy, both religious and secular. Nearly anything could be sacrificed, but not the ever-growing need for money.

The Reverend James Barton was an unlikely shepherd in the transformation of American philanthropy. He was born in 1855 in Charlotte, Vermont, a town of 1,500.⁴

³ “‘Philanthropy that is the Church’s Curse,’” *Boston Globe*, March 27, 1905.

⁴ Charlotte, North Carolina, and Charlotte, Vermont, are pronounced differently. As a consequence of the French and French-Canadian influence in Vermont, the northern Charlotte is pronounced with an emphasis on the last syllable, like the French name. Coincidentally, the two communities had around the same population when Barton was born.

Charlotte must have seemed like a metropolis, though, compared with Jerusalem, Vermont (“few sections of New England ... are more truly rural,” Barton later wrote), where Barton spent most of his youth. His Quaker family was not wealthy and Barton worked on farms and in a lumber mill to help the family get by. “Patched clothing was common rather than the exception” in this part of Vermont, Barton recalled. The single-room schoolhouse gave Barton a contract to stoke the fire before the other students arrived, which allowed the boy to peruse some of the older children’s textbooks. This intellectual curiosity led to Barton’s pursuit of higher education. He enrolled at Middlebury High School at nineteen, then went on to Beeman Academy and Middlebury College, paying his own way and graduating college in 1881 as the oldest member of his class at the age of twenty-five.⁵

Middlebury College changed Barton’s life and set him on a path that would extend far beyond northwestern Vermont. Just before Barton’s senior year, the tiny college of forty or fifty students hired a new president, Cyrus Hamlin, who was one of the best-known missionaries of his generation. He had helped open Robert College in Constantinople in 1863 and had led the school into the 1870s. Hamlin inspired Barton to seek a theology degree at Hartford Seminary in the hopes of becoming a missionary. As graduation neared, Barton’s life seemed to change overnight. Between May and September 1885, Barton graduated from Hartford, was appointed a missionary of the American Board, got married, got ordained, and left to start his missions work.⁶

Like her new husband, Flora Holmes had grown up on a rural, northeastern farm and had worked as a teacher. The couple seemed well-suited for each other, but they had

⁵ James L. Barton, “Autobiographical Notes,” [1934?], quotes on 6 and 15, American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions Archives, 1810-1961 (ABC 11.4, box 12, folder 2) Houghton Library, Harvard University (hereafter ABCFM Archives).

⁶ James L. Barton, “Reminiscences of James L. Barton,” *Missionary Herald* 123, no. 1 (January 1927): 15-16.

little time to enjoy married life. They were assigned to Harpoot, in Ottoman Turkey (modern-day Elazığ), and boarded the ship to take them across the Atlantic on September 19. James ran the missionary schools there for seven years before the couple returned to the United States when Flora became ill. It soon became clear they would not be returning to Harpoot anytime soon, so the American Board hired James to be a foreign secretary, with oversight of about half of the Board's mission fields. In the following decades, James and Flora traveled across the country and the world to attend missionary and political conferences and to serve on delegations investigating American missionary and humanitarian work.⁷

During Barton's eight decades, he witnessed and participated in a remarkable transformation in the nature of American philanthropy. The Bartons reached Harpoot in November 1885. The following summer, a group of young men gathered at evangelist Dwight L. Moody's Northfield, Massachusetts, Bible school. Out of that meeting arose the Student Volunteer Movement, which popularized the mission movement's watchword, "the evangelization of the world in this generation."⁸ Though Barton's calling had come earlier and he did not attend the Northfield conference, he embraced the challenge to his generation.

Even the most fervent proponents of missions, like Arthur T. Pierson, who received credit for the watchword, recognized the challenges of evangelizing the world in a generation. Opponents and the less idealistic supporters knew the task to be a chimera. Many of the most rational criticisms, however, bore little weight within the missionary community, partly because they had already committed to addressing certain grievances and

⁷ Scrapbook of clippings, 1893-1927, ABC 11.4, box 12, ABCFM Archives.

⁸ Dana L. Robert, *Occupy until I Come: A. T. Pierson and the Evangelization of the World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003), 145-56.

partly because of they believed God would help with the others. Some opponents ridiculed missionaries for working at cross-purposes when they seemed to agree on all major issues. Others objected to sending money abroad when it could have been spent at home.⁹

The number of American mission boards increased from about ten in 1860 to over ninety at the end of the century.¹⁰ Each board operated independently, with its own administration, missionaries, and fundraising. The boards sent missionaries to the same regions of the world, so they often worked near missionaries from other denominations. While conflicts did arise among Protestant missionaries, conflicts also existed between missionaries of the same board. In addition, the Protestant boards took concrete steps in the late nineteenth century to better coordinate their efforts. This included the joint operation of schools and some efforts to limit geographic overlap.¹¹

⁹ John Errett Lankford, "Protestant Stewardship and Benevolence, 1900-1941: A Study in Religious Philanthropy" (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1962), 17-20; Wilbert R. Shenk, "Introduction," in *North American Foreign Missions, 1810-1914: Theology, Theory, and Policy*, ed. Wilbert R. Shenk (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004), 4-5. In 1896, Judson Smith catalogued the criticisms somewhat differently in an attempt to address the concerns: 1) the impossibility of evangelizing the world; 2) the incompetence of missionaries and mission movement leaders; 3) the methods "provoke opposition and hatred"; and 4) past failures indicate future failures. Judson Smith, "Foreign Missions in the Light of Fact," *North American Review* 162, no. 470 (January 1896): 21.

¹⁰ R. Pierce Beaver and William Hutchison offer slightly different numbers, but both claim a rapid increase in the last four decades of the nineteenth century. William R. Hutchison, *Errand to the World: American Protestant Thought and Foreign Missions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 91; R. Pierce Beaver, *All Loves Excelling: American Protestant Women in World Mission* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1968), 85.

A word on terminology. Foreign missions or the foreign mission movement identifies the entire phenomenon of philanthropy or proselytization done in the name of Christianity. Mission boards were the organizational bodies that commissioned missionaries. Missionary societies generally referred to the support network for missionaries and mission boards.

¹¹ The institutionalization of this effort produced the Foreign Missions Conference of North America, which began in 1893 and met annually for many years to promote better coordination among the mission boards.

East Asia, as a particularly important mission field, led to a great degree of interdenominational coordination. A case in Chefoo (present-day Yantai) offers an exception that proves the rule. When a Southern Baptist missionary began working in the area, Presbyterian Secretary Arthur J. Brown immediately contacted his Southern Baptist counterpart, R. J. Willingham. Brown strained to make clear that he wanted to work with the Southern Baptists. He forwarded "the Articles of Comity and Co-operation proposed for adoption by the missionary workers in Chefoo" and offered to cede work in nearby Teng-chou (present-day Penglai) to the Baptists. The issue did not easily resolve itself, and years later Brown wrote again out of fear that "the conditions there are rapidly becoming very embarrassing and it appears quite desirable that our two Boards should have conference here before conditions become further involved." Though this example reflects an interdenominational dispute, the great pains Brown took to encourage cooperation indicate the strong desire to

Cooperation only extended so far. Protestant mission boards continued to view the presence of Catholic missionaries as dangerous and presented horror stories of Catholic mass conversions to urge supporters to give more.¹² The Protestant boards agreed about the dangers of Catholicism, but their willingness to build a unified response failed, largely because they could not agree to share money or power. Most mission boards continued to rely on a denominationally defined support base. Though cooperation proceeded haltingly and amid numerous misunderstandings and frustrations, it was nevertheless a goal and, in part, that was a byproduct of the motto.

If competition between Protestant groups, to the degree that it existed, impeded the evangelization of the world, outright opposition to missions across much of the globe limited missionaries' access. In this case, the missionaries trusted providence would help

promote, in his words, "comity." Conflict, it is important to remember, is also likely to be overrepresented in the historical record. Arthur J. Brown to R. J. Willingham, 27 July 1906 and 3 May 1912, Southern Baptist Convention, Foreign Mission Board Historical Files, Southern Baptist Library and Archives, Nashville, Tennessee (SBHLA).

In a second example of interdenominationalism from Arthur J. Brown, he also launched an effort to operate joint schools to educate missionary children in East Asia. Arthur J. Brown "to the Boards and Societies of Foreign Missions having work in China, Japan and Korea," 21 May 1910, box 2, folder 32, International Mission Board, Missionary Correspondence Files, SBHLA.

¹² The American Board provides one example. Following the financial crises of the 1890s, reduced giving led the Board to threaten to cut missionary salaries. The threat caused an outcry as missionaries in the Ottoman Empire were trying to save Armenians during the Hamadian Massacres of 1894-1896. A widely-circulated pamphlet quoted missionary Herman Barnum lamenting the potential growth of Catholicism. "The Armenians are more friendly than ever, more open to the truth, less prejudiced against Protestantism, and unless we take advantage of this crisis in putting preachers into available places it will be an immense harm to the cause. . . . The Catholics are very active, and you may be sure they will leave no stone unturned to draw the Armenians into their fold, and every lack of energy on our part will be taken advantage of by them. Nothing that has happened has really been so disheartening as this." "What the Missionaries Say of the Reductions," *Our Heroes in the Orient: Their Faith; Their Needs* (Boston: The Board, 1896), 19.

Another example comes from Arthur Judson Brown of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions. In summarizing contemporary needs, Brown warned of "Greek and Roman Catholic Churches . . . pouring priests and brothers, monks and nuns, into heathen lands and spending vast sums in equipping them with churches and schools. . . . The Protestant Churches should redouble their efforts, that they may mold these new conditions before hostile influences become established. It is not a rhetorical figure, but the sober truth that it would take treble the sum that the Churches are now giving to handle the situation in an adequate way." Arthur Judson Brown, *The Why and How of Foreign Missions* (New York: Young People's Missionary Movement, 1908), 258.

See also Ian R. Tyrrell, *Reforming the World: The Creation of America's Moral Empire* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010), 4, 95.

them overcome barriers. Once “natives” heard the gospel and witnessed the good works of medical missionaries and educators like James Barton, the missionaries believed cultural and political opposition would wither away. That belief would prove to be misplaced in many cases, but it nevertheless provided a response to the critics. In any case, though, “*evangelizing* the world” did not mean *converting* everyone in the whole world. Universal salvation remained heretical for most missionaries. Rather, they sought to bring the gospel everywhere, to create self-governing, self-supporting, and self-propagating churches.¹³ To achieve the goal outlined in the watchword, missionaries merely needed to be able to preach in every region of the world. Missionary supporters did debate the best methods to achieve their goals, but they never questioned the goals’ long-term feasibility, at least not during Barton’s lifetime.¹⁴

The real problem with "evangelizing the world in this generation" for the attendees of the Northfield conference was neither infighting nor non-Christian opposition, but giving and, initially, a dearth of missionaries. The conference itself and the Student Volunteer Movement (SVM) that it spawned soon addressed the latter issue. One hundred young men at the conference (known as the Mt. Hermon 100) pledged to become missionaries. Within a year, four of the Mt. Hermon 100 had toured the country and found 2200 additional men and women willing to take a similar pledge.¹⁵

¹³ American Board Foreign Secretary Rufus Anderson and Church Missionary Society Secretary Henry Venn popularized this triad, known as the “Three-Self” principle or formula. Although Anderson faced criticism in the postbellum era for focusing too much on evangelism and refusing, for the most part, to send single women as missionaries, mission boards always presented the goal of growing the “native church” as an ideal to strive for. Kenneth Scott Latourette, "Missionaries Abroad," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 368 (November 1966): 24-25; Paul William Harris, *Nothing but Christ: Rufus Anderson and the Ideology of Protestant Foreign Missions* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 3-4, 156-59; Hutchison, *Errand to the World*, 78; Dana L. Robert, *American Women in Mission: A Social History of Their Thought and Practice* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1997), 107-08, 115-16.

¹⁴ Arthur T. Pierson, *The Crisis of Missions: Or, the Voice Out of the Cloud* (New York: Robert Carter and Brothers, 1886), 29-42; Robert, *Occupy until I Come*, 140-44.

¹⁵ ———, *Occupy until I Come*, 149, 155. Following this initial wave of enthusiasm, the SVM would later find it more difficult to find “qualified” volunteers, but by 1902, nearly 2000 students had not just taken the pledge, but actually been hired as missionaries. Another 8000 would become missionaries in the following two decades. The SVM blamed the challenge of finding qualified volunteers on the fact that the mission boards

It was one thing to find people to agree to a difficult but adventurous job; it was another to finance it. At \$400 per year (on the very low end of missionary salaries, even for an individual without a family), those 2200 pledges would have cost an additional \$880,000 per year in salaries alone. The new missionaries would have also required funds for the intercontinental transport of themselves, their families, and their supplies. In addition, each new mission station would have needed housing, somewhere to hold church services, possibly a schoolhouse or hospital, perhaps a printing press, and countless other requirements. Evangelizing the world would have cost many millions of dollars.¹⁶

Despite the massive infusion of cash required to "evangelize the world in this generation," missionary supporters believed they had some reason to be hopeful. Donations needed to multiply, but, in their view, the weakness of contemporary giving provided a

lacked the resources to support all of the initial volunteers, which discouraged later students from taking the pledge in the first place. "The Student Volunteer Movement: Its Work, Its Plans, Its Needs," 1912, MRL 12: Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions Records, box 1, folder 5, The Burke Library Archives at Union Theological Seminary, New York (hereafter Burke Library SVM Records); Lankford, "Protestant Stewardship," 38.

¹⁶ To take one example: the support of an American Board family in China in 1903 was to cost \$1,040 per year plus \$1,150 in the initial year. The annual salary, based on the size of the family and location of the mission station, was \$1,000 with an additional \$40 for a teacher. To get the mission started, \$500 paid for the family to travel to China and \$650 for the "outfit" (i.e. basic expenses to set up the station). This exemplifies a fairly costly scenario, but not an uncommon one. Harry Hicks to Edward P. Drew, 4 December 1903, ABC 4.3, vol. 2, ABCFM Archives.

Within less than a decade, the Student Volunteers were describing the "financial obstacle" as "one of the greatest in the pathway of many volunteers." "Report of the Executive Committee of the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions," 1894, box 1, folder 8, Burke Library SVM Records.

Note that throughout this dissertation, money will be denoted at historical values. As Thomas Piketty has noted, inflation remained generally flat until World War I with the exception of certain periods of time when prices changed markedly. Even in the period after World War I, inflation was much more of an issue in Europe than in the United States. For example, the United States experienced rapid inflation during the Civil War, but then more deflation than inflation for the rest of the century. Inflation rose dramatically after World War I (reaching 24 percent in 1920), but was again followed by rapid deflation (-16 percent) in 1921. Since giving totals usually reflected receipts over the course of an entire year or more, it would be practically impossible to account for such fluctuations and equally difficult to determine how such sharp changes in inflation impacted individual contributions. Despite this fact and the decision here to ignore the changes in currency valuation, it is very important to remember that those changes had a real effect on people's lives, often for the worse. Ignoring inflation is not an attempt to deny that history, merely an acknowledgement that it is not the point of this dissertation. To approximate contemporary values, one can multiply the given amounts by twenty-five. Thomas Piketty, *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2014), 102-09.

potential opportunity for a rapid expansion of fundraising. This optimism, later proven to be misplaced, grew out of confidence that the “home base” would support their efforts if only they better understood the work.¹⁷ “Money is not lacking, but understanding and love for this work,” German missiologist Theodor Christlieb asserted in a work American Congregationalists translated and printed.¹⁸ Initially, the Northfield conference attendees hoped the simple announcement of the motto and the emergence of the SVM would produce a sufficient increase. The pledge at least attracted greater interest in missions work and made volunteers feel somewhat obligated to give.¹⁹ The SVM and other groups, like the Layman's Missionary Movement and Young People's Missionary Movement, also followed Christlieb's approach, shaming supporters who spent extravagantly on themselves and refused to give to missions. Christlieb reproached Rhinelanders for spending more on “pieces of foolery” during a few days of Carnival than their combined contributions to missions.²⁰ If parishioners would only give to missions as much as they spent on candy or tobacco or alcohol, the Young People's Missionary Movement claimed, thousands of new missionaries could set sail. The groups produced countless advertisements and graphs that showed how little money American Protestants gave to missions relative to their personal consumption (figure I.1).

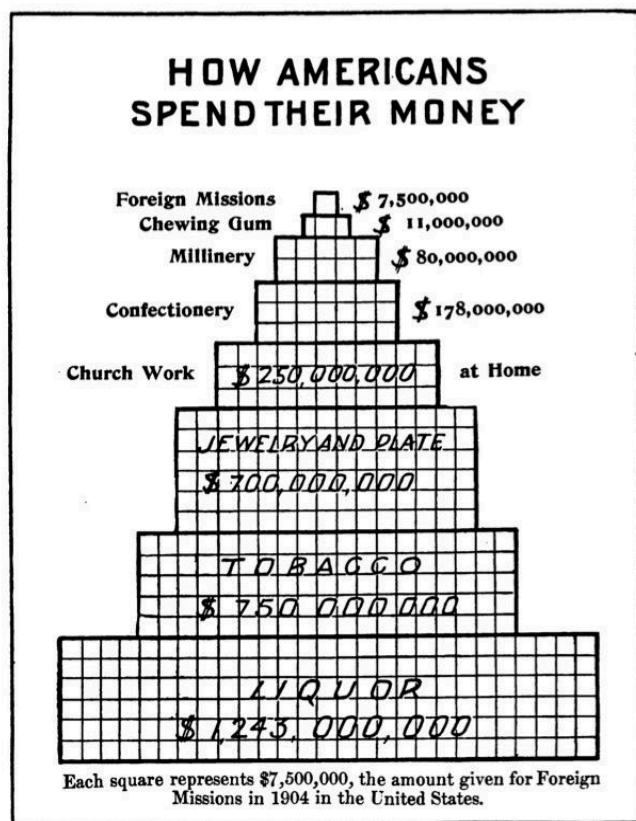
¹⁷ William Hutchison named his work on missions and American Protestant Thought, *Errand to the World*, adapting Perry Miller's title, *Errand into the Wilderness* (1956). Miller had argued the initial Puritan migration had served a dual-purpose, to construct a covenanted society for themselves and to show Europe how to be good Christians. Hutchison referenced Miller because, despite the many differences in the Puritan and missionary errands, the latter also had outward and inward components, evangelizing the world and sparking spiritual renewal at home. Hutchison, *Errand to the World*, 7-8.

¹⁸ Theodor Christlieb, *Protestant Foreign Missions: Their Present State. A Universal Survey*, trans. David Allen Reed (Boston: Congregational Publishing Society, 1880), 51.

¹⁹ H. T. Pitkin, “The Future of a Great Movement,” *The Seminary Student* 1, no. 8 (May 1893): 154.

²⁰ Christlieb, *Protestant Foreign Missions*, 51.

The Moral of this American Diagram applies equally to England



“The heathen are perishing! Are you going to accumulate money? Shall the little account of Consols be added, or souls be saved? Our luxuries cost us more than our Lord.”—Rev. C. H. Spurgeon.

Figure I.1: Young People’s Missionary Movement, “How Americans Spend their Money.” A chart meant to shame Americans into donating more money to foreign missions by comparing “sinful” consumption with giving to missions.

Source: The Land of Sinim: An Illustrated Report of the China Inland Mission, 1905 (London: China Inland Mission, 1905), 27.

In 1915, thirty years after his arrival in Harpoot, James Barton turned sixty and the “European War” raged. By any definition of “this generation,” time was running out to evangelize the world and mission boards continued to complain about a lack of funding.²¹ New and innovative fundraising strategies frequently seemed to sacrifice one group in order to appeal to another. To make giving more efficient, for example, mission boards encouraged the consolidation and eventual elimination of women's societies, which had previously been the most successful fundraisers. To increase giving quickly, the boards sought large donations from wealthy industrialists, alienating many parishioners.

²¹ To clarify, the motto’s use of “this generation” meant those currently alive. In other words, the students wanted to evangelize the world before they died. Robert, *Occupy until I Come*, 154.

The First World War saw the growth of numerous nonsectarian philanthropies and, as a direct result of American deployment in 1917, the number of Americans who had spent time abroad dramatically increased. Historians have identified the war as key to the development of a humanitarian consciousness around the world and to the expansion of state cooperation with nonprofit organizations. Many of these organizations explicitly disavowed connections with religion or politics, which allowed them to appeal to a broader donor base and gain access to countries with a political or religious culture that differed from the United States. The Great War, in many ways, launched modern global philanthropy, but its impact on missions has attracted less attention.²²

Despite the growth of secular philanthropy, and its concomitant competition for American donors, giving to missions also increased markedly during World War I. Mission boards connected their fundraising drives with the conflict, noting specific direct consequences, such as the acquisition of abandoned British and German missions and exchange rate fluctuations, as well as more ideological arguments, such as the claim that missions promoted a more peaceful world. The acceleration in giving would not last, however, and held level after the war. Even so, it did not nearly match the needs of those boards still hoping to evangelize the world by the end of the generation.²³

For James Barton and his fellow mission board leaders, the war presented new possibilities. Rather than limiting their work to denominational mission boards, with defined donor pools and limited state support, they joined the trend toward nonsectarian

²² Bruno Cabanes, *The Great War and the Origins of Humanitarianism, 1918-1924* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014); William I. Hitchcock, "World War I and the Humanitarian Impulse," *The Tocqueville Review/La revue Tocqueville* 35, no. 2 (2014); Julia Irwin, *Making the World Safe: The American Red Cross and a Nation's Humanitarian Awakening* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); John Branden Little, "Band of Crusaders: American Humanitarians, the Great War, and the Remaking of the World" (PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2009).

²³ Charles H. Fahs, *Trends in Protestant Giving: A Study of Church Finance in the United States* (New York: Institute of Social and Religious Research, 1929), esp. 36-54.

philanthropy and spun off much of the humanitarian work that missionaries had been performing. Barton and other mission movement leaders allied with Jewish and Catholic leaders to found the American Committee for Armenian and Syrian Relief (ACASR) in 1915. Within a decade, Near East Relief (which succeeded the ACASR) was receiving four times as much money as the largest mission boards while working in a much smaller portion of the world.²⁴ Missionaries and former missionaries dominated the list of overseas employees and the organization consciously cooperated with mission boards, even identifying the work as “a great missionary opportunity.”²⁵ Mission boards had worked with secular philanthropies in the past, particularly the American Red Cross, but the ACASR reflected a much closer relationship than had previously existed.

Aside from the financial logic of expanding the donor pool and reducing the mission boards’ work load, spinning off the humanitarian work also solved a theological issue within mission circles. For decades, indeed since the founding of the earliest American foreign mission boards in the early nineteenth century, mission movement leaders had been debating the degree to which missionaries should have been focusing exclusively on evangelism or mixing evangelism with efforts to improve the welfare of a community. Historian (and son of missionaries) William R. Hutchison labeled the negotiation as one between Christ and Culture.²⁶ The latter included a wide variety of social services, such as building schools and hospitals, that missionaries considered essential for “civilized” society. Like local residents, whose opinions about the missionaries varied widely, American supporters of missions

²⁴ Ibid., 54-55.

²⁵ James I. Vance, “Religious Education in the Overseas Orphanage of the Near East Relief,” [September] 1924, MRL 2: Near East Relief Committee Records, series 2, box 7, folder 9, The Burke Library Archives at Union Theological Seminary, New York.

²⁶ Hutchison, *Errand to the World*; see also Emily Conroy-Krutz, *Christian Imperialism: Converting the World in the Early American Republic* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015). Dana T. Robert, however, has noted that missionary wives in Hawaii, which became the model of “civilizing” missions, made no distinction between Christ and Culture. Robert, *American Women in Mission*, 69-70.

debated the benefits of this “cultural” work. Religiously conservative Americans, like the wealthy Presbyterian businessman and philanthropist Charles Lukens Huston, refused to support the social welfare programs of many missionaries, but strongly promoted worldwide evangelism.²⁷

This dissertation argues the mission movement helped spawn modern global philanthropy to complement its work in mission fields. While other historians have linked formal imperialism with transnational moral reform movements, they have also interpreted the influence of missionaries after the first decades of the twentieth century as waning.²⁸ Mission boards did indeed struggle to achieve their own lofty goals; however, the consequence was not a decline of the moral empire. Instead, mission movement leaders reframed their work as both religious and nonreligious, with each complementing the other. As he increasingly devoted his time to Near East Relief, James Barton may have seemed less engaged in missions work. That was never his own view of the situation. By the 1910s, Barton had encountered the challenges of raising money for missions many times over and

²⁷ Charles Lukens Huston to Fred B. Smith, 3 October 1916, box 20, folder Se-Sm and C. I. Scofield to Charles Lukens Huston, 19 March 1917, box 20, folder C. I. Scofield, Charles Lukens Huston papers (Accession 1174), Hagley Museum and Library, Wilmington, DE 19807.

²⁸ Tyrrell, *Reforming the World*, 5. Grant Wacker has pointed to the clearest sign of this waning, the famed China missionary Pearl S. Buck's 1932 address, “Is There a Case for Foreign Missions?” Buck eventually concluded that there was, but her many qualifications in the speech and elsewhere, in which she associated missions with incompetence, ineffectiveness, and intolerance, meant it was less than a full endorsement. The speech also prompted a public debate about Buck and missions. Wacker convincingly argues that Buck represented the ambivalence, hesitancy, and outright disapproval of missions on the part of the American public. Grant Wacker, “The Waning of the Missionary Impulse: The Case of Pearl S. Buck,” in *The Foreign Missionary Enterprise at Home: Explorations in North American Cultural History*, ed. Daniel H. Bays and Grant Wacker (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2003), 191-205. William Hutchison noted that the statistical high-point for missions came just before the Great Depression, but the symbolic high-point was the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh in 1910. Hutchison, *Errand to the World*, 125, see also ch. 6. See also Paul A. Varg, “Motives in Protestant Missions, 1890-1917,” *Church History* 23, no. 1 (March 1954): 68; Robert T. Handy, “The American Religious Depression, 1925-1935,” *Church History* 29, no. 1 (March 1960): 4; Emily S. Rosenberg, “Missions to the World: Philanthropy Abroad,” in *Charity, Philanthropy, and Civility in American History*, ed. Lawrence Jacob Friedman and Mark D. McGarvie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 246, 249, 256.

had come to believe that even nonsectarian work supported by Catholics and Jews could, in the end, help evangelize the world.

Conceiving the Origins of the Mission Movement

The diverse work of missions, which led to the division between religious and nonreligious organizations, reflected the various ways in which mission movement leaders imagined their movement had begun. Three origin stories of the American mission movement each emphasized a different aspect of missions work. Many Christians pointed to the Bible and claimed Jesus himself had inaugurated missions by proclaiming the Great Commission.²⁹ Historians frequently join historical figures in referencing a second period, the colonization of the Americas or the early American republic, as an era of consequence. At the same time, the most traditional origin story focused on the founding of the ABCFM, the first American organization specifically tasked with overseas evangelism, in the early nineteenth century. Participants in the nineteenth- and twentieth-century mission movement used all three origin stories to serve various purposes.

Dating the origin of American Christian missions to the colonization of the Americas associated evangelism with exploration and imperialism. Both Catholics and Protestants had subjugated the American continents under the pretense of beneficence, specifically the plan to bring Christianity and civilization to the Indians.³⁰ The founding

²⁹ The New Testament contains various passages that have been interpreted to support evangelism. Most famously, though, in Matthew 28:19-20, after Jesus's resurrection, he commands his disciples, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." The more condensed version in Mark 16:15 reads, "Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation." There are countless examples of mission movement leaders citing the Great Commission in support of their work, but for an example that considers the Great Commission in light of the history of missions, see E. K. Alden, "The Missionary Heritage of the Present Generation," *Missionary Herald* 78, no. 11 (Nov. 1882): 448-59; Smith, "Foreign Missions in the Light of Fact," 22-24.

³⁰ Colonial New Englanders distinguished beneficence from benevolence. The former meant "doing good" while the latter meant "wishing good." Conrad Edick Wright, *The Transformation of Charity in Postrevolutionary New England* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1992), 7.

documents of the Virginia and Massachusetts Bay colonies had each referenced evangelism and for John Winthrop, the success of Massachusetts Bay had rested on whether they could embody the ideals of Christian civilization.³¹ Some of the most famous figures in American religious history, including John Eliot (c. 1604-1690), Roger Williams (c. 1603-1683), Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758), and David Brainerd (1718-1747), had devoted a portion of their lives to missions to the Indians. Contemporary and subsequent Americans recognized the work of these missionaries, and Jonathan Edwards's biography of Brainerd profoundly influenced the founders of the nineteenth-century mission movement.³² Like the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the late nineteenth century was also a time of overseas exploration and expansion of empires.

While many arguments suggest dating the origin of the American mission movement to the sixteenth or seventeenth century, a third origin story has tended to receive the most attention over the years. It centers on the Haystack Prayer Meeting in Williamstown, Massachusetts, in 1806. Amid the religious fervor of the Second Great Awakening, five Williams College students met in a field to pray. When a storm broke out, the students fled to a haystack and, at the urging of Samuel J. Mills (1783-1818), prayed for the

³¹ The Virginia Company, despite their primarily commercial interests, expressed their goals in the language of evangelization. The charter therefore included the hope that the venture would “[propagate] ... Christian Religion to such People, as yet live in Darkness and miserable Ignorance of the true Knowledge and Worship of God, and may in time bring the Infidels and Savages, living in those parts, to human Civility, and to a settled and quiet Government.” In the 1620 Charter of New England, King James I claimed “the principall Effect which we can desire or expect of this Action, is the Conversion and Reduction of the People in those Parts unto the true Worship of God and Christian Religion.” The charters for every other English colony included similar language. This includes colonies like Maryland and Pennsylvania that also promoted religious toleration.

³² John A. Grigg, *The Lives of David Brainerd: The Making of an American Evangelical Icon* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 170-76; Joseph A. Conforti, *Jonathan Edwards, Religious Tradition, and American Culture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 74-76; Joseph Conforti, "David Brainerd and the Nineteenth Century Missionary Movement," *Journal of the Early Republic* 5, no. 3 (Autumn 1985): 309-29; David W. Kling, "The New Divinity and the Origins of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions," in *North American Foreign Missions, 1810-1914: Theology, Theory, and Policy*, ed. Wilbert R. Shenk (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004), 30-31.

Christianization of Asia. Mills soon helped found the American Board in 1810.³³ All of the major denominations established their own foreign mission boards in the next thirty years.³⁴ It would be 1806 and 1810 that later mission movement leaders most frequently recognized as the origins of American foreign missions.³⁵

Though the founders of the American Board connected their goals with the Great Commission and with the evangelization of the Indians, their more immediate inspiration came from England. For more than a decade prior to the Haystack Meeting, American evangelicals had followed and supported the growth of English overseas missions and particularly the London Missionary Society. English missionaries, most famously William Carey (1761-1834), had traveled to India and Burma in the previous decade. When the ABCFM dispatched its first missionaries in 1812, they quickly sought out Carey.³⁶ After

³³ William E. Strong, *The Story of the American Board: An Account of the First Hundred Years of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions* (Boston: Pilgrim Press, 1910), 3-16; Douglas K. Showalter, "The 1810 Formation of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions," in *Role of the American Board in the World: Bicentennial Reflections on the Organization's Missionary Work, 1810-2010*, ed. Clifford Putney and Paul T. Burlin (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2012), 1-10.

³⁴ The ABCFM was the first foreign mission society in the United States, but the origins of the British foreign mission movement date to the 1780s and 1790s and is especially associated with William Carey's 1792 "Enquiry." In Britain, the Baptist Mission Society was formed in 1792, London Missionary Society in 1795, and the Society for Missions to Africa and the East (later the Church Mission Society) in 1799. In the United States, several denominations joined the ABCFM and other foreign mission boards quickly followed. The Reformed Church of America (also known as the Dutch Reformed Church) and several Presbyterian denominations joined the American Board early in its history. The American Baptist Foreign Mission Society began in 1814. The Methodist Episcopal Church created a foreign mission board in 1819, sending its first missionary to Africa in 1833. The Episcopal Church established the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society in 1821. The Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions was founded in 1837 when the Old School Presbyterians left the American Board. The African Methodist Episcopal Church established a Home and Foreign Mission Society in 1844, but had been sending missionaries to Africa since 1820. Following the sectional split of the Methodists, Baptists, and Presbyterians over slavery, newly formed southern denominations established foreign missions societies almost immediately.

³⁵ See, for example, James L. Barton, "One Hundred Years of American Foreign Missions: An Interpretation," *North American Review* 183, no. 601 (October 19, 1906): 745-48.

Contemporary accounts had similarly interpreted it as the dawn of American foreign missions. In accounting for the ordination of those first American Board missionaries, *The Panoplist, and Missionary Magazine* wrote, "This transaction may justly be considered as forming a new and important era in the annals of American churches, THE ERA OF FOREIGN MISSIONS." "Ordination," *The Panoplist, and Missionary Magazine United* 4, no. 9 (February 1812): 426. See also Onesimus [pseud.], letter to the editor, *The Panoplist, and Missionary Magazine United* 4, no. 10 (March 1812): 448.

³⁶ Hutchison, *Errand to the World*, 44; Conroy-Krutz, *Christian Imperialism*, xiv-xv, 22-25, 66-72; Kling, "New Divinity," 15-17.

deciding to send two other missionaries to India, the London Missionary Society told the men to go to New York City first, to take advantage of American interest in the work by securing additional funds.³⁷

As should be clear, each of the origin stories for American foreign missions contains some justification. It is helpful to recognize the implications of each origin story for turn-of-the-century Protestants. To start with the Great Commission identified Christianity as an inherently proselytizing religion. Failure to evangelize defied God's will. This story focused on missions as intrinsic to Christianity and suggested missions ought to be viewed primarily from the perspective of the church rather than other social contexts. As noted above, the American conquest story helped relate exploration in the late nineteenth century with the conquest of the Americas. Most late nineteenth-century American missionaries believed in the positive potential for American imperialism, at least insofar as it promoted their notions of morality.³⁸ This story has also been useful more recently in postcolonial studies. It speaks to the hegemonic use of culture to maintain or impose rule and the ways subaltern groups employ that same cultural vocabulary to subvert colonial power. This perspective necessarily connects questions of imperialism and culture, but it also decenters the nation-state. It points to the limitations of words like "foreign," which is a social and cultural construct rather than a political or geographic reality. The final origin story associated missions with the growth of American voluntarism in the early nineteenth century. It interpreted missions as one of many forms of philanthropy that also included efforts to reform prisons and asylums, to promote temperance and Sabbatarianism, and to abolish slavery. For historians,

³⁷ The missionaries were, in fact, waylaid in the United States due to a conflict with the East India Company and, along with other English missionaries in the United States, helped spark more active American participation in overseas missions. Conroy-Krutz, *Christian Imperialism*, 54-58.

³⁸ Tyrrell, *Reforming the World*, ch. 6-7; see also Hutchison, *Errand to the World*, 92.

this origin story also connects missions with the growth of capitalism in the early nineteenth century, since many scholars have linked voluntarism with economic change. This third story therefore proves most convenient when associating missions with philanthropy, but one must not forget that, like historians, participants in the mission movement used each of the origin stories to suit particular goals at particular times.³⁹

Missions Fundraising as Historical Lens

The need for the late nineteenth-century mission movement to reimagine its origins in various guises and then divide its work between religious and nonreligious organizations emerged, in part, as a consequence of the challenges of a modernizing United States. Due to the many rapid changes in immigration, economics, technology, political inclusivity, and America's role in the world during the Gilded Age and Progressive Era, scholars have struggled to construct coherent narratives of this period. For Robert Wiebe, "order" and bureaucracy united rural "island communities" and modernized American society. Jackson Lears proposes "rebirth" or "regeneration" as a central theme. Nell Irvin Painter emphasizes the conflict between advocates of prosperity and advocates of democracy.⁴⁰

Like the mission movement origin stories, each historical rubric has merit and carries different implications. Each also clarifies developments within missions and the frustrating efforts to raise money. Mission boards established auxiliary societies in rural communities across the country. While those auxiliaries frequently dated to the early nineteenth century, the emergence of the mission movement watchword and the need to greatly increase giving

³⁹ Nineteenth-century promoters of missions were conscious of the multiple origin stories. See E. K. Alden, "The Mutual Relations of the American Board and the Churches," *Missionary Herald* 83, no. 11 (November 1887): 452.

⁴⁰ T. J. Jackson Lears, *Rebirth of a Nation: The Making of a Modern America, 1877-1920* (New York: HarperCollins, 2009); Nell Irvin Painter, *Standing at Armageddon: The United States, 1877-1919* (New York: Norton, 1987); Robert H. Wiebe, *The Search for Order, 1877-1920* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967).

led the mission boards to demand greater systematization. The auxiliaries increasingly lost control over their resources. For example, mission boards began restricting the degree to which auxiliaries could dictate where their money went and how the missionaries could spend it. Lears's concept of "regeneration" centers on the same Protestant communities and beliefs that also produced the greatest supporters of foreign missions. He interprets the quest for rebirth as originating in the "recesses of the Protestant soul."⁴¹ Painter's narrative informs the "tainted money" controversy in 1905. The controversy raised the question of whether parishioners *formed* the church or *served* it.

The fact that such different interpretations of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era all apply to mission movement fundraising underlines the degree to which raising money for missions typified the era. However, despite the immense volume of primary source evidence of missionary fundraising, the topic has only received minimal extended analysis from historians. Valentin H. Rabe's *The Home Base of American China Missions, 1880-1920* (1978) devoted two chapters to the topic, focusing on the principles and strategies that guided fundraising by the mission boards.⁴² While Rabe recognized the significance of professionalization and the growth of industry for fundraising practices in the early twentieth century, his work suffers from numerous substantial defects. His sources overwhelmingly came from the American Board and the Laymen's Missionary Movement and date from 1900 to 1915, limiting his ability to document the variety of practices or change over time. Rabe concluded that white, native-born, moderately wealthy evangelicals provided the base of support for missions, with women playing a disproportionately

⁴¹ Lears, *Rebirth*, 5.

⁴² Valentin H. Rabe, *The Home Base of American China Missions, 1880-1920* (Cambridge: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1978), 109-71.

significant role.⁴³ Rabe examined only net donations, which inevitably led to an emphasis on wealthier, more committed groups. His limited source material and his uncritical acceptance of fundraising statistics make his claims difficult to substantiate.

Although Rabe has produced the only monograph specifically focused on fundraising for missions, the financing of other religious and philanthropic institutions has received more attention. Unfortunately, however, the disciplinary nature of scholarship has tended to produce work that fails to bridge academic boundaries. Scholars of religion have largely focused on churches, synagogues, and other religious organizations, while scholars of philanthropy and fundraising have emphasized secular institutions and the growth of professional fundraising.⁴⁴ Most surprising, the history of philanthropy and the history of missions have remained largely separate in the historiography.⁴⁵ Other scholarship on missions has examined the role of the United States in the world, including the work of missionaries, though usually from the perspective of the history of imperialism.⁴⁶

⁴³ Ibid., 110-12.

⁴⁴ The primary exceptions to this division come from scholars of pre-1860 America when the church and charity work closely overlapped. Among historians of the late nineteenth century, two works are particularly noteworthy in the ways they address religious and secular philanthropy. James Hudnut-Beumler's *In Pursuit of the Almighty's Dollar* (2007) explores the "materialization of religion" and argues that the spiritualization of money-raising expanded the size, scope, and diversity of Protestantism. Hudnut-Beumler speaks primarily to religious studies scholars, but his account underlines a characteristic of all philanthropy, namely the relatively brief enthusiasm for new methods of raising money, particularly those that created a sense of obligation to give. Thomas Rzeznik's *Church and Estate* (2013) connects the history secular and religious philanthropy more explicitly, but, as the title suggests, it focuses on the relationship between churches and parishioners. Rzeznik documents how donations from Philadelphia's elite often vexed Protestant and Catholic clergymen because of their stipulations for the use of the money, their demands for recognition, and their actual authority in church governance. James David Hudnut-Beumler, *In Pursuit of the Almighty's Dollar: A History of Money and American Protestantism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007); Thomas F. Rzeznik, *Church and Estate: Religion and Wealth in Industrial-Era Philadelphia* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2013), esp. ch. 1-2.

⁴⁵ Despite its age, or perhaps because of it, Merle Curti's *American Philanthropy Abroad* (1965) remains the work that most closely links developments in missions with those of philanthropy more generally. Merle Curti, *American Philanthropy Abroad: A History* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1963; repr., New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1988).

⁴⁶ Regarding the Middle East, for instance, examples that devote significant attention to the role of Americans in the region include Robert L. Daniel, *American Philanthropy in the Near East, 1820-1960* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1970); Ussama Samir Makdisi, *Faith Misplaced: The Broken Promise of U.S.-Arab Relations: 1820-2003* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2010); Ronald Grigor Suny, *"They Can Live in the Desert but Nowhere Else": A History of the Armenian Genocide* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015); Karine V. Walther, *Sacred*

Ian Tyrrell's *Reforming the World* (2010) has likely gone the furthest in synthesizing recent conceptions of the relationship between missions and imperialism. Tyrrell argues that "the boundaries between Christian evangelical networks operating on a transnational level and formal empire were blurred, with the latter phenomenon essentially embedded within the former."⁴⁷ Partly through the moral reform movement's self-promotion and transnational communication networks, Americans became more internationally engaged. With the rise of formal American imperialism outside of the United States, moral reformers pressed further, encouraging political leaders to seek a moral empire. While those politicians did adapt to the reformist ethos, foreign policy leaders like Alfred Thayer Mahan, Theodore Roosevelt, and Elihu Root maintained a view that valued political power first and moral reform second.⁴⁸

Questions of missions and imperialism have long dominated the discourse on the history of missions.⁴⁹ More recently, the "new mission history" has resisted gross

Interests: The United States and the Islamic World, 1821-1921 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015).

⁴⁷ Tyrrell, *Reforming the World*, 5.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, esp. 192-96.

⁴⁹ The argument for cultural imperialism received initial support from Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., "The Missionary Enterprise and Theories of Imperialism," in *The Missionary Enterprise in China and America*, ed. John King Fairbank (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974). See also Margaret Strobel, *European Women and the Second British Empire* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991). William Hutchison embraced a subtler cultural imperialist perspective, claiming that the missionaries could not separate their attempts to 'modernize' and to evangelize. See Hutchison, *Errand to the World*. For works that similarly nuance the cultural imperialism perspective, see Paul W. Harris, "Cultural Imperialism and American Protestant Missionaries: Collaboration and Dependency in Mid-Nineteenth-Century China," *Pacific Historical Review* 60, no. 3 (August 1991): 309-38; Brian Stanley, *The Bible and the Flag: Protestant Missions and British Imperialism in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Leicester, UK: Apollos, 1990).

Historians of missions, and in particular British missions, have recently offered insightful critiques of the relationship between missions and imperialism. These critiques often derive from postcolonial theories and particularly challenge proponents of the cultural imperialism argument to better define their foundational terms and also to examine the relationship between missionaries and proselytes rather than simply the connections between the missionaries and the metropole. Andrew Porter, for example, begins by noting that the coincidence of missionaries and the spread of British imperialism cannot be ignored, but nor can historians ignore how the missionaries understood themselves. While missionaries could not dissociate themselves from imperialism, "they were amongst the weakest agents of 'cultural imperialism'" and indigenous peoples took advantage of that weakness. In conclusion, although missionaries represented empire to a degree, it was not an association they desired. Andrew Porter, *Religion Versus Empire?: British Protestant Missionaries and Overseas Expansion, 1700-1914* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2004), quote on 322; see also ———, "'Cultural Imperialism' and Protestant Missionary Enterprise, 1780-1914," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 25, no. 3 (1997): 367-91; Ryan Dunch, "Beyond Cultural Imperialism: Cultural Theory,

generalizations about missions as either wholly imperialistic or wholly sympathetic, benevolent believers, instead focusing on the interrelationship between missionaries and the local populations. In particular, such scholarship has noted that proselytes were not unwitting participants, sucked into the traps set by the missionaries, but often astute tacticians who recognized the benefits and dangers of associating with the outsiders.⁵⁰

Most of the historiography on missions has focused on the missionaries themselves, their encounters with peoples abroad, or the rationale they and mission movement leaders provided for these endeavors. The movement's influence within the United States has received far less attention and has focused mainly on American culture.⁵¹ Missions history pays little attention to the enormous bureaucracy without which none of those foreign encounters would have occurred and it emphasizes debates about cultural imperialism without referencing the essential connections between imperialism and the political economy.⁵²

Christian Missions, and Global Modernity," *History and Theory* 41, no. 3 (October 2002): 301-25; Norman Etherington, ed. *Missions and Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Ussama Samir Makdisi, *Artillery of Heaven: American Missionaries and the Failed Conversion of the Middle East* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008); Dana L. Robert, ed. *Converting Colonialism: Visions and Realities in Mission History, 1706-1914* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008); Peter van der Veer, *Imperial Encounters: Religion and Modernity in India and Britain* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001); James G. Greenlee and Charles Murray Johnston, *Good Citizens: British Missionaries and Imperial States, 1870-1918* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1999); Jeffrey Cox, *Imperial Fault Lines: Christianity and Colonial Power in India, 1818-1940* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002); Barbara Reeves-Ellington, *Domestic Frontiers: Gender, Reform, and American Interventions in the Ottoman Balkans and the Near East* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2013); Conroy-Krutz, *Christian Imperialism*.

⁵⁰ Dunch, "Beyond Cultural Imperialism," 301-25; Etherington, ed. *Missions and Empire*; Makdisi, *Artillery of Heaven*; Reeves-Ellington, *Domestic Frontiers*; Robert, ed. *Converting Colonialism*; van der Veer, *Imperial Encounters*.

⁵¹ Four studies stand at the forefront of this approach: Daniel H. Bays and Grant Wacker, eds., *The Foreign Missionary Enterprise at Home: Explorations in North American Cultural History* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2003); Clifford Putney, *Muscular Christianity: Manhood and Sports in Protestant America, 1880-1920* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001); Dana L. Robert, "The Influence of American Missionary Women on the World Back Home," *Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation* 12, no. 1 (Winter 2002); Tyrrell, *Reforming the World*.

⁵² For exceptions, see Russell E. Richey, "Organizing for Missions: A Methodist Case Study," in *The Foreign Missionary Enterprise at Home: Explorations in North American Cultural History*, ed. Daniel H. Bays and Grant Wacker (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2003); Peter J. Wosh, *Spreading the Word: The Bible Business in Nineteenth-Century America* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994).

Other historians of American religion have documented an extensive, albeit incomplete, association with the history of capitalism. Some scholars have argued that entrepreneurs and social elites used churches as tools to preserve their status and discipline and control their workers, while others have contended that religious beliefs encouraged workers to resist unfair practices or to build a working-class consciousness.⁵³ The more recent historiography on the mutual development of religion and business has perceived an interdependent relationship in which churches, despite their aphorisms about Mammon, promoted business growth and borrowed business practices.⁵⁴ Numerous scholars have also connected religious developments with the growth of the marketplace or ideologies of capitalism (whether in favor of it or opposed) in industrial and postindustrial society.⁵⁵ Taken

⁵³ Among the best known interpretations of religion as cultural hegemony are Clifford S. Griffin, "Religious Benevolence as Social Control, 1815-1860," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 44, no. 3 (Dec. 1957): 423-44; Paul E. Johnson, *A Shopkeeper's Millennium: Society and Revivals in Rochester, New York, 1815-1837*, 25th anniversary ed. (New York: Hill and Wang, 2004); Anthony F. C. Wallace, *Rockdale: The Growth of an American Village in the Early Industrial Revolution* (New York: Knopf, 1978). The opposing camp has become much more popular, especially since the 1990s. See Herbert G. Gutman, "Protestantism and the American Labor Movement: The Christian Spirit in the Gilded Age," *The American Historical Review* 72, no. 1 (1966); Lois W. Banner, "Religious Benevolence as Social Control: A Critique of an Interpretation," *The Journal of American History* 60, no. 1 (June 1973): 23-41; Thomas Walter Laqueur, *Religion and Respectability: Sunday Schools and Working Class Culture, 1780-1850* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1976); Jama Lazerow, *Religion and the Working Class in Antebellum America* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995); Teresa Anne Murphy, *Ten Hours' Labor: Religion, Reform, and Gender in Early New England* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992); Mark S. Schantz, *Piety in Providence: Class Dimensions of Religious Experience in Antebellum Rhode Island* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000); William R. Sutton, *Journeyman for Jesus: Evangelical Artisans Confront Capitalism in Jacksonian Baltimore* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998). See a good, albeit outdated, summary of the debate, see Daniel Walker Howe, "The Evangelical Movement and Political Culture in the North During the Second Party System," *The Journal of American History* 77, no. 4 (March 1991): 1217-22.

⁵⁴ John Corrigan, *Business of the Heart: Religion and Emotion in the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Hudnut-Beumler, *In Pursuit of the Almighty's Dollar*; Rolf Lundén, *Business and Religion in the American 1920s* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988); Beth Barton Schweiger, *The Gospel Working Up: Progress and the Pulpit in Nineteenth-Century Virginia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

⁵⁵ R. Laurence Moore, *Selling God: American Religion in the Marketplace of Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994); Elizabeth A. Fones-Wolf, *Selling Free Enterprise: The Business Assault on Labor and Liberalism, 1945-60* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994); Leigh Eric Schmidt, *Consumer Rites: The Buying & Selling of American Holidays* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995); Douglas Carl Abrams, *Selling the Old-Time Religion: American Fundamentalists and Mass Culture, 1920-1940* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2001); David Paul Nord, *Faith in Reading: Religious Publishing and the Birth of Mass Media in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004); Preston Shires, *Hippies of the Religious Right* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2007); Bethany Moreton, *To Serve God and Wal-Mart: The Making of Christian Free Enterprise* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009); Eileen Luhr, *Witnessing Suburbia: Conservatives and Christian Youth Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009); Richard J. Callahan, Kathryn Lofton, and Chad E. Seales, "Allegories of Progress: Industrial Religion in the United States," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 78,

together, these studies indicate the strong admixture of American political economics and religion.

The study of post-Civil War philanthropy and fundraising has largely focused on secular institutions, with a particular interest in the origins and expansion of secularism. Scholars have posited various explanations for that development. Some emphasize the Civil War itself, especially the United States Sanitary Commission, which supposedly helped bring about the demise of “charity” and the rise of “philanthropy.”⁵⁶ The change in nomenclature derives from a contemporary attempt to distinguish benevolent work that was “direct, personal, [and] concrete” (i.e. charitable) from the “abstract and institutional” philanthropy that emerged later.⁵⁷ Although one particularly associates the former with the period in American history through the early nineteenth century and the latter with the twentieth century, the two approaches actually co-existed through much of the nineteenth century.⁵⁸

no. 1 (March 2010); Mark R. Valeri, *Heavenly Merchandize: How Religion Shaped Commerce in Puritan America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010); Darren Dochuk, *From Bible Belt to Sunbelt: Plain-Folk Religion, Grassroots Politics, and the Rise of Evangelical Conservatism* (New York: Norton, 2011); ———, “Blessed by Oil, Cursed with Crude: God and Black Gold in the American Southwest,” *Journal of American History* 99, no. 1 (June 2012); Daniel Vaca, “Book People: Evangelical Books and the Making of Contemporary Evangelicalism” (PhD diss., Columbia University, 2012).

⁵⁶ This argument is especially associated with George M. Fredrickson, *The Inner Civil War: Northern Intellectuals and the Crisis of the Union*, 1st Illinois Paperback ed. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 98-112. In contrast, see Judith Ann Giesberg, who has written the most extensive account of the Sanitary Commission to date. She has resisted the interpretation of the organization as a revolutionary change from what came earlier. Rather, she writes, it “served as an interim structure—the missing link, if you will—between the localized female activism of the first half of the century and the mass women’s movements of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.” Judith Ann Giesberg, *Civil War Sisterhood: The U.S. Sanitary Commission and Women’s Politics in Transition* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2000), 11.

⁵⁷ These definitions come from Robert A. Gross, “Giving in America: From Charity to Philanthropy,” in *Charity, Philanthropy, and Civility in American History*, ed. Lawrence Jacob Friedman and Mark D. McGarvie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 31, 33.

⁵⁸ Unlike charity, philanthropy “aspires not so much to aid individuals as to reform society. ... By eliminating the problems of society that beset particular persons, philanthropy aims to usher in a world where charity is uncommon—and perhaps unnecessary.” The historiography of philanthropy has largely adopted this distinction, a fact that Gross laments, since it ignores the very direct, personal connections that volunteers and social workers establish during their work for large philanthropies. *Ibid.*, 29-48, quote on 31; see also Robert Payton, “Philanthropic Values,” in *Philanthropic Giving: Studies in Varieties and Goals*, ed. Richard Magat (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 29-45.

Kathleen McCarthy, for example, has addressed some of Gross’s concerns while conforming to others. In *American Creed* (2003), McCarthy identifies a deep history of cooperation between local and national governments since the early eighteenth century, a development typically associated with later public-private

Much of the argument behind the transformation of American charitable institutions following the Civil War derives from the emergence of scientific philanthropy, particularly Charity Organization Societies, following the war. As many historians have shown, the leaders of scientific charity received their initial training during the war, frequently as supporters of the Sanitary Commission. That experience prompted a greater appreciation for professional employees and organized institutions, gendered as masculine even as women continued to take leading roles, to address social ills.⁵⁹ On a more ideological level, American philanthropy changed in the late nineteenth century as a result of Americans' split views on charity. The American elite who gave to charity perceived both giving and intentionally withholding gifts as social goods. Consequently, when public welfare

partnerships. On a certain level, in other words, charity was never exclusively "direct, personal, concrete." However, on a broader scale, McCarthy presents the development of philanthropy through the Civil War as divided between a democratic, associational, northern version and a southern, hierarchical version that gave authority to white men. Like Fredrickson, McCarthy associates the Civil War as a major turning point, particularly the Sanitary Commission, which exemplified "female reformers shift[ing] the rationale for their public participation and policymaking from moral authority to social science research." In contrast, southerners followed a more traditional model of charity, emphasizing morality and religion.

It should be noted that McCarthy tempers the arguments of other historians, such as Lori Ginzberg, who placed even greater emphasis on transformation brought on by the Civil War. Ginzberg argued that the women in the antebellum period forged ties based on gender whereas class became the key factor after the war. In addition, while the basis of southern philanthropy remained the same, McCarthy is not arguing that the war had no impact on southern philanthropy. Rather, she claims it significantly diminished the white, patriarchal hierarchies that had previously dominated southern institutions. Kathleen D. McCarthy, *American Creed: Philanthropy and the Rise of Civil Society, 1700-1865* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2003), 200-201, 262-63n20; see also Lori D. Ginzberg, *Women and the Work of Benevolence: Morality, Politics, and Class in the Nineteenth-Century United States* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990), ch. 5.

⁵⁹ The debate about this period of philanthropy has centered largely on whether scientific philanthropy served as a means of social control of the working class by the elite. For arguments in favor of that argument, see ———, *Women and the Work of Benevolence*, 189-213, esp. 208-10; Fredrickson, *Inner Civil War*, ch. 12-13. Joan Waugh disputes the social control characterization, but she also claims Josephine Shaw Lowell's "experiences in the Civil War defined both her private and public identities," eventually bringing her to leadership roles in the scientific philanthropy movement. Joan Waugh, *Unsentimental Reformer: The Life of Josephine Shaw Lowell* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), esp. 8-11, quote on 85. See also Walter I. Trattner, *From Poor Law to Welfare State: A History of Social Welfare in America*, 6th ed. (New York: The Free Press, 1999), ch. 5, esp. 95-103; Michael B. Katz, *In the Shadow of the Poorhouse: A Social History of Welfare in America* (New York: Basic Books, 1986), 66-84.

See also Scott M. Cutlip, *Fund Raising in the United States: Its Role in America's Philanthropy* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1965). Cutlip's background in public relations seems to have shaped his perspective, particularly his emphasis on the emergence and development of professional fundraisers. He chose not to discuss the spectrum of fundraising practices at any given moment of time and while he acknowledged the importance of religion in the development of philanthropy, he only provided passing references to religious institutions.

arose in the early twentieth century, proponents underlined the importance of individual responsibility even while institutionalizing the social good of giving to the needy.⁶⁰

While the traditional narrative of nineteenth-century philanthropy focuses on increasing secularization, professionalization, masculinization, and more social scientific approaches, more recent scholarship has challenged that model. These scholars have, broadly speaking, sought to understand the ways philanthropy has promoted or militated against democracy and social welfare. Frequently, especially among those who interpret philanthropy as social control, that narrative has adopted a sense of declension, where systematization results in increasingly stratified hierarchies defined by gender and class. While scholars have rightly noted that philanthropists employed new social science disciplines in the late nineteenth century to eradicate or isolate various populations, proponents of scientific charity soon recognized the failure of biological explanations for pauperism and decoupled poverty from other social ills.⁶¹ Olivier Zunz has similarly addressed questions of democracy and philanthropy. Merging the histories of twentieth-century foundations and “mass philanthropy” (a novel approach among historians of philanthropy), Zunz argues philanthropy promoted democracy by creating a “culture of giving” that has “given Americans of diverse conditions a strong voice in defining the common good.”⁶²

By chronicling fundraising practices of several Protestant foreign mission boards between the Civil War and the Great Depression, with a particular focus on missions in the

⁶⁰ Benjamin Soskis, "The Problem of Charity in Industrial America, 1873-1915" (PhD diss., Columbia University, 2010), esp. 9.

⁶¹ Brent Ruswick, *Almost Worthy: The Poor, Paupers, and the Science of Charity in America, 1877-1917* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013).

⁶² Olivier Zunz, *Philanthropy in America: A History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012), xi, 44.

Ottoman Empire, this dissertation examines the ways Americans interacted with the mission movement and how that interaction helped develop modern global philanthropies in the United States. It argues that mission boards eased the transition from nineteenth-century benevolence work to twentieth-century philanthropies after coming to realize that secular organizations aligned with many of their interests and could expand the reach of foreign missions. The history of global philanthropy, therefore, is not one of secularization, but of fusion with religious contemporaries.

Chapter one opens amid the American Civil War with the 1862 decision to establish the Syrian Protestant College in Beirut (later renamed the American University of Beirut). Missionaries undertook this expensive venture at one of the most perilous moments in American history because mid-nineteenth-century fundraising models relied more on direct, personal appeals than raising collective interest. Daniel Bliss, the college's first president, solicited donations from wealthy northerners, many of whom owned companies that provided supplies for the Union Army and were profiting from the war. He soon raised \$100,000. This fundraising model continued methods that had existed for generations. Through personal connections, supporters could be confident of the "worthiness" of recipients to receive their benevolence. In contrast to the historiography of philanthropy, which identifies the Civil War as a key moment of transformation toward science, secularism, and professionalism, this chapter shows how the war added urgency to existing interpretations of philanthropy.

When foreign mission movement leaders adopted the slogan "the evangelization of the world in this generation" in the 1880s, they needed new fundraising methods to accompany their new goal. Chapters two through four chronicle a series of steps that the leaders adopted to encourage giving, steps that did not succeed nearly as well as they had

hoped. These failures eventually led many supporters of foreign missions to help expand nonsectarian philanthropy.

In *chapter two*, the focus turns to missionary publications and their construction of missionary archetypes, particularly during the Armenian massacres of 1894-1896 and the Boxer Uprising of 1899-1901. The press presented both events as attacks on Christians and emphasized the role of missionaries in defending their proselytes, focusing particularly on missionaries' masculinity and practicality. Mission boards used this model to encourage donations. Fundraising had therefore shifted from its basis in individual connections to one in which individuals served as "faces" of the whole movement.

Chapter three uses the figure of James Barton to trace the declining role of ministers and women in raising money for foreign missions at precisely the moment historians have identified a growing democratization of philanthropy. In particular, the chapter examines two episodes in Barton's career: the "tainted money" controversy in 1905 and the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh in 1910. The chapter places the "tainted money" controversy in the context of other changes in American Board financing, each of which devalued the importance of fundraising through church collections in order to devote more resources toward gaining sponsorship from the wealthy. Barton's role on Commission VI also indicated movement away from grassroots fundraising. A key portion of the Commission's draft report claimed that women's societies, for many decades some of the best fundraisers for foreign missions, were becoming problematic. Although couched in the language of efficiency, the concern centered squarely on who would control the finances. In conclusion, the chapter foreshadows the later growth of nonsectarian philanthropy. Mission movement officials were struggling to raise sufficient capital while most donors were left

with little authority, so both fundraisers and supporters had reason to look for alternative ways of promoting American philanthropy.

The historiography of philanthropy emphasizes the importance of World War I even more than the Civil War, particularly for transnational organizations. *Chapter four* examines foreign missions fundraising before and during the war, when the boards tried to adopt fundraising models of more successful organizations. The boards launched fundraising schemes that sought pledges from every member of every church in very brief periods of time. Like Community Chests, the donations went to benevolences in general and officials then distributed the money according to predetermined allocations. During the war, the mission boards presented themselves as alternative recipients for donations as organizations that both maintained neutrality and actively sought peace (through conversion). Receipts rose substantially in the 1910s and 1920s, but they never approached their fundraising goals.

Chapter five moves from World War I into the postwar period, with a focus on the nonsectarian American Committee for Armenian and Syrian Relief (ACASR, later Near East Relief and Near East Foundation) organization. The ACASR was formed to respond to the Armenian Genocide of 1915-1917, and has continued to provide humanitarian assistance ever since. While claiming to be nonsectarian, the organization was largely a continuation of foreign missions work. Most of its leadership had experience in missions and fundraising campaigns and promotional materials referenced Christianity, even though Isaac Seligman, Oscar Straus, and Stephen Wise (all prominent American Jews) helped establish the organization. With the assistance of the federal government, Near East Relief grew much larger than any denominational mission board and mission movement officials saw it as highly successful. Rather than divide philanthropy into secular and religious categories,

therefore, it is important see nonsectarian humanitarian work as a practical offshoot of missions.

An *epilogue* explores a period of self-examination by the mission boards and by Near East Relief just before and after 1930. The generation that was supposed to have evangelized the world was coming to an end. For the previous half-century, mission boards had claimed they could remake the world if they just received enough money. The epilogue examines three reports that disputed that faith in money. Americans were not prepared to give the amounts the mission boards had been asking for and even mission movement leaders were beginning to accept that fact. Strategy, not a surge in giving, would yield success. The decline of foreign missions and growth of secular philanthropy did not reflect an abandonment of missionary ideals, but rather a belief that non-religious organizations could benefit missions. The secularization of philanthropy, in other words, had less to do with ideology and more to do with tactical thinking.

Chapter 1: The American Civil War and the Continuity of Foreign Missions, 1860-1880

One word, war, might summarize 1862 in American history. Most conspicuously, Confederate and Union soldiers slaughtered one another at Shiloh, Bull Run, and dozens of other sites since sanctified in American civil religion.¹ Non-military news and topics of particular historical interest, though, also revolved around the war. The war allowed numerous significant pieces of legislation to pass in 1862 thanks to the vacancies of southern congressmen. The Homestead Act, which offered western lands to settlers for little or no money, and the Morrill Land-Grant Act, which gave federal land to states for the establishment of universities, irrevocably altered the American landscape. The original Pacific Railroad Act also passed, paving the way for the transcontinental railroads. Similarly, the Dakota War of 1862 had many unique causes and consequences unrelated to the Civil War, but the Sioux hoped the distraction of war would work to their advantage. Thousands of fugitive slaves, along with abolitionists and Radical Republicans, finally forced Abraham Lincoln and Congress to recognize the importance of emancipation for the war. Lincoln decided to pursue the Emancipation Proclamation sometime in 1862 and Congress took a series of steps that year to limit slavery and to encourage more slaves to flee their masters. Every event in the history books about 1862 seems little removed from the Civil War.

Given the many significant wartime developments in 1862, historians understandably pay far less attention to those Americans who were not directly affected by the war. September 17, 1862, undoubtedly deserves far more attention as the bloodiest day in American military history than as the day Daniel Bliss and his family disembarked in New York after their month-long trip from Beirut, in Ottoman Syria. Months earlier, missionaries

¹ Robert N. Bellah, "Civil Religion in America," *Daedalus* 96, no. 1 (Winter 1967): 9-11.

for the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM or American Board) had decided to open a college in Beirut and Bliss was returning to the United States to raise money for the project. The five-thousand-mile separation between Syria and the United States made the Civil War, literally, a distant concern for the missionaries.

That physical separation only tells part of the story, though. The Blissess' arrival in New York on the day of the Battle of Shiloh signified the close connection between American missionaries and the "home base," despite the physical separation. The school depended upon donations from the United States, especially in the first phase of development. Even the missionaries' modest appeal for "at least \$5,000" to start the school must have seemed out of step with current events. Bliss's fundraising trip took him first to the United States and then to the United Kingdom. With so many war-related charities, though, what could be left for a school halfway around the world? Bliss would spend the rest of the war fundraising for his Syrian Protestant College, which would eventually become the American University of Beirut. Within these few years, he vastly exceeded the absurdly low budget of \$5,000. He raised \$100,000 in the United States alone, and then traveled to England in 1864 to raise several thousand more British pounds. The school was incorporated in New York in 1864 and opened in Beirut in December 1866 with Daniel Bliss as its president.²

² Daniel Bliss and Frederick Jones Bliss, *The Reminiscences of Daniel Bliss* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1920), 162-86; Robert L. Daniel, *American Philanthropy in the Near East, 1820-1960* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1970), 79.

It is worth mentioning a connection between Civil War legislation mentioned above, which largely sought to colonize the frontier, and the establishment of the Syrian Protestant College. Ussama Makdisi has argued the foreign mission project paralleled the concept of the frontier. "The idea of American missionaries as pioneers required that the Ottoman Empire be seen as an extension of the fabled American frontier, a semi-barbarous landscape in need of colonization and enlightenment by rugged 'American' individualism, liberal education, and above all religious toleration." Ussama Samir Makdisi, *Artillery of Heaven: American Missionaries and the Failed Conversion of the Middle East* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008), 215.

While the central place of the Civil War in the history of 1862 is undoubtedly more than justified, the story of the founding of the Syrian Protestant College reminds us that the world did not stand still as North fought South. Many Americans could not put their work on hold until the war resolved itself and developments in Beirut propelled the founders of the Syrian Protestant College. In particular, a conflict between the Druze and Maronite communities led to an influx of Christians in the city seeking missionary assistance. The mission schools had closed during that conflict, only to reopen as the United States itself plunged into war and the American Board sought to reduce expenditures.³ The missionaries' appeal did not even reference the war, instead speaking of their fears about "Jesuits and other Roman Catholic missionaries ... multiplying their institutions" and attracting "even the children and youth of Protestants."⁴ The missionaries undoubtedly sympathized with their friends and family in the Union army, but the war did not mitigate their own battle for hearts and minds in Syria and nor did it prevent Bliss from a successful fundraising campaign.

The Syrian Protestant College is a counter-narrative to the classic story of American philanthropy. In that narrative, early nineteenth-century voluntary organizations drew their power from an evangelical ethos that promoted caring for individuals who were sick, poor, and hungry. The roots of this approach to charity extended into the colonial period and

³ Betty S. Anderson, *The American University of Beirut: Arab Nationalism and Liberal Education* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2011), 6-10; Ussama Samir Makdisi, *Faith Misplaced: The Broken Promise of U.S.-Arab Relations: 1820-2003* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2010), 50-53. Makdisi emphasizes the independent decision-making of the missionaries, citing American Board leader Rufus Anderson's view that the schools founding was a "necessary choice of evils." Makdisi buries Anderson's reasoning in an endnote. In Anderson's missiology, missions were supposed to pursue evangelism and church-founding, not education. As a result, the missionaries made the school independent of the American Board. The fact that the fundraising campaign was so wildly successful indicates the support for the school among supporters of the American Board as well the fact that fears about the American Civil War causing a severe drop in donations were inappropriate. This chapter will further elaborate on the latter fact.

⁴ "A Protestant College in Syria," *Missionary Herald* 59, no. 2 (February 1863): 38.

earlier. In the “Christian utopian closed corporate community” of Puritan New England, for example, where towns were the basic community structure, the “righteous” adopted needy neighbors to see them cared for and reformed.⁵ In the late nineteenth century, medical and scientific knowledge attempted to solve underlying social and environmental problems rather than treat the individual manifestations of the those problems. Indeed, the narrative claims that the Civil War so shook the nation that Americans no longer placed hope in philanthropic methods that lacked a scientific basis. Philanthropy did not change overnight, but the historiography nevertheless emphasizes the new organizations, influenced by social science, that pointed toward the future while religious organizations reflected the past.⁶

⁵ Kenneth A. Lockridge, *A New England Town: The First Hundred Years, Dedham, Massachusetts, 1636-1736* (New York: Norton, 1970), 16; see also Barry Levy, *Town Born: The Political Economy of New England from Its Founding to the Revolution* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009).

⁶ Amos Warner (1861-1900) had a brief, but significant impact on the history of scientific charity. He studied at Johns Hopkins University with Richard Ely, a progenitor of scholarship in the social sciences. Warner eventually became the first Superintendent of Charities in Washington, DC and a scholar in his own right. Warner’s classic, *American Charities* (1894), epitomized the view that religious charity was giving way, as it ought, to applied sociology and scientific charity. Mission movement officials undoubtedly disputed his assertions about religious charity. Amos Griswold Warner, *American Charities: A Study in Philanthropy and Economics* (New York: T. Y. Crowell, 1894; repr., New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 1989); see also Leon Fink, *Progressive Intellectuals and the Dilemmas of Democratic Commitment* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 54-61.

Scientific charity proponents applied emerging theories of economics and sociology, largely derived from German critiques of laissez-faire economics, to classic social questions about what to do with the impoverished, mentally ill, disabled, and imprisoned. With regard to criminality and poverty, they claimed a link between biology and “unworthy” behavior. Historians have traditionally lambasted scientific charity as a more calculating version of the social control exercised by early nineteenth-century reformers. This argument is not without merit. In the late nineteenth century, scientific charity workers aligned themselves with the eugenicist movement. More recent scholarship, though, has argued that the reformers failed to implement much of their harsh rhetoric and eventually came to accept pauperism as an extremely complicated problem that biology alone would not explain. Brent Ruswick, *Almost Worthy: The Poor, Paupers, and the Science of Charity in America, 1877-1917* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013); Joan Waugh, *Unsentimental Reformer: The Life of Josephine Shaw Lowell* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997); Daniel T. Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1998), ch. 3; Walter I. Trattner, *From Poor Law to Welfare State: A History of Social Welfare in America*, 6th ed. (New York: The Free Press, 1999), ch. 5; Michael B. Katz, *In the Shadow of the Poorhouse: A Social History of Welfare in America*, 10th anniversary ed. (New York: Basic Books, 1996), 68-87; Alice O'Connor, *Poverty Knowledge: Social Science, Social Policy, and the Poor in Twentieth-Century U.S. History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), ch. 1; Robert H. Bremner, *American Philanthropy*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 76-99, esp. 87; Dawn Marie Greeley, "Beyond Benevolence: Gender, Class and the Development of Scientific Charity in New York City, 1882-1935" (PhD diss., State University of New York at Stony Brook, 1995).

Scientific charity was largely synonymous with the Charity Organization Societies that sprang up across the country in the 1870s and 1880s. Consequently, the vast majority of scholarship on scientific charity examines only domestic philanthropy. It should be noted, though, that the movement had a profound

The work of the United States Sanitary Commission during the Civil War, in particular, has shaped the history of American philanthropy. In this narrative, Florence Nightingale's success at nursing British soldiers during the Crimean War (1853-1856) led the United States federal government to support a highly organized, scientific approach to help wounded soldiers. Over the next half-century, that model spread across the "third sector" of the American economy, voluntary organizations. The historiography therefore holds up the Sanitary Commission as a significant progenitor of scientific charity.⁷

The history of the Protestant foreign mission movement modifies this traditional narrative of the third sector. Missions arose out of the same evangelical ethos as other antebellum charitable organizations. The Civil War certainly had a profound impact on missions, but it neither diminished them nor removed the religiosity from them. Instead, the war proved to many Christian observers the reality of human depravity and the need for salvation. The decades after the war marked the acme of American foreign missions. New missionary societies arose and women, in particular, began to organize themselves in order to commission large numbers of unmarried female missionaries for the first time. Donations to missions consistently increased from 1860 to 1930. Between 1901 and 1927, for example,

influence on international philanthropy as well and supporters of missions tended to have the same pedigree as supporters of scientific charity.

⁷ By being "broader in scope and more scientific in intent" than other organizations, the Sanitary Commission "demonstrate[d] the real usefulness of philanthropy in wartime," according to the late historian Robert H. Bremner. Bremner, *American Philanthropy*, 76.

George M. Fredrickson, *The Inner Civil War: Northern Intellectuals and the Crisis of the Union*, 1st Illinois Paperback ed. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 111-12; Lori D. Ginzberg, *Women and the Work of Benevolence: Morality, Politics, and Class in the Nineteenth-Century United States* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990), ch. 5; Lawrence Jacob Friedman and Mark D. McGarvie, eds., *Charity, Philanthropy, and Civility in American History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 156-57; Peter Dobkin Hall, "A Historical Overview of Philanthropy, Voluntary Associations, and Nonprofit Organizations in the United States, 1600-2000," in *The Nonprofit Sector: A Research Handbook*, ed. Walter W. Powell and Richard Steinberg (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006), 42; Trattner, *From Poor Law to Welfare State*, 78-80; Ruswick, *Almost Worthy*, 21; Kathleen D. McCarthy, *American Creed: Philanthropy and the Rise of Civil Society, 1700-1865* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2003), 193-97, 200-07.

donations to fifteen of the largest denominational societies by living donors multiplied fivefold, from just over \$5 million to just under \$30 million.⁸

The growth of the postbellum foreign mission movement continued developments that had begun before the Civil War. Fundraising, for example, maintained its reliance on individual churches to pool their resources and send their collections to a central, denominational mission board. The boards held very little authority over the clergy and could only hope the ministers listened to their appeals, which rarely suggested any novel fundraising methods. Like antebellum efforts, fundraising after the war depended upon personal connections between churches, missionaries, and mission boards. Frequently a church would dramatically increase giving by paying the salary of, or “adopting,” a missionary. Poorer churches combined their donations to adopt missionaries or committed to supporting a particular aspect of missions work, such as a student at a mission school or a “native” Bible reader.⁹

The mission movement points to the gradual evolution of philanthropy in the era of the American Civil War. The war and contemporary developments radically altered many elements of society, especially as a result of the abolition of slavery, the deaths of a generation of young men, and the dominance of Republican politics. The war, however, did not change everything. While forerunners of scientific philanthropy came to prominence during the war, the vast majority of Americans maintained antebellum conceptions of philanthropic work and charitable giving. These were rooted in religious values that emphasized personal connections and individual salvation. The slow transformation of

⁸ Charles H. Fahs, *Trends in Protestant Giving: A Study of Church Finance in the United States* (New York: Institute of Social and Religious Research, 1929), 46.

⁹ Throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth century, mission boards used a variety of pejorative terms to describe missionaries' surrounding communities, most prominently “heathen” and “native.” I have chosen to use their terminology, in quotation marks, throughout this dissertation.

philanthropy underlines the danger of rigid divisions between religion and secularism and helps explain why, a half-century later, amid the First World War, missionaries continued to stand at the core of international relief work.

Locating the Origins of the Moral Empire

Looking at the period between 1800 and 1845, historians have pointed to numerous influences, frequently conflicting, that caused and developed the organizing impulses that fed the foreign mission movement. Colonial precedents, which included church- and community-based philanthropy as well as public-private partnerships, provided an important framework on which voluntarism in the United States rapidly expanded. The democratic principles of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, especially the guarantee of freedom of association, also encouraged Americans to organize. Even Americans who could not participate in the democratic process because of their gender, race, or class still eagerly joined voluntary societies, sometimes with a goal of gaining those civil rights.¹⁰

Closely connected with the growth of democracy, the spread of capitalism heavily influenced voluntary societies. These societies depended entirely upon contributions of time and money, neither of which were available in large quantities until industrialization increased the accessibility of capital and reduced working hours for the emerging middle class. It also coincided with and helped construct the middle-class ideal of the True Woman (and her Jewish counterpart, the True Sister), a woman who spent her time building a perfect home for her husband and children, but who also joined other women to build local voluntary societies. The societies frequently focused their efforts on moral reform, targeting

¹⁰ McCarthy, *American Creed*; Robert H. Bremner, *Giving: Charity and Philanthropy in History* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1994); ———, *American Philanthropy*, ch. 2 and 3; G.J. Barker-Benfield, "The Origins of Anglo-American Sensibility," in *Charity, Philanthropy, and Civility in American History*, ed. Lawrence Jacob Friedman and Mark D. McGarvie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 71-89.

the new class of unskilled, often immigrant labor. Thus, the ideal of voluntarism was from the start closely tied to the wealth of those who benefited from capitalism.¹¹

Churches promoted voluntary societies in several ways. Following the American Revolution, every state except Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New Hampshire quickly ceased public funding of churches. The holdouts continued their support of the Congregational Church through community taxation until the third and fourth decades of the nineteenth century and views on disestablishment continued to differ, but the movement toward some separation between church and state occurred quite early in the new republic. Disestablishment forced churches to compete with each other, turning them into their own voluntary associations in a way and providing a model and a parent for similar organizations. Success at organization prompted the expansion of Christianity in the early nineteenth century and fueled the mission movement.¹²

¹¹ Barbara Welter, "The Cult of 'True Womanhood: 1820-1860," *American Quarterly* 18, no. 2 (1966): 151-74; Nancy F. Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood: "Woman's Sphere" in New England, 1780-1835*, 2nd ed. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997); Anne Firor Scott, *Natural Allies: Women's Associations in American History* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991); cf. McCarthy, *American Creed*; ———, "Women and Political Culture," in *Charity, Philanthropy, and Civility in American History*, ed. Lawrence Jacob Friedman and Mark D. McGarvie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 189, 192-93. The historiography on early nineteenth-century voluntary societies is rich and varied. The main lines of debate center on whether the societies were outgrowths of democratic principles or thinly veiled tentacles of elite cultural hegemony and whether women's participation reflected their place as citizens or as mothers. Kathleen D. McCarthy argues, for instance, that voluntary associations served a diverse community and promoted egalitarianism until the end of the nineteenth century. Most scholarship, however, has focused on the majority of societies led by relatively wealthy, white men and women. The point here is not to adjudicate this debate, but to emphasize the context of and reasons for the emergence of the foreign mission movement.

American Jewish women sought self- and community improvement in similar ways, as expressed in the Independent Order of the True Sisters and the National Council of Jewish Women. The True Sisters sought "true piety" through love of neighbor, solidarity, and loyalty. Council women "clung to the primacy of motherhood as woman's divinely assigned role," while establishing a place for a distinctive American Jewish woman's voice. Cornelia Wilhelm, *The Independent Orders of B'nai B'rith and True Sisters: Pioneers of a New Jewish Identity, 1843-1914* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 2011), esp. 53-55; Faith Rogow, *Gone to Another Meeting: The National Council of Jewish Women, 1893-1993* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1993), 6; see also Karla Goldman, *Beyond the Synagogue Gallery: Finding a Place for Women in American Judaism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), 10-11.

¹² McCarthy, *American Creed*, Introduction and ch. 1; Donald G. Mathews, "The Second Great Awakening as an Organizing Process, 1780-1830: An Hypothesis," *American Quarterly* 21, no. 1 (1969): 23-43; Nathan O. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989), esp. 9; Steven K. Green, *The Second Disestablishment: Church and State in Nineteenth-Century America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

Politics also interacted with missions through the admixture of benevolence and imperialism. Proponents of missions used military language to claim a divine mandate for spiritual conquest. The United States, they argued, had a special role in this conquest as a wealthy center of evangelical Protestantism.¹³ At the same time, missionaries vacillated in their support of formal imperialism, championing empire as a means of spreading “benevolence” and yet bemoaning its actual implementation.¹⁴ The American Board, for example, initially supported British imperial control of India, but the East India Company’s frequent restrictions on their movements and actions prompted a more ambivalent attitude. In other words, missionaries approved of imperialism only insofar as it served their interests.¹⁵

Almost from the start, mission boards debated the degree to which their work should focus on pure evangelism or evangelism through social service. American Board Corresponding Secretary Rufus Anderson left a strong influence in favor of the former position. He advocated the “Three-Self” principle, promoting self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating churches and he opposed devoting resources to institutions that would not promote direct church growth abroad. Anderson’s tenure spanned a period

¹³ William R. Hutchison, *Errand to the World: American Protestant Thought and Foreign Missions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 51-59.

¹⁴ “Benevolent Empire” was the term used at the time, though it fits into the scholarly category of moral imperialism. See Daniel Walker Howe, “The Evangelical Movement and Political Culture in the North During the Second Party System,” *The Journal of American History* 77, no. 4 (March 1991): 1222-23; McCarthy, “Protestant Missionaries,” 186-89; Berta Esperanza Hernández-Truyol, ed. *Moral Imperialism: A Critical Anthology*, Critical America (New York: New York University Press, 2002); Ian R. Tyrrell, *Reforming the World: The Creation of America’s Moral Empire* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010), 4-7; Emily Conroy-Krutz, *Christian Imperialism: Converting the World in the Early American Republic* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015), 5-10.

¹⁵ ———, *Christian Imperialism*, 9-11, 60-73, quote on 10.

of over thirty years, from 1832 to 1866, making him the central figure in the antebellum mission movement.¹⁶

These theological, political, economic, and organizational forces came together to form nineteenth-century philanthropy. From the start, Americans felt deeply torn about philanthropy. Most Americans in the nineteenth century approved of the ideal of community support for the least fortunate, but they reached no consensus regarding who should receive aid and how to deliver it. Through most of American history, members of the social and economic elite dictated the terms of philanthropic support. Those terms frequently conflicted with the interests and desires of the supposed beneficiaries of philanthropy. “Philanthropy” often included demands to abandon one’s native language and dress, requirements to abstain from alcohol, or stipulations to adopt “proper” gender roles. Consequently, many of the supposed beneficiaries were the most vocal opponents to American philanthropy. Disputes over the nature, goals, and methods of altruism have resulted in voluntary associations frequently changing their methods of philanthropy and appealing to a frequently changing constituency using frequently changing justifications.¹⁷

The question of how best to offer aid became even more complicated for foreign missions. On one hand, popular interpretations of the Great Commission identified foreign

¹⁶ Paul William Harris, *Nothing but Christ: Rufus Anderson and the Ideology of Protestant Foreign Missions* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), esp. ch. 8; Hutchison, *Errand to the World*, 77-90; cf. Conroy-Krutz, *Christian Imperialism*, 218n9.

¹⁷ Benjamin Soskis, "The Problem of Charity in Industrial America, 1873-1915" (PhD diss., Columbia University, 2010); Ginzberg, *Women and the Work of Benevolence*, esp. 5; Peter J. Wosh, *Spreading the Word: The Bible Business in Nineteenth-Century America* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994); Greeley, "Beyond Benevolence."

While this dissertation focuses on Protestant groups, it is important to keep in mind parallels in the history of American Judaism. Like Protestants, Jews approached philanthropy with ambivalence. The “proper Jew” gave to philanthropy, but also distinguished the deserving from the undeserving poor and lamented anyone who relied on public charity. Jews used the parallels between their own organizations and Christian groups, as well as communal efforts, to counter long-standing anti-Semitic beliefs. Naomi Wiener Cohen, *Encounter with Emancipation: The German Jews in the United States, 1830-1914* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1984), 111, 114-29.

missions as a necessary element of Christianity and most American Protestants, except certain anti-missionary sects, did not question the ideal of spreading Protestantism. On the other hand, the distance between the mission fields and the United States made it impossible for supporters to assess the worthiness of students in mission schools or patients treated by medical missionaries. In order to solve this conundrum, mission boards relied on traditional methods of building support for charity to raise money and to allay fears of unworthy recipients of aid.

Wives and Well-Wishers: Women at the Core of American Antebellum Missions

Women played key roles in antebellum missionary work as missionary wives abroad and as supporters and fundraisers within the United States. Some single women, especially those who worked with American Indians and widows, also served as missionary assistants.¹⁸ For the most part, though, mission boards defined the role of women in mission fields in relation to their husbands. Still, the choice to become a missionary was not the husband's alone.¹⁹ Single women often developed their interest in missions through various societies within the United States and selected their husbands specifically with the hope and intention of traveling abroad. Many antebellum women embraced the theological underpinnings of missions as much or more than their husbands. In addition, mission boards preferred for men to travel to the field with wives, so many bachelors sought quick marriages prior to

¹⁸ Note that missionary wives also received the title of "assistant missionary," but the distinction between married and single women was nevertheless significant given the widespread paternalist view that white women needed the protection of their husbands when living among foreigners. R. Pierce Beaver, *All Loves Excelling: American Protestant Women in World Mission* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1968), 48-84; Conroy-Krutz, *Christian Imperialism*, 116-17, 216n4.

¹⁹ As Dana T. Robert has noted, accounting for missionary wives reframes the narrative of missions, which has often centered on the David Brainerd model of a lone man among "foreigners." Dana L. Robert, "Evangelist or Homemaker? Mission Strategies of Early Nineteenth-Century Missionary Wives in Burma and Hawaii," in *North American Foreign Missions, 1810-1914: Theology, Theory, and Policy*, ed. Wilbert R. Shenk (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004), 116.

departure, with women who had already indicated their desire to become missionaries.²⁰ In one of the more extreme examples, Asa Thurston proposed to a friend's cousin, Lucy Goodale, on their first meeting in 1819 and married her eighteen days later. Sybil Mosely met Thurston's partner, Hiram Bingham, at Bingham's ordination and married him within a week. With a long, difficult journey as a honeymoon and a high probability of never returning to the United States, missionary couples necessarily felt a profound reliance upon each other.²¹

Once in the mission field, antebellum missionary wives held numerous responsibilities. They could reach populations forbidden to men, particularly women and children. Ann Judson, who eventually settled in Burma with her husband, Adoniram, learned Burmese, educated girls, and evangelized women.²² American ideals of domesticity dictated that missionary wives build Christian homes and thus model that prototype for the surrounding community. Missionaries evaluated societies' "progress" toward "civilization" according to a definite hierarchy. When women cared for children in the home and neither worked for wages nor engaged in politics, the missionaries identified the society as highly civilized, while a matriarchal family structure or intensive female labor outside of the home reflected, in their view, the absence of civilization.²³ Therefore, modeling the Christian home served both religious and cultural functions. The Sandwich Islands (i.e. Hawaii) exemplified

²⁰ The practice did not change too much as the century progressed. James Barton married Flora Holmes only three months before they traveled to the Ottoman Empire.

²¹ Dana L. Robert, *American Women in Mission: A Social History of Their Thought and Practice* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1997), 4-24. See also Samuel Worcester, "Missionary Notice," *The Panoplist, and Missionary Magazine* 11, no. 4 (April 1815): 179-80.

²² Robert, *American Women in Mission*, 43-46; ———, "The Influence of American Missionary Women on the World Back Home," *Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation* 12, no. 1 (Winter 2002): 118-20.

²³ Conroy-Krutz, *Christian Imperialism*, 14-15, 116-17; See also Jane Hunter, "The Home and the World: The Missionary Message of U.S. Domesticity," in *Women's Work for Women: Missionaries and Social Change in Asia*, ed. Leslie A. Flemming (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1989), 159-66.

that perspective. Distressed by Hawaiian culture and with large families of their own, missionary wives argued that they best served the goals of evangelism by exhibiting the Protestant family unit.²⁴

On the home front, women established a diverse set of voluntary associations to promote missions. They formed mite societies, cent societies, and sewing societies, among others. Women in these organizations came together to give small, regular donations to the denominational boards that commissioned missionaries. Such societies empowered women by offering visible positions in the church, by allowing them a degree of control over their collective wealth, and by promoting community through mutual dependence.²⁵ Women used their gifts of time and money to compensate for their lack of formal political power, creating “parallel power structures.”²⁶ Mission boards claimed “greater funds will be secured, and in the manner least objectionable” with separate male and female auxiliaries.²⁷ For a time,

²⁴ Lisa Joy Pruitt, *A Looking-Glass for Ladies: American Protestant Women and the Orient in the Nineteenth Century* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2005), ch. 3; Robert, "North American Foreign Missions, 1810-1914," 116-32. For the more general history of missionary wives in the early foreign mission movement, see Beaver, *All Loves Excelling*, 48-57; Robert, *American Women in Mission*, ch. 2.

²⁵ Regarding cent societies, *The Panoplist, and Missionary Magazine* wrote, “The smallness of the donations in Cent Societies, so far from being an objection to them, is an argument in their favor. The greater the number of Christians who are personally interested in the cause of missions the greater will be the prospect of success. Those who give money to support a mission will pray for its prosperity, and will anxiously inquire as to its effects. Thus the mind will become enlarged, and accustomed to regard all mankind with animated wishes for their happiness.” S. N., “Cent Societies,” *The Panoplist, and Missionary Magazine United* 4, no. 12 (May 1812): 560.

Beaver, *All Loves Excelling*, 13-48; Patricia Ruth Hill, *The World Their Household: The American Woman's Foreign Mission Movement and Cultural Transformation, 1870-1920* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1985), 2-4; Anne M. Boylan, *The Origins of Women's Activism: New York and Boston, 1797-1840* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), ch. 4-5; Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood*, ch. 4; Ginzberg, *Women and the Work of Benevolence*, ch. 2; McCarthy, *American Creed*, ch. 2, 8; Anne Firor Scott, "Women's Voluntary Associations: From Charity to Reform," in *Lady Bountiful Revisited: Women, Philanthropy, and Power*, ed. Kathleen D. McCarthy (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1990), 36-40, 46-49; Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, *Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America* (New York: Knopf, 1985), 109-28.

²⁶ Kathleen McCarthy provides this terminology. Kathleen D. McCarthy, "Parallel Power Structures: Women and the Voluntary Sphere," in *Lady Bountiful Revisited: Women, Philanthropy, and Power*, ed. Kathleen D. McCarthy (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1990), 1-31; See also F. Ellen Netting, Mary Katherine O'Connor, and David P. Fauri, "A Missing Tradition: Women Managing Charitable Organizations in Richmond, Virginia, 1805-1900," *Social Service Review* 83, no. 4 (2009): 557-84.

²⁷ "Systematic Charity," *Missionary Herald* 19, no. 11 (November 1823): 366.

therefore, the women's societies seemed to satisfy all relevant parties. In 1839, the American Board counted 680 women's associations, compared with 923 associations for men.²⁸

The United States Sanitary Commission as Harbinger of Modern American Philanthropy

As a cataclysmic event that demanded the service of millions of Americans and occupied the attention of the entire country, the Civil War helped shape philanthropy in countless ways. Historians have rightly argued that wartime experiences changed Americans' associations with charity. George Fredrickson's *The Inner Civil War* (1965) was already pushing scholars in that direction half a century ago. Fredrickson argued the war radically altered the social philosophy of northern elites, especially for those who fought. The Transcendentalists that Fredrickson focused on had supported many goals similar to those of reform movements before the war, but only through *escaping* civilization to promote the "strenuous life." After the war, according to Fredrickson, their earlier idealism transformed into more structured and harshly utilitarian approaches. They rejected humanitarianism and put their faith in "scientific" interpretations of social order. This change continued a wartime mentality that had emphasized anti-humanitarian, "tough love" approaches to reform. "The 'collective trauma' of the struggle for the union reshaped the attitudes of this New England-based, educated elite and helped prepare it for a new modernizing role."²⁹ Thus, in Fredrickson's influential formulation, northern elites prompted the modernization of American philanthropy.³⁰

²⁸ Throughout New England (the primary constituency of the American Board, with 75 percent of the associations), women had organized nearly an equal number of associations as the men. Men and women each had about six hundred associations or approximately one association per twelve hundred residents over the age of fifteen. Beaver, *All Loves Excelling*, 37.

²⁹ Fredrickson, *Inner Civil War*, quote on xiii.

³⁰ Since the publication of *The Inner Civil War*, numerous historians have pointed to changes in American philanthropy that had been developing much earlier. Indeed, the tendency toward greater organization and less sentimentalism characterized numerous novel philanthropies, especially in New York and

While the embrace of social scientific institutions tended to deemphasize appeals to religion, a related transformation occurred among religious conservatives. Following the war, American Protestants adopted new eschatologies based on premillennialism. Their counterparts, postmillennialists, believed that humans could perfect society, at which point Jesus would return for a thousand-year reign. Premillennialists claimed human depravity left no room for improving society. A famous story about Dwight Moody (1837-1899) illustrated the premillennialist worldview. Moody was an evangelist and revivalist and a hugely popular figure in his day. He claimed to have had a dream one night in which he was on a sinking ship and God called out to him, “Moody, save all you can.” The sinking ship referred to the world, which was doomed to death and destruction. The best Moody could do was to convert as many people as possible before the ship fully sank.³¹

The United States Sanitary Commission (USSC), in particular, embodied the changes that historians of philanthropy perceive as characteristic of modern American philanthropy. Fredrickson described the USSC as “the largest, most powerful, and most highly organized philanthropic activity that had ever been seen in America.”³² The Sanitary Commission was a semi-public relief organization originally proposed by a group of women in April 1861. It received official sanction from the federal government, but had private, male leaders and raised money on its own. It supplemented the work of military doctors and inspected the sanitary conditions of military camps. While historians have pushed back on glowing

Boston. See David J. Rothman, *The Discovery of the Asylum: Social Order and Disorder in the New Republic* (Boston: Little, 1971); Michael B. Katz, *In the Shadow of the Poorhouse: A Social History of Welfare in America* (New York: Basic Books, 1986); Conrad Edick Wright, *The Transformation of Charity in Postrevolutionary New England* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1992).

³¹ Ernest Robert Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism: British and American Millenarianism, 1800-1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), ch. 1-3; George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 51, 66-68; Paul S. Boyer, *When Time Shall Be No More: Prophecy Belief in Modern American Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1992), 86-90.

³² Fredrickson, *Inner Civil War*, 98.

portrayals of the USSC that characterized early accounts of the organization, much of the literature still identifies the USSC as a remarkable innovation of the Civil War with far-reaching consequences.³³

The Sanitary Commission has been a particularly useful example of secularization and professionalization because of its competition with another Civil War military relief society, the United States Christian Commission. In addition to promoting Christianity generally, the Christian Commission performed many of the same functions as the USSC, but out of religious benevolence and with volunteer, rather than professional, employees. While the Sanitary Commission proved highly successful at assisting victims of the war and raised millions of dollars, the Christian Commission never grew to the same size and, for the most part, failed to make a significant impact. The ways that historians have remembered the two commissions therefore has served as a model for the broader historical changes.³⁴

³³ Margaret Humphreys, *Marrow of Tragedy: The Health Crisis of the American Civil War* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013), esp. ch. 4, 5, and 9. Humphreys offers a comprehensive history of the USSC. She emphasizes the role of women in the organization, as progenitors in the antebellum period, as founders bringing together a variety of local health care societies, and as employees who “‘feminized’ the military experience by promoting cleanliness, nutrition, adequate clothing, and proper medical care and transport” (15). Though led by men and with many men working close to the front lines, women still outnumbered men and the commission saw itself as “channeling the healing power of women to the wounded and sick soldiers” (4). See also Friedman and McGarvie, eds., *Charity, Philanthropy, and Civility in American History*, 156-57; Hall, “A Historical Overview of Philanthropy, Voluntary Associations, and Nonprofit Organizations in the United States, 1600-2000,” 42; Ginzberg, *Women and the Work of Benevolence*, ch. 5; Fredrickson, *Inner Civil War*, 98-112; Ginzberg, *Women and the Work of Benevolence*, ch. 5; McCarthy, *American Creed*, 193-97, 200-07; ———, “Protestant Missionaries,” 190-91. For two of the best critiques of the USSC as a forerunner of modern philanthropy, see Jeanie Attie, *Patriotic Toil: Northern Women and the American Civil War* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998); Judith Ann Giesberg, *Civil War Sisterhood: The U.S. Sanitary Commission and Women's Politics in Transition* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2000).

³⁴ For a mostly sympathetic reading of the Christian Commission, see George C. Rable, *God's Almost Chosen Peoples: A Religious History of the American Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 213-19. See also Attie, *Patriotic Toil*, 157-69.

Lori Ginzberg emphasizes that the organizations conflicted with each other more on the rhetoric of benevolence than on the practices of providing aid. Indeed, they worked reasonably well together and even the difference between paid and unpaid employees was somewhat more cosmetic than substantial. The Christian Commission did pay some agents and others received salaries from their home churches while many of the paid Sanitary Commission workers gave their pay to the soldiers. Ginzberg, *Women and the Work of Benevolence*, 161-66.

In a further sign that the Sanitary Commission and Christian Commission might not have been as rigidly representative of secularity versus religion (which is argued in more detail below), Mary W. Wood identified the USSC as a “training-school” for missionary women. Mary W. Wood, *History of Presbyterian*

For historians of philanthropy, the Sanitary Commission pointed toward the growth of secular, dispassionate, and de-personalized philanthropy.³⁵ De-personalization overlapped with the systematization of philanthropic work, though in essence, it meant that supporters of the USSC could not know anything but the most general information about the individuals aided by their donations. Previously, wealthy donors like William Appleton would “part with money in various ways of charity but much like to do it in my own way and not to be dictated to or even asked but in a general way, to give with others.”³⁶ In other words, Appleton abhorred intermediaries intruding into his charitable giving. The Sanitary Commission separated the donor from the recipient and determined on its own how best to allocate funds. Indeed, Fredrickson described the leadership of the USSC as contemptuous of any notion of humanitarianism or philanthropy.³⁷ According to its own literature, the Commission claimed “its ultimate end is neither humanity nor charity. It is to economize for the National service the life and strength of the National soldier.”³⁸ According to Fredrickson, the “belief in the need for an expert to act as intermediary between irrational popular benevolence and the suffering to be relieved was the great contribution of the Sanitary Commission to American philanthropic ideas.”³⁹ All of these characteristics developed further after the conclusion of the war, as evidenced by the Freedmen’s Bureau’s attempts to reconstruct southern society.

women’s missionary societies, [March 1934?], United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. Commission on Ecumenical Mission and Relations Records, RG 81, box 4, folder 17, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (hereafter Ecumenical Mission and Relations Records).

³⁵ By de-personalization, I mean the expansion of philanthropic work beyond personal or community acquaintances.

³⁶ Quoted in Fredrickson, *Inner Civil War*, 111-12.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 100-04.

³⁸ Quoted in *ibid.*, 102.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 108; See also Ginzberg, *Women and the Work of Benevolence*, ch. 5-6.

Foreign Missions and the Counter-Narrative of Civil War Philanthropy: E. W. and Mary Blatchford

Though the military conflict dominated the attention of American Protestants in the early 1860s, foreign missions continued throughout the Civil War. Indeed, donations to the American Board and to the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions *increased* during the war and the Presbyterians continued to dispatch missionaries.⁴⁰ In 1866, after fundraising for four years, missionary Daniel Bliss opened the Syrian Protestant College. In his five-hundred page history of the American Board from 1810 to 1910, William Strong hardly mentioned the war, but when he did grant it a paragraph, he focused on the “marvel of the Board’s financial history,” especially its ability to quickly close deficits despite increasing expenses.⁴¹ In later periods, mission leaders would point to this growth in order to convince donors that they could increase giving and cover deficits regardless of wider circumstances.⁴²

The life and work of Eliphalet (E. W.) And Mary (Williams) Blatchford offers a window into the role of the Civil War in shaping mission movement fundraising. E. W. was born a minister’s son in 1826. His grandfather encouraged his interest in evangelism, donating thirty dollars in E. W.’s name to the American Bible Society in 1827 in order to provide the baby with a lifetime membership. E. W. saved the certificate his entire life.⁴³ As a

⁴⁰ American Board receipts averaged a growth rate of 6 percent during the war. Although the details are largely beyond the scope of the argument here, that average masks a telling variation. Receipts plummeted 21 percent in 1861 compared with 1860 and grew strongly in 1863 and 1864, at 17 percent and 34 percent, respectively. Even that deserves further explanation, though, as the receipts in 1860 exceeded the five-year moving average by 20 percent and, given the chaos of war and the poor incoming receipts, the Board extended the 1860-1861 fiscal year by a month.

Presbyterian receipts told a similar story, with declines in 1861 and 1862, followed by increases each subsequent year. Both boards also saw receipts decline in 1866, recovering in 1868.

⁴¹ William E. Strong, *The Story of the American Board: An Account of the First Hundred Years of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions* (Boston: Pilgrim Press, 1910), 313-14, see also 307-08.

⁴² For example, Robert E. Speer to Andrew V. V. Raymond, 15 September 1914, box 50, folder 10, Ecumenical Mission and Relations Records; “An Emergency Call,” *Missionary Herald* 113, no. 7 (July 1917): 327.

⁴³ American Bible Society Certificate, 1827, box 4, folder 135, Blatchford Family Papers, The Newberry Library, Chicago.

youth in Bridgeport, Connecticut, he had a teacher who “gave knowledge of foreign lands, their needs and conditions.” She soon became a missionary and sent E. W. artifacts from Hawaii, sparking an early interest in missions.⁴⁴ E. W. himself moved back and forth between the East and Midwest as his father took jobs in Chicago and northern Missouri. He eventually settled in St. Louis where he met Truman Post, pastor of Third Presbyterian Church. Fifty years later, he would summarize his sentiments about Post, as “Teacher, Philosopher, Poet, Preacher, Pastor, Friend, and in all a Master.” Post’s ministry focused on “participation of the brethren,” and would further encourage Blatchford’s concern for missions.⁴⁵ While in St. Louis, E. W. started a piping and bullet business, helping connect the city to the telegraph system by encasing wires in lead pipes that lay on the bottom of the Mississippi River. By 1853, he had a near monopoly on western lead and opened a plant in Chicago.⁴⁶

Mary Williams was born some thirty miles outside of Chicago in 1834. At the encouragement of missionaries, her family had moved there from Massachusetts. The Town of Chicago had incorporated the year before Mary’s birth. The family struggled to run a thousand-acre farm and, soon after three of Mary’s siblings died of scarlet fever in quick succession in 1841, the family moved into town. Mary’s father established one of the first grocery businesses in the city, which quickly became highly successful.⁴⁷ Mary was

⁴⁴ “Interest in Missionary Work from Childhood,” [1901?], box 15, folder 340, Blatchford Family Papers; E. W. Blatchford, “Reminiscences,” ca. 1910, 186, box 6, folder 184, Blatchford Family Papers—Additions, The Newberry Library, Chicago.

⁴⁵ E. W. Blatchford to Cornelius Patton, 27 March 1902, box 1, folder 8, Blatchford Family Papers—Additions.

⁴⁶ Charles Hammond Blatchford, *Eliphalet W. Blatchford & Mary E. W. Blatchford: The Story of Two Chicagoans* (North Tarrytown, NY: C. H. Blatchford, 1962), 2-10.

⁴⁷ Isaac D. Guyer, *History of Chicago; Its Commercial and Manufacturing Interests and Industry* (Chicago: Church, Goodman, and Cushing, 1862), 96-97.

adventurous as a youth, climbing Mount Washington and attending Yale University as a special student.⁴⁸

Mary and E. W. married in 1858 and settled in Chicago. The lead business was booming, thanks largely to the popularity of lead paint and the ability to use the same machinery to make linseed oil for the paint. The Blatchfords joined the New England Congregational Church, partly because it argued more forcefully against slavery than the Presbyterians, and they participated in numerous voluntary organizations, as was expected of the elite.⁴⁹

Unsurprisingly, the Civil War shaped the Blatchfords' lives in many ways. On the business front, they made a fortune. Less than three months before the bombardment of Fort Sumter in April 1861, E. W. had traveled to Washington, DC, to meet with Commandant of the Navy Yard, John A. Dahlgreen, and other political leaders. Dahlgreen, known for establishing the Navy's Ordnance Department and for inventing a new type of cannon that could be used on land or ship, had previously established a lead contract with Blatchford for bullet machines. The January 1861 trip solidified the deal and the two discussed expanding it. E. W. knew the need would likely increase. By the time he met with Dahlgreen, five southern states had already seceded, and after the meeting, he visited a foundry in Virginia with "heavy orders from Louisiana, No. Car. & Florida. This brings this fearful movement before us more tangibly than anything yet." Within days of the bombardment of Fort Sumter on April 12, 1861, E. W. received new orders for tons of lead, which he personally delivered to Washington in early May.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Blatchford, *Eliphalet W. Blatchford & Mary E. W. Blatchford*, 2-12.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 14-17.

⁵⁰ E. W. Blatchford to Mary Blatchford, 29-30 January 1861, 23 April 1861; E. W. Blatchford to "Bro," 5 May 1861, box 1, folder 5, Blatchford Family Papers.

In terms of wartime service, both E. W. and Mary worked for the Sanitary Commission. Mary helped organize Sanitary Fairs while E. W. became treasurer of the northwestern branch of the Commission in 1861 and wrote a report on conditions of military hospitals in Missouri. Despite the nonsectarianism of the organization, the Blatchfords viewed their Sanitary Commission work as essentially religious. In 1862, E. W. met with Henry W. Bellows, the Unitarian minister who served as president of the USSC. Bellows viewed “good Samaritanism” and compassion as dangerous and prohibited voluntarism. Nevertheless, upon meeting Bellows, Blatchford described him as “a liberal Christian man. I forgot entirely his Unitarianism.” In 1863, E. W. found himself “constantly occupied—day and night” with Commission matters, but he also described it as “such a privilege to labor in this work.” He would save his Sanitary Commission pin, which contained a Christian cross at its center, and Executive Committee ribbon for the rest of his life.⁵¹

After the war, Mary and E. W. became more heavily involved in foreign missions. Mary helped organize the Women’s Board of Missions of the Interior in 1868 (which was an auxiliary board to the American Board) and remained its corresponding secretary for four decades. By 1916, she was the only original organizer still alive and an active member.⁵² Her correspondence with E. W. in the 1870s regularly mentions meetings of the mission board, though frequently with few details, and she visited the American Board’s main offices when she traveled to Boston.⁵³ E. W. became a corporate member of the American Board in 1870

⁵¹ E. W. Blatchford to Mary Blatchford, 29 January 1862, 5 March 1862, 10 April 1863, and 19 August 1863, box 1, folders 6-7; Mary Blatchford to Edward Williams, 12 November 1861, box 12, folder 259, Blatchford Family Papers; “Gallery of Local Celebrities,” *Chicago Tribune*, April 21, 1901; Blatchford, *Eliphalet W. Blatchford & Mary E. W. Blatchford*, 18-19; Fredrickson, *Inner Civil War*, 105-07.

⁵² “The Woman’s Board of Missions of the Interior,” *The Advance* 58, no. 2623 (February 17, 1916): 645; see also Mary Blatchford, “In His Name,” [ca. 1890], box 16, folder 382, Blatchford Family Papers.

⁵³ Mary Blatchford to E. W. Blatchford, 1870-1874, box 10, folders 233-235, Blatchford Family Papers.

and a vice-president between 1885 and 1898. As a result of these official positions, the Blatchfords established numerous connections with missionaries. Their daughter Amy would marry the missionary educator Howard S. Bliss in 1889. The couple moved to Beirut in 1902 when Howard succeeded his father as president of the Syrian Protestant College, leading it through the transition that resulted in the name change to American University of Beirut. The Blatchfords' grandson would remember his grandfather as one who "regarded his business as a means of aiding [his philanthropic interests]."⁵⁴

On the one hand, then, the Civil War marked the Blatchfords' lives in countless ways. The war increased their wealth, their interest in service organizations, and their connections with both national and local leaders. At the same time, none of these developments arose spontaneously. They already had wealth, connections, and interests in missions when the war started and their evangelical motivations remained constant before, during, and after the war. In addition, while the Blatchfords praised efficient philanthropy before and after the war, they did not seem to adopt the Sanitary Commission's anti-compassion, anti-voluntarism mentality. Perhaps the greatest evidence of the Blatchfords' worldview came in the form of a drawing on the back of an 1885 letter from E. W. to his son Paul while the former was traveling across Europe. The drawing consisted of an eight-tier pyramid. From base to tip, E. W. identified the tiers: faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity.⁵⁵ Efficiency and professionalism certainly made philanthropy work and E. W. regularly criticized ineffective charity, but he also interpreted the motivation for effective philanthropy in decidedly religious terms.

⁵⁴ Blatchford, *Eliphalet W. Blatchford & Mary E. W. Blatchford*, 23-48, quote on 42.

⁵⁵ E. W. Blatchford to Paul Blatchford, 2 June 1885, box 2, folder 18, Blatchford Family Papers.

Mission boards similarly adapted and evolved in light of the war. Since most Protestant denominations had experienced a schism over slavery in the 1840s and 1850s, it should come as no surprise that the missionaries and missionary societies quickly aligned themselves with either the Federals or the Confederates. The American Board connected its fate directly with defeat of the South. At the end of 1861, attendees of the annual meeting passed a resolution claiming “[deep sympathy] with our National Government in its struggle with a rebellion which threatens its existence, and imperils the success of this missionary Board.”⁵⁶ Both missionaries and their boards acknowledged the profound sacrifice of soldiers, attested to the righteousness of the cause, and sent their prayers for a speedy defeat of the opposing side. Missionaries claimed they would have joined the fight if they had been at home.⁵⁷

After forcefully emphasizing the necessity of the war, mission boards inevitably steered conversations to their own work, claiming it was even more essential. While no one denied the righteousness of the war, the Great Commission proved the cause of missions was not just righteous, but mandated by God. At the same annual meeting at which the American Board aligned itself with the Federals, delegates also claimed “the peculiar condition of our country at the present time, in no wise affects our obligations to the heathen world. . . . The command to preach the gospel to every creature is still upon us, and

⁵⁶ “Resolutions Respecting the National Crisis,” *Missionary Herald* 57, no. 11 (November 1861): 329.

⁵⁷ Henry Jessup, for example, in appealing for Americans to continue donating to foreign missions, wrote, “We all sympathize with you in this day of your severe trial in our loved Father-land. We suffer with you, weep and pray with you, and were we among you, would gladly do our part in the duty we owe our common country.” Henry Harris Jessup, “An Appeal to the churches in America,” *Missionary Herald* 57, no. 8 (August 1861): 245.

Those sentiments continued even as the war lasted far longer than anticipated. Regarding the need to continue to support missionaries abroad, American Board Corresponding Secretary Selah Treat wrote, “Those self-denying men who have toiled so faithfully in distant, perhaps ungenial climes, whose patriotism, now that the life of our nation is in jeopardy, turns hitherward, even as the needle to the pole, who teach their churches to pray so fervently for the rescue of our country from all its trials and all its sins,—those men (who will not say?) *must* have and *shall* have the gold. They deserve it.” “The Financial Policy of the Board,” *Missionary Herald* 60, no. 11 (November 1864): 346.

we cannot, without great guilt, neglect it. It is addressed to all, the poor as well as the rich.”⁵⁸

The American Board could not ignore the Civil War, but it could have retrenched in order to focus on the immediate national crisis. Instead, it used the war to underline its own needs.

Like the American Board, the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions (BFM) seemed to have been only moderately impacted by the war. The BFM had a small deficit in 1862, but otherwise ran surpluses. Surprisingly, the organization expanded during the war. Each year saw the departure of around ten missionaries and receipts grew by 50 percent from the start to the end of the war. The outward signs of success hid significant turmoil, caused especially by extreme fluctuations in the price of gold and high rates of exchange that made wartime budgeting almost pointless.⁵⁹

Correspondence to the BFM reflected the fact that the mission movement continued apace throughout the war. Most striking is the absence of references to the war even as it raged. One of the exceptions points to the impact of the war on the BFM. W. S. Rogers wrote to BFM Treasurer William Rankin near the end of the war to deliver a single dollar that one of his parishioners had given for foreign missions. Rogers was feeling ambivalent about the financial state of the BFM. “I am glad to see that you are able to hold your own so well in these war times. But still our church is not near up to the measure of its duty. I am ashamed of the contributions of many of our churches in this region.”⁶⁰ The strong growth

⁵⁸ “Treasurer’s Report,” *Missionary Herald* 57, no. 11 (November 1861): 324.

⁵⁹ In 1864, American Board Corresponding Secretary Selah B. Treat reported the fluctuations to the Prudential Committee. “When we met at Springfield, (October 7, 1862,) gold had advanced to 123; when we adjourned, it had risen to 129. At the opening of the meeting at Rochester, as also at its close, it stood at 147. The rate to-day is 190; and we are grateful for a fall of 95 per cent from the highest point which it has reached. What the average will be, during the coming twelve-month, no prudent man will venture to predict.” “The Financial Policy of the Board,” 344.

See also J. A. Leyenberger to Walter Lowrie, 8 February 1865, box 18, folder 3, Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. Board of Foreign Missions Secretaries’ Files, RG 31, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (hereafter BFM Secretaries’ Files).

⁶⁰ W. S. Rogers to William Rankin, 14 January 1865, box 18, folder 1, BFM Secretaries’ Files.

the BFM experienced and the lack of correspondence mentioning the war should not be interpreted to mean a lack of interest in domestic concerns. It does point to the fact that the American Civil War was not the primary turning point in the history of foreign missions.

Southern white mission boards admittedly experienced a harsher blow to their work during the Civil War, but they nevertheless persisted. The difficulties mainly stemmed from the war, especially the blockade of southern ports, which made it nearly impossible to transmit anything to missionaries abroad or to send out new missionaries. In addition, these were much younger organizations, born from the earlier schisms, and therefore lacked the resources of the North. By the start of the war, the mission boards had only just begun dispatching missionaries. Finally, especially in the later years of the war, Confederate currency lost most of its value, making fundraising a futile endeavor.⁶¹

Despite these extraordinary difficulties, however, southern denominations retained foreign missions throughout the war with varying levels of success. Southern Presbyterians had only split from the northern congregation in the months leading up to open hostility. Still, they immediately established a foreign missionary society and were continuing to receive money and applications from prospective missionaries in 1863. That year, the board received close to \$17,000, but could spend only \$7,000, mostly on missions to the Indians. The difficulties referenced above limited the practical value of those offers, so the church prayed God would “remove all hindrances, and . . . set before her an open door.” They kept their hopes, speculating that God may have sent the war to allow missionaries more time for training and theological education.⁶²

⁶¹ On the history of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South during the Civil War, see Robert Watson Sledge, *Five Dollars and Myself: The History of Mission of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1845-1939* (New York: General Board of Global Ministries, United Methodist Church, 2005), 87-98, 98-103.

⁶² Joseph M. Wilson, *The Presbyterian Historical Almanac, and Annual Remembrance of the Church for 1865*, vol. 7 (Philadelphia, 1865), 260-66, 301-03, quote on 260.

Sentiments among Southern Baptists were similar to those of the Presbyterians. Having split from their northern counterparts in 1845, Southern Baptists were unlike the Presbyterians in that they had had an extended period of time to develop their missions. In addition, the Southern Baptist Convention was founded as a missionary church and missions would regularly help unify the decentralized denomination.⁶³ The 1863 annual report matched the Presbyterian optimism, expressing “a profound sense of Divine goodness,” since “God has wonderfully preserved us.” At the time, they had dozens of missionaries in China, Japan, and West Africa and receipts of close to \$30,000. Like the Presbyterians, the Baptists continued to receive money they could not send to their missions. Instead, they informed their missionaries to take out loans from any source and the board would settle the debt whenever possible. They also relied on donations from individuals in federally controlled territory who sent funds directly to the missionaries.⁶⁴

American Board Organizational Stasis and Change after the War

Historians often emphasize major shifts in the foreign mission movement following the Civil War. The American Board, the most prominent mission board in the historiography, frequently provides examples of these changes. Rufus Anderson, the corresponding secretary of the American Board since 1832 and an influence beyond his own Congregational Church, retired in 1866. Anderson had worked to prevent single women

⁶³ At the same time, a strong anti-missionary sentiment existed among some Southern Baptists. Following an extreme version of predestination, these Baptists believed that God had already chosen the saved and the damned, so, from their perspective, missions made no sense and reflected an absurdly optimistic worldview. Scholars have also noted class and geographic explanations for opposition to missions. By the time of the Civil War, many of these churches had become Primitive Baptist. Wayne Flynt, *Alabama Baptists: Southern Baptists in the Heart of Dixie* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1998), 32-34, 82-83, 259-60; Bertram Wyatt-Brown, "The Antimission Movement in the Jacksonian South: A Study in Regional Folk Culture," *The Journal of Southern History* 36, no. 4 (Nov. 1970): 501-29; Joshua Guthman, *Strangers Below: Primitive Baptists and American Culture* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2015), ch. 1.

⁶⁴ *Proceedings of the Ninth Biennial Session, of the Southern Baptist Convention Held in the Green Street Baptist Church, Augusta, Ga.* (Macon, GA, 1863), 24-25, 32-33.

from becoming missionaries and favored mission work focused on building “native” churches. His departure and the founding of the Woman’s Board of Missions (WBM) in 1868 were, therefore, not entirely coincidental. The WBM quickly increased the number of unmarried women who became missionaries. The American Board also gradually expanded its emphasis on education and medical care relative to evangelism, another turn against Anderson’s missiology.⁶⁵

Other changes bore little connection to Anderson’s retirement. The American Board had been a broadly interdenominational Calvinist organization since early in its history.⁶⁶ Before the war, the Presbyterian Church (Old School) and Reformed Church of America had each withdrawn to form their own boards. In 1870, after the reconciliation of the New School and Old School Presbyterians, New School Presbyterians also left the Board. Prior to these departures, the organizational structure had built interdenominationalism into the authority structure, with proportional representation on the Prudential Committee, the governing body of the Board. Thus, for the first time in its history in 1870, the American Board became a purely denominational organization, representing the Congregational Church.⁶⁷

Despite these many outward changes, much of the organization of the American Board changed remarkably little. The leadership structure, for one, had largely stayed the same since the early nineteenth century. Until 1832, a corresponding secretary and treasurer, along with two assistants, oversaw all essential day-to-day operations. When the organization

⁶⁵ Harris, *Nothing but Christ*, 162; Robert, *American Women in Mission*, 131-32.

⁶⁶ The original 1810 charter of the American Board proclaimed itself to be interdenominational and the name of the organization was meant to reflect that. However, in the early years, Congregationalists held most of the leadership positions. Strong, *The Story of the American Board*, 142-43, 150-51; Conroy-Krutz, *Christian Imperialism*, 3.

⁶⁷ Strong, *The Story of the American Board*, 309-10.

became too large for two secretaries, the assistants received promotions and they divided United States into thirteen districts, each with its own administrator to organize fundraising, handle correspondence with local churches, and publicize the Board's work.⁶⁸ Except the treasurer, who was often a businessman, the secretaries had backgrounds in the clergy after the war as before. The Prudential Committee functioned as a Board of Trustees from early in the Board's history. Its composition enlarged and changed to reflect the gradual growth in support and changing denominational character of the organization, but its role remained the same. In addition, the American Board, from the start, offered voting rights to corporate members, generally men who had donated substantial sums. The composition of corporate members also expanded and changed in the same ways and for the same reasons as the Prudential Committee, but also like the Prudential Committee, its role did not change.⁶⁹

The support network of the American Board also changed remarkably little following the war. Wealthy and middle-class families from New England provided the majority of support and men from those families, particularly ministers, filled the leadership positions of the Board. The departure of the Presbyterians in 1870 and the country's westward expansion only slightly modified the centers of support. Though the American Board's interdenominationalism ostensibly ended in 1870, the actual support network remained fairly static. Congregationalists had always donated the most money and controlled the most seats on the Prudential Committee. At the same time, the Board welcomed support from anyone and was willing to commission non-Congregationalists as missionaries.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Rufus Anderson, *Memorial Volume of the First Fifty Years of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions* (Boston: American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, 1861), 155. Later, the thirteen districts were reduced to three in order to centralize these tasks and give the main office in Boston a limited number of administrators with whom they coordinated and corresponded.

⁶⁹ Strong, *The Story of the American Board*, 305-07.

⁷⁰ Responding to an inquiry from a Baptist woman interested in mission work, Corresponding Secretary N. G. Clark (Rufus Anderson's successor) expressed the Board's view that "we have no objection to this, provided one is a liberal Baptist." N. G. Clark to Mary E. Downer, 16 January 1882, American Board of

The addition of the Woman's Board of Missions points to the most fundamental change following the war: the more overt role of women. The change was especially consequential as a symbol of changing ideas about gender and missions, and unmarried women finally had a board that would appoint them as missionaries. In practice, however, the immediate impact was far smaller. In mission fields, women had always held positions of authority, especially since many societies limited intersexual interaction and missionaries judged cultures based on women's roles within them. In the United States, the antebellum women's cent societies and similar organizations quickly and easily shifted their support from the denominational boards to the new women's boards. In addition to paying the salaries of new unmarried missionary women, women's boards adopted some financial responsibilities of the denominational boards, including the salaries of missionary wives and the schools in which they worked. Certainly, the new organizational structure facilitated fundraising since it gave both the women's boards and the local auxiliaries specific objects in which they were highly invested, financially and personally.⁷¹

The business model of the American Board, both before and after the Civil War, focused on establishing personal connections between missionaries and supporters at home. It achieved these personal connections through a variety of direct and indirect methods. Correspondence, speeches, newspaper articles, and photographs all served to connect Americans with their missionaries abroad. This approach maintained antebellum ideas about the nature of charitable work. Paradoxically, it also distanced supporters from both missionaries and mission fields by orienting fundraising around the needs of the donors at home rather than the demands overseas. Donors perceived themselves to have some degree

Commissioners for Foreign Missions Archives, 1810-1961 (ABC 1.1, vol. 105) Houghton Library, Harvard University.

⁷¹ Hill, *The World Their Household*, ch. 2-4; Robert, *American Women in Mission*, ch. 4.

of authority over the missionaries they supported, which made it more difficult for the donors to understand and interpret the information they received. Mission boards and philanthropic institutions later overcame this challenge by constructing giving around the donor while limiting actual control of philanthropic work to all but the largest givers.

Throughout the late nineteenth century, nearly every issue of the *Missionary Herald*, the main publication of the American Board, contained ten to twelve pages of letters from missionaries.⁷² The letters covered the work of the mission stations, including education, evangelism, and church-building, but a significant portion also documented daily life abroad. Since the end of the 1860s, the *Herald* had also been printing a drawing of a mission station or its environs as a frontispiece of nearly every issue. The image connected with the first article of the issue, which was itself usually a missionary's description of the scene and its association with his, or later her, work.

The *Herald's* use of images followed nineteenth-century Protestants' sensibilities about imagery or photography. Despite Protestants' bibliocentrism and associations of religious imagery with Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy, mass-produced images, and especially photographs, achieved an "aura" (i.e. spiritual authenticity and authority) for nineteenth-century American Protestants.⁷³ By the Civil War, the American Tract Society had already produced hundreds of tracts, many including illustrations. Even before that, illustrated Bibles and almanacs had served pedagogical functions, but the Tract Society reproduced images far more cheaply and in far greater numbers. The tracts changed over

⁷² The November issue devoted most of its pages to reports from the annual meeting. Every other issue focused on the work of the missions and even November issues contained a section of missionary correspondence. During the same period, though, the publication grew from thirty-two pages to fifty pages, diluting the focus on the letters.

⁷³ David Morgan, *Protestants & Pictures: Religion, Visual Culture, and the Age of American Mass Production* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 8-9.

time; initially closely connected with a text, they later became more detailed and open to interpretation, allowing the viewer add personal meanings.⁷⁴

The February 1872 issue of the *Herald* opened with a drawing, “Damascus, From Anti-Lebanon” (the western name given to the mountain range separating Lebanon and Syria) (figure 1.1) and continued with an article by a local missionary, L. H. Adams. Beginning with a very cursory history of the city, Adams emphasized connections with biblical stories and major changes of power. In three short paragraphs, the article spanned four thousand years of history from the time Abraham “passed or visited Damascus” in “B.C. 1936” to its contemporary rule by the Ottoman Turks. The history set the scene. The following paragraphs continued to paint a picture, this time of the contemporary city, focusing on its topography and urbanity. Adams closed with a mention of current missionary work by three Presbyterians.⁷⁵ The *Herald* followed Adams’s short piece with excerpts of letters and articles providing further detail about life in Damascus.

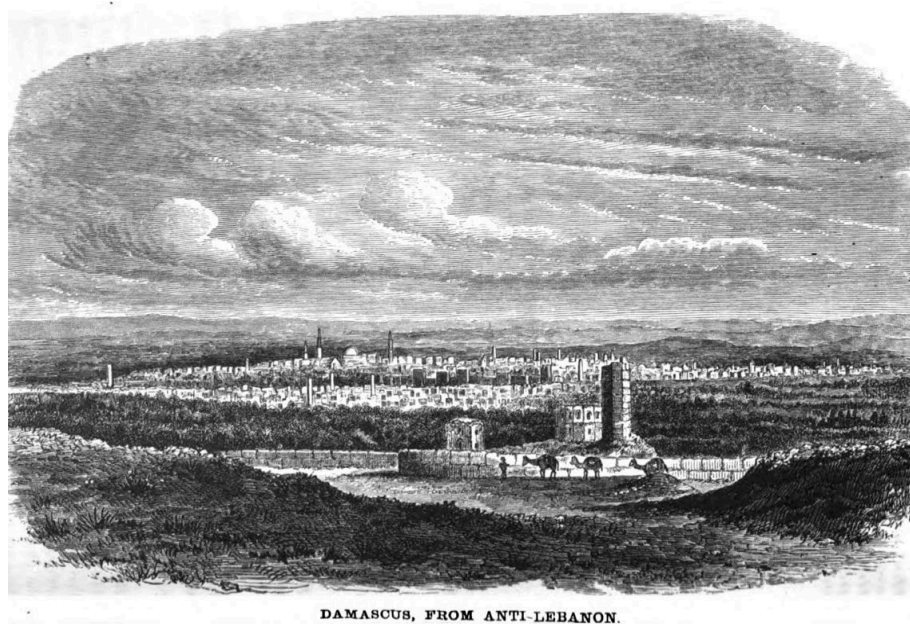


Figure 1.1:
Unknown Artist,
“Damascus, from
Anti-Lebanon.” A
sketch depicting the
landscape of the
mission field that
served to ease readers’
concerns about
sending their money to
distant Ottoman
Syria.

Source: Missionary
Herald 68, no. 2
(February 1872):
frontispiece

⁷⁴ Ibid., ch. 1.

⁷⁵ L. H. Adams, “Damascus,” *Missionary Herald* 68, no. 2 (Feb. 1872): 41-42.



Figure 1.2: Frederick Edwin Church, *Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives*, 1870, oil on canvas, 54 1/4 × 84 3/8 in., The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, MO. The artist of “*Damascus, from Anti-Lebanon*” (figure 1.1) was likely familiar landscape paintings of the Holy Land like those of Church. The paintings were meant to satisfy both aesthetic and spiritual interests.

Source: Wikimedia Commons, accessed 9 December 2016,
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Frederic_Edwin_Church_-_Jerusalem_from_the_Mount_of_Olives_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg

Several features stand out in the sketch that preceded the Adams article. First, the overall setting was lush, reflecting Adams’s description of the region’s fertility. Second, the artist emphasized the city’s minarets, the only spires sticking out of an otherwise flat, dense city. Finally, set off from the white background of city walls the drawing depicted three camels. This depiction remarkably paralleled Frederic Edwin Church’s *Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives* (1870) (figure 1.2). Church, a significant painter of the Hudson River School, similarly portrayed the walled, sacred city as a narrow plane, punctuated by minarets, with a lush foreground containing a few camels, and a broad skyline punctuated by clouds. No *Missionary Herald* readers would have confused “*Damascus, From Anti-Lebanon*” with

Church's majestic canvas in terms of quality, but both images served spiritual purposes.

Church provided viewers with a key in order to identify important sites. Visual depictions of "Biblical lands," whether high art or a sketch, sought to educate viewers and to connect with the viewers' religious lives.⁷⁶

The Damascus article and image, like hundreds of others, appealed to Americans' fascination with the Orient.⁷⁷ Adams described Damascus as "the most thoroughly oriental city in the East." The late literary theorist Edward Said famously argued that western cultural and intellectual depictions of "the East" as Europe's ultimate "other," "a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes, remarkable experiences," served the imperialist ends of European powers.⁷⁸ Although Said himself explicitly differentiated European and American experiences of the Orient, numerous scholars have found relevance in applying Orientalism (sometimes using another term, like arabesque, to acknowledge dissimilarities with the European experience) to American forms of domination.⁷⁹ A postcolonial scholar could undoubtedly use the Damascus article and sketch to show how missionary societies imagined the Middle East and how Middle Easterners adopted that imagined reality to serve their own purposes. From another perspective, the Orientalist images in the *Herald* also influenced the relationship between the producer of the narrative and the reader or, in other words, between the missionary and donors to missions.

⁷⁶ "One is struck not by the exoticism of the imagery," writes art historian Holly Edwards about depictions of the Orient in the 1870s, "so much as its comfortable familiarity for a Victorian audience." Holly Edwards, "A Million and One Nights: Orientalism in America, 1870-1930," in *Noble Dreams, Wicked Pleasures: Orientalism in America, 1870-1930* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 17; see also Jennifer Raab, *Frederic Church: The Art and Science of Detail* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2015), 150-51.

⁷⁷ Edwards, "A Million and One Nights," 16-17.

⁷⁸ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 1.

⁷⁹ Jacob S. Dorman, "Ever the Twain Shall Meet: Orientalism and American Studies," *American Quarterly* 67, no. 2 (June 2015): 491-92.

The *Herald's* depiction of Damascus and other mission fields must be understood in the context of nineteenth-century charity. Like the Orientalist novels, paintings, and scholarship that Europeans consumed and Edward Said examined, the American Board's portrayal of mission fields served to justify readers' fascination with and desire to shape the Orient. From the perspective of an organization that relied on donations, like the American Board, the justification for shaping a region was closely associated with donors' justifications for giving. Debates about charity in the United States centered on the degree to which the receiver deserved aid. A telling illustration of this issue came in the distinction between poverty and pauperism. The impoverished needed temporary assistance in order to avoid a downward spiral while paupers suffered from a more fundamental character flaw that aid would not solve. The city-dwellers who debated philanthropic methods in the mid- and late nineteenth century believed their predecessors who lived in small communities had been able to distinguish poverty from pauperism through close personal relationships. Absent those relationships, they advocated closer supervision of aid recipients by building, for example, poorhouses.⁸⁰

If reformers in American cities faced challenges to determine who deserved charity, mission boards faced a far greater challenge. The American Board had described poverty in "heathen countries" in 1832, decades before the Adams article. "The mass of the people in

⁸⁰ Soskis, "Problem of Charity," 17-19; see also Greeley, "Beyond Benevolence," ch. 1.

Such concerns, it should be noted, did not start in the late nineteenth century. A desire to recreate community life as was imagined to exist in the colonial era and concerns about the breakdown of the community order of society led to the construction of almshouses, penitentiaries, insane asylums, and orphanages in the Jacksonian period and more social scientific responses later in the century. Paul S. Boyer, *Urban Masses and Moral Order in America, 1820-1920* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978); Rothman, *The Discovery of the Asylum*; see also Wright, *The Transformation of Charity*; Katz, *In the Shadow of the Poorhouse*; Ruswick, *Almost Worthy*; Amanda Porterfield, "Protestant Missionaries: Pioneers of American Philanthropy," in *Charity, Philanthropy, and Civility in American History*, ed. Lawrence Jacob Friedman and Mark D. McGarvie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 56; Jeremy Beer, *The Philanthropic Revolution: An Alternative History of American Charity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), ch. 2.

every heathen country are not only servile and debased in their morals, but miserably poor and destitute of the comforts of life.” Worse, unlike in “civilized” nations, where both paupers and the temporarily impoverished faced individual obstacles, “uncivilized” society lacked logical social structures, according to the American Board. In India, for example, the spiritual benefits awarded for charitable giving meant the wealthy regularly donated large sums, leading to coterie of beggars. Religious mendicants were even worse, the Board claimed, since they demanded the donations without thanks (the parallel of mission boards demanding “Christian charity” apparently did not register).⁸¹ Smyrna was no different, according to John B. Adger, where begging nearly drove him despair. “What are we to do? Give to them and thus encourage indolence, and bring to our houses daily a crowd of those who will eat nothing but the bread of idleness? Or shall we turn them away and thus perhaps be deaf to the cry of the real sufferer. I am in a straight.”⁸² Six decades later, the American Board considered the issue of charity in the Ottoman Empire. Unlike the Hindus of India, “Mohammedans” possessed “no charity, no self-control, no self-improvement.”⁸³ “Oriental” religions, in the American Board’s estimation, had not figured out how to distribute relief.

Given this troubling picture, Americans who wanted to send charity to the impoverished abroad could not rely on foreign governments to distinguish the worthy from the unworthy. They had to trust the missionaries to make that determination. H. T. Pitkin (whose later death in the Boxer Uprising would turn him into a heroic figure in the mission movement) acknowledged the challenges while a student at Union Theological Seminary. “Misery that is seen appeals more than degradation that is read about, and the opportunity is given to every missionary to go out with the money and prayers of one or more Churches

⁸¹ “Eastern Beggars,” *Missionary Herald* 28, no. 3 (March 1832): 90-91.

⁸² “Extracts from the Journal of Mr. Adger,” *Missionary Herald* 31, no. 8 (August 1835): 299.

⁸³ “Some Results of Relief Work in Turkey,” *Missionary Herald* 93, no. 3 (March 1897): 99.

back of him, binding the hearts and sympathies of one to the other and helping to hasten the time when every Church shall have its own representatives working in Home, Foreign and City Fields.”⁸⁴ John Adger focused his efforts on supporting a poor society and dispensary and, despite his claims that “Moslems” deserved no aid, “the progressive qualities of the Armenians” made them worthy of relief.⁸⁵

The Damascus article and image sought to make the mission field imaginable for supporters, to retain a degree of foreignness, but also to make it real. Indeed, readers could even recognize that they had already encountered some history of the city from 1 and 2 Kings, not to mention the story of Saul’s conversion on the road to Damascus. Even if that connection had been enough to convince supporters to donate, though, Adams’s article opened by noting the population of 300,000 and closed by referencing the three missionaries. If supporters at home had no chance of judging who deserved support, the missionaries themselves stood little better with a ratio of one missionary for every hundred thousand residents. It telegraphed both the immense scale of the task at hand and the fact that supporters needed to know and trust their missionaries abroad.⁸⁶

A primary purpose of foreign missionary societies was therefore to build direct contact between missionaries and home base communities. Only the wealthiest individuals could cover the annual salary of a missionary, which cost between \$400 and \$700. More commonly, one or more relatively wealthy churches pooled donations to cover the salary. Ideally, the church or local missionary society adopted the missionary before his or her departure for the field. Doing so allowed the church to consecrate the missionary in a special

⁸⁴ H. T. Pitkin, “The Future of a Great Movement,” *The Seminary Student* 1, no. 8 (May 1893): 154.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*; “Extracts from the Journal of Mr. Adger,” 99. The basis of the positive impressions of Armenians came from the fact that the American Board was allowed to work and live among them.

⁸⁶ Adams, “Damascus,” 41-48.

service. If the missionary was already abroad, the mission board might encourage the missionary's home community to adopt him or her. In either case, the missionary had a direct connection with a local community. Missionaries did not receive furloughs until they had served for five to ten years, so if the adoption did not occur before departure and the missionary had not been a member of the community, the missionary and church community might never meet, making it more difficult for the church to trust the missionary's judgment and to raise money.⁸⁷

The American Board served the churches as an intermediary or agent in their relationships with the missionaries. While the nineteenth-century Board reminded individuals and churches of the biblical injunction to "make disciples of all the nations" (Matt. 28:19), it did not claim any authority over churches or individuals. They had to decide on their own to support the work and, once choosing to become a missionary or give money to missions, the ABCFM would then facilitate those choices as best it could. Home Secretary E. K. Alden spoke of "churches ... awaking to their obligation," to reflect the balance between the mandatory and voluntary connections with missions. The Board did not dictate how churches or individuals made decisions or what church body would maintain support for missions. It saw its role as "furnish[ing] missionary intelligence and ... exert[ing] all possible persuasive influence to encourage and animate all churches and all persons to a more thorough missionary consecration."⁸⁸

⁸⁷ The American Board described the relationship between the home churches and missionaries as a "brotherhood." At the 1893 annual meeting, E. K. Alden emphasized the personal call of the missionary and the personal connection with supporters at home. "The Financial Policy of the Board," 346; E. K. Alden, "The Personal Factor in the Missionary Problem," *Missionary Herald* 89, no. 11 (November 1893): 446-49.

⁸⁸ E. K. Alden, "The Mutual Relations of the American Board and the Churches," *Missionary Herald* 83, no. 11 (November 1887): 452-58, quotes on 453 and 455.

The congregational polity model, which granted a large degree of independence to individual churches, defined the relationship between churches and the American Board. In further explaining that relationship, Alden quoted Thomas C. Upham's *Ratio Disciplinae, or the Constitution of Congregational Churches* (1829) as follows: "These missionaries may justly be considered as sent abroad by the churches, inasmuch as they are supported by their contributions, attended by their prayers, and protected by their constant solicitude. It is true that the immediate agents are missionary societies; but these societies, when the subject is rightly considered, are agents and representatives of the churches." Consequently, although Alden described the relationship as a "fellowship," the ideological locus of power remained with parishioners and their churches.⁸⁹

Such a diffuse power structure plagued the American Board with fundraising problems from the start. By the 1860s, a pattern had emerged where donations trickled in during the first part of the fiscal year. Throughout the rest of the year, as donations continued to come in behind schedule, the treasurer and home secretary sounded an increasingly loud alarm about the impending "embarrassment." As the fiscal year drew to a close, the secretaries sent a "special appeal." Donations in the final quarter, thanks especially to wealthy supporters and corporate members, usually more than doubled receipts in other quarters. Sometimes this influx of donations closed the deficit and other times it did not.⁹⁰

Missionaries and Board leaders met deficits with concern, of course, and balanced budgets with relief. In either case, they regretted the necessity of "special appeals." In locating the cause of the problem, the secretaries faulted neither themselves nor the

⁸⁹ Ibid., quotes on 455 and 458.

⁹⁰ For example, "Change in the Financial Year," *Missionary Herald* 57, no. 8 (August 1861): 252-53; "Condition of the Treasury," *Missionary Herald* 65, no. 4 (April 1869): 119-20; "No Retrenchment," *Missionary Herald* 69, no. 1 (January 1873): 16-17.

missionaries. Both secretaries and missionaries proposed reasonable budgets, they claimed, and followed the most economical business methods possible. In 1861, the secretaries had eliminated the *Journal of Missions* and modified the fiscal year to end on August 31 rather than July 31 in the hopes of increased giving, but with only slight success. The fault, they said, lay with parishioners, pastors, and local treasurers, in particular their “habit of delay” and failure to provide “more *prompt*, more *regular* and *systematic*, and more *liberal* contributions.”⁹¹ Unsurprisingly, blaming donors for giving too little or too late has rarely succeeded in ameliorating such situations, especially when the same organization identifies itself as an “agent” of those donors. The American Board was not an exception in that regard.

Without retracting their condemnation of their constituents, the American Board secretaries also offered less hostile solutions to their money problems, mainly by forming better connections between missionaries and their supporters. Following the departure of New School Presbyterians in 1870, the Board anticipated financial shortfalls, which were exacerbated by the rising price of gold⁹² and the general expansion of work. To get ahead of the problem, Secretaries S. B. Treat and N. G. Clark suggested expanding the readership of the *Missionary Herald*, making it “a more efficient auxiliary in the work of missions.”⁹³ The *Herald* had always been a money-maker for the Board. Its descriptions and stories offered one of the few portraits of distant lands at a time of great expansion and specialization for

⁹¹ “Special Appeals,” *Missionary Herald* 61, no. 10 (October 1865): 291-92. Italics in original.

⁹² The prices of gold and silver were perennial problems. Since donations came in American currency (either as hard currency or drafts for a bank), the Board was constantly converting money to gold or Mexican silver, which missionaries could keep or exchange for local currency. These multiple conversions meant the Board never knew how much money they needed to ask of donors, because it could change dramatically and rapidly, sometimes to the benefit of the Board and other times to its disadvantage.

⁹³ S. B. Treat and N. G. Clark, “Enlarging the Influence of the *Missionary Herald*,” *Missionary Herald* 68, no. 1 (January 1872): 23-24.

religious publications.⁹⁴ Treat and Clark made a different argument. They hoped added information would encourage donations, but they also perceived a lack of “sympathy with the missionaries, of prayer for their speedy success, of faith in the sure results of their labors.” In other words, they hoped the *Herald* would bring missionaries and their supporters closer together.⁹⁵

Adding new *Herald* readers did not solve the problem of late donations, but the American Board’s success or failure at fundraising is of less historical significance than how they shaped supporters’ views of philanthropy. Mission movement leaders did not challenge the direct contact between supporters and missionaries, because they maintained an antebellum conception of charity that emphasized community support and personal responsibility. The American Board did not need to be anything more than an “agent” for the churches if the mandate to give derived not from the demands of the board, but from that personal responsibility to support community. E. K. Alden addressed the topic of the biblical demand for individual action at the 1878 annual meeting. In the process, he revealed the theological underpinnings of raising money according to personal connections. Alden claimed that God directly designated individuals to become missionaries. Organizations could facilitate that call, but “the personality [as in individuality] of the missionary call has been emphasized by this Board throughout its history.” Once an individual felt called to become a foreign missionary, “the personal responsibility of the entire body of Christ at home is seriously affected. . . . From this hour personal responsibility, as to the foreign missionary work, touches every individual, and he cannot escape it.”⁹⁶

⁹⁴ Frank Luther Mott, *American Journalism: A History, 1690-1960*, 3rd ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1962), 321-22, 395; Strong, *The Story of the American Board*, 148-49.

⁹⁵ Treat and Clark, “Enlarging the Influence,” 23-24.

⁹⁶ E. K. Alden, “The Proclamation of Christ Among All Nations, A Personal Responsibility,” *Missionary Herald* 74, no. 11 (November 1878): 359.

In his response to Alden's address, Edward P. Goodwin, minister of First Congregational Church in Chicago, described personal responsibility as the heart of the church. "All these obligations, relating to the spread of the gospel, lie at *our* doors," Goodwin told the assembled, and he claimed "there can be no debate here. . . . It is to be met by no flurries of occasional enthusiasm, no spasms of occasional giving. It can only be met by a spirit of individual consecration, lifting its cry without ceasing in every closet, at every family altar, in every pulpit, and in every office and counting room and place of toil as well."⁹⁷ One should note the ease with which the personal responsibility to give blends with personal belief. Organizational authority, in theory, mattered little when personal belief, individual responsibility, and community support all dictated the need to give. As the continual struggles to raise enough money suggest, though, reality proved far different from theory.

Women's Postbellum Fundraising and Personal Overseas Connections

Women's mission boards and missionary societies in the 1870s also identified worthy recipients of financial support through their personal connections. Ideally, that contact took the form of direct communication with missionaries abroad and physical visits before the missionary left or when she returned on furlough. Lacking new letters or the presence of a missionary, periodicals sufficed. The bulk of such publications recounted stories from the field. Personal contact allowed women in the United States a sense of connection with the wider world and many women saw that contact as necessary for the success of the movement itself.

⁹⁷ Edward P. Goodwin, "Report on Dr. Alden's Paper," *Missionary Herald* 74, no. 11 (November 1878): 374.

The Women's Board of Mission (WBM) incorporated in 1869 (following its establishment in 1868) to serve Congregationalist women missionaries. Two years earlier, soon after Rufus Anderson's retirement, the American Board had commissioned ten single women as missionaries. The Board tasked the missionaries with reaching non-Christian women and children and providing "the practical illustration of what the Gospel has done for woman, as exemplified in the missionary herself." The WBM sought to continue and support this work.⁹⁸

The WBM also, from the outset, sought to reach the pocketbooks of women, initially in New England and then further afield. Arthur Pierson summarized their work as follows: "Christian women thus organized devoted their energies to the diffusion of intelligence and the increase of interest as to Foreign Missionary work, and to the systematic gathering of offerings." Within nine months, the organization had received over \$4,000 and took on support for seven missionaries and eleven "native" Bible readers.⁹⁹

Local auxiliary societies arose soon after the establishment of the WBM. The branch in New Haven, Connecticut, formed in the spring of 1870. It became a particularly prominent example, partly because Yale University's Congregationalist association attracted many prominent members of the Church to the town and partly because of its proximity to Boston, the hub of the WBM. In little over a year, the group had expanded beyond New Haven and established its own auxiliaries in nearby communities.¹⁰⁰ The Women's Missionary

⁹⁸ Arthur T. Pierson, "Early History of the Woman's Board of Missions, Auxiliary to the American Board," *The Gospel in All Lands* (March 8, 1883): 119.

⁹⁹ Pierson, "Early History of the WBM," *The Gospel in All Lands* (1883): 119.

¹⁰⁰ Hannah Hume to N. G. Clark, 19 September 1871, MRL 12: Women's Board of Missions Records, series 1, box 1, folder 2, The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York (hereafter WBM Records).

Society of New Haven held more money and influence, but its fundraising differed only in scale from other branches.

The New Haven branch of the WBM applied nearly all of its funds to specific purposes and expected special privileges for those gifts. In May 1871, for example, the newly formed society “voted to undertake the support of Mrs. Leonard’s school in Marsovan” (present-day Merzifon, in northern Turkey). The school trained women to be teachers. Amelia Leonard was sister-in-law to the newly elected treasurer of the society and had participated in the organization of the society. The society was proud to be able to call it “our school.”¹⁰¹ The following month, the society requested that Henry Schauffler, a missionary on furlough from Constantinople, come speak about his personal knowledge of the school in Marsovan.¹⁰²

The Marsovan school reflected the benefits and challenges associated with “special gifts” (as donations for specific purposes would later be called). On the one hand, the women of New Haven knew and trusted the missionary who would use their appropriation. They could learn about the school from speakers and correspondents who actually knew the students and teachers. At the same time, the women encountered problems with their fundraising scheme almost immediately. Since the New Haven branch did not actually control the finances of the mission, they had no idea how much they were supposed to raise. When they requested that figure from Marsovan, they received no reply. On several occasions, they also sought the information from Louisa Bartlett, treasurer of the WBM, and feared the lack of a budget would interfere with all of their donations. The fears were short-

¹⁰¹ Hannah Hume to Louisa Bartlett, 10 May 1871 and 13 June 1871; Hannah Hume to Mrs. Leonard, 10 May 1871, series 1, box 1, folder 2, WBM Records.

¹⁰² Hannah Hume to Henry Schaufler [*sic*], 12 June 1871, series 1, box 1, folder 2, WBM Records.

lived and the New Haven branch soon sent \$450 to Marsovan, but similar issues would soon become recurring problems.¹⁰³

In addition to the difficulty coordinating budgets with missions thousands of miles away, the women's societies caused further conflict by demanding regular communications from the missionaries they sponsored. In 1874, Hannah Hume, the corresponding secretary in New Haven, wrote to Leonard, emphasizing that "all these benefactors are anxious to hear something about those they support." Hume acknowledged that "mission work claims all your time" and only made the imposition for letters "with much reluctance."¹⁰⁴ Demands upon missionaries in the field along with miscommunication between missionaries and home societies would eventually cause the missions boards to regulate special gifts or stop them altogether.

Not all special gifts could go to causes with which the women of New Haven already had such a deep connection. In later years, they would agree to support a number of women, students, and institutions. Offering support even began to appear like an order form, indicating they would support one school and two scholarships therein, four scholarships elsewhere, two Bible readers, and "it was also voted to ask you to reserve for us one missionary in Japan."¹⁰⁵ In 1874, for instance, they "adopted" Miss Strong "as their missionary" in Monterey, Mexico. Hume wrote to Miss Strong to tell her of "our warm interest in you personally and also in your work" and to ask "to hear from you occasionally."¹⁰⁶ At other times, Hume literally underlined that the missionary had become "our missionary" and would be expected to maintain regular communication with New

¹⁰³ Hannah Hume to Louisa Bartlett, June-September 1871, series 1, box 1, folder 2, WBM Records.

¹⁰⁴ Hannah Hume to Amelia Leonard, 2 November 1874, series 1, box 1, folder 2, WBM Records.

¹⁰⁵ Hannah Hume to Abbie Child, 28 September 1874, series 1, box 1, folder 2, WBM Records.

¹⁰⁶ Hannah Hume to Miss Strong, 24 August 1874, series 1, box 1, folder 2, WBM Records.

Haven. As with Amelia Leonard, Hume often regretted the necessity of such letters, but insisted “there must be the call for the money & the returns of what has been done with it in order to secure the fullest sympathy [and] the most generous giving.”¹⁰⁷

In reality, the New Haven branch of the WBM had no control over their own donations. All money went directly to the WBM who distributed it to the various mission fields. The sense of “ownership” (though perhaps the better metaphor would have been employment) was therefore entirely illusory. If the New Haven branch had immediately dissolved, the WBM would have filled the gap without much need to concern the missionaries themselves. At the same time, Hannah Hume and her colleagues clearly viewed it as essential for successful fundraising. They knew that women joined the societies in order to learn about the world around them. Missionaries offered one of the only accessible perspectives on daily life in foreign countries in the 1870s. Perhaps on a more subconscious level, philanthropy had always been about personal assistance, traditionally at a very local level. To consider sending wealth so far from home therefore required some sense of connection.

Conclusion: The Staying Power of Missionary Charity

Long after the end of the Civil War and the supposed rise of modern philanthropies, mission boards maintained the basic organizational structures and financing models from the antebellum period. These structures centered on a narrow, male, clergy-controlled hierarchy and broad support networks of churches and local women’s missionary societies. The support networks relied on direct contact with missionaries to justify giving to faraway mission stations. As before the Civil War, therefore, the conception of charity work as

¹⁰⁷ Hannah Hume to Hattie Seymour, 29 November 1874, series 1, box 1, folder 2, WBM Records.

community support continued even when the actual benevolent workers traveled thousands of miles from the support network.

Two conclusions follow from the ongoing relevance of antebellum models of charity. Most directly, it points to the need for a more nuanced interpretation of the growth of scientific philanthropy in the late nineteenth century. While the US Sanitary Commission may have suggested an innovative model that later philanthropies adopted, that model took several generations to develop.¹⁰⁸ Historians have failed to sufficiently account for the contingent development of philanthropy. Second, the growth of scientific methods of benevolent work did not necessarily correlate with popular ideas about charity. Whatever ideas George Fredrickson's Transcendentalists were developing did not apparently influence Hannah Hume and her cohort of New Haven women or Mary and E. W. Blatchford. This conflict over interpretations of philanthropic work became more profound when missionary societies became more systematic in their fundraising and evangelism. Missionaries and mission board leadership began employing models that sought to address social ills in order to eventually promote individual conversion, but they still had to appeal to the Protestant public according to popular notions of charity in order to produce sufficient giving. The aftermath of the Civil War, an event that decisively shaped so many other aspects of life, did not fundamentally change antebellum models of charity.

¹⁰⁸ And, as Jeanie Attie has noted, it derived from the imagined history of the US Sanitary Commission rather than the actual history of the Commission. Attie, *Patriotic Toil*.

Chapter 2: *The Picket Line of Missions: Journalism, Missions, and Humanitarian Heroism in the 1890s*

A reader of the American Protestant press in the 1890s would have been excused for believing Christianity was under attack. The attacks seemed both physical and figurative, coming from all corners of the world. The traditional narrative pays particular attention to middle-class Protestants' perception that the secularism, modernity, and general backwardness that they associated with immigrants and the working class would somehow destroy "Christian America." Immigration did increase in the 1880s and 1890s and included Catholics, Jews, Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs, among others. They in no way challenged white, male, Protestant hegemony in the United States, but the perception of an assault on traditional American values nevertheless prompted a xenophobic backlash with very real, physical attacks on immigrant populations.

Popular literature fanned the flames of American Protestant phobias. Josiah Strong's *Our Country* (1885) warned Protestant America that they were in danger of losing "their" country to immigrants and Mormons. He also decried American urban life. His wildly popular book identified cities as dens of sin.¹ In addition to the dangers of city life, conservative Christians feared intellectual advances, particularly Darwinism and new forms of Biblical interpretation that challenged the idea of divine authority. Accounts of American religious history have traditionally identified these developments as part of a growing divide between modernism and fundamentalism that reached a climax in the 1910s and 1920s.²

¹ Josiah Strong, *Our Country*, rev. ed. (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1963).

² See especially George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

This traditional characterization has begun to break down as historians have come to recognize that fundamentalists embraced and employed elements of modernity. Janine Giordano Drake has encouraged a rethinking of the debates along the lines of divergent practices rather than the broader and vaguer concept of modernity. Matthew Bowman has identified the divide as "less about doctrine than about, ultimately, how

This fear of cities and suspicion of modern “progress” was not limited to conservative Christians. Despite the author’s bitterness toward Christianity and the scandal the novel initially produced, Theodore Dreiser’s *Sister Carrie* (1900) epitomized those fears. Dreiser had grown up in a poor, German-American family, devastated by a fire several years before the author’s birth that had destroyed his father’s opportunity to be a stable breadwinner. Dreiser remembered his mother as a daydreamer who moved the family from place to place, including a brief stay in Chicago. The harsh Catholic schooling that he and his siblings endured led many of them to rebel against social norms through casual sex and alcoholism. Regarding one brother, biographer Jerome Loving notes, “He sought the American Dream of success but settled for its sham materialism.”³

Like Dreiser’s own mother and siblings, Sister Carrie was a dreamer. Her hopes and willfulness have continued to make her a compelling, but flawed character. From the very first sentence of the novel, with Carrie boarding a train to Chicago, Dreiser doomed her to a future of “neither surfeit nor content.” The city was a “magnet attracting,” Dreiser claimed, one that corrupted compassionate Carrie and destined her to dream of “such happiness as [she] may never feel.”⁴

In the imagination of practicing Protestants in the 1890s, foreign missions fit into the story of conflict in an even more direct, frequently violent manner than occurred in the

human societies might be transformed.” Whether the dispute centered on ideas or actions, disdain for immoral urban living still dominates our understanding of the emerging divide between mainline and conservative Christianity in the early twentieth century. Janine Giordano Drake, “Urban Evangelicalism, Reconsidered,” review of *Building the Old Time Religion: Women Evangelists in the Progressive Era*, by Priscilla Pope-Levinson and *The Urban Pulpit: New York City and the Fate of Liberal Evangelicalism*, by Matthew Bowman, *Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 14, no. 4 (October 2015): 625-28; Matthew Burton Bowman, *The Urban Pulpit: New York City and the Fate of Liberal Evangelicalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), quote on 9.

³ Jerome Loving, *The Last Titan: A Life of Theodore Dreiser* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), ch. 1, quote on 8.

⁴ Theodore Dreiser, *Sister Carrie* (1900; repr., New York: Grosset & Dunlap, [1917]), quotes on 1 and 557.

cities. Whether it was the Kurds and Turks massacring Armenians, the Boxer Uprising targeting missionaries in China, or the increasing popularity of stories about martyred missionaries of the past, the victims repeatedly appeared to be Protestant Christians. Headlines included “The Gathering Storm,” “Some of the Darker Shadows,” “Armenia’s Cry for Help,” and “Modern Martyrdom in Armenia.” Technological and stylistic innovations in printing enlivened the headlines with the publication of numerous photographs and the regular reappearance of heroic figures. Counterintuitively, the religious press claimed the attacks proved the superiority of western civilization and Christianity over “heathenism.” With a goal of upsetting traditional authority, violence indicated the goal was being accomplished and led to calls for greater giving.

The calamities of the 1890s gave missions a place of prominence in the popular press.⁵ The relationship between the press and missions benefited both. Very few Americans matched missionaries’ knowledge of non-western societies, making them popular figures of authority. The press therefore sought the knowledge of the missionaries and, though mission boards tried to avoid taking sides in conflicts to maintain an appearance of being non-political, the missionaries complied with tacit support from their administrators. The boards lamented the violence and mourned the deaths of their proselytes and missionaries, but also benefited from the increased attention and the printed appeals for donations that frequently appeared alongside the news reports. The money and the attention increased the prestige of

⁵ Google Ngram, which graphs the relative frequency of words and phrases over time, provides a non-scientific, quantitative indication of this. The phrases “foreign missions” and “foreign missionary,” after declining in usage from the mid-1850s to about 1870, grew rapidly from the 1880s until reaching a peak in the mid-1910s with nearly double the frequency of the 1860s. For the rest of the twentieth century, there has been a steady decline in usage (connected with a later preference for “world missions” or “global missions”).

missions work and, not coincidentally, missions grew rapidly between the late 1890s and the start of the 1930s.⁶

Coverage of the conflicts in the 1890s created a new generation of missionary heroes and heroines. The missionary hero figure had a deep history by the turn of the twentieth century and missionary heroes of earlier generations had figured prominently in the development of foreign missions in the early nineteenth century. Throughout the nineteenth century, mission boards regularly published memorials when missionaries died in the field. The memorials glorified the missionaries' service and several individuals, such as Harriet Newell and Adoniram Judson, became particularly significant, known by all supporters of missions.⁷

That the missionary hero story took on new forms in the 1890s was no coincidence. In 1886, a gathering of young men proclaimed what would become the mission movement's watchword, "the evangelization of the world in this generation." The motto and the Student Volunteer Movement that emerged from that conference sparked a newfound interest in missions, especially among college students looking for adventure and excitement in the

⁶ Much of the reason for these bookends related to the overall economy. Giving in the 1890s, which vacillated widely, reflected the numerous financial panics of that decade. American Board receipts, for example, fell more than 10 percent in 1893 and 1897 when compared with the average of the five previous years and every year between 1893 and 1899 was in negative territory. From 1900 through 1920, that statistic fell below zero only once, with a 1 percent decrease in 1904 (caused by a mild recession). In a 1948 study of missions financing, the Foreign Mission Conference of North America found that at least one mission board reached a high point in giving every year of the 1920s. In total, there were twenty-four high points and one low point in the decade. From 1933 through 1943, low points outnumbered high points thirty-six to four. "Preliminary Report of the Special Committee on Foreign Missions Financing," MRL 12: Foreign Missions Conference of North America Records, series 1, box 3, and folder 1, The Burke Library Archives, Columbia University Libraries, at Union Theological Seminary, New York.

While the economic downturns explain falling receipts, the obverse does not necessarily follow. A growing economy does not explain the growth in missions, since the financial growth of any philanthropic endeavor relies as much on ideological support as excess capital.

⁷ Mary Kupiec Cayton, "Canonizing Harriet Newell: Women, the Evangelical Press, and the Foreign Mission Movement in New England, 1800-1840," in *Competing Kingdoms: Women, Mission, Nation, and the American Protestant Empire, 1812-1960*, ed. Barbara Reeves-Ellington, Kathryn Kish Sklar, and Connie Anne Shemo (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 69-93.

world. By the end of the century, nearly 2000 student volunteers had become missionaries.⁸ Not surprisingly, this increase prompted greater focus on and resistance to missions both at home and abroad. Stories about modern missionary heroes frequently highlighted that resistance to underline the missionaries' bravery and fortitude, particularly the ways their efficiency, practicality, and use of the latest innovations in western education and medicine would overcome "native" skepticism.

The stories frequently underlined the masculinity of the missionaries, regardless of whether they were men or women. The masculinization of missionaries exposed the complicated gender roles of religious American men. White, middle-class, American men around 1900 rued the perceived "feminization" of Protestantism, feared the New Woman, obsessed over sports and manliness, and worried that their white-collar jobs were undermining their manliness.⁹ Foreign missions were attempting to bring Christianity and

⁸ "The Student Volunteer Movement: Its Work, Its Plans, Its Needs," 1912, MRL 12: Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions Records, box 1, folder 5, The Burke Library Archives at Union Theological Seminary, New York.

⁹ On the "feminization" of American Protestantism, see Barbara Welter, "The Feminization of American Religion, 1800-1860," in *Dimity Convictions: The American Woman in the Nineteenth Century* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1976), 83-102; Ann Douglas, *The Feminization of American Culture* (1977; repr., New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1998). As a historical reality, the feminization of religion has received significant criticism. See especially Ann Braude, "Women's History Is American Religious History," in *Retelling U.S. Religious History*, ed. Thomas A. Tweed (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 92-96. As Braude notes, though, while the historical reality of feminization is a fallacy, anxieties of feminization are historically factual.

On the perceived threat to manliness and cultural responses to that threat, see Gail Bederman, *Manliness & Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), esp. ch. 1; Angus McLaren, *The Trials of Masculinity: Policing Sexual Boundaries, 1870-1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997); Kristin L. Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood: How Gender Politics Provoked the Spanish-American and Philippine-American Wars* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998); Clifford Putney, *Muscular Christianity: Manhood and Sports in Protestant America, 1880-1920* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001).

Several scenes in Harold Frederic's *The Damnation of Theron Ware* (1896) reflected this perception of the femininity of American Protestantism. In the course of the novel, the Methodist minister Ware is transformed from credulous evangelical to cultured atheist. Several Roman Catholics help him through that process. One, Dr. Ledsmar, alerts Ware of the dependence of religions on the superstitions of women. Religion, he claimed, was "calculated to attract women," who are not a metaphysical people. . . . They want their dogmas and religious sentiments embodied in a man." Shortly after his conversation with Ledsmar, Ware finds himself at a Catholic picnic and desires to taste a beer. Underlining the effeminacy of clergy, Frederic's Ware feels unable to ask for a beer on his own like the men were doing, but "perhaps some one would bring him out a glass, as if he were a pretty girl." Harold Frederic, *The Damnation of Theron Ware* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1960), 225-26, 244.

“civilization” (frequently equated to Anglo-American domestic values) to “heathen” lands. How could mission boards ask men to not only “unman” themselves by attending church, but to become active in supporting its extension abroad? Missionary hagiography allowed men to imagine an obvious justification for patriarchy and to recruit more men to missionary endeavors. Romantic stories of hyper-masculine missionaries served as effective tools in worldwide evangelism by encouraging young men to be active participants in the mission movement and ignore their concerns that becoming active members in the church emasculated them.

The explicit praise for missionary heroism only slightly masked the implicit criticism of contemporary American efforts to evangelize the world. Hagiographies frequently chronicled the lives of British, not American, missionaries. The fact that British missionaries vastly outnumbered their American counterparts for much of the nineteenth century undoubtedly offers some explanation for the discrepancy in hagiographies.¹⁰ The largest mission boards (Presbyterian, Methodist, Congregationalist, and Baptist) also had denominational connections with Britain and saw their efforts as allied. The purpose of

While the supposed crisis in manhood has attracted much scholarly attention, many other scholars have criticized this approach for presenting manhood as constantly in crisis or for examining male-centric organizations and ignoring the history of gender (i.e. failing to examine the ways that male groups interacted with women and reinforced notions of patriarchy). See Judith A. Allen, "Men Interminably in Crisis? Historians on Masculinity, Sexual Boundaries, and Manhood," *Radical History Review* 82 (Winter 2002): 191-207.

One might also note the danger of normalizing Protestantism as the American religion, since concerns about the feminization of religion did not necessarily extend to other American religions. Nineteenth-century Jews, for example, feared the exact opposite, the over-masculinization of the synagogue. Indeed, efforts to “Americanize” Judaism led Jews to create more public spaces for women that middle- and upper-class American Christians would have understood as distinctly religious. Catholicism also provides a counterexample. Given the importance of Catholic liturgy (which granted greater authority to priests) and the role of nuns in the religious hierarchy, Catholic laywomen had more circumscribed roles in local churches than their Protestant counterparts. See Karla Goldman, *Beyond the Synagogue Gallery: Finding a Place for Women in American Judaism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000); Kathleen D. McCarthy, "Women and Political Culture," in *Charity, Philanthropy, and Civility in American History*, ed. Lawrence Jacob Friedman and Mark D. McGarvie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 186-87.

¹⁰ William R. Hutchison, *Errand to the World: American Protestant Thought and Foreign Missions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 93.

hagiography, though, has less to do with exalting the past and more to do with influencing the future. In this case, hagiographers sought to persuade American men to support missions. The emphasis on British masculinity underscored the failure of American men to make their mark.

Popular missionary publications of the 1890s demonstrate changing conceptions of missions and the ideal missionary. Such conceptions altered the landscape of missions work and, while missions remained highly respected for several decades, eventually helped diminish their place in American society. Many of the most famous missionaries in American history worked or were re-memorialized during this time period. As their heroic exploits tended to have less to do with religious fervor and more to do with bravery, extraordinary service, or promotion of “civilization,” the ideal foreign servant ended up with fewer necessary connections to evangelism in general, let alone a particular denomination or foreign mission board.

Masculinizing Hagiographies

The trope of the heroic missionary long preceded the violence in the 1890s, though earlier forms of heroism had often centered on the missionary’s spirituality. Jonathan Edwards had written his *Life of David Brainerd* (1749), the archetype of the American missionary hagiography, in order “to promote the interest of true religion in general.”¹¹ The early nineteenth-century mission movement had grown out of an idealization of sacrificing all for humankind, which was interpreted as an indication of God’s blessings.¹² Early

¹¹ Quoted in John A. Grigg, *The Lives of David Brainerd: The Making of an American Evangelical Icon* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 129, see also 136-39.

¹² Joseph A. Conforti, *Jonathan Edwards, Religious Tradition, and American Culture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), ch. 3; David W. Kling, “The New Divinity and the Origins of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions,” in *North American Foreign Missions, 1810-1914: Theology, Theory, and Policy*, ed. Wilbert R. Shenk (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004), 24. See also Grigg, *The Lives of David Brainerd*, 128-47; Hutchison, *Errand to the World*, ch. 2.

missionary hagiographies had emphasized the ways deceased missionaries had embodied that sacrifice. By the late nineteenth century, spirituality and sacrifice had become code for femininity, which muscular Christians sought to reform in American Protestantism.¹³

The tradition of the self-sacrificing missionary nevertheless continued into the twentieth century, but alongside it, a newer form of hagiography focused on missionaries' skills and relief work. In defending missionaries against the accusation of incompetence, for example, Judson Smith asserted the missionary could be "no weakling." Missionaries were "peers of the best men of their generation ... for strength and clearness of mind, for balanced judgment, for practical sense, for industry and efficiency, for power in leadership and organization, for success in dealing with men, for magnanimity and courage, for patience and heroic self denial."¹⁴

Hagiographies offered readers "the fuel of information" to "supply the fire of enthusiasm."¹⁵ *The Picket Line of Missions: Sketches of the Advanced Guard* (1897), published by an all-American list of nine authors, focused on the exploits of British male missionaries. The book targeted young adults, specifically participants in the Epworth League Reading Group, the Methodist Episcopal Church outreach organization for eighteen to thirty-five year olds. In contrast to the later stereotype of Epworthian lifelessness, *The Picket Line of Missions* presented the lives of missionaries as thrilling and fulfilling, while also highly practical.¹⁶

¹³ Putney, *Muscular Christianity*.

¹⁴ Judson Smith, "Foreign Missions in the Light of Fact," *North American Review* 162, no. 470 (January 1896): 26.

¹⁵ Francis E. Clark, "Introduction," in *Great Missionaries of the Church*, by Charles C. Creagan and Josephine A. B. Goodnow (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell & Co., 1895), xii-xiii.

¹⁶ Novels in the mid-twentieth century used the Epworth League as a metaphor for insipid prudishness. In Robert Penn Warren's *All the King's Men* (1946), Jack's editor complains about his coverage of the election. "Can't you put some more steam in it? This is an election and not a meeting of the Epworth League." Ernest Hemingway also used the metaphor, in *Across the River and Into the Trees* (1950), to describe General Eisenhower as very proper.

Bishop William Ninde hoped the stories of “our noble missionaries” would attract young people to missions.¹⁷ Ninde perceived missions to be beset by failure, lamenting the “apathy” and the “great mass of professing Christians [who] probably never contribute a penny.”¹⁸ However, heroic men like David Livingstone and William Taylor had begun to build positive momentum. Ninde chose to ignore the common wisdom that middle-class women were providing the financial contributions that allowed foreign missions to continue. He sought more popularity and financial support, the absence of which he blamed on competition with commercial culture. “Home and personal interests preoccupy and absorb the minds of our people and blind them to the needs of the far-distant millions.”¹⁹ Ninde claimed foreign missions needed to offer products as engaging as anything found on Main Street.

Advanced guard missionaries enjoyed adventurous travel as well as energetic and fulfilling employment. Missionary Alexander Mackay’s “heroic element” and “manly qualities,” according to his hagiographer, John Talbot Gracey, would arouse the mission spirit among “young men.” At the same time, as a layman, Mackay represented the “vast opportunity in the missionary fields ... along not only professional lines as physicians and educators, but also along wellnigh all the vocations as mechanics and tradesmen, as engineers, inventors, and ‘pathfinders.’”²⁰ The key quality to have was manliness. Mackay’s life demonstrated that with “coolness, courage, and infinite tact,” a missionary could become a hero regardless of his professional interests.²¹

¹⁷ W. X. Ninde, “Introduction,” *The Picket Line of Missions: Sketches of the Advanced Guard* (New York: Eaton & Mains, 1897), 5.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 10.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ J. T. Gracey, “Alexander M. Mackay, the Hero of Uganda,” in *The Picket Line of Missions*, 72-73.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 91.

Arthur Pierson's brief biography of Ion Keith-Falconer, whose "stalwart manhood won applause," also emphasized the possibility of emulation.²² Keith-Falconer achieved his fame through athletics, academics, and concern for the poor in England. He died shortly after arriving at his first missionary post. His heroism, according to Pierson, was achieved simply by choosing to become a missionary amid his many other options in life. Young men, Pierson implied, could make the same decision.

Many other publications, stretching into the twentieth century, followed this hagiographical style. Like *The Picket Line*, John Lambert's *The Romance of Missionary Heroism* (1907) targeted young readers.²³ Lambert consciously minimized his emphasis on "the spiritual aspects of foreign mission work" in order to appeal to an audience more attracted to adventure, but he nevertheless "[desired] that the narratives which follow may help to kindle in some minds an enthusiasm for missions."²⁴

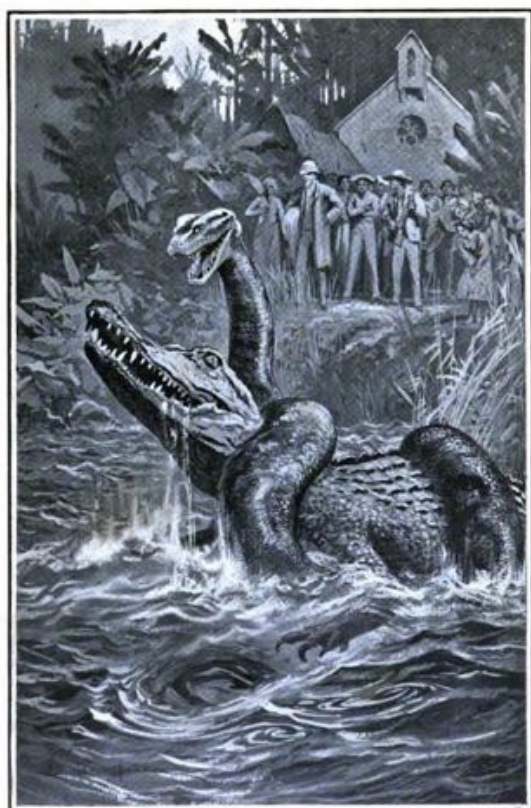
To illustrate the sort of excitement that greeted the lives of missionaries, Lambert's hagiography opened with a depiction of an anaconda slowly squeezing the life out of an alligator (figure 2.1). In the background, English missionary William Henry Brett and his congregants calmly watched the battle from shore. The artist stylized each animal to suggest an even greater savagery than natural form would allow. Brett, his congregation, and the church, on the other hand, were contained within the top right-hand corner, partly hidden by the jungle, mere observers to the grand show. Through both the artwork and the title, "A Titanic Combat," the illustrator emphasized the ferocious struggle rather than the missionary

²² Arthur T. Pierson, "The Hon. Ion Keith-Falconer, Pioneer in Africa," in *The Picket Line of Missions*, 120.

²³ Though Lambert himself was Scottish and the book was initially published in London, J. T. Lippincott, one of the largest publishing houses in the United States, also published the book and it received widespread notice in American evangelical periodicals.

²⁴ John Chisholm Lambert, *The Romance of Missionary Heroism: True Stories of the Intrepid Bravery and Stirring Adventures of Missionaries with Uncivilized Man, Wild Beasts and the Forces of Nature in All Parts of the World* (London: Seeley and Co., 1907), 8.

or church. According to the brief description beneath the image, the congregation had paused their service “without ceremony” to see the anaconda crush its opponent, “only to be shot itself by a native.”



A TITANIC COMBAT

Hearing a noise outside during service, Mr. Brett's congregation without ceremony went out to find a battle between an alligator and an enormous anaconda in progress. They had a long and terrific struggle, but at last the anaconda got into a position which enabled it to use its powers of compression to the utmost, and it literally crushed the life out of its opponent, only to be shot itself by a native.

Figure 2.1: Unknown Artist, “A Titanic Combat.” The sketch depicts an anaconda killing an alligator in the Amazon. Appearing in a book about missionaries, it is notable that the church, missionary, and congregation occupy a small quadrant of the sketch.

Source: John Chisholm Lambert, The Romance of Missionary Heroism (London: Seeley and Co., 1907), frontispiece

Over two hundred pages later, Lambert’s narrative account of the same “titanic combat” contrasted with the initial brief description. While the image depicted an unemotional Brett with his arms at his hips, Lambert presented an “exciting fight” that caused the entire congregation to jump up and leave mid-service. “Even [Brett] could not resist” running “as speedily as possible to the scene of action.”²⁵ The staid Brett of the illustration became an animated thrill-seeker in the narrative. The conflicting versions of the

²⁵ Ibid., 234.

“titanic struggle” reflected competing representations of male missionaries around 1900. Lambert wrote of rugged men civilizing foreign lands while simultaneously admiring the “barbarity.”

The blandest of work constituted missionary heroics to Lambert. George Leslie Mackay (no relation to Alexander), a Canadian Presbyterian Church missionary to Formosa (modern-day Taiwan), for example, presented “the steady devotion of a brave soldier of the Church militant” through his dentistry.²⁶ Among cannibals, Mackay had to “literally take his life in his hands,” but he earned their gratitude by extracting teeth.²⁷ The apparent contrast between menial employment and adventurous travel encapsulates Lambert’s conception of missionary heroism.

Lambert’s biography of Alexander Mackay similarly blended manly bravery when faced with endless perils with mundane practicality. Inspired by David Livingstone and Henry Stanley, Mackay traveled to Uganda on behalf of the Church Missionary Society. Facing hostile leaders and “the burning rays of the sun, the teeth of hippopotami, and the ravages of armies of white ants,” many of Mackay’s colleagues perished.²⁸ Mackay’s local fame, though, rose as he built roads and boats. Mackay’s heroism, in Lambert’s imagination, was inextricable from his work as an engineer and the context of Uganda.

Of the twenty-four missionary heroes in *The Romance of Missionary Heroism*, one was a woman. Lambert’s story of Annie R. Taylor, an Englishwoman who traveled to China in 1884 for the China Inland Mission, was unusual in several respects. Unlike every other hero, Taylor failed to achieve her goal, in her case to become the first Protestant missionary to

²⁶ Ibid., 63. It is worth noting that while other biographies mention Mackay’s dentistry, they do not dwell on it. See R. P. Mackay, “George Leslie Mackay, D.D., 1844-1901,” in *Effective Workers in Needy Fields*, by William F. McDowell et al. (New York: Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions, 1902), 75.

²⁷ Lambert, *Romance of Missionary Heroism*, 74.

²⁸ Ibid., 105.

reach Lhasa, Tibet. While that failure might suggest Lambert's belief in women's weakness or inconstancy, he also depicted her as far removed from traditional female domesticity. Lambert's Taylor offered no practical skills; instead she constantly traveled. Lambert noted extended stays in India and China in less than half a sentence apiece. The journeys, especially the failed attempt to enter Tibet from China, bore no comforts of a Christian home. Finally, abandoning the last vestige of domestic life, Taylor traded away her tent. Fittingly, an accompanying illustration depicted a battle scene (figure 2.2). The artist did not present Taylor engaging in the fight, but nonetheless, she stood alone as the only woman, her female companions nowhere near the battle. Elsewhere, Lambert compared her to C. G. Gordon, a British officer killed in Sudan.²⁹ While the Mackays' heroism joined adventure with menial labor, Taylor's heroism centered solely on adventure. She was a Christian explorer.



MISS TAYLOR AND HER PARTY ATTACKED BY TIBETAN BRIGANDS

Figure 2.2: Unknown artist, "Miss Taylor and Her Party Attacked by Tibetan Brigands." Amid a fierce battle, missionary Annie Taylor sits astride her white horse. She is the only woman in the frame. The image and accompanying text underlined qualities associated with masculinity.

Source: John Chisholm Lambert, The Romance of Missionary Heroism (London: Seeley and Co., 1907), illustration following page 80

²⁹ Ibid., 77.

Other leaders of American missions similarly underlined the importance of missionary masculinity. In defending missionaries against the accusation of incompetence, Judson Smith identified the stereotypical masculine qualities with which he most associated missionaries, including strength, power, courage, and “heroic self denial.” He then listed a series of men who, he claimed, embodied those qualities. Jesse Page hoped his biography of John Coleridge Patteson, whose “thorough manliness . . . compels you utterly to believe in him,” would inspire readers. Sophia Lyon Fahs employed her skills as a writer to produce a journalistic account of Alexander Mackay in the aptly titled *Uganda’s White Man of Work* (1907). Charles Creegan, the principle fundraiser in New York City for the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM or American Board), published two volumes of missionary hagiography, both dedicated to young people, covering forty-nine missionaries, none female.³⁰

Painting missionaries as heroic men served several important functions. Ian Tyrrell has argued that emphasizing male control facilitated fundraising with businessmen and aided cooperation with European societies.³¹ Clifford Putney claims American men built numerous religious groups to address their fears about non-physical labor producing feeble men, sick with neurasthenia.³² In the hagiographies presented above, masculinization also challenged secular commercial entertainment, promoted an emphasis on the “civilizing” project of missions, and tried to prove the necessity of men to missions and the mission movement to

³⁰ Smith, “Foreign Missions in the Light of Fact,” 26; Jesse Page, *Bishop Patteson, The Martyr of Melanesia*, 2nd ed. (New York: Fleming H. Revell, n.d.), 6; Sophia Lyon Fahs, *Uganda’s White Man of Work, A Story of Alexander M. Mackay* (New York: Young People’s Missionary Movement, 1907); Creegan, *Great Missionaries of the Church*; C. C. Creegan, *Pioneer Missionaries of the Church* (New York: American Tract Society, 1903).

³¹ Ian R. Tyrrell, *Reforming the World: The Creation of America’s Moral Empire* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010), 65-66.

³² Putney, *Muscular Christianity*; see also T. J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

men. In other words, reimagining the mission movement as male served to fight against popular notions of female dominance in mission fields by using the same tactics that had made women's missionary societies so popular, namely captivating, personal stories.

William Ellis's *Men and Missions* (1909) reflected the deep ambivalence of many men about women's enthusiasm for foreign missions. Ellis acknowledged women's contributions, but felt the need for more male leadership.³³ He hoped men would eagerly support missions, but those potential supporters needed to overcome their fears of the perceived femininity of missions. Hagiographers tapped into the belief that by experiencing "savagery," whether through hunting, joining the Boy Scouts, or by dressing up as Indians, white men proved that "civilization" had not emasculated them.³⁴ Having established the degree to which missions exposed men to the uncivilized world, missionary hagiography claimed that men no longer needed to worry about the dangers of emasculation. "Wellnigh all the vocations" were open to missionary men, according to J. T. Gracey. Regardless how domestic the vocation, a missionary could remain confident in his manliness. Advocating the Christian home was possible for men even amid a supposed masculinity crisis because the male leadership of missionary societies and male donors imagined missionaries to be heroic, manly men.

Indignation Capital: The American Board and the Hamidian Massacres of 1894-1896

Current events provided the most frequently cited evidence of the effectiveness of missions and the heroic, manly actions of contemporary and previous missionaries. In the 1890s, those current events centered on two outpourings of violence against Christians, one

³³ William T. Ellis, *Men and Missions* (Philadelphia: Sunday School Times Co., 1909), 61-69.

³⁴ Putney, *Muscular Christianity*; Philip Joseph Deloria, *Playing Indian* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998), 95-111; Shari M. Huhndorf, *Going Native: Indians in the American Cultural Imagination* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), ch. 2; David I. Macleod, *Building Character in the American Boy: The Boy Scouts, YMCA, and Their Forerunners, 1870-1920* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983).

targeting Armenians in the Ottoman Empire³⁵ and the other targeting missionaries and Christian converts in China. From the perspective of the perpetrators of the violence, the missionaries were outsiders bent on upsetting civil authority and social norms. Missionaries rarely advocated open rebellion against political power, since they partly depended on protection from those authorities. They did, however, seek to bring “civilization” to “heathen” lands and knew those efforts would be disruptive. The violence, they concluded, was evidence of that disruption and therefore, pointed to their success. While numerous scholars have noted the close connection between missionary conceptions of civilization and domesticity or the ideal of the “Christian home,” missionaries also associated civilization with manhood.³⁶ Attempting to summarize the work of the American Board in Armenia, Judson Smith asserted, “Our schools and all our evangelical teaching tend to awaken the intelligence of the Armenians, and call out and train their manhood.”³⁷ Coverage of the events in the Ottoman Empire and China allowed missionary organizations to promote their

³⁵ Reflecting the popularity of race as an organizing principle in the late nineteenth century, American Protestants preferred to identify the region and empire as Turkey and Turkish. In the discussion below, derivations of both Turkey and the Ottoman Empire appear, though Turkey only refers to the area associated with the later country of Turkey.

³⁶ The scholarship connecting missions, “civilization,” and domesticity covers the entire nineteenth century. See, for example, Emily Conroy-Krutz, *Christian Imperialism: Converting the World in the Early American Republic* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015), esp. ch. 4; Patricia Ruth Hill, *The World Their Household: The American Woman's Foreign Mission Movement and Cultural Transformation, 1870-1920* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1985), ch. 2-3, esp. 61-62; Jane Hunter, *The Gospel of Gentility: American Women Missionaries in Turn-of-the-Century China* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984), ch. 5; ———, “The Home and the World: The Missionary Message of U.S. Domesticity,” in *Women's Work for Women: Missionaries and Social Change in Asia*, ed. Leslie A. Flemming (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1989), 159-66; Lisa Joy Pruitt, *A Looking-Glass for Ladies: American Protestant Women and the Orient in the Nineteenth Century* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2005), esp. 7; Barbara Reeves-Ellington, *Domestic Frontiers: Gender, Reform, and American Interventions in the Ottoman Balkans and the Near East* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2013); Barbara Reeves-Ellington, Kathryn Kish Sklar, and Connie Anne Shemo, eds., *Competing Kingdoms: Women, Mission, Nation, and the American Protestant Empire, 1812-1960* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), esp. ch. 1, 11, 12, and conclusion; Dana L. Robert, “Evangelist or Homemaker? Mission Strategies of Early Nineteenth-Century Missionary Wives in Burma and Hawaii,” in *North American Foreign Missions, 1810-1914: Theology, Theory, and Policy*, ed. Wilbert R. Shenk (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004), 116-32.

³⁷ Judson Smith to C. C. Creagan, 30 November 1894, American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions Archives, 1810-1961 (ABC 1.1, vol. 171) Houghton Library, Harvard University (hereafter ABCFM Archives).

own work and solicit contributions, while simultaneously identifying their causes as humanitarian and in contrast with the supposed barbarism of the “heathen” and “Mohammedans.”

The massacres in the Ottoman Empire (later called the Hamidian Massacres) began in the district of Sasun (frequently spelled Sassoun in the American press) in the summer of 1894 after Armenians refused to pay increased tributes to Kurdish leaders.³⁸ Following some fighting, the Armenians surrendered, but Kurdish militias and Ottoman forces nevertheless killed many men, women, and children. In reports after the massacre, the estimated number killed varied from a few hundred to ten thousand (Ronald Suny estimates the number as 900). Following Sasun, western European powers pressured the Sultan to grant greater autonomy to Armenian areas and more oversight from Europe, but the Sultan resisted those demands.

Relative calm set in for another year, until the fall of 1895. An armed demonstration in Constantinople on September 30, 1895, turned into a bloodbath in which dozens of Armenians and fifteen Ottoman gendarmes died. Mob violence spread throughout the city. Soon thereafter, an assassination attempt on a former governor of Van in Turkish Armenia and an Armenian rebellion in the town of Zeytun (modern-day Süleymanlı) on October 12 led to further reprisals. When rumors spread that the sultan had granted Armenian

³⁸ This account of the Hamidian Massacres derives primarily from Peter Balakian, *The Burning Tigris: The Armenian Genocide and America's Awakening to International Human Rights* (New York: HarperCollins, 2003), part 1; A. Dzh Kirakoṣiān, ed. *The Armenian Massacres, 1894-1896: U.S. Media Testimony* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 2004), introduction; Jeremy Salt, *Imperialism, Evangelism, and the Ottoman Armenians, 1878-1896* (London: F. Cass, 1993); Ronald Grigor Suny, *"They Can Live in the Desert but Nowhere Else": A History of the Armenian Genocide* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015), ch. 4.

It deserves mention that scholars have frequently contemplated connections between the massacres in the 1890s and the genocide in the 1910s. Most scholars have argued for viewing the events as distinct, though not without some connections. For an overview of the literature, see Ronald Grigor Suny, Fatma Mèuge Gèođcek, and Norman M. Naimark, eds., *A Question of Genocide: Armenians and Turks at the End of the Ottoman Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 317n2.

autonomy, the killings increased and spread across all areas where Armenians lived. Kurdish militias bore direct responsibility for much of the killing, but the Ottoman authorities either encouraged the violence or took no action to stop it. Over the following winter, many Armenian survivors died of starvation or exposure.

Armenian revolutionaries fought back in 1896, but their limited successes were greatly overshadowed by the disproportionate response of Kurdish militia and Ottoman soldiers. When the Armenians seized the Imperial Ottoman Bank in Constantinople in August, mob violence returned to the city, resulting in the deaths of several thousand more Armenians. European powers again responded by demanding an end to the violence and reforms, but again accepted the Sultan's refusal without adding additional pressure. Internal divisions between France, Germany, Austria-Hungary, Russia, and the United Kingdom as well as their individual interests in the Ottoman Empire made it impossible for them to present a united front on the "Armenian Question." Between 100,000 and 200,000 Armenians died during the Hamidian massacres.

The American media presented the conflict as a massacre of Christians by Muslims. Americans demanded a more forceful response from their own government and castigated the Europeans for the ineffective pressure placed on the Sultan.³⁹ An Associated Press story stated the number of dead at Sasun as above 6,000 and emphasized the Sultan's responsibility for the massacre. The *New York Times* described the violence as the result of "Moslem oppression."⁴⁰ Stories of gruesome deaths filled headlines, such as the *Boston Globe's* "Flayed Alive" on December 28, 1895, an article that only briefly mentioned a flayed

³⁹ Kirakoṣiān, ed. *The Armenian Massacres*; See also Salt, *Imperialism*. While Kirakoṣiān presents media coverage as "testimony," Jeremy Salt argues that the coverage followed stereotypes of Muslims as innately violent. The point here is not to assess the accuracy of the reporting, but to convey the information that Americans received in the media.

⁴⁰ "Armenians in Distress," *New York Times*, September 14, 1895, 5.

Protestant teacher.⁴¹ The *Boston Globe* quoted Julia Ward Howe, who questioned whether “Christendom ... [would] stand by its own or ... see them slaughtered. ... We, the people of the United States, are in a position to take the first step.⁴²” Such accounts turned a conflict that bore little relevance to American strategic interests into a central topic of discussion in the American media.

By the time of the Armenian massacres, the American Board was employing over 150 missionaries and eight hundred local workers across all of Anatolia. Many Americans associated work in the Ottoman Empire with the ABCFM, so at the start of the massacre, letters began to flood the American Board’s Missionary Rooms in Boston.

Between 1894 and 1896, the American press documented the destruction of Armenian and American property in the Ottoman Empire and the deaths of many thousands of Armenians.⁴³ At the start of the massacre in December 1894, an Associated Press story emphasized the role of the American Board in the region. The *New York Times*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Atlanta Constitution*, *Boston Globe*, and *Los Angeles Times* all picked up the story. Journalists often turned to missionaries to supply information.⁴⁴

⁴¹ “Flayed Alive,” *Boston Globe*, December 28, 1895, 7.

⁴² “Fresh Victims,” *Boston Globe*, November 23, 1895, 13.

⁴³ The terminology in this chapter will undoubtedly offend some as being insufficiently critical of the perpetrators of the violence or, conversely, insufficiently critical of the victims. I would ask for leniency. The purpose of the chapter is not to interrogate the violence itself, but to understand its effects on the American public. The relevant data is therefore the information Americans consumed, not the events themselves. I largely employ the language of Americans at the time, who overwhelmingly viewed the violence as Turkish and Kurdish massacres of Armenian Christians.

⁴⁴ Although it is impossible to calculate exactly how often journalists relied on missionaries for information, it is possible to gain a rough understanding of the degree to which the popular press associated events in Armenia with missionaries. Between 1894 and 1896, the *New York Times* printed approximately 1500 articles that referenced Armenia or Armenians, 260 of which also mention missionaries. In the *Boston Globe*, the ratio was 850 articles with 90 including the word missionaries. Of the 1200 articles in the *Chicago Tribune*, 175 mentioned missionaries. These numbers do not signify that 15 to 20 percent of articles associated events in Armenia with missionaries. Rather, they indicate that the press mentioned missionaries enough for anyone following events in Armenia to make an association between missionaries and Armenia.

The demand for information could overwhelm officials of mission boards in the United States. These officials usually held only a superficial knowledge of the Ottoman Empire and events on the ground. Charles Creegan appealed for help in “meeting the demand which comes almost every day from representatives of the press for full and reliable news regarding the troubles in Turkey.”⁴⁵ Though he struggled to satisfy all the journalists’ requests, he also recognized the great benefit that this tragedy would produce for the American Board. Creegan told Corresponding Secretary Judson Smith, “It is very evident the people are getting considerable missionary information which they would not otherwise receive.”⁴⁶

One September 14, 1895, article exemplified the degree to which newspapers relied on the information provided by missionaries. In the article, the *New York Times* reprinted eleven paragraphs of an American Board missionary’s account, filling nearly an entire column of the newspaper. The article calculated exactly how much aid would be needed to rebuild enough homes and provide enough food and supplies to forestall massive casualties over the winter. The unidentified missionary notably referred to a colleague, Grace Kimball, a medical missionary for the Women’s Board of Missions (WBM), which was an auxiliary organization to the American Board. The reference undoubtedly attracted more attention to the work and the work brought prominence to Grace Kimball. Throughout the 1890s, the WBM provided one-quarter to one-third of funds for Congregationalist missionaries. The article’s focus on this female medical missionary surely helped encourage contributions.⁴⁷

The fact that Constantinople laid partial blame for the Armenian uprisings at the feet of American missionaries, since mission schools largely catered to Greek and Armenian

⁴⁵ C. C. Creegan to Judson Smith, 28 November 1894, ABC 12.1, vol. 17, ABCFM Archives.

⁴⁶ C. C. Creegan to Judson Smith, 10 January 1895, ABC 12.1, vol. 17, ABCFM Archives.

⁴⁷ “Armenians in Distress,” *New York Times*, September 14, 1895, p. 5.

students, only produced more attention and outrage in the United States. When a mob attacked the American Board's Anatolia College in Marsovan in 1893, for example, it attracted sufficient anger in the United States that President Grover Cleveland felt compelled to address the matter in his State of the Union address. Cleveland struck a balance between reproof and leniency. He condemned the regime for its "apparent indifference ... to the outrage" and its stripping Armenians of Ottoman citizenship when they immigrated to the United States.⁴⁸ At the same time, he closed by mentioning all the steps the Sublime Porte (the metonym for the Ottoman government) had taken to assuage American concerns. This antagonistic yet accommodating position matched that of the American Board, even though the Board and Washington continually frustrated each other through the other's actions.

Publicly, missionaries emphasized their neutrality in the conflict between the Armenians and Constantinople. As in the 1870s with regard to the Balkans, they faced a complicated political dynamic, since they worked as "guests" of the Sultan among a semi-nationalistic portion of his population. Public neutrality was the only option. The *Missionary Herald* claimed American Board "missionaries have ever been the loyal supporters of the Sultan, and have steadfastly opposed all revolutionary movements."⁴⁹ American Board officials were acutely aware that both supporters and opponents read the *Herald*. Their ability to distribute the publication, which was occasionally revoked, and to convey a positive

⁴⁸ Each of these issues has its own backstory. Ottoman officials ordered the destruction of a building at Anatolia College in retaliation for the secret nationalist activities of two Armenian professors there. The immigration issue arose because the United States was immediately naturalizing Armenian immigrants. Americans (both citizens and naturalized residents) in the Ottoman Empire could not be tried in Ottoman courts due to extraterritoriality (a legal structure often associated with diplomatic immunity). Though most Armenians immigrated to the United States for economic reasons, Ottoman government officials claimed to be concerned about revolutionary Armenians who had gained American naturalization and sought to solve the problem by preventing all Armenian immigrants from returning to the country. Robert Mirak, *Torn Between Two Lands: Armenians in America, 1890 to World War I* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983), 36-44; Karine V. Walther, *Sacred Interests: The United States and the Islamic World, 1821-1921* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015), 250-53.

⁴⁹ [Editorial Paragraphs], *Missionary Herald* 91, no. 9 (September 1895): 352. See also, [Editorial Paragraphs], *Missionary Herald* 91, no. 5 (May 1895): 175.

message to supporters depended upon a delicate balance between advocacy and remaining “inoffensive.”⁵⁰

At the same time, both missionaries and the American government clearly sided with certain Armenian contingents. While on one page the *Herald* proclaimed the missionaries’ lack of partisanship, literally two pages later, it castigated the Sultan for stonewalling American Board attempts to open schools for Armenians.⁵¹ Reporting on European demands for greater independence of Armenian territories, the *Herald* claimed “the necessity of reforms has now become ... apparent to the civilized world.”⁵² This doublespeak apparently caused consternation among supporters at home. Charles Creegan wondered whether the attempt at neutrality harmed efforts to raise money, since the American public, almost universally, sided heavily with the Armenians.⁵³ While the Woman’s Board of Missions of the Interior was “carefully refrain[ing] from publishing anything that we thought might prevent our missionaries from going on with their work,” they were discovering missionary letters appearing in the press. How were the papers receiving them, Sarah Pollock wondered. “If the Turkish government is incensed by such letters, ought not a word of warning to be sent to the friends of the missionaries if they are giving such information to the public press.”⁵⁴

The American Board balanced its attacks on the Sultan with criticism of certain groups of Armenians. It particularly opposed socialist and nationalist groups, whose

⁵⁰ James Barton to M. D. Wingate, 19 December 1894, ABC 1.1, vol. 171, ABCFM Archives.

⁵¹ [Editorial Paragraphs], *Missionary Herald* 91, no. 5 (May 1895): 175, 177-78.

⁵² [Editorial Paragraphs], *Missionary Herald* 91, no. 7 (July 1895): 264-65.

⁵³ C. C. Creegan to Judson Smith, 13 December 1894, ABC 12.1, vol. 17, ABCFM Archives.

⁵⁴ Sarah Pollock to Judson Smith, 23 March 1896, ABC 12.1, vol. 15, ABCFM Archives. Pollock specifically referenced a letter the WBMI received from Corinna Shattuck that seemed to find its way into *The Independent*.

ideologies conflicted with the goals of American Protestant missionaries.⁵⁵ The Armenians that the Board preferred were those moderate factions who advocated independence while minimizing its basis in a national identity historically associated with the Armenian Apostolic Church. Even though the revolutionary groups challenged the traditional clerical authority, they employed church rhetoric and their goals certainly did not align with those of the American Board.⁵⁶ The ABCFM proudly broadcast how its relief work improved its image among those Armenians it supported, many of whom had been skeptical of the missionaries.⁵⁷ The public assurances of the American Board's supposed political neutrality, therefore, sounded somewhat hollow.

The American Board provided very limited direct information to its supporters about the violence in 1894 and 1895. The Board perceived the missionaries to be in an “extremely delicate” situation and felt it “inexpedient ... to present ... a full statement of all that we hear and believe.” While acknowledging their sympathy for “the one side ... who are suffering by reason of poverty, oppression, and misrule” (i.e. the Armenians), it also felt it unnecessary “to prove [its] sympathy with the suffering and oppressed by joining others

⁵⁵ Assuming any Armenian revolution would have ended in defeat, the American Board thought the nationalists endangered Armenian lives and the work and property the missions had built up over decades. George C. Reynolds, “Armenian Revolutionism,” *The Independent* 48, no. 2489 (August 13, 1896): 3-4.

The case of Karekin Chitjian reflected these concerns. Chitjian was a popular Armenian Congregationalist pastor who settled in Worcester, Massachusetts [there is some dispute about whether he was deported or left willingly]. The City Missionary Society gave him the pastorate of the Armenian Protestant church, but he then raised the hackles of American Board officials by, supposedly, promoting an Armenian revolution. The members of the Armenian church in Worcester acknowledged their nationalist views, but claimed they kept religion and politics separate. That was not enough for Board Secretary Judson Smith, though, who “begged the church to give up all political and factional difficulties and strive to be Christian men and bring others to Christ.” “The Armenian Church,” *Worcester Daily Spy*, January 5, 1894. See also “Worcester’s Armenians,” *Boston Journal*, January 5, 1894; “Armenian Revolutionists,” *Worcester Daily Spy*, January 7, 1894; “The Armenian Church,” *Worcester Daily Spy*, January 22, 1894; Cyrus Hamlin, “The Armenian Question and the American Missionaries,” letter to the editor, *Boston Daily Advertiser*, April 13, 1895; Mirak, *Torn Between Two Lands*, 26, 197-98, 207-08.

⁵⁶ Suny, “*They Can Live in the Desert!*”, 142-43.

⁵⁷ Judson Smith and James Barton, “Annual Survey of the Work of the American Board, 1894-95,” *Missionary Herald* 91, no. 11 (November 1895): 446.

who, at a safe distance from the scene of danger, are passing vigorous resolutions in condemnation of the wrongs inflicted.”⁵⁸ In following this course of action, the Board attempted to balance the need for Ottoman authorities to prevent the violence from engulfing the missionaries with the clear sentiments of foreign missions supporters. Even when it claimed “there is no longer place for doubt as to the horrors which were perpetrated in the Sassoun region,” the Board only offered the tersest of commentaries.⁵⁹

Former American Board missionary Frederick Davis Greene exemplified, in some ways even embodied, the conflicting views of the American Board. In the months after the events in Sasun, Americans across the country were expressing their ire at the Ottoman government. An “indignation meeting” in New York City on December 18, 1894, featured numerous dignitaries. Columbia University President Seth Low presided and speakers included Bishop Henry Codman Potter of the Episcopal Church and Josiah Strong, who was not only the author of *Our Country* (1885), but also secretary of the Evangelical Alliance. To the consternation of American Board officials, Fred Greene wanted to speak as well. By December 5, Charles Creegan was thinking he had convinced Greene to stay silent at the meeting. Still, he was worried. “[Greene] appears to be quite nervous,” Creegan wrote to American Board Home Secretary C. H. Daniels, “and after he meets the three or four engagements already made I do not think it will be wise to make other engagements for him.”⁶⁰ More than a week later, though, Creegan was forced to line up a string of arguments from numerous sources to once again convince Greene not to speak or even attend the

⁵⁸ “Affairs in Turkey,” *Missionary Herald* 91, no. 1 (January 1895): 11-12. In private letters, officials claimed, “The wildest newspaper reports have been fully authenticated by letters from various parts of the mission,” further underlining the conflicted position the officials felt themselves to be in. James Barton to M. D. Wingate, 19 December 1894, ABC 1.1, vol. 171, ABCFM Archives. See also James Barton to C. C. Creegan, 27 November 1894, ABC 1.1, vol. 171, ABCFM Archives.

⁵⁹ [Editorial Paragraphs], *Missionary Herald* 91, no. 3 (March 1895): 86.

⁶⁰ C. C. Creegan to C. H. Daniels, 5 December 1894, ABC 12.1, vol. 17, ABCFM Archives.

indignation meeting. Creegan quoted one American Board official after another, referencing “the peril to our missionaries and their families in Turkey.” He even “read him a portion of a letter ... from his father, urging me to use my best endeavor to keep him from making any [sic] public address touching these troubles.” Finally, Creegan approached organizers to make sure no one would invite Greene to speak.⁶¹

Creegan’s earlier concerns about Fred Greene muddying the waters for the American Board were apparently justified. Greene could not keep quiet. He published an anonymous article in the January edition of *Review of Reviews*. If that had been all, the American Board would have surely forgiven him. Creegan had even expressed his appreciation for the article before discovering the identity of the author.⁶² Greene soon stopped concealing his name. In March, he traveled to England with the intent to stir up more interest in Armenia.⁶³ Around the same time, Putnam Press published Greene’s account of the Sasun massacre. The Board was forced to strongly distance itself from his assertions. Greene called the massacre a “crime upon humanity”⁶⁴ and the consequence of misgovernment.⁶⁵ In response, the American Board asserted its “loyalty to the existing authorities” and opposition to “revolution or violent measures.”⁶⁶ Condemnations of Armenian revolutionaries almost always accompanied any criticism of the Sultan and the latter complaints always related directly to missionary concerns.

⁶¹ Creegan to Smith, 13 December 1894.

⁶² Creegan to Smith, 10 January 1895.

⁶³ C. C. Creegan to C. H. Daniels, 15 March 1895, ABC 12.1, vol. 17, ABCFM Archives.

⁶⁴ The term crime against humanity first arose in response to the Armenian genocide in 1915 and only came into widespread usage after World War II. Thus, Greene was arguing that the massacre should have roused the conscience of any moral society rather than appealing to a particular set of international laws. Greene was not alone in claiming the massacres constituted a crime against humanity. *The Nation* called it “a crime against the human race.” “The Armenian Trouble,” *The Nation* 60, no. 1542 (January 17, 1895): 44.

⁶⁵ Frederick Davis Greene, *The Armenian Crisis in Turkey: The Massacre of 1894, Its Antecedents and Significance* (New York: Putnam, 1895), xii, xvii.

⁶⁶ [Editorial Paragraphs], *Missionary Herald* 91, no. 5 (May 1895): 175.

While Greene was undoubtedly a troublesome former missionary, American Board officials also appreciated his work and generally agreed with his assertions. When he spoke at the Broadway Tabernacle at the height of the controversy, “his address was excellent” and he “did not refer to the troubles in Turkey.” Of even more value, though, he was also “giving information to Dr. Strong, Drs. Ward and Stoddard, and others who are in a position to help create the right sentiment.”⁶⁷ Privately, the American Board sought to influence public opinion against the Sublime Porte and for intervention by the U.S. government “in the name of humanity, if not of Christianity.” Publicly, its “relations to the Turkish Government prevent any open agitation upon the subject.”⁶⁸

The American Board’s restraint in condemning the massacre of Armenians was exceptional among periodicals sympathetic to the cause of foreign missions. *The Outlook*, for example, laid blame for the massacres directly at the feet of Sultan Abdul Hamid II. It described him as an “incompetent, if not criminal, Sultan”; claimed the state of government in the Ottoman Empire was one of anarchy, worse than Russian despotism; and suggested that “if it is not the policy of the current Sultan to exterminate the Christians in his empire, he is acting as if this were his policy.”⁶⁹ Leaders of *The Outlook* came from the same background as American Board leaders: elite, white Congregationalists from the northeastern United States. *The Outlook*, especially since the start of Lyman Abbott’s tenure as editor, also placed great emphasis on international topics. The same issue that so forcefully condemned the Sultan featured an article by Cyrus Hamlin, one of the most famous American Board

⁶⁷ C. C. Creegan to Judson Smith, 6 December 1894, ABC 12.1, vol. 17, ABCFM Archives.

⁶⁸ James Barton to M. D. Wingate, 13 December 1894, ABC 1.1, vol. 171, ABCFM Archives. See also James Barton to C. C. Creegan, 27 November 1894, ABC 1.1, vol. 171, ABCFM Archives. For complaints about the U.S. government’s slow and ineffectual response to the massacre, see Dwight, Mission News Notes, 31 January 1896, ABCFM, Near East Records, box 1, folder 5.

⁶⁹ “The Armenian Question,” *Outlook* 52, no. 23 (December 7, 1895): 941. See also “The Evils of the Turk,” *Outlook* 42, no. 8 (August 24, 1895): 301-02 [author listed as “An Armenian”].

missionaries and the founder of Robert College in Constantinople. While the *Herald* and *The Outlook* overlapped in many ways, they differed in their objectives. The American Board needed to consider the ramifications for its missionaries, not just those in Turkey, if it were seen as engaging in politics in a country in which it operated. Its reticence to challenge the Sultan therefore made sense. The perspective of donors was better expressed by *The Outlook* and by the correspondence sent to the Board's Missionary Rooms in Boston.⁷⁰

With the violence at the end of 1895, which struck missionary facilities more than earlier incidents, the American Board became more vocal, beginning to match the frustration expressed in *The Outlook* and other publications. Their statements pointed to their belief in relief work as fundamental to missions, the heroism of their missionaries, and their support of American Red Cross work. The accounts depicted the conflict as an Islamic assault on Christianity with American Protestants acting as benevolent caregivers. Privately, James Barton identified it as “a contest in which the Cross and the Crescent are arrayed on opposite sides,” but while Muslims armed themselves, peaceful Christians met death as martyrs.⁷¹ According to reports in the *Herald*, American Board missionaries responded to the conflict by providing food, shelter, and clothing to displaced Armenians. In addition, Grace Kimball created a program of industrial education that produced its own income.

The portrayal of the massacre as an attack on Christians and the need for humanitarian assistance resonated with donors. In seeking distribution channels, the American Board was a logical solution. The American Board had the largest contingent of

⁷⁰ Numerous monographs and pamphlets by former American Board missionaries and collaborators were also more representative of the private views of American Board officials. These include Edwin Munsell Bliss, *Turkey and the Armenian Atrocities* (Edgewood Publishing Company, 1896); James S. Dennis, *The Turkish Problem and the Status of Our Missionaries* (New York: The Evangelist Press, 1896); and Greene, *The Armenian Crisis in Turkey*.

⁷¹ James Barton to Josiah Strong, 7 March 1896, ABC 1.1, vol. 182, ABCFM Archives.

Americans in Anatolia at more than 150 and its treasurer in Constantinople, W. W. Peet, could use preexisting channels to distribute relief. Leonard Woolsey Bacon, a secretary of the National Armenian Relief Committee, wrote to the American Board to inquire about transmission of such funds in early 1896. The National Armenian Relief Committee had emerged in late 1895 out of more localized organizations, particularly one in New York City, as well as at the behest of the New York Chamber of Commerce. The “local channels,” the National Committee claimed, had been providing “relatively small amounts, . . . nothing commensurate with the needs.” It sought to assist in the formation of new committees and the success of old committees by offering literature and procedures for public meetings. The National Committee quickly became the preeminent organization to fundraise for the Armenians, but it still had to rely on the American Board to transmit its money. The American Board’s Judson Smith wrote back to assure Bacon of “the security and facility with which money can be placed where it is wanted in Turkey.” Though Smith agreed to transmit any donated goods as long as the National Committee paid for the shipping, he emphasized that “money is far more desirable than goods.”⁷²

On several occasions, the Board argued that Armenians, especially “Gregorians” (as they identified members of the Armenian Apostolic Church), had caused numerous problems for missionaries in the years before the massacre. The primary goal was, after all, the conversion of the Gregorians to Protestantism. The American Board accused the Armenian Apostolic Church of persecuting Protestants, charging them an additional tax (much as the Kurds were doing to Armenians) and arresting anyone who could not pay.⁷³ In

⁷² Correspondence between Leonard Woolsey Bacon and Judson Smith, January and February 1896, ABC 1.1, vol. 181 and ABC 10, vol. 82, ABCFM Archives; Merle Curti, *American Philanthropy Abroad: A History* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1963; repr., New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1988), 122-23.

⁷³ Lyman Bartlett, “Hopeful Fields,” *Missionary Herald* 91, no. 2 (February 1895): 61.

the wake of the massacres, however, the Board claimed the Armenian Church had come to see the missionaries as their “truest friends” and “the doors of the old churches have been open as never before for the missionary and the Protestant preachers to proclaim the gospel truth.”⁷⁴ Grace Kimball perceived that “suspicion, distrust, and dislike of missionaries ... have almost entirely disappeared.”⁷⁵ Throughout the crisis, the American Board recognized the situation as both a tragedy and a wonderful opportunity to reach a deeply concerned American public and an Armenian population in need of assistance. The massacre of Armenians was one of the first instances in which humanitarian organizations used an international crisis to spur donations.⁷⁶

Grace Kimball, in particular, became a central representative of the American Board thanks to her successful “industrial bureau.” Although a remarkable figure in many respects, her success was not supposed to have come from teaching manufacturing during a crisis. She was born into a prominent family in Dover, New Hampshire, in 1855. Her father was a lawyer, judge, and representative in the state legislature. Both sides of her family had ancestors in Massachusetts in the 1630s. Kimball sailed for Van, Turkey, in 1882 on behalf of the WBM. Armenians had lived around Lake Van for a millennium and the city’s importance for Armenian history could hardly be overstated. A tenth-century cathedral still stands on the island of Aghtamar on the southern end of Lake Van. “Van in this world and paradise in the next,” an Armenian proverb exclaimed.⁷⁷

Kimball stayed in Van only briefly before returning to the United States in 1888 to study medicine at the Woman’s Medical College of New York Infirmary. The school was the

⁷⁴ Smith and Barton, “Annual Survey of the Work,” 446.

⁷⁵ G. N. Kimball, “A Letter from Armenia,” ABC 77.1, box 40, ABCFM Archives.

⁷⁶ Tyrrell, *Reforming the World*, ch. 5.

⁷⁷ Suny, “*They Can Live in the Desert*”, 254.

third oldest medical college for women and had been opened by Elizabeth Blackwell in 1868 in an effort to address the inadequate training that women were receiving from schools in Boston and Philadelphia.⁷⁸ By the time Kimball attended, it was among the leading institutions for women's medical training. She graduated in 1892 and immediately returned to Van.

Although most women who received medical degrees worked as doctors, employment as a medical missionary offered a wider variety of work and greater authority for women than medical work in the United States. That, however, ended up not being the case for Kimball. Ottoman officials refused to grant her a license to practice in the empire, initially using her sex as an excuse, which proved a great disappointment to her. In mid-1896, during some of the worst violence, when a faculty position at Vassar College opened that would allow her to teach and practice medicine, Kimball decided to return to the United States.⁷⁹ The prestige she gained through her work during the massacre nevertheless continued. She gave frequent public addresses propounding public health, missions, and women's suffrage and she became one of the very few female corporate members of the American Board.

Grace Kimball's life reflected a development in the emphasis on personal connections between missionaries and the American public. In the late nineteenth century, partially as a result of rapid developments in publishing and growing support for transnational humanitarianism, missionary boards began to portray missionaries as heroic

⁷⁸ Thomas Neville Bonner, *To the Ends of the Earth: Women's Search for Education in Medicine* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), 16-21.

⁷⁹ H. O. Dwight, Mission News Notes, 2 July 1896, American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, Near East Records (bMS 1136, box 1, folder 5), Andover-Harvard Theological Library, Harvard University (hereafter ABCFM, Near East Records).

figures, devoted to the cause of humanitarianism.⁸⁰ Theology and spirituality may have motivated the missionaries, but their heroism centered on their practical concern for humanity. While a local community's connection with an individual continued to provide significant support for fundraising, an individual's heroic acts abroad became the focus of new promotional materials used for fundraising.

Kimball's industrial work in Van epitomized the ideal of the practical, heroic missionary. Kimball's "industrial bureau" paid Armenians to manufacture clothing and bedding and to bake enough bread to feed 7,500 people.⁸¹ The *Missionary Herald* quoted Kimball's fellow missionary at Van as saying the work was a "model scheme" and "the truest missionary work," because it allowed the Armenians to support themselves and thus not "trench on the self-respect of the people by unnecessary free distribution." He continued, "The funds contributed are thus made to do at least twice as much in the way of relief, as they would by being given out free in the first place."⁸² The *Missionary Herald* editors elsewhere referred to her work with "many adjectives in the superlative."⁸³ In the suggested program for the December 1896 missionary concert of prayer, the Board identified only two individuals, one being Kimball, under "Modern Heroines on the Mission Field" and the sources of information included a *Review of Reviews* article on Kimball, the only source about a particular missionary.⁸⁴

⁸⁰ Ian Tyrrell has reconceptualized American imperialism during this period around the idea of moral reform, largely promoted through missionaries. He argues that the so-called "moral empire" depended upon the growth of "webs of communication," through print culture, commerce, and transportation. Tyrrell, *Reforming the World*, esp. ch. 1.

⁸¹ "Relief Work at Van, Eastern Turkey," *Missionary Herald* 92, no. 6 (June 1896): 234.

⁸² *Missionary Herald* 92, no. 4 (April 1896): 155-56.

⁸³ "Relief Work at Van," 232.

⁸⁴ "Suggested Program for Missionary Concert. December, 1896," *Missionary Herald* 92, no. 11 (November 1896): 483.

The move toward industrial education and practical missions work had a long history prior to Kimball's work in Van. Donors to missions, as one would expect, also gave to other causes and consequently encouraged mission boards to adopt practices they perceived as successful. Chicago industrialist and philanthropist Eliphalet W. Blatchford, for example, had helped found the Chicago Manual Training School in 1882. Blatchford, who had made a fortune supplying bullets to the Union Army during the Civil War, had become a corporate member of the American Board in 1870 and its vice-president in 1885. The Chicago Commercial Club, of which Blatchford was a member, had founded the Manual Training School on the principle that a pupil ought "not simply to read or to hear how a thing is done; nay, ... to do it himself."⁸⁵ Students learned metal- and wood-working, among other things, in addition to general education requirements.

Manual training was part of a spectrum of education reforms in the late nineteenth century based on child-centered education. Those reforms expanded the accessibility and efficacy of schooling, but they also reified assumptions about race, gender, and class. All children deserved some form of education, but child-centered pedagogy oriented curricula around the assumed future occupation of the children, based on their standing in society. Proponents of manual training, for example, acknowledged differences in the ways students learned, but also infantilized the manual education students by associating the pedagogical structure with kindergartens and "savage" teaching practices. Kindergartens and manual training schools "have common methods of instruction," Charles Ham asserted, and while "we [might] have more and better tools than the savage[s]," nevertheless, "we might take a lesson from [them]." In the end, Ham and others hoped, education for the "ignorant

⁸⁵ Frank A. Hill, "The Manual Training Idea,—Reminiscences of Personal Growth into its Spirit," *Manual Training Magazine* 1, no. 1 (October 1899): 1-2; See also Charles H. Ham, *Manual Training, The Solution of Social and Industrial Problems* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1886), 2-4.

classes” that performed “the labor of the world” would stop the “vandal hands [that have] destroyed the mill, the factory, and the forge erected to ameliorate his condition” and allow the student to “think of becoming a man!”⁸⁶ E. W. Blatchford expected his own sons to pursue an education more fitting their social standing, complete with an elite university training (at Amherst College, for three of the four Blatchford sons) in preparation for careers in business, law, or the clergy.

Blatchford’s work with the Chicago Manual Training School led him to promote industrial education in mission fields. To achieve that goal, Blatchford regularly gave special donations to missionaries willing to pursue industrial training. In 1886, for example, he directed the American Board to send money to a high school in the Ottoman Empire that offered industrial training. While the American Board would strongly endorse such work in the 1890s, in 1886, Judson Smith identified it as “somewhat outside of the special work to which the Board has deemed itself called.”⁸⁷ In the memory of American Board leaders, similar work had been attempted decades earlier with little success.⁸⁸ Blatchford’s support, and that of other wealthy donors, however, convinced the Board that they ought to pursue more industrial education.

The industrial education dilemma was only the latest incarnation of the debate between those who saw missions as purely evangelistic and those who viewed evangelism as

⁸⁶ Ham, *Manual Training*, 5, 9-10, 40.

⁸⁷ Judson Smith to E. W. Blatchford, 17 November 1886, box 4, folder 136, Blatchford Family Papers, The Newberry Library, Chicago; see also E. J. Pierce to E. W. Blatchford, 1 February 1887, box 2, folder 96, and Frederick L. Kingsbury to E. W. Blatchford, 3 March 1887, box 1, folder 71, Blatchford Family Papers—Additions, The Newberry Library, Chicago.

⁸⁸ “You know our Committee have always been rather slow in engaging in the support of industrial schools. It is a new feature in our history. It is a branch of missionary work which is evidently developing more and more, and public attention is being called to it more than ever before. The first experiments in this direction forty or fifty years ago were failures; hence a prejudice was raised against anything of the sort; but, wisely used, I cannot but feel that industrial schools may be made very helpful in the promotion of missionary work.” N. G. Clark to E. W. Blatchford, 7 March 1887, box 4, folder 136, Blatchford Family Papers.

an endpoint preceded by “civilization.” This debate had begun in the early nineteenth century and continued into the twentieth.⁸⁹ Grace Kimball herself had claimed months before the Armenian massacres that her medical work brought “the hearts of the people to us, ... breaking down old animosities, and ... gaining for the name of American missions a new respect and friendliness.”⁹⁰ The perspective that industrial work bridged the divide between Protestants and “Gregorians” was widespread among the missionaries. Other mission stations, such as those at Oorfa and Marsovan, also employed displaced and impoverished Armenians. Corinna Shattuck, the missionary at Oorfa and the other “Modern Heroine on the Mission Field,” asserted, “I feel almost no difference now [between Protestants and Gregorians]; all are my people.”⁹¹

While industrial work, like that of Grace Kimball and Corinna Shattuck, attracted many admirers in the United States, it led others to claim the work was beyond the purview of “woman’s work.” Johanna Zimmer’s desire to open an evening school in Constantinople prompted her sponsor, the Woman’s Board of Missions of the Interior, to consider offloading her support to the American Board. The WBMI identified woman’s work as “work for women.” Women who taught men, as Zimmer was seeking to do, operated outside of woman’s work in this definition and it was consequently a violation of the WBMI’s constitution to support such work.⁹²

The decision to support only work that directly benefited women might have appeared to be a reasonable basis for distinguishing the realm of the woman’s boards and the American Board. At other times, though, the WBMI took a much harsher, more

⁸⁹ Hutchison, *Errand to the World*.

⁹⁰ *Missionary Herald* 90, no. 8 (August 1894): 332.

⁹¹ “Oorfa—Relief Work,” *Missionary Herald* 92, no. 9 (September 1896): 370.

⁹² M. D. Wingate to Judson Smith, 13 December 1894, ABC 12.1, vol. 16; WBMI Minutes, 7 December 1894, ABC 75, vol. 9, ABCFM Archives.

gendered position with regard to industrial work. Zimmer's attempt to open a night school "embarrassed" the Executive Committee. "To many of our ladies it seems inconsistent to spend money on what might be called a manual training school, or an industrial school," especially since "that which is distinctively the work for women is . . . growing."⁹³ To the WBMI, the industrial work that some Americans associated with heroic work was understood to be distinctly male, even when performed by women.

The *Christian Herald*: An Ally and an Advocate for the American Board

Grace Kimball's work attracted attention beyond the pages of the *Missionary Herald*. The *Christian Herald*, in particular, promoted her work. The *Christian Herald* originated as a British publication to promote millenarianism, establishing an American edition in New York in 1878. Newspaperman Louis Klopsch viewed the American version as lacking a national flavor and took control of the magazine in 1889, purchasing it outright soon thereafter. It has been described as a forerunner to yellow journalism.⁹⁴

Louis Klopsch was an ideal owner for the *Christian Herald* and it soon increased in popularity and renown. By the time he purchased the periodical, Klopsch had already achieved some success in journalism as a writer, advertiser, and publisher. In 1881, he had purchased the Pictorial Associated Press, which sold images to magazines and newspapers at a time before most publications had the capability to produce those images on their own. Klopsch's interest in the *Christian Herald* stemmed partly from his religiosity. He attended Thomas DeWitt Talmadge's Brooklyn Tabernacle church, one of the largest congregations in the country. Talmadge was nationally known for his eloquence and also had a background

⁹³ M. D. Wingate to Judson Smith, 6 February 1894 and M. D. Wingate to C. H. Daniels, 22 September 1894, ABC 12.1, vol. 16, ABCFM Archives.

⁹⁴ Tyrrell, *Reforming the World*, 103.

in journalism. In another successful scheme, Klopsch syndicated Talmadge's sermons to hundreds of newspapers for the Monday press.

Klopsch's interests in religion and journalism came together in his purchase of the *Christian Herald*. He asked Talmadge to become his editor, published numerous pictures and drawings, some in color, and included a Talmadge sermon in every issue. Klopsch sought "to give [the *Christian Herald*] a broad evangelical character and to make it co-ordinate with the secular newspaper." He linked publishing with spirituality, claiming, "in the day of judgment, amid all the millions of men who will come up to render their accounts, the largest accounts will be rendered by newspaper men." When Klopsch acquired the magazine in 1889, circulation stood at 30,000. When he died two decades later, it topped 250,000.⁹⁵

The *Christian Herald* reported extensively on relief work and "the East" and frequently turned to Orientalist images and articles to appeal to its readership. The interest in the Holy Land stemmed from the publishers' millenarianism. Millenarians, then as now, closely followed developments in Palestine, believing Jerusalem would play a central role in the Apocalypse. When Klopsch and Talmadge took over the magazine, that focus only increased. They included news stories about foreign cultures and missionaries as well as fictional accounts of life in the Orient. The original decision to acquire the *Christian Herald* occurred when the two men were stopping in England on their way to Palestine.

Given the geographic focus on the eastern Mediterranean, the *Christian Herald* unsurprisingly covered the Armenian massacres of 1894-1896. Aside from that geographic interest, the magazine also encouraged humanitarian gifts in response to other man-made or natural disasters. Klopsch identified philanthropy as an essential part of publishing, claiming

⁹⁵ Charles M. Pepper, *Life-Work of Louis Klopsch: Romance of a Modern Knight of Mercy* (New York: *The Christian Herald*, 1910), 1-10, quotes on 9.

he would make the magazine “a medium of American bounty to the needy throughout the world.”⁹⁶ Over the winter of 1894-1895, the cause was not yet Armenia, but a drought in Kansas and Nebraska that had already lasted several years. In each issue, Klopsch published the names of every individual and organization who submitted a donation, whether of twenty-five cents or seventy dollars, with special notes about donations of goods or services. Klopsch and Talmadge praised their readers, claiming they had “already established for themselves a character for practical benevolence such as attaches to no other aggregation of Christian men and women in this Union.” Klopsch went to Nebraska himself to supervise the distribution of the funds, which were meant to supply immediate needs while victims awaited congressional action. Following the systematization of fundraising, the *Christian Herald* asked donors to send monetary donations directly to the magazine, “keeping the work of distribution within a system.”⁹⁷ For Klopsch and Talmadge, the magazine was an ideal vehicle for raising money. It attracted attention for its stories and images and then channeled that interest into fundraising.

The incident at Sasun did not produce an immediate effect on the *Christian Herald*. It continued to report regularly on daily life in the Ottoman Empire with occasional reference to tensions between Armenian Christians and the Muslim majority. Like *The Outlook*, though, the *Christian Herald* took a harsher stance against the Sultan much earlier than the American Board’s *Missionary Herald*. By September 1895 and into 1896, nearly every issue referenced the oppression of the Armenians. In particular, it defined the conflict as an attack on Christians by Muslims and it identified Grace Kimball as representative of the work of American Protestants in the region.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 9.

⁹⁷ “Relief Work Goes on Bravely,” *Christian Herald* 18, no. 5 (January 30, 1895): 69. See also “Fighting Back the Famine,” *Christian Herald* 18, no. 6 (February 6, 1895): 85.

The *Christian Herald* inaugurated its extended coverage of Armenian massacres with a front-page article about Grace Kimball in the September 18, 1895, issue entitled, “One Godly Woman’s Work.” The article described and praised her “industrial bureau” and emphasized the conflict as one of Muslim aggression against Christians. The “half savage Kurds,” whom the magazine described as “rude mountaineers, who delight in bloodshed and pillage,” had forced Armenians to live “little better than wild beasts” following the Sasun massacre. Referencing the previous year’s campaign in Nebraska, the magazine encouraged readers to think of the Armenian situation as little different, fellow Christians in danger of starvation and in need of help from wealthy American Christians.⁹⁸

In the following months, the *Christian Herald* covered the situation in Ottoman Armenia in almost every issue, frequently on the front page and accompanied by numerous photographs or drawings. It built its fundraising campaign over the course of the first month of coverage. The week after the Kimball article detailed the suffering of Christians, an article returned to the topic with a focus on women and children forced to eat “bread made of cloverseed, linseed or flax, mixed with grass and roots.” The article emphasized the lack of available funds to support relief work.⁹⁹ The next issue announced the official fundraising campaign, claiming it arose “in response to urgent and repeated appeals from many friends throughout the United States.” The issue contained six images across two pages. One photograph on each page depicted a nondescript object described as “hunger-bread,” reminding readers of the previous issue. Another photograph depicted women weaving, referencing Grace Kimball and the work she was organizing.

⁹⁸ “One Godly Woman’s Work,” *Christian Herald* 18, no. 38 (September 18, 1895): 601, 603.

⁹⁹ “The Suffering Armenians,” *Christian Herald* 18, no. 39 (September 25, 1895): 621.

Klopsch soon announced that he had hired William Willard Howard as a commissioner to distribute the aid that the magazine would raise.¹⁰⁰ In reality, he would serve more as a correspondent than a relief worker, much like Klopsch had done in Nebraska. At thirty-six, Howard's brief career until that point had been in journalism. His preparation as commissioner amounted to a single trip to Armenia the previous December. The magazine published an extended letter and series of photographs from Howard about conditions among the Armenians. Howard's skills (or lack thereof) would be put on display two decades later when he single-handedly led the American Constantinople Relief Committee to ruin through financial mismanagement.

To garner support for its campaign to raise money for Armenia, the *Christian Herald* transformed Grace Kimball into the heroine of relief work. In its weekly coverage, it mentioned her in almost every article. She became the literal face of the relief work when the October 16, 1895, issue contained a drawing of her. Given the emphasis Klopsch placed on drawings and photographs, it was significant that Kimball was the first Armenian relief worker to appear in the magazine. In the following issue, she received the endorsement of Cyrus Hamlin, the founder of Robert College in Constantinople and the most well-known missionary from the Ottoman Empire.¹⁰¹ Earlier, W. W. Howard had also endorsed her work as "a most excellent plan," though Howard's endorsement probably benefited his own reputation more than Kimball's.¹⁰² The constant references to Kimball appeared to have achieved significant results. Prefacing numerous letters published in the issue, the magazine

¹⁰⁰ "Armenia's Cry for Help," *Christian Herald* 18, no. 40 (October 2, 1895): 633, 637.

¹⁰¹ "How the Armenians Suffer," *Christian Herald* 18, no. 43 (October 23, 1895): 689.

¹⁰² "Armenia's Cry for Help," 637.

claimed, “especially is an interest shown in Dr. Grace N. Kimball’s good work, which has awakened the keenest appreciation.”¹⁰³

The *Christian Herald* promoted giving in the name of humanitarianism by constructing a drama around the massacre. Photographs and drawings helped bring the suffering of the Armenians to life.¹⁰⁴ Articles maintained themes from week to week, much like a serialized story. Grace Kimball served as the central character in the drama the *Christian Herald* was constructing. The story contained a full cast of sympathetic characters in the form of Armenians. The authors placed great emphasis on the fact that Armenians were Christians, indeed it was a “life-and death struggle of a brave Christian people.”¹⁰⁵ “They only knew one ultimate duty when all the world seemed to oppose and forsake them—they knew how to cling to Christ and their simple faith.”¹⁰⁶ The story had an equal number of villains, nameless “Moslem oppressors,” especially the savage Kurds.

After six months of fundraising, the *Christian Herald* provided the American Board with \$25,000, nearly half the total receipts the ABCFM had received until that point. The fundraising methods of the *Christian Herald* pointed toward future developments of humanitarian aid. The emphasis was no longer limited to connecting individual missionaries to particular communities, even if that practice continued as well. Instead, the *Christian Herald* found strategies that employed elements of popular culture. They turned a humanitarian crisis into engaging reading.

¹⁰³ “Hunger’s Death-Roll in Armenia,” *Christian Herald* 18, no. 41 (October 9, 1895): 649.

¹⁰⁴ Though an earlier generation of scholars viewed spectatorship in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as distancing viewers from actual experience, more recently, scholars have shown how pictures, postcards, and moving images promoted community. The work of the *Christian Herald* provides another example to support these recent arguments. See, for example, Grace Elizabeth Hale, *Making Whiteness: The Culture of Segregation in the South, 1890-1940* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1998), 228; Amy Louise Wood, *Lynching and Spectacle: Witnessing Racial Violence in America, 1890-1940* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 4-11.

¹⁰⁵ “How the Armenians Suffer,” 689.

¹⁰⁶ “Hunger’s Death-Roll in Armenia,” 649.

The purpose of examining foreign missionary responses to the Armenian massacres is neither to better understand those events nor to determine the validity or sufficiency of the American response. The documents do not answer those questions, at least not on their own. Rather, the documents, in the context of earlier calls for aid to foreign societies, point to the changing ways that Americans understood the role of their money in the world. In the earlier period, charitable contributions served to establish a direct connection between particular communities and worthy recipients. By the end of the nineteenth century, the worthiness of the individual was subsumed under the cause or circumstances in which the donation was solicited. Americans had long donated in times of crisis, but donations to foreign causes was a novelty of the 1890s, first with the Russian famine and then with the Armenian massacres.

Martyrdom and Money: The Boxer Uprising and Presbyterian Fundraising for Missions

While American Protestants watched the events in the Ottoman Empire with horror and disgust, developments in China also held their attention.¹⁰⁷ American merchants had been trading in China since the end of the Revolutionary War, but missionaries did not arrive until 1830, with Elijah Coleman Bridgman of the American Board being the first. The treaties that ended the First Opium War (1839-1842), later called the “unequal treaties” by the Chinese, forced China to grant numerous concessions to western powers. Mission boards could open stations in new cities and the treaties granted extraterritoriality (i.e. consular, rather than local, legal authority) to the missionaries (something they also had in

¹⁰⁷ This account of the origins and history of the Boxer Uprising derives from Joseph Esherick, *The Origins of the Boxer Uprising* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987); Richard O'Connor, *The Spirit Soldiers: a Historical Narrative of the Boxer Rebellion* (New York: Putnam, 1973); Paul A. Cohen, *History in Three Keys: The Boxers as Event, Experience, and Myth* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), ch. 1.

the Ottoman Empire). Treaties two decades later opened the rest of China. Over the subsequent forty-five years, Protestant missionaries in China grew from 100 to 3500.¹⁰⁸

These concessions, granted by an embattled ruling elite, prompted the bandits that plagued central China in the 1890s to occasionally target missionary facilities. After attacks on and threats against missionaries in Sichuan province in 1895, some Americans suggested a halt to American missions in China.¹⁰⁹ Much greater anti-foreign violence broke out several years later, which European, American, and Japanese governments used as justification to occupy portions of China, briefly forcing the imperial court to relocate from Beijing to Xi'an.

In American memory, the Boxers (*I Ho Ch'uan* in Chinese, translated as Fists of Righteous Harmony or Righteous and Harmonious Fists) were the group primarily associated with the violence against European and American institutions. Neither the Boxers nor American awareness of anti-foreign sentiment in China arose spontaneously in 1898, the traditional starting date of the Boxer Uprising. The origins of the *I Ho Ch'uan* remain obscure, but in 1808, Chinese authorities had suppressed them at the insistence of imperialist western governments. The group had never entirely disbanded, though, and they came to prominence again in Shandong province in 1898. The amount of violence was very minor and sporadic until 1899 and played into the hands of European governments who used any violence to expand their influence over Chinese policies. In response to the murder of two missionaries in 1897, for example, the German government humiliated the Imperial Court by forcing it to build three cathedrals with plaques indicating imperial support and to remove numerous officials, including the relatively effective Shandong governor. They also

¹⁰⁸ Daniel H. Bays, *A New History of Christianity in China* (Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), ch. 3-4.

¹⁰⁹ [Editorial Paragraphs], *Missionary Herald* 91, no. 11 (November 1895): 432.

seized the port of Jiaoxhou. All of these steps only encouraged anti-Christian and anti-foreign sentiment in China.

The immediate history of the Boxer Uprising began with First Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895 in which Japan crushed China, the much larger country that had previously looked down on the island nation. Following the restoration of imperial rule in Japan in 1867-1868, Japan had begun a process of centralization of power, reform and strengthening of the military according to European standards, and industrialization. During the war, Japan won every significant battle, destroying much of the Chinese navy and killing thousands of troops. By the time China sued for peace, Japan could demand huge reparation payments, control of Formosa (Taiwan), and an independent Korea.

In response to the humiliating war, some Chinese political leaders demanded extensive reforms. Since the 1860s, China had been engaging in numerous efforts to modernize the Chinese military and economy. Empress Dowager Cixi, who wielded much of the political power between 1861 and 1908, had favored these institutional reforms known as the Self-Strengthening Movement, but she strongly opposed the westernization of the government even after the Sino-Japanese War. Despite the opposition, Cixi's nephew, Guangxu Emperor, and others began to change the system of government, expand capitalism, and reform the military. Cixi and her allies soon placed the emperor under house arrest, ending what became known as the Hundred Days' Reform.

The *I Ho Ch'uan* might be seen as the reactionary party in this dispute. They were initially fiercely hostile to Qing authorities, whom they blamed for economic, political, and social tension and impotence against foreign powers. With regard to the latter, the Boxers could point to the First and Second Opium Wars of 1839-1842 and 1856-1860, which forced

China to open its ports to the opium trade. They also inveighed against the construction of railroads across China, which eliminated the work of thousands of boatmen.

Resentment of missionaries in particular followed from the complaints about foreign control. The Treaty of Nanking, which ended the First Opium War, opened ports to foreign trade, granted reparations to Britain, and ceded Hong Kong to Queen Victoria. The expansion of missionary cities and the granting of extraterritoriality especially incensed the Boxers. The treaties specifically connected the presence of foreign missionaries in China with a particularly demeaning moment in Chinese history. The Boxers and other anti-foreign groups initially associated the expansion of foreign influence with an impotent imperial authority, though as the uprising progressed, the imperial court and the Boxers became allies.

In addition to the conflict over westernization, repeated natural disasters and lawlessness in the 1890s created a ripe environment for unrest. In the 1850s, the Yellow River had shifted course and silting caused the riverbed to actually sit above the Shandong Province. As a result, rain frequently resulted in massive floods. The shift in the river also exacerbated the decline of the Grand Canal in Shandong province, putting further pressure on communities along the canals. The absence of rain caused equally severe problems, including several droughts. As a result, famine ravaged Shandong Province in the years preceding the uprising. Banditry had been a longstanding problem, but the natural disasters led to a sharp rise in lawlessness in 1898-1899. The inability of Qing authorities to suppress them prompted residents to support alternative means of control.

In 1898 and 1899, several groups of Boxers emerged in Shandong province. Following the murder of British missionary S. M. Brooks on December 31, 1899, the first murder of a missionary in two years, *I Ho Ch'uan* violence escalated. The imperial court issued a weak condemnation of the bloodshed, but did not attempt to break up the

associations. Great Britain, the United States, France, and Germany protested the decree, which only strengthened anti-foreign sentiment. By May 1900, the Boxers had spread beyond Shandong into the outskirts of Beijing. They clashed with Chinese troops on numerous occasions and often lost, but their numbers swelled so much that they were able to occupy Zhuozhou in May. At that point, foreign legations called up troops for protection and the Boxers responded by targeting foreigners directly. Twenty-four foreign warships stood at the ready offshore. The Boxers were so numerous by the end of May that the imperial court could not suppress them without losing total control. After the Boxers began entering Beijing in mid-June and besieged the foreign legation district on June 20th, the imperial court explicitly sided with the Boxers. Eight nations (Austria-Hungary, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States) put together a force of 20,000 to assault Beijing and recapture the foreign legations, which they accomplished on August 14.

The Boxer Protocol formally ended the uprising on September 7, 1901. By that time, tens of thousands had died, mostly Chinese victims of the Boxers. Protestant missionary deaths numbered slightly fewer than two hundred. The Protocol indemnified the Qing court for the loss of property and life, costing the Chinese the equivalent of \$333 million at 4 percent interest. In addition to other demands, the penalty for joining an anti-foreign society was to be death and the Chinese ceded control of territory to guarantee foreign access between the capital and the sea.

Missionaries in China and missionary supporters in the United States recognized many of the challenges facing the Chinese in the 1890s. Missionary publications followed the Sino-Japanese War in close detail and with particular enthusiasm for Japanese success, since they considered the use of western military tactics proof of western superiority. They believed the subsequent reform movement would make the Chinese more open to their

offerings, both spiritual and practical. Missionaries also reported on the numerous natural disasters, seeking donations to alleviate the sufferings, and they advocated infrastructure reforms to prevent future flooding. They in no way delighted in the hardships faced by many Chinese, but they also hoped these challenges would “soften the hearts of the people and lead them to accept the offer of the Bread of Life.”¹¹⁰ While the missionaries noted many difficulties in the 1890s, they remained optimistic about their own evangelistic work.

For both Chinese nationals and, to a certain extent, Protestant missionaries in China, the origins and consequences of the Boxer Uprising defied simple explanation. The press, on the other hand, waffled between nuance and heavy-handedness. As with the conflict in the Ottoman Empire, the press sometimes identified the uprising as an attack on Christianity itself.¹¹¹ The *Chicago Tribune* quoted a Presbyterian minister’s description of the uprising as Satan’s struggle.¹¹² Other articles presented long, complicated explanations for the violence. The *New York Times*, citing Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions Secretary A. Woodruff Halsey, listed six factors: the Boxers, reformers, the Empress Dowager, international commerce, foreign powers, and the missionaries (though he especially blamed Roman Catholics).¹¹³

The August 1900 edition of the *North American Review* encapsulated both perspectives on the uprising. The issue opened with a piece by John Barrett, a former

¹¹⁰ *Assembly Herald* (February 1899): 88. On the floods, “China’s Perennial Sorrow,” *Assembly Herald* (March 1899): 142-43. Note that the *Assembly Herald* did not use volume or issue numbers during 1899, but started to do so in 1900.

¹¹¹ *Harper’s Weekly* described the situation as one in which “the whole of Christendom is more or less intimately concerned.” E. S. Martin, “This Busy World,” *Harper’s Weekly* 44, no. 2271 (June 30, 1900): 607.

¹¹² “To Enlighten the Chinese,” *Chicago Tribune*, June 28, 1900, 13.

¹¹³ Protestants, Halsey claimed, “[were doing] their work as peaceable servants of Christ.” In the end, though, he summarized the problem by stating that when news breaks about developments in Beijing, “You may hear of barbarities inhuman. That is China.” “Catholic Missions in China Blamed,” *New York Times*, July 23, 1900. Robert Speer expressed similar views in a letter published in *The Churchman* and reprinted in the *New York Times*. “Missionaries in China,” *New York Times*, August 26, 1900.

minister to Siam (Thailand), which focused exclusively on a strong military response from the United States to defend the interests of American missionaries and merchants. His response blended the rhetoric of religion, militarism, and race science.

In this hour of peril and through trials that shall follow, we must remember that we are a Christian as well as a commercial nation. We are a moral as well as a material force. We are a civilizing as well as an exploiting agency. This is a supreme test in the competition of nations, in a struggle where the principle of the survival of the fittest has its stern and cruel application. Possibly now, as China and the allied nations of the world are in deadly struggle in North China, whether with riotous hordes or government forces, our Anglo-Saxon race, our Anglo-Saxon religions, our Anglo-Saxon systems of society and government are at stake. We cannot, therefore, quail before our responsibility. There is no question of imperialism or expansion involved other than that of the salvation and extension of our race and our institutions.¹¹⁴

Barrett's concerns actually centered more on the merchants than the missionaries, but he could use the missionaries to turn an acquisitive argument into a moral one. Other writers expressed differing views in the same issue. Methodist missionary George B. Smyth warned readers that "some will think me too warm an advocate of the Chinese, ... [but] no one can justly write of the antagonism of China toward foreigners without showing how large a share the foreigners themselves have had in producing it."¹¹⁵ He then proceeded to recount how western "ignorance" and "injustice" (like Halsey, reserving special condemnation for Roman Catholics) had produced the animosity that resulted in the *I Ho Ch'uan*.¹¹⁶

Throughout the uprising, the popular press turned to mission boards for information, since missionaries were the leading authorities on China. E. S. Martin claimed in *Harper's Weekly* that "four-fifths of the anxiety in this country is about the missionaries."¹¹⁷ Since information was rarely forthcoming, the articles frequently reported little more than

¹¹⁴ John Barrett, "America's Duty in China," *North American Review* 171, no. 525 (August 1900): 146.

¹¹⁵ George B. Smyth, "Causes of Anti-Foreign Feeling in China," *North American Review* 171, no. 525 (August 1900): 182.

¹¹⁶ More specifically, Smyth blamed western merchants for seeking to exploit Chinese goods and indiscriminately massacring people who interfered. He also blamed the Dowager Empress for failing to stop the Boxers when she had a chance and missionaries, both Catholic and Protestant, for arrogance. *Ibid.*, 182-97.

¹¹⁷ Martin, "This Busy World," 607.

the names and supposed locations of the missionaries or the contents of outgoing telegrams that had received no reply. Under the title “Mission Board’s Action,” for example, the *New York Times* informed readers, “no further direct news was received by any of the local Mission Boards yesterday.”¹¹⁸ When news did arrive, newspapers quoted telegrams in their entirety. In the aftermath of the uprising, missionaries took the lead in offering interpretations and analyses of what occurred.¹¹⁹

The Presbyterian (USA) Board of Foreign Missions (BFM) placed particular emphasis on their work in China and would lose five adults and three children in the uprising. They identified their presence, with nearly two hundred missionaries, as “larger than that of any other Board in the world, except the [nondenominational] China Inland Mission.”¹²⁰ At the epicenter of the conflict in Shandong, the Presbyterians held 40 percent of the missionary force, including twenty-three married couples and thirteen single women. Those fifty-nine missionaries accounted for over 8 percent of all Presbyterian missionaries and about one-quarter of Presbyterian missionaries in China. Although the Presbyterians operated twenty-seven mission stations across Asia, the Americas (including within the United States among Chinese and Japanese immigrants), and West Africa, China was one of the crown jewels of Presbyterian missions, given the number of missionaries in the country and money spent there. The *Assembly Herald*, the joint publication of all the Presbyterian boards, not surprisingly published regular updates on developments in China.

¹¹⁸ “Mission Board’s Action,” *New York Times*, July 15, 1900, 2.

¹¹⁹ Examples include Katharine M. Lowry, “A Woman’s Diary of the Siege of Peking,” *McClure’s Magazine* 16, no. 1 (November 1900): 65-76; Hiram H. Lowry, “The Chinese Resentment,” *Harper’s Monthly Magazine* 101, no. 605 (October 1900): 740-47; Isaac Taylor Headland, “The Boxers,” *Harper’s Weekly* 44, no. 2269 (July 16, 1900): 556.

¹²⁰ “A Call to Prayer for Our Imperiled Missionaries,” *Assembly Herald* v. 3, no. 2 (Aug. 1900): 713

Like the American press generally, the *Assembly Herald* expressed optimism in the late 1890s about the campaigns for reform and westernization. The magazine published a letter from the missionary W. A. P. Martin, writing from Peking less than a month after Empress Dowager Cixi imprisoned the emperor, who claimed, despite the machinations of Cixi, “the outlook [has never] been fairer for missions.” In January 1899, the *Assembly Herald* editors compared the emperor to John Brown, claiming he had “‘gone in’ for reforms more swiftly than his seniors can allow,” but that he would be remembered favorably in years to come.¹²¹ The BFM suggested devoting the monthly concert of prayer to the outlook for foreign missions and devoted a significant section to China. They acknowledged “grave problems,” but remained highly optimistic due to “the total change in regard to foreign teaching and influence, and the increased friendliness toward missions and missionaries.”¹²² The next month, the editors perceived, “The government is beginning to appreciate the value to China of the presence of these devoted men and women” and in March, that Cixi did not “possess the power to shut out the light from China. The reform movement has only received a temporary check.”¹²³

Robert Speer took up the topic of China in the May 1899 issue of the *Assembly Herald*. Speer was a leading voice in mission circles and was perhaps the most well-known and well-respected member of the BFM leadership. He never served as a missionary himself, but gained fame for his role in promoting the Student Volunteer Movement while a student at Princeton College.¹²⁴ He joined the BFM at twenty-four and remained there for the next forty-six years. Like many of his colleagues, Speer perceived the world to be on the cusp of

¹²¹ *Assembly Herald* (January 1899): 4-5, 15.

¹²² “Monthly Concert of Prayer for Foreign Missions,” *Assembly Herald* (January 1899): 28.

¹²³ “Current Events,” *Assembly Herald* (March 1899): 131.

¹²⁴ John F. Piper, Jr., *Robert E. Speer: Prophet of the American Church* (Louisville, Ky.: Geneva Press, 2000), 42-43.

great transformation, both in spiritual and practical terms. Also like his colleagues, Speer articulated those changes in the language of racial science, describing Chinese people as “oldest among races,” yet undeveloped and childish. However, with imminent change, they would “burst into a conflagration of progress.” The growth of print culture, railroads, industry, and social and political reform all pointed to this progress. The Sino-Japanese War killed the anti-foreign sentiments that had afflicted the country in the early 1890s, according to Speer, and the people were coming to realize that “Protestant missionaries ... [were] not the agents of foreign governments plotting to trouble and to steal.”¹²⁵

The February 1900 issue of the *Assembly Herald* epitomized the lack of foresight within the BFM. Issues of the *Assembly Herald* usually went to press approximately two weeks prior to the start of the month. S. M. Brooks had been killed on December 31, 1899, so the uprising was in its very early stages as the issue was being put together. Coincidentally, the BFM had selected China as the topic for the February concert of prayer and, following a practice of aligning *Assembly Herald* articles with the monthly concert that had begun the previous year, the BFM published extensively about China that month. Arthur Brown and Frank Ellinwood, two of the BFM secretaries, each wrote an article for the issue. They expressed similar sentiments, perceiving a strong tendency among contemporary Chinese for westernization, especially following the Sino-Japanese War. Brown noted that the Dowager Empress owned a Bible and the emperor was learning English, concluding, “China begins to feel the pulsebeat of western civilization, to realize that she has been left far behind by nations which in comparison are but as yesterday.” He advocated advancing the work further. “China is the strategic point in world evangelization, and [the Board] is eager to send to it the reinforcements of men and money which will enable our little army of missionaries

¹²⁵ Robert E. Speer, “The Unprecedented Opportunity in China,” *Assembly Herald* (May 1899): 264-65.

to leave the trenches in which they are now compelled to wait, and ‘advance along the whole line’ until China is won for Christ.” Ellinwood made similar claims, pointing especially to what he viewed as the great advancement of Chinese society since the end of the Opium Wars and the imposition of European imperial power.¹²⁶

Having underlined its optimism about China and downplayed the instances of anti-foreign violence in the months preceding the uprising, the strength of the Boxers came as a surprise to the BFM. The *Assembly Herald* first referenced the “boxers” (with a lowercase ‘b’) in an article entitled, “Some of the Darker Shadows,” in the April 1900 issue. From the first, the *Assembly Herald* portrayed the Boxers as barbarians. In an account of the murder of Brooks, missionary Paul Bergen claimed the Boxers tortured, beheaded, and fed Brooks to dogs. In fact, Brooks was attacked while traveling alone down a dangerous road and then fought back against his attackers, only to be killed when he tried to escape. A more accurate resume of Brooks’s death would not have altered the BFM’s overall message, though, which was one of Christianity besieged by the uncivilized world. The account of “darker shadows,” noted that the BFM treasurer would be taking donations to forward to missionaries in China.¹²⁷

Throughout the uprising itself, the BFM could offer its supporters very little substantive information, but an absence of information did not prevent them from calling for donations. Immediately following a report of “bitter feeling against all foreigners and mission work” in Canton, the BFM documented the case of a church in New Jersey raising money to fund a school in China in an article titled “A Lesson in Heroism.” From July until

¹²⁶ Arthur J. Brown, “The Chinese as a People,” *Assembly Herald* 2, no. 8 (February 1900): 405-07, quotes on 406 and 407; Frank F. Ellinwood, “The Canton Mission,” *Assembly Herald* 2, no. 8 (February 1900): 407-10.

¹²⁷ “Some of the Darker Shadows,” *Assembly Herald* 2, no. 10 (April 1900): 523; Esherick, *The Origins of the Boxer Uprising*, 269-70.

September, the absence of word from China proved most discouraging. The *Assembly Herald* pointed out that repeated telegrams sent to the missionaries in Peking and Paoting-Fu had received no reply. They reprinted rumors and at the same time discounted them as unreliable because the sources were Chinese. Without specific information to use for fundraising, the BFM prepared its readers for a “call for money, not only to rebuild the ruined stations, but to restore the work which had to be abandoned on account of the cuts of recent years.”¹²⁸ To emphasize the need for contributions, they printed photographs of a mission station that had been confirmed as destroyed. More than anything, the *Assembly Herald* emphasized all the good work that Presbyterians were doing in China.

Once the BFM had some definite information about the deaths of its missionaries and destruction of mission stations, it immediately sought funds. Within weeks, the BFM established the China Relief Fund. It received around five thousand dollars during the month of September.¹²⁹ A more organized effort came out of the General Assembly the following May when the BFM launched a “‘Martyr Memorial Fund’ to be permanently invested while its annual interest shall go to the support of three mission families at Paotingfu.”¹³⁰ A “China Re-establishment” fund was also started. Together, the three funds totaled close to thirty-thousand dollars before the signing of the Boxer Protocol.¹³¹

On September 21, 1900, representatives of eight foreign mission boards met at the Presbyterian Building on Fifth Avenue in New York City to coordinate strategies following the Boxer Rebellion. The meeting followed the invasion of Peking by the Eight-Nation Alliance, which liberated the foreigners who had sought refuge among the diplomatic

¹²⁸ Arthur J. Brown, “The China Situation,” *Assembly Herald* 3, no. 2 (August 1900): 712.

¹²⁹ “Aid for Chinese Christians,” *New York Times*, October 3, 1900, 7.

¹³⁰ “A ‘Martyr Memorial Fund,’” *Assembly Herald* 4, no. 4 (April 1901): 147.

¹³¹ Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., *Annual Report* (New York, 1901), 341.

legations in the capital. At that point in time, the mission boards knew most of the basic facts. In late August and early September, the Presbyterian board received confirmation of the murder of eight missionaries in Paoting-fu. The American Board, Christian and Missionary Alliance, and China Inland Mission, in addition to numerous exclusively European boards, also counted missionaries among the dead.

The representatives made three defiant decisions in New York City that day. Two policies related particularly to China and one to the home base. In China, they concluded that, far from discouraging mission work, “the present disturbances would open a wider field of labor, under more hopeful conditions.” That they also concluded “there should be nothing like an exodus of the missionaries from China” logically followed from their interpretation of the circumstances. On the home front, they decided on “an aggressive policy” to build missionary interest employing “the story of the martyrdoms in the persecution and the necessity for relief.”¹³²

That the uprising would bring about “more hopeful conditions” points to the close, but complicated, connection between foreign missions and political imperialism. Optimism would not have been possible without the military intervention by the Eight-Nation Alliance and the assumption of their continued presence. The boards had no desire to make that connection more explicit than necessary, though, and decided at the same meeting to limit their claims of indemnity to the “actual value of property destroyed.”¹³³ Given the military occupation of Peking and the close relationship between the mission boards and federal officials, it would not have required great effort to force more extensive compensation,

¹³² “A Statement of Mission Policy in China,” *Assembly Herald* 3, no. 5 (November 1900): 863.

¹³³ *Ibid.*

especially for the dead missionaries, but it was in the missionaries' interest to disassociate themselves as much as possible from political power.

While the BFM's response to the Boxer Uprising matched a long history of using a developing tragedy to encourage giving, it also differed in several essential respects. The call was not for the alleviation of suffering, but for the rebuilding as soon as possible the BFM's own facilities. At the height of the conflict, as the Boxers were entering Beijing, the BFM dispatched seventeen new missionaries to China, including to Beijing and Shantung.¹³⁴ As *The Churchman* noted in reference to a letter written by Robert Speer, "The solution lies not in less Christianity for China, but in more."¹³⁵ The fact that those facilities were not incidental victims of attack, but direct targets of widespread anti-missionary sentiment only invigorated the fundraising campaign. Also, the BFM did not limit its appeal to returning the mission stations to their former state, but sought to expand their presence. The BFM appeared to be arguing that benevolence was not something that could be rejected by a society. As long as Americans provided financial support, the missions would stay.

The BFM and other outlets, particularly Fleming H. Revell Co., memorialized the dead missionaries many times over. Fleming H. Revell was born in Chicago in 1849. His sister Emma married the famous evangelist Dwight Moody. Moody gave Revell the editorship of one of his publications in 1869 and a year later, Revell opened his own publishing house. Moody allowed Revell to be the exclusive publisher of his sermons and the publishing house quickly became a leader among religious publishing houses. In the five years after the Boxer Uprising, Revell published countless pamphlets as well as Robert Speer's *The Situation in China* (1900), W.A.P. Martin's *The Siege in Peking* (1900), Arthur

¹³⁴ "Religious News and Views," *New York Times*, June 16, 1900, 10.

¹³⁵ "Missionaries in China," *New York Times*, August 26, 1900, 11.

Smith's *China in Convulsion* (1901), Isaac C. Ketler's *The Tragedy of Paotingfu* (1902), Ada H. Mateer's *Siege Days* (1903), Robert Coventry Forsyth's *The China Martyrs of 1900* (1904), and a new edition of W.A.P. Martin's *A Cycle of Cathay* (1900). The days when a single memorial book served to honor the dead had long passed.

Whether implicitly or explicitly, the Revell books sought to encourage giving to foreign missions in China. Arthur Smith's two-volume *China in Convulsion* received the most praise as an explanation of the origins of the uprising. Smith, an American Board missionary in China, emphasized the fanaticism and delusion of the Boxers. The accuracy of Smith's account is less relevant here. Of more interest is the reception of the book. Reviewers found it to be the most exhaustive and authoritative explanation of the uprising and very well-written. The *Missionary Herald* commended the book to its readers, praising it for accuracy, thoroughness, and "the illustrations ... [which] add to the vividness of the narrative."¹³⁶ *The Literary World* described it as "a true historian's narrative, spirited and graphic, free, however, from sensationalism, impartial, and instruction."¹³⁷ Nearly all reviewers referred to the final chapter of the book, in which Smith summarized the current situation for China. The uprising had demonstrated "a 'dauntless mendacity,' a barbaric cruelty, and a colossal price, unexampled in modern history." China needed to be "essentially changed," not just "regenerated by her contact with Western Civilization." Rather, the goal needed to be the Christianization of China. After his exhaustive analysis, Brown thus concluded that greater support for missions would prevent another uprising.¹³⁸

Unlike *China in Convulsion*, Ada Mateer's *Siege Days* asserted the goal of raising money for missions in China directly and at the outset. In her preface, she reprinted an unsigned

¹³⁶ "China in Convulsion," *Missionary Herald* 98, no. 1 (January 1902): 16.

¹³⁷ "China in Convulsion," *The Literary World* 33, no. 2 (February 1, 1902): 22.

¹³⁸ Arthur Smith, *China in Convulsion*, 2 vols. (New York: Revell, 1901), quotes on 734-35.

letter that encouraged everyone who experienced the siege to “do something to help the Home Societies to raise funds to carry on the work so nearly destroyed.” Mateer consciously wrote to a female audience, claiming a woman’s perspective was lacking in other work. In her gendered understanding of female interest, she therefore wrote “more of feeling than of events.” Like nearly all of Revell’s publications, Mateer’s book included numerous photographs and drawings.¹³⁹

Conclusion: Heroes Who Helped Sell Foreign Missions

The construction of missionary heroes and heroines in the 1890s pointed to several developments in the financial landscape of foreign missions. First, as noted by Bishop William Ninde in *The Picket Line of Missions*, philanthropies were in competition with commercial culture. To succeed in that competition, missions needed to distribute a product that interested consumers. *The Christian Herald* succeeded in that endeavor as much as anyone by building a plot around the Armenian massacres complete with heroes, victims, and villains. Similarly, Revell built a narrative of the Boxer Uprising through its numerous publications of the event.

The missionary heroes also moved the fundraising model away from one based on direct personal relations. While numerous mission boards continued to encourage churches to adopt a particular missionary or mission station, maintaining a figurehead served its own purpose. It attracted a more national following and allowed the mission board to control its messaging more easily. In order to grow missions more rapidly, mission board leaders decided they needed to significantly increase their funding, which was facilitated by the popularity of particular missionaries.

¹³⁹ Ada H. Mateer, *Siege Days: Personal Experiences of American Women and Children During the Peking Siege* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1903), 7, 17.

The ability to control messaging was especially important at the end of the nineteenth century, with the rise of Progressive Era values. By raising the status of particular missionaries, the mission boards could emphasize the efficiency and practical utility of the boards' work. American society had identified these values as masculine and the missionary stories also underlined the manliness of missions.

Chapter 3: “Money itself can never be evil”: James Barton and the Decline of Grassroots Missionary Fundraising

Myron Dudley did not write to James Barton on March 23, 1905, to offer congratulations. Days earlier, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM or American Board) had announced a donation of \$100,000 from John D. Rockefeller, Sr. Dudley and Barton were colleagues in the Congregational Church (Dudley as a minister in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, and Barton as foreign secretary of the ABCFM), but Dudley had no interest in being collegial. He told Barton, “I have been watching for the protests that have begun to pour into your Rooms! May the flood grow to a deluge! May it overwhelm you, until you return to that man his unrighteous gains!”¹

As the *Christian Register* noted, the controversy was rather peculiar in that this was far from Rockefeller’s largest donation. Rockefeller had already donated \$100,000 or more to at least thirteen organizations and he had already given the University of Chicago more than one hundred times that amount.² So why did this particular donation raise so many hackles? Was the size of the gift really what was at issue? And what did it signify about mission movement fundraising?

The “tainted money” controversy, as it came to be known, spurred Rockefeller toward one of the major developments in philanthropic giving in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the formation of foundations. The controversy made it clear to Rockefeller that he needed to retain more control over his philanthropy.³ In light of the

¹ Myron S. Dudley to James L. Barton, 23 March 1905, American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions Archives, 1810-1961 (ABC 41, box 1, folder 3) Houghton Library, Harvard University (hereafter ABCFM Archives).

² *Christian Register*, April 13, 1905, p. 394.

³ Benjamin Soskis, "The Problem of Charity in Industrial America, 1873-1915" (PhD diss., Columbia University, 2010), 320-24.

controversy and a variety of additional factors, he and other wealthy industrialists, like Andrew Carnegie and Russell Sage (through his widow, Margaret, since Russell was too tightfisted to enter philanthropy), established foundations with open-ended mission statements. They believed narrowly defined goals limited the efficacy of other philanthropies.

Around the same time, another type of nonprofit was emerging. These organizations relied on small contributions from a wide cross-section of the American public and, often, various forms of assistance from the state. Examples included the campaign to fight tuberculosis and the American Red Cross's World War I drives.⁴ This development has been labeled "mass philanthropy" or the "people's philanthropy." Historian Olivier Zunz locates the origins of mass philanthropy in the early twentieth century, but associates its early history primarily with World War I. Zunz claims mass philanthropy created a "culture of giving" that has "given Americans of diverse conditions a stronger voice in defining the common good."⁵

⁴ Taking an idea from a Danish fundraising campaign, Red Cross Secretary Emily Perkins Bissell sold 50,000 postage envelope seals around Christmastime in 1907 in Wilmington, Delaware. The campaign was so successful, she had to quickly produce 350,000 more stamps that season and the campaign spread nationwide the following year. Scott M. Cutlip, *Fund Raising in the United States: Its Role in America's Philanthropy* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1965), 54-57.

The most famous national campaign of the early twentieth century was undoubtedly the American Red Cross campaign of 1917, in which the organization raised the extraordinary sum of \$100 million in one week. *Ibid.*, ch. 4.

⁵ "Mass philanthropy" is the term used by Olivier Zunz and "people's philanthropy" by Scott Cutlip. Olivier Zunz, *Philanthropy in America: A History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012), ch. 1-3, quotes on xi and 44; Cutlip, *Fund Raising in the United States*, ch. 1-4. See also Peter Dobkin Hall, "A Historical Overview of Philanthropy, Voluntary Associations, and Nonprofit Organizations in the United States, 1600-2000," in *The Nonprofit Sector: A Research Handbook*, ed. Walter W. Powell and Richard Steinberg (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006), 56-60. On foundations, see Helmut K. Anheier and David C. Hammack, eds., *American Foundations: Roles and Contributions* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2010); Robert F. Arnove, ed. *Philanthropy and Cultural Imperialism: The Foundations at Home and Abroad* (Boston: G.K. Hall, 1980); Inderjeet Parmar, *Foundations of the American Century: The Ford, Carnegie, and Rockefeller Foundations in the Rise of American Power* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012). On the growth of philanthropy and humanitarianism during and following World War I, see Julia Irwin, *Making the World Safe: The American Red Cross and a Nation's Humanitarian Awakening* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); William I. Hitchcock, "World War I and the Humanitarian Impulse," *The Tocqueville Review / La revue Tocqueville* 35, no. 2 (2014); Bruno Cabanes, *The Great War and the Origins of Humanitarianism, 1918-1924* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,

Historians have overstated the novelty of the development of mass philanthropy. Zunz claims the “culture of giving” arose in the early twentieth century due to the growth of wage labor, mass media, and professional fundraisers.⁶ He plays down the significance of earlier giving by identifying it as entirely distinct, due to the fact that much of it was church-based and therefore fragmented according to denomination. While the outlets may have been denominational, this account underappreciates the role of religious giving in American history. Religious organizations received the majority of all donations during this period and Protestant denominations did not, at least in the abstract, understand themselves to be in competition with each other or their work to be fragmented. World War I undoubtedly encouraged Americans to give, but the “culture of giving” long preceded the war. Myron Dudley and others protested Rockefeller’s “tainted money” precisely because they perceived it as a violation of the idea that the church, collectively, would support foreign missions. They rued Rockefeller’s intrusion into the preexisting “culture of giving” that had (imperfectly) funded the ABCFM for many years.

The work of James Barton in the first decade of the twentieth century offers a counter-narrative to the democratization of American philanthropy. The Vermont-born, former missionary to the Ottoman Empire served as foreign secretary of the American Board for more than thirty years, from 1894 to 1927. In that capacity, at the oldest foreign mission board in the United States during the height of popularity for foreign missions, Barton had a prominent role in shaping American global philanthropy.

Two episodes during Barton’s tenure as foreign secretary pointed to the ways foreign missions financing was becoming less democratic and more closely tied to industrial

2014); cf. Michael N. Barnett, *Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011).

⁶ Zunz, *Philanthropy in America*, ch. 2.

capitalism. The first was the “tainted money” controversy. Barton had orchestrated the donation and needed to defend his actions when the controversy erupted. Second was the World Missionary Conference (WMC) in Edinburgh in 1910. Other interdenominational conferences had preceded it, but the WMC represented a culmination of the mission movement. The conference was not at all representative of world Christianity (the twelve hundred representatives were all Protestant and largely male Anglophones), but no missionary conference before or since attracted such widespread attention in the popular press. Eighty reporters covered the event. Numerous dignitaries either attended or expressed their condolences for missing it. The conference opened with a message from King George V, who had ascended the throne only weeks earlier, and former American President Theodore Roosevelt sent a letter of support. William Jennings Bryan and Seth Low, both prominent American political leaders, delivered addresses.⁷

Each of the eight commissions at the WMC produced a book-length report on a particular topic with a goal of sharing best practices. Barton chaired Commission VI on the home base of missions, which asked how to attract interest in and support for missions among Protestants in North America and Europe. The epistolary debates that preceded the conference reflected concerns about grassroots methods of fundraising. In particular, the commission questioned whether women’s societies, which had been highly successful at raising money, presented potential problems for male-dominated denominational boards. As chair, Barton received and responded to the commission’s correspondence and largely shaped the final report.

⁷ Brian Stanley, *The World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh 1910* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2009), 12; George Robson, "History of the Conference," in *The History and Records of the Conference, Together with Addresses Delivered at the Evening Meetings* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1910), 18-23.

James Barton alone did not cause the American Board, let alone all of foreign missions, to become less democratic. He did contribute to the trend, though, which refocused financing efforts on wealthy donors who gave directly to mission boards rather than through church collections. As a result of this changing funding model, pastors and women's societies bore less of the burden for raising money and, as in the case of Myron Dudley, even became adversaries at times. These divisions would eventually lead the American public to see global philanthropy as ideally located outside of the church and mission movement leaders like Barton to see government-backed philanthropy as superior to any method that relied on grassroots fundraising.

American Board Financing: The Search for Security in Fundraising

Throughout the nineteenth century, foreign missions financing depended primarily on personal connections between one church, missionary society, or individual and one or several missionaries or mission stations abroad. Donors earned money through their various professions, increasingly associated with white-collar jobs, and gave on a regular basis, whether monthly, semiannually, or annually. Even the fact that mission boards frequently had to beg for more money at the end of the fiscal year pointed to the cyclical nature of giving.

The exceptions to the regular donation cycle clarify how giving changed at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century. Rockefeller's gift of \$100,000 in 1905 was neither the largest nor the most influential donation to the American Board. Anson Phelps had left \$100,000 of his mining and commercial wealth to the Board when he died in 1853. He had stipulated the money be distributed years after his death in ten equal parts, perhaps indicating a lack of confidence in the Board's ability to manage such a sum of money. Samuel W. Swett, who had made a fortune in trans-Pacific trade and banking, had

left over half a million dollars in 1884. By far the largest gift, however, had come unexpectedly from Asa Otis of New London, Connecticut, who had bequeathed a million dollars to the Board, almost his entire estate, when he died in 1879. The gift was twice the size of the annual budget and would not be equaled until 1911.

Asa Otis was born in Colchester, Connecticut, in 1786. His prosperity grew when he moved to Richmond, Virginia, as a young adult. He partnered with his cousin, Joseph Otis, and two other men to open Otis, Dunlop & Co., a commission company, based in Richmond and New York. In 1818, the company acquired a prominent auction house in Richmond. It sold a wide variety of imported and domestic goods, including sugar, coffee, cotton, alcohol, and dry goods. The company relied deeply on the slave economy in the Americas and Otis achieved his great wealth largely as a result of slavery. By 1830, Otis, Dunlop & Co. owned eight slaves.⁸ Asa Otis returned to Connecticut in the 1830s, but his sympathies with the South remained. He joined residents of New London in denouncing “some imported travelling incendiaries” (presumably abolitionist or antislavery literature) and “to assure [the South] that this city is decidedly hostile to the movements of the abolition faction.”⁹ Until the Civil War, Otis maintained investments in Richmond valued at \$40,000. With the start of the war, the Confederacy sequestered Otis’s investments, since it deemed him “an alien enemy.”¹⁰ Though most Congregationalists strongly opposed slavery, especially in their postbellum memory, no one raised any objection to the Otis gift in 1879.

⁸ It is unclear how the slaves were employed and whether the auction house also sold slaves. “New Advertisements,” *Richmond Enquirer*, May 13, 1831; Henry A. Baker, *History of Montville, Connecticut, Formerly the North Parish of New London, From 1640 to 1896* (Hartford, CT: Case, Lockwood & Brainard Co., 1896), 414-15; Marianne Patricia Buroff Sheldon, “Richmond, Virginia: The Town and Henrico County to 1820” (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 1975), 298; Carter Godwin Woodson, *Free Negro Owners of Slaves in the United States in 1830, Together with Absentee Ownership of Slaves in the United States in 1830* (Washington, DC: Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, 1924), 73.

⁹ “Public Meeting,” *The New-London Gazette, and General Advertiser*, Sept. 16, 1835.

¹⁰ “To Be Sequestered,” *Richmond Enquirer*, October 23, 1861.

The announcement of the Otis gift, as well as its management differed substantially from how the organization received gifts in the early twentieth century. In keeping with the ideal of the discreet donor who quietly distributed wealth, Otis had not alerted the Board of the prospective gift and in its official acknowledgement of the gift, the Board did not mention Otis's name. The intent of the discreet donor tradition was not necessarily to make all gifts anonymous—indeed, a brief biography of Otis appeared immediately after the announcement—but rather to distance the donor from the gift.¹¹

Like the Phelps and Swett bequests, the American Board chose to use the money from the Otis bequest almost immediately. With no stipulations from Otis himself as to how to spend the money, the Board divided it into thirds, equally split among education, evangelism, and new missions. It took only a few months for the Board to spend \$160,000 and within four years, all the money for education and evangelism was gone. New missions required more planning, thus delaying the complete liquidation of the account until 1897. Given that the Board intended to spend the money so quickly, it is perhaps not surprising that they used the announcement of the gift as a call for “rich and the poor alike” to increase their own giving.¹² When the funds for education and evangelism dried up, the Board claimed the best manner of replacing that money was to encourage pastors to do more to promote giving, “reaching the entire membership of the church, gathering up the pennies as well as the dollars.” Pastors, they argued, were the “final and only hope.”¹³

When the American Board received Asa Otis's gift in 1879, it was the Board's only trust fund. Two permanent funds, which had been established decades earlier, also provided a small amount of support. The Swett legacy became the second trust fund in 1884, but since

¹¹ On the decline of the discreet donor tradition, see Soskis, "Problem of Charity," ch. 5.

¹² “A Munificent Bequest,” *Missionary Herald*, 75, no. 5 (May 1879): 167.

¹³ ABCFM, *Annual Report* (Boston, 1882), lviii.

the Board chose to liquidate both accounts in short order, neither lasted into twentieth century. It is unclear why the Board chose to spend the money so quickly. Several legal explanations present themselves. The ability of heirs to challenge the charitable designation of an estate varied from state to state and sometimes favored the heir, especially if the validity or clarity of the will was in doubt.¹⁴ Spending the money immediately might have frustrated these types of legal disputes. However, once the charity received the actual money, those issues had already been settled, so they are unlikely to offer much explanation. The complicated laws pertaining to perpetual trusts—which prevented testators from leaving money for vague purposes in the distant future—also varied from one state to another, but charities generally had much more leeway in holding trusts in perpetuity.¹⁵ The limits on perpetual trusts, even if they likely did not apply to the Otis and Swett bequests, may have still encouraged the Board to distribute the money immediately. The American Board began accepting large numbers of perpetual trusts in the 1890s, a policy which correlated with a series of legal decisions that overturned the laws against perpetuities. The most likely explanation for the liquidation of the funds, though, related less to the law than to the Board's leaders' views of financing missions. As indicated by the statements that accompanied the Otis bequest announcement, the Board immediately sought additional giving to accompany the Otis bequest. It saw large gifts as an opportunity to encourage

¹⁴ Zunz, *Philanthropy in America*, 11-17; Mark D. McGarvie, "Law of Charity," in *Philanthropy in America: A Comprehensive Historical Encyclopedia*, ed. Dwight Burlingame, vol. 2 (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2004), 299-305.

¹⁵ The laws against perpetuities sought to force testators to name specific individuals or purposes for estates. A testator generally had to grant an estate to a living person or the immediate descendent of a living person. The laws attempted to prevent an estate from being left in limbo for extended periods of time. Charities could fall afoul of these laws, though they only rarely did, especially among charities that existed at the time of the will. One of the exceptions was the case of *Jocelyn v. Nott* in Connecticut. When Susan Townbridge left property to the Congregational Church of Connecticut in case anyone wanted to build a church on the property at some point in the future, the Connecticut Supreme Court held the will invalid since Townbridge set no time limit on the construction of the church. *Jocelyn v. Nott*, 44 Conn. 55 (1876).

further giving. Expanding work placed an increased burden on the Board's constituency to maintain the new endeavors. The Board hoped that pressure would produce increased giving.

This strategy of rapidly liquidating funds began to change in the 1890s. In 1898, the Board established a "Conditional Gifts Fund." Conditional gifts were a form of charitable gift annuities. A donor gave a principal amount to be held by the American Board with the stipulation that a beneficiary (which could be either the donor or someone else) would receive annual or semi-annual payments of between 4 and 6 percent, depending upon the age of the beneficiary.¹⁶ The American Board adopted the charitable gift annuity program at a time when such gifts were becoming extremely popular among religious organizations thanks to the popularization of actuarial science.¹⁷

¹⁶ To be clear, the American Board's "conditional gifts" were not conditional in the sense of being limited to a particular purpose (a circumstance they called "special gifts"). The condition referred to was the requirement that the Board make annuity payments on the gift. Once the beneficiary died, the principal amount went into the Board's regular treasury.

¹⁷ The Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions's version, called "Special Gift Agreements," offered semi-annual payments to the donor (and, unlike the American Board, only the donor) at rates of four to seven percent. The board advertised the annuity as a safe and convenient way to offer support. It guaranteed the investment against "the entire assets of the Board, and by high-class bonds in which the money is invested." Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., "Income @ 4% to 7% and Investment in Foreign Missions," n.d., United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. Commission on Ecumenical Mission and Relations Records, RG 81, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

One example of the popularization of actuarial science was Miles Menander Dawson's *Practical Lessons in Actuarial Science: An Elementary Text-Book* (New York, 1898), which, as the name suggests, self-consciously sought to explain the subject to a broader public. Dawson noted that he was providing no new information. Rather the book's "chief virtue lies in its simplicity" (4). Much of the book consisted of various mortality tables.

It is also interesting to note that religion, at least the rhetoric of religion or the quest to understand the universal, had something to offer statisticians. Theodore Porter has described the vision of early British statisticians (especially Karl Pearson) as "utopian" and noted their use of words like "gospel," arguing against a myopic conception of modernization, or the rise of expertise, as rationalization or bureaucratization. Pearson, in particular, connected his hopes for statistics with his criticism of Martin Luther's dogmatism and saw in it the possibility of "a union of reason and personal renunciation," according to Porter. Porter describes this worldview as "statistical faith." Theodore M. Porter, "Statistical Utopianism in an Age of Aristocratic Efficiency," in "Science and Civil Society," *Osiris* 2nd series, vol. 17 (2002): 210-11, 224-27; ———, *Karl Pearson: The Scientific Life in a Statistical Age* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004), ch. 1 and 5.

To say that actuarial science became popularized is not to claim that it bore the modern sophistication that arrived in the mid-twentieth century. As noted above, mission boards made annuity payments solely based on the beneficiary's age, disregarding all other factors that would influence that person's expected lifespan. The essential intellectual change, though, was not in the complexity of the actuarial tables, but in the concept of

Conditional gifts had numerous advantages. First and foremost, they prevented lawsuits with heirs who disputed the terms of wills. Since the donor gifted the money in his or her lifetime, there could be no doubt as to the donor's intent. The regularity of conflicts with heirs forced the Prudential Committee, which oversaw day-to-day operations of the Board, to establish an entire subcommittee to determine the Board's responses. Eliminating such lawsuits saved both time and money. Conditional gifts also offered more flexibility for both donors and fundraisers. The agreement could close anytime during the donor's lifetime, so the Board could take advantage of particular moments of heightened interest in missions instead of having to wait until end of the donor's life.¹⁸ Finally, using actuarial statistics, the American Board could plan long-term budgets, since they controlled the donation's principal.

For all of these reasons, the American Board was thrilled with this new source of fundraising and pushed it hard to constituents. "There can be no better guarantee of security than this would be," they advertised.¹⁹ Within five years, officials of the Board were noting that conditional gifts were growing rapidly while bequests were declining.²⁰ The fund grew at an annual rate of between 5 and 10 percent fairly consistently throughout the first decades of

normality, which arose in the nineteenth century as a result of developments in statistics. Popular acceptance of limited variation outside a range of normality allowed for new arguments in favor of giving (as well as ostracism of those people who were deemed "abnormal"). For a history of the development of actuarial science in the 1930s and 1940s, see John E. Murray, *Origins of American Health Insurance: A History of Industrial Sickness Funds* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), 101-02 and ch. 10; on the history of normality, see Ian Hacking, *The Taming of Chance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), esp. ch. 19-21.

Jonathan Levy has written about the ways corporations, fraternal societies, and individuals "began to hedge the perils of life under capitalism by using financial instruments born of capitalism itself." The Conditional Gifts Fund grew out of these historical developments. See esp. Jonathan Levy, *Freaks of Fortune: The Emerging World of Capitalism and Risk in America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), quote on 2, see also ch. 3, 6.

¹⁸ The conditional gift contract did not refer to situations in which the donor could retract the gift and, while it seems likely the situation arose at some point, the lack of evidence in the archival record suggests such occurrences were extremely rare.

¹⁹ ABCFM, *Annual Report* (Boston, 1901), 21.

²⁰ Report of the Finance Committee, 21 December 1903, ABC 81.1, vol. 9, folder 3, ABCFM Archives.

the twentieth century, nearly tripling in value between 1902 and 1920 (figure 3.1). Between 1910 and 1920, income from such annuities nearly doubled and Cornelius Patton described them as “booming.”²¹ Although the Board accepted conditional gifts of any size, the model centered on donors granting substantial sums of money. The Board then invested these funds, mostly in bonds, thus tying the success of the program to the health of the overall economy. This approach differed greatly from that employed during the 1880s, when the Board held minimal assets and spent money as it came in.

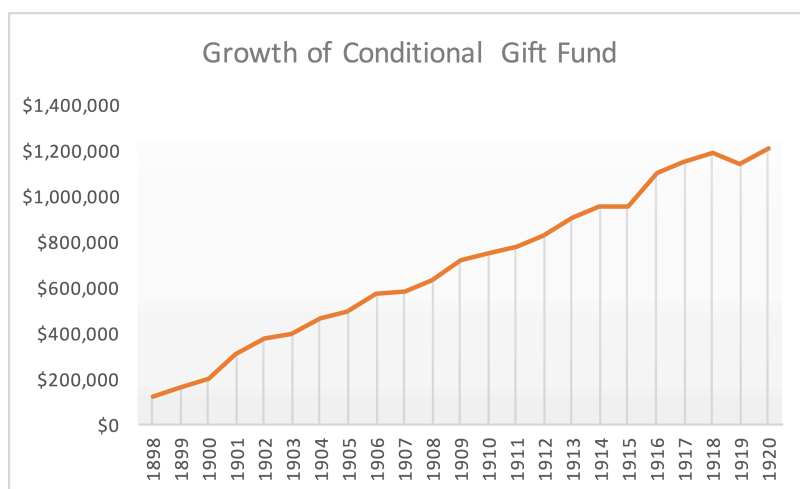


Figure 3.1: American Board Conditional Gift Fund, 1898-1920. Officials heavily promoted the fund as an alternative to legacy giving. The fund grew steadily and rapidly for two decades.

Source: American Board annual reports, 1898-1920

The annuity program seemed dangerously close to banking. For a given investment, the Board offered a set rate of return. This overlap appeared to concern the Board, which worried that a financial corporation could have claimed the Board’s charter did not allow it to offer annuities. As a result, the Board only used the word annuity as a comparative explanation for the conditional gifts, not to describe the gifts themselves. Splitting hairs, Cornelius Patton described them as “gifts made under certain conditions.”²²

²¹ Cornelius Patton to Brewer Eddy, 18 February 1916, ABC 4.1, vol. 24, ABCFM Archives.

²² Cornelius Patton to M. L. Burton, 5 March 1915, ABC 4.1, vol. 22, ABCFM Archives.

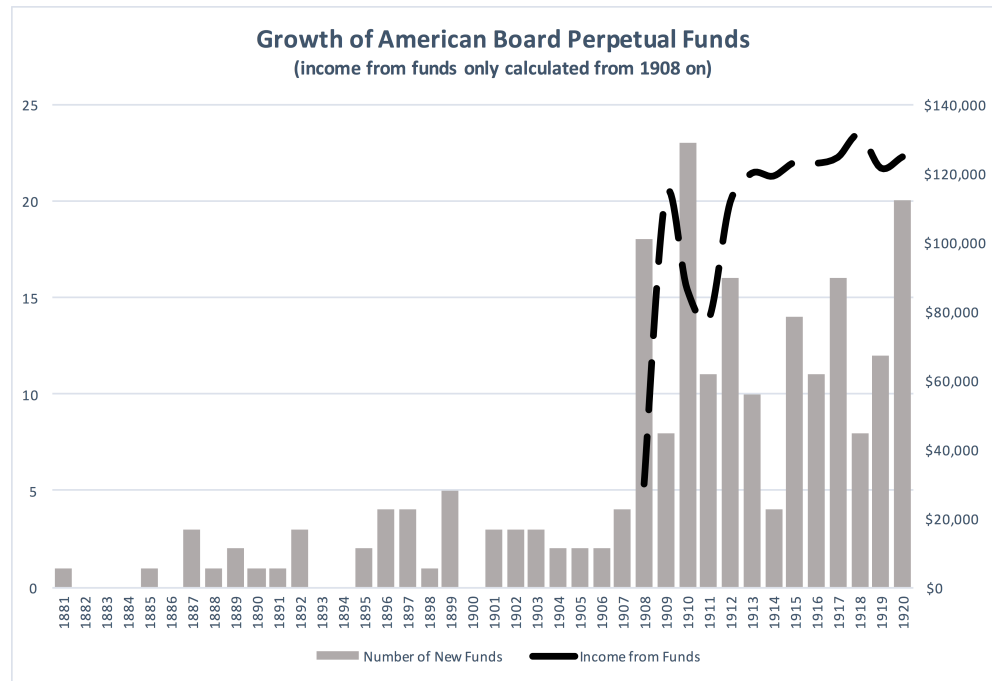


Figure 3.2: American Board Perpetual Funds, 1881-1920. Following the financial crises of the 1890s, the American Board started to rapidly increase the number of perpetual trusts, which provided greater stability.²³

Source: American Board annual reports, 1881-1920

The other major change in American Board financing was the rapid addition of new trust funds beginning in the early 1900s (figure 3.2). Rather than liquidating large bequests as occurred with the Otis and Swett gifts, these funds became endowments, sometimes for specific work and other times for the general work of the Board. The number of new funds created between 1881 and about 1907 was typically less than two and never exceeded five while between 1908 and 1920 the average rose to almost twelve. As a result of this expansion, investments doubled between 1910 and 1920, from approximately \$3 million to \$6 million. All of this occurred during a period when per capita giving remained unchanged.

These changes in financing occurred gradually over many decades. One indication of the changing strategy occurred in late 1903. The Prudential Committee asked its Finance

²³ Note that due to changes in the format of the treasurer's reports sometimes make it difficult to know exactly when a permanent fund was established. Nevertheless, the trend is clear and certain.

Subcommittee whether it could use the surplus of the Conditional Gift Fund to pay for current work. Certain members of the Prudential Committee hoped to apply the surplus, valued at \$200,000, to cover deficits or other short-term needs. The subcommittee, consisting of four businessmen from the Boston area, strongly warned against that approach. They viewed the surplus as “an essential safeguard ... quite as essential for the credit of the institution as capital.” They noted that the Board could safely expend income from the fund, a course the Board soon chose to follow, as long as they maintained the surplus. This single report did not cause the shift in American Board financing, but it influenced that process.²⁴

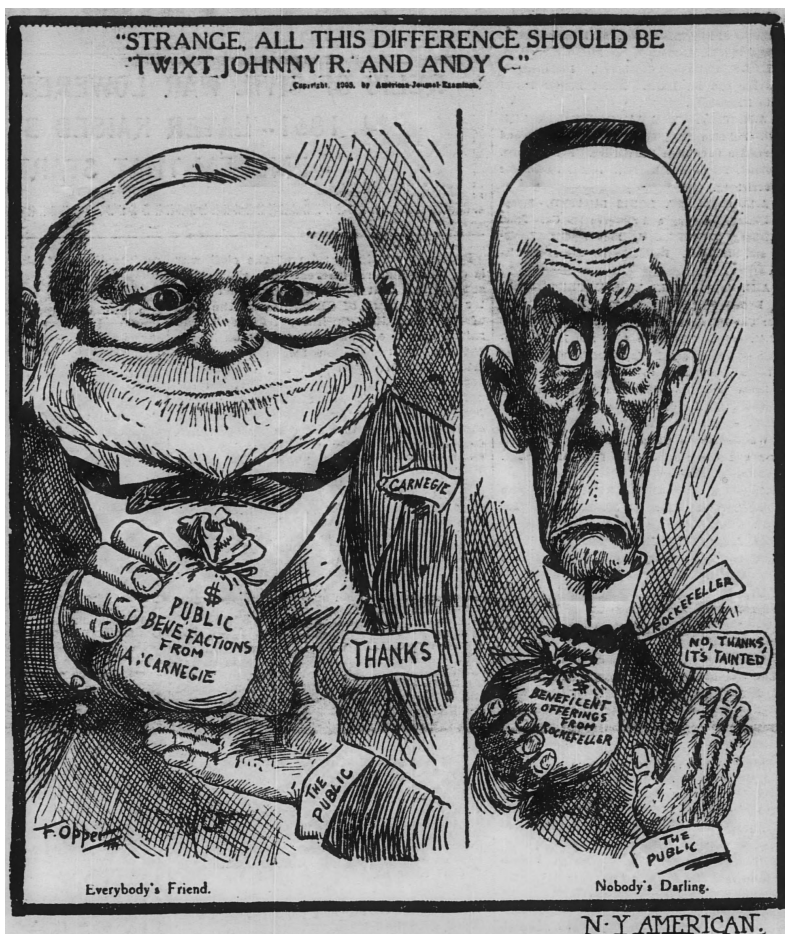


Figure 3.3: F. Opper, “Strange, All this Difference Should be Twixt Johnny R. and Andy C.” When John D. Rockefeller’s donation of \$100,000 to the American Board erupted into the “Tainted Money” controversy, it surprised many middle-class and wealthy Americans. They could not understand what distinguished that gift from others. Note that the American Board was indistinguishable from “the public” in Opper’s cartoon.

Source: Evening Star (Washington, DC) (May 7, 1905)

²⁴ Report of the Finance Committee, 21 December 1903, ABC 81.1, vol. 9, ABCFM Archives.

Protestants or Plutocrats: The Choice between “Tainted Money” and Mass

Philanthropy

The controversy over Rockefeller’s donation in 1905 and James Barton’s responses to it epitomized the changing views of mission movement fundraising within the American Board. While the Prudential Committee never seriously considered returning the money, the episode pointed to the challenges of fundraising in the early twentieth century. The conflict arose initially from within the American Board’s own Congregational Church, with ministers forming the core group of protesters. Washington Gladden was the most well-known of the so-called “protestants.” Gladden, a pastor from Columbus, Ohio, advocated for social Christianity in the late nineteenth century and was coincidentally the moderator of the National Council of Congregational Churches in 1905.²⁵ Gladden called the money “flagitiously” acquired and demanded it be returned.²⁶ The protestants labeled the gift “tainted money,” referencing an 1895 article Gladden had published in the *New Outlook*. Tainted money, Gladden had claimed at the time, was “corroded with a rust which eats the flesh like fire. Every man who covets such gains passes under [its] curse.”²⁷ The moniker stuck. Even Rockefeller supporters identified the episode as the “tainted money controversy.” Frederick T. Gates, the Baptist clergyman who managed Rockefeller’s

²⁵ Heath Carter has recently presented a convincing challenge to the classic interpretations of the origins of social Christianity. The historiography, Carter shows, has overemphasized the importance of figures like Gladden and Walter Rauschenbusch. Instead, social Christianity was the creation of working people. That does not negate that Gladden served as a symbol of the movement. Heath W. Carter, *Union Made: Working People and the Rise of Social Christianity in Chicago* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).

²⁶ Flagitious, meaning criminal, was already an archaism in 1905. The employment of outdated language reflected, on a small scale, Gladden’s struggles with modernity. On the one hand, he sought a radical reconstruction of society while at the same time he rooted that change in a highly orthodox interpretation of Christianity. Susan Curtis, *A Consuming Faith: The Social Gospel and Modern American Culture* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), 36-48.

²⁷ Gladden, “Tainted Money,” *New Outlook* 52 (Nov. 30, 1895): 886.

philanthropic activities, later called the phrase “a flash of genius” on the part of his opponents.²⁸

At the time of the “tainted money” controversy, disdain for Rockefeller was widespread. Between 1902 and 1904, Ida Tarbell had published a series of articles in *McClure's Magazine* that attacked both the business practices of Standard Oil and the individual proclivities of John D. Rockefeller, Sr. Tarbell had grown up amid the oil boom in Pennsylvania and had developed a hatred for Standard Oil early in life. As a young journalist, she encountered Henry Demarest Lloyd's *Wealth Against Commonwealth* (1894), which criticized the monopolistic business practices of Standard Oil. She built her reputation as a researcher through two series on Napoleon and Lincoln that helped *McClure's* multiply its circulation tenfold. Her articles on Standard Oil further increased *McClure's* circulation. She focused on the history and practices of Rockefeller and his company—which Tarbell frequently conflated—rather than broader issues like the nature of trusts. She showed how Standard Oil violated common understandings of fair business practices, using collusion, corruption, and intimidation to drive out competition.²⁹ The series achieved widespread popularity and resulted in a two-volume book published in November 1904. In a character study that Tarbell published in *McClure's* the following year, she portrayed Rockefeller as burdened by a profound sense of guilt.³⁰

Despite the popularity of Tarbell's articles on Rockefeller and Standard Oil, the leaders of the American Board were not prepared for so much public vitriol following the Rockefeller gift and they reacted slowly and clumsily.³¹ Barton had spent three years

²⁸ Frederick Taylor Gates, *Chapters in My Life* (New York: Free Press, 1977), 202.

²⁹ Ron Chernow, *Titan: The Life of John D. Rockefeller, Sr* (New York: Random House, 1998), 435-45.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 449-53.

³¹ An early draft of the Prudential Committee's official response to the protestants was perhaps too honest in that regard. Noting the protest, the initial text stated that the gift “was accepted weeks before, and at

soliciting Rockefeller, Gates, and John D. Rockefeller, Jr. for the donation. Rockefeller formally agreed to make a \$100,000 donation on February 11, 1905. Rather than preparing for an outcry, Barton spent the following days boasting of his success to other leaders of the American Board. It would take over a month for the American Board to make the donation public.³² In the intervening period, the Board's main concern was not the ethics of taking Rockefeller's money, but whether the donation would give a false impression that it needed no further donations for the year. Not until March 2nd did Barton even mention the possibility that Rockefeller's unpopularity would cause problems and throughout this period he claimed the criticism would be minor and blow over quickly.³³

The American Board's efforts to control the message surrounding Rockefeller's gift failed utterly. It publicly announced the gift in the April 1905 issue of the *Missionary Herald* and the March 15th issue of *The Congregationalist and Christian World*. Barton and his colleagues consciously chose to publish articles about it—rather than listing it among the other donations—to avoid the appearance that they were ashamed.³⁴ There was no chance of hiding the donation in any case. The *New York Times* and other popular newspapers

once appropriated, without any expectation of such criticism as has been encountered." Editors removed the final clause, inserted "with due deliberation" at the start of the quote, and changed "at once appropriated" to "afterwards appropriated." The edits emphasized greater calculation than the actions of the Board would have suggested. Report of the Special Committee on the Rockefeller Gift, ABC 81.1, vol. 9, folder 5, ABCFM Archives.

³² Gates later described how he "looked with eagerness for the Boston announcement of this gift. . . . I scanned the headlines every morning, but in vain. The days lengthened into weeks." Gates's poor memory or desire for literary flourish clouded his recounting of the announcement, since Barton regularly updated him regarding the announcement plans. Despite the inaccuracy, though, Gates captured the extensive delay. Gates, *Chapters in My Life*, 201.

³³ James Barton to Emily Smith, 2 March 1905, ABC 1.1, v. 253, ABCFM Archives.

³⁴ As a further indication of the poor understanding between the Board and Rockefeller, Gates criticized the announcement as overly concise and insufficiently appreciative. The Board had written the articles precisely to avoid appearing either curt or unthankful. Gates's complaints did not entirely lack merit. Though the article in *The Congregationalist* described the gift as "magnificent," it also used ambiguous language that could have been interpreted as self-praise and at no point explicitly thanked Rockefeller. The front-page article, entitled "Good News for the American Board," closed the brief article by identifying the gift as "a gratifying tribute to the excellent financial administration of our foreign missionary society." "Good News for the American Board," *The Congregationalist and Christian World* 90, no. 11 (March 15, 1905): 349; Gates, *Chapters in My Life*, 201.

published stories on March 15th as well. The Board had sent the same announcement to the *Chicago Advance*, but the controversy erupted so quickly that the *Advance* instead published an article on the protest with quotes from over thirty ministers about the gift. Even in its own publication, the *Missionary Herald*, the Board bungled the message. The *Herald* article mentioned the American Board's "joyful surprise" at the donation. Elsewhere, in a widely-republished Associated Press story, Barton was quoted as stating that the gift was "unsolicited." Both statements were misleading and they infuriated Gates. He demanded Barton set the record straight and "conclusively and authoritatively [show] that [Mr. Rockefeller] made this gift only after urgent solicitation, followed by enlightened and careful investigation by his agents ... and after full written reports had been sent to him by his agents."³⁵ In his memoir, Gates accused the Board of having "sedulously concealed their appeal."³⁶ An unsolicited gift would have given the impression that Rockefeller made the donation in an effort to improve his public image. Barton slowly corrected the situation, eventually publishing his entire correspondence with Gates.

By acknowledging that he had solicited the money, Barton inflamed the protests. He had not just accepted, but *sought* Rockefeller's "tainted money." A solicited gift violated the terms of the discreet donor tradition. Asa Otis's past associations with slavery had not caused conflict because the American Board had had no prior knowledge or even close association with Otis. To solicit money brought a nonprofit organization into collaboration with the donor. The conflict shifted quickly to focus on whether Barton should have sought the money.

³⁵ Frederick T. Gates to James Barton, 31 March 1905, ABC 11.4, box 4, folder 6, ABCFM Archives.

³⁶ Gates, *Chapters in My Life*, 201.

Even amid the uproar and despite the numerous missteps, Barton maintained the controversy was a “tempest in a teapot.” He viewed the protestants’ criticism as little more than personal malice against Rockefeller, originating in their gullibility for the accusations of Ida Tarbell and Henry Demarest Lloyd. While Tarbell commingled the sins of Rockefeller and Standard Oil, James Barton claimed the protestants erred in failing to distinguish the man from his company. Rockefeller’s great wealth derived mostly from his other endeavors, according to Barton, and they had “never been criticised and are not today.” He also claimed the vast majority of correspondents supported acceptance of the donation. He frequently cited a ratio of five or six to one in favor of the donation and once went so far as to say the letters were “almost entirely upon [the] one side.”³⁷ That ratio is impossible to verify, but its accuracy would signify that a great number of letters favoring receipt of the gift never made it to the American Board archive. Though a majority of the surviving records approved of the gift, the ratio appears to have been much closer than Barton suggested, around two or three to one. Barton urged critics of the gift to “respect and honor those who cannot see the question as [they] see it” and for both sides to “seek only to accomplish that which will meet with the widest results in the advancement of the Kingdom of God in this land and in the world.”³⁸ To those who supported the gift, he expressed “sincere gratitude” and praised their “unanswerable logic” and the “masterly way” they understood the situation.³⁹ He added his view that the protestants were “absolutely void of any logical faculty.”⁴⁰

³⁷ [James Barton] to A.N. Hitchcock, 10 April 1905, ABC 1.1, v. 254, ABCFM Archives. (As the final page of the letter is missing, it is unclear whether Barton authored it, however the letterbook included only three authors during this period with Barton composing the vast majority of letters.)

³⁸ James Barton to J. W. Barnett, 6 April 1905, ABC 1.1, v. 254, ABCFM Archives.

³⁹ James Barton to S. G. W. Benjamin, 7 April 1905, and James Barton to George A. Sanders, 7 April 1905, ABC 1.1, v. 258, ABCFM Archives.

⁴⁰ James Barton to Alfred T. Perry, 6 April 1905, ABC 1.1, v. 254, ABCFM Archives.

In more principled terms, Barton defended the decision to keep the donation with numerous arguments. He added justifications over time and used different ones in different situations. His first principle and one the American Board adopted as its primary basis for keeping the money was that it “cannot set [itself] up as an inquisitorial board, exacting from every donor a statement as to how his gift was earned.”⁴¹ Later, Barton added that “the principle will hold just as good in the case of a single dollar as it does in the case of a million dollars.”⁴² Along the same lines, he contended that the Board had always “received money without questioning from those who give” and then referenced the gifts of non-Christians who gave in order to support a local missionary school or hospital.⁴³ Barton’s next argument was based on stewardship. “It seems to us that if anybody has diverted any of the Lord’s money which we read belongs to him, as the silver and the gold are His, and we are able to get any part of the diverted money back into the Lord’s treasury that we are doing Him service by so doing.”⁴⁴ In perhaps the culmination of his reasoning, Barton concluded that “money itself can never be evil” and the evil acts of an individual “can in no way affect the value of the gift if it is used for the Lord’s cause.”⁴⁵

In the end, the pastors who formed the bulk of the protestants agreed that money itself lacked moral value. They acknowledged that the American Board could never investigate the character of each donor. “Tainted money” just happened to be a catchy phrase. Their complaint centered not on the money, but on Rockefeller’s immoral means of acquiring it and the prospect of cooperating with such a despicable individual. They rejected Barton’s *reductio ad absurdum* argument that to question Rockefeller’s morality meant

⁴¹ James Barton to Emily Smith, 2 March 1905, ABC 1.1, v. 253, ABCFM Archives.

⁴² James Barton to A. N. Hitchcock, 6 March 1905, ABC 1.1, v. 253, ABCFM Archives.

⁴³ James Barton to C. C. Creegan, 17 March 1905, ABC 1.1, v. 253, ABCFM Archives.

⁴⁴ James Barton to H. M. Moore, 18 March 1905, ABC 1.1, v. 253, ABCFM Archives.

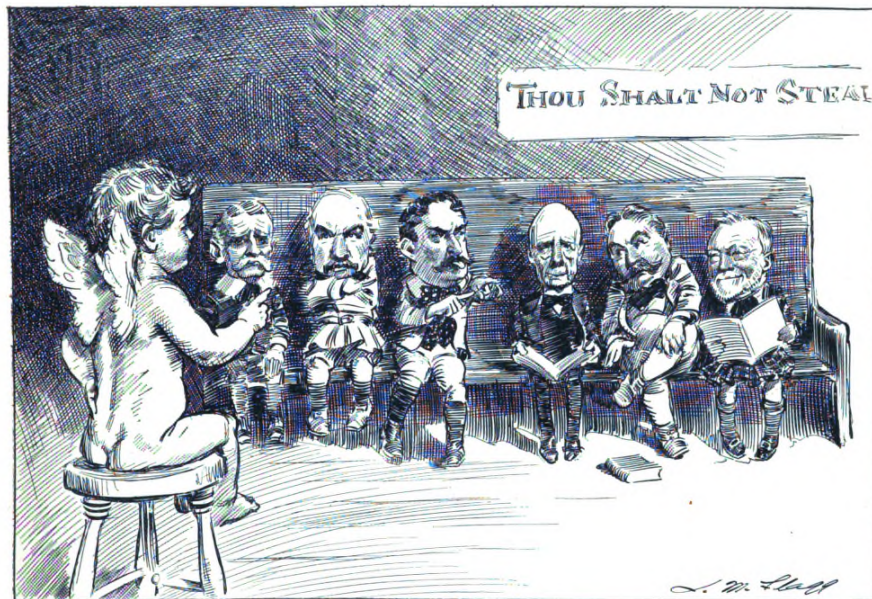
⁴⁵ James Barton to Robert E. Carter, 18 March 1905, ABC 1.1, v. 253, ABCFM Archives.

questioning the morality of every donor. An anonymous essay on the subject identified a “new and increasing ethical sense, ... [which] condemns methods of business which are not the natural outgrowth of the competitive system, but a flagrant and unchristian abuse of that system.” To accept money from Rockefeller “serves in the public mind as an act of approval of the donor and his methods; the solicitation of a gift serves as an act of marked approval.”⁴⁶ Even if the money itself lacked moral value, “tainted money” still contaminated anyone that chose to accept it.

Shortly before the controversy, *Life Magazine* published a cartoon and story entitled “Life’s Sunday-School Class” (figure 3.4) that coincidentally reflected the protestants criticism of Rockefeller and the American Board. The cartoon depicted six robber barons (Rockefeller, Andrew Carnegie, John Warne Gates, Thomas Lawson, Henry Rogers, and J. Pierpont Morgan) in children’s bodies and adult heads sitting on a pew as an angel played “Life.” A sign above the industrialists reading “thou shalt not steal,” served as the theme of the story. “Life” asked the boys, singling out Rockefeller, why stealing was a sin. Rockefeller remained silent while the other boys bickered over who stole what from whom. Finally, Rockefeller responded, “Stealing is a great sin and very naughty. It should not be indulged in by the majority of people.” Upon “Life’s” further questioning, Rockefeller clarified that God occasionally “chooses one person who may take from the others all he can get because he’s consecrated to the service of the Lord, and he’s wise and good and smart enough to know what to do with it.” Whether or not money in itself could be evil, to accept the money as a donation affirmed the morality that *Life* attributed to young “Johnny Rockefeller.”⁴⁷

⁴⁶ “The History of the Case,” ABC 41, box 3, ABCFM Archives.

⁴⁷ James Montgomery Flagg and Tom Masson, “Life’s Sunday-School Class,” *Life* 45, no. 1169 (March 23, 1905): 323-24. Flagg drew the cartoon while Masson wrote the story. Many Americans are familiar with Flagg’s work, likely without knowing it; he drew the famous “I Want You” propaganda poster to recruit soldiers in World War I and World War II.



Life's Sunday-School Class.

PRESENT: *Johnny Rockefeller, Johnny Gates, Tommy Lawson, Hen. Rogers, Little Pierpont Morgan, Andy Carnegie.*

Figure 3.4: J. M. Flagg, "Life's Sunday-School Class." Flagg's cartoon and the accompanying article underlined public sentiments about John D. Rockefeller, Sr. While all of the industrialists appeared as petty children, Rockefeller uniquely claimed to have received a divine revelation that God excepted him from the command, "thou shalt not steal."

Source: *Life* 45, no. 1169 (March 23, 1905): 323

Josiah Strong, like Washington Gladden a prominent leader of the Social Gospel movement, joined Gladden in protesting the gift. Although Strong's career had begun with pastorates in Congregational Churches, by 1905 his fame derived from his best-seller, *Our Country* (1885), and his work in Protestant interdenominational social reform. *Our Country* had told American Protestants they could still achieve a model Christian society, but only if they rolled back the growth of Mormonism, Catholicism, immigration, intemperance, socialism, materialism, and urbanism. In other words, American success depended primarily upon the success of Protestant home missions. Not coincidentally, Strong had been the leader of the Ohio Home Missionary Society in the years before the book's publication. *Our Country* had foreshadowed the Progressive Era's hopefulness in the possibilities of scientific

racism and social reconstruction. Following the success of *Our Country*, Strong had become the leader of the Evangelical Alliance in the United States, which promoted social reform in American cities. He had then created the League for Social Service (later called the American Institute for Social Service), which provided information about poverty, drunkenness, political corruption, and other social ills.

Like Barton, Strong appealed to universally acknowledged principles when registering his opposition to the Rockefeller gift. In a nine-page letter to the Prudential Committee, Strong laid out those principles. He sent Barton a personal copy, noting his “warm personal esteem,” but also his unyielding resistance to the gift.⁴⁸ He directly challenged Barton’s claim that a charitable organization could not judge the character of every contributor. Taking the argument *ad absurdum* in the opposite direction from Barton, Strong argued that no charity could accept a donation from pirates who stole their wealth. He supported this view by citing a common saying of the day, loosely derived from Proverbs 29, “the partaker is as bad as the thief.” Strong interpreted the principle to mean “that a man has no right to give that which is not his, and no one has a right to receive a gift which the donor has no right to give.” Rockefeller, Strong asserted, had “no moral right” to his wealth and therefore no right to donate it. He concluded his arguments with a broader reflection on religion and capitalism. “Modern civilization, and especially American civilization is beset by no greater peril than the worship of wealth. . . . The peril is growing with the enormous increase of wealth. . . . When men who have kept back the laborers’ hire contribute largely to

⁴⁸ Josiah Strong to James Barton, 5 April 1905, ABC 41, box 1, folder 5, ABCFM Archives. The personal esteem was likely genuine. The two had collaborated closely during the Hamidian massacres of Armenian Christians in 1894-96.

religious objects and their gifts are accepted, working men believe that the church condones injustice and are embittered toward her.”⁴⁹

While Barton viewed the Rockefeller gift in the context of the need for charities to maintain steady receipts, Strong placed the gift in the context of the dispute between labor and capital. At the center of the “tainted money” controversy was the nature of foreign missions. Was the American Board fundamentally a philanthropy and therefore obligated to pursue its mission to the best of its ability, regardless whom it might offend in the process? Or was it a representative body and therefore responsible primarily to its constituency? Both sides of the “tainted money” controversy viewed the American Board as a philanthropy *and* a representative body, but they clearly differed in which they valued more.

Strong’s views appeared to do little to sway the Prudential Committee. It unanimously approved the gift and sent its thanks to Rockefeller. The Committee simultaneously established a subcommittee to consider the protests against the gift, but the subcommittee merely articulated the views Barton had previously expressed. While the Prudential Committee oversaw the work of the American Board secretaries, the authority to reject the gift technically fell to the corporate members of the Board.⁵⁰ These members consisted of ministers and wealthy donors. They held voting power at the annual meetings and, in theory, could have demanded the Board repay the \$100,000 to Rockefeller. Corporate members dissented from Barton’s position to a much greater degree than the Prudential Committee. Almost a quarter of them expressed some reservation over the idea that

⁴⁹ Josiah Strong to the Prudential Committee of the American Board, 5 April 1905, ABC 41, box 1, folder 5, ABCFM Archives.

⁵⁰ The Prudential Committee was “responsible to the Board for the proper administration of all its affairs at home and abroad when the Board is not in session.” Since the Board, consisting of the corporate members, was only in session at annual meetings, the Prudential Committee largely administered the Board on its own. Report of the Committee on the Home Department, 3 January 1905, ABC 81.1, vol. 9, folder 3, ABCFM Archives.

philanthropies were obligated “to use every legitimate means to secure and convert money from other uses into the direct service of advancing the kingdom of God in the world.” Among ministers, nearly a third expressed reservations to varying degrees; among the laity, only six percent held similar views.⁵¹

Both sides claimed victory in the “tainted money” controversy and each had some basis for doing so. By the annual meeting in November, Gladden had narrowed his criticism to the fact that Barton had solicited the money. The Board did not vote on Gladden’s proposal to prevent the future solicitation of “tainted money,” but he claimed he had received private assurances that the Prudential Committee would abide by the rule. Gladden consequently ceased his protests and revived his calls for donations to the American Board. In a widely reprinted sermon, Gladden told his congregation, “There need be no fear that moral issues will be raised hereafter in the solicitation of money.”⁵² Much to Gladden’s chagrin, members of Prudential Committee refused to acknowledge any tacit agreement. Gladden responded by questioning their integrity. “If you were at liberty as gentlemen to authorize me to make that statement, you are not at liberty as gentlemen to throw doubt upon that statement, or even refuse to confirm it when called upon.”⁵³ All was eventually

⁵¹ The Board’s survey asked corporate members to respond to a statement of four principles that the Prudential Committee adopted to defend acceptance of the gift. The fourth principle, which proved the most contentious is quoted above. The other three principles stated that 1) “the American Board has not been given the authority . . . to judge the character or reputation of the donors;” 2) the Board can only refuse a donation if the donor clearly (i.e. requiring no research on the part of the Board) acquired the money illegally; and 3) “the Board pronounces no judgment on the character of donors” and members can therefore praise or criticize any business practices of donors. The survey offered five responses to those principles (the number of responses in each category is noted parenthetical): approval (192); approval with slight reservation (7); approval in principle, but not with regard to Rockefeller (5); disapproval mainly the solicitation of the gift (17); and disapproval of the principles entirely (24). Of the twenty-four disapprovals, twenty were ministers; of the seventeen disapprovals based on solicitation, twelve were ministers. The reservations about Rockefeller in particular came entirely from ministers. At the other end of the spectrum, only eighty-six ministers approved of the principles. Prudential Committee to Corporate Members and replies, August 1905, ABC 41, box 1, folder 1, ABCFM Archives.

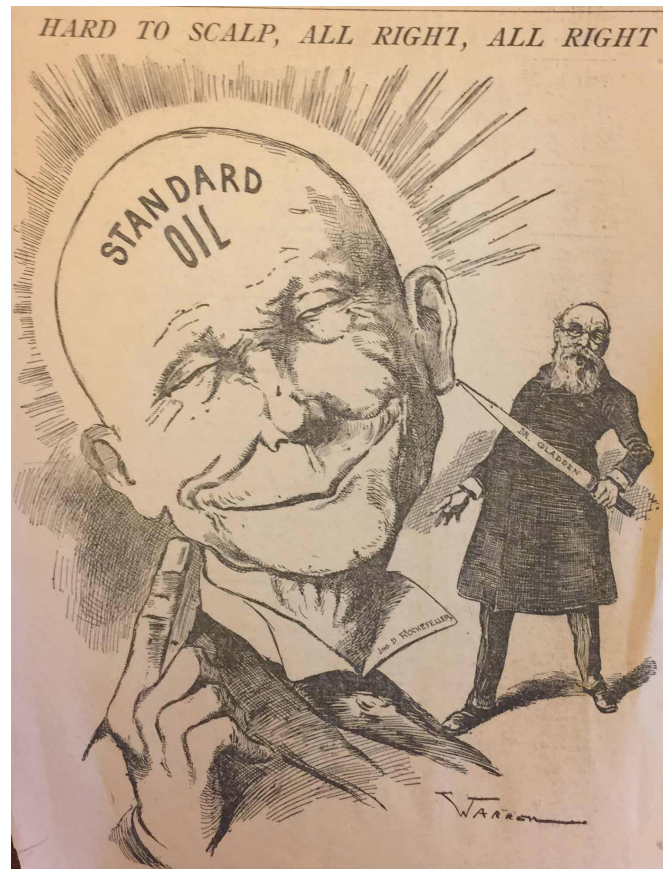
⁵² “Tainted Money Will Be Taken, Says Gladden,” *Atlanta Constitution*, November 13, 1905, 1.

⁵³ Washington Gladden to “Members of the Prudential Committee who took part in the conference at Dr. Gordon’s Study,” ABC 76, Samuel Capon Papers, box 1, folder 22, ABCFM Archives.

forgiven and the American Board honored Gladden with an invitation to deliver the sermon at the 1909 annual meeting.

Figure 3.5: Garnet Warren, "Hard to Scalp, All Right, All Right." Warren depicted Rockefeller as superhuman and radiant, but also looking old and perhaps even infirm. Washington Gladden, on the other hand, though older than Rockefeller, appears far spritelier. Despite that contrast, Gladden could do no more than prick Rockefeller's ear.

Source: Boston Herald, April 28, 1905



While members of the Prudential Committee cast doubt on Gladden's claims of success, they did not entirely side with Barton either. When Barton sought to renew Rockefeller's donation in 1906, the Prudential Committee refused to allow him to do so. From the start, both Barton and Gates had planned for the \$100,000 to be a minimum annual contribution, thereby increasing the American Board's annual income by 10 percent. The Prudential Committee, however, feared that a renewed gift from Rockefeller might prompt the rise a rival Congregationalist foreign mission board, tearing the denomination apart. Barton later revealed that this decision by the Prudential Committee caused him to

seriously consider resigning.⁵⁴ He must have found it especially galling to participate on the Sub-Committee on Appropriations in December 1905, which the Prudential Committee had tasked with finding areas to cut. In the end, they proposed \$20,000 in cuts, one-fifth of what Barton had been expecting from Rockefeller.⁵⁵

If the “tainted money” controversy had no clear winners or losers, it also did not answer the central question of whether a philanthropic institution ought to seek donations from wealthy individuals who achieved their wealth immorally. The controversy did, however, signal and perpetuate the end of the tradition of the “discreet donor” tradition. Gladden and the protestants sought to preserve that tradition, as represented by the Otis gift, in which organizations received unsolicited money and could still condemn the money’s source. Rockefeller, Gates, and Barton, on the other hand, were forced to argue for the benefits of public philanthropic giving by the wealthy. The end of the discreet donor tradition meant that philanthropies could no longer ignore the biography of the donor, but it also allowed them to seek out the gifts of the wealthy in an age of massive inequality.⁵⁶

The Otis gift in 1879 reflected a view of the American Board as a transnational wing of the Congregational Church. The gift jolted and expanded its work, but did not change its relationship with its predominantly northern, middle-class constituency. The rhetoric of appeals in the 1880s and 1890s underscored the importance of missions as a church-wide endeavor. The Board pointed to the “main instrumental dependence ... upon the strong and

⁵⁴ James Barton, “Reminiscences of James L. Barton,” *Missionary Herald* 123, no. 5 (May 1927): 174.

⁵⁵ Reports of the Committee on Appropriations, 5-12 December 1905, ABC 81.1, vol. 9, folder 1, ABCFM Archives.

⁵⁶ This synopsis comes directly from Benjamin Soskis’s 2010 dissertation, which includes the most extensive recent analysis of the “tainted money” controversy. Note that while Soskis primarily approaches the topic from Rockefeller’s perspective and using resources at the Rockefeller Archive Center, my analysis centers largely on American Board officials and resources from the ABCFM Archives. Despite using very different sources, the fact that my research supports Soskis’s conclusions only underlines the merits of those conclusions. Soskis, “Problem of Charity,” ch. 5.

steady growth of regular donations from individuals and churches.”⁵⁷ When the Board incurred a debt of over \$100,000 following the Panic of 1893, the financial committee at the annual meeting argued it would be more feasible to close the debt by asking every member to contribute fifty cents rather than appeal to the “wealthier constituency of the Board.”⁵⁸ At other times, the Board argued that “the best treasury is filled by many givers”⁵⁹ and demanded “more denominational loyalty.”⁶⁰

Just a decade before the “tainted money” controversy suggested the Board’s relative indifference to popular opinion, it was resting its hopes on popular support. The Armenian massacres of 1894-1896 coincidentally occurred shortly after the Panic of 1893. In the context of those massacres, American Board District Secretary Charles Creegan contemplated a campaign for donations from New York’s wealthy industrialists to assist missionaries in Armenia. He proposed the idea to officials in Boston as a novel approach to fundraising. The idea occurred to him that it “might be a good plan to make a personal appeal.”⁶¹ After discussing it with the New York Chamber of Commerce, he quickly abandoned the idea as out of place. The businessmen would organize their own campaign, but Creegan feared they would act too slowly and meticulously, resulting in unnecessary suffering abroad.⁶²

The “tainted money” controversy not only reflected a change in policy, in which the type of appeal Creegan rejected became possible, it also clarified the divergent perspectives on mission movement financing. To the protestants, the American Board was only as good

⁵⁷ ABCFM, *Annual Report* (Boston, 1893), 17.

⁵⁸ ABCFM, *Annual Report* (Boston, 1894), xii.

⁵⁹ ABCFM, *Annual Report* (Boston, 1895), 21.

⁶⁰ ABCFM, *Annual Report* (Boston, 1897), xxix

⁶¹ C. C. Creegan to C. H. Daniels, 4 December 1895, ABC 12.1, vol. 17, ABCFM Archives.

⁶² C. C. Creegan to Judson Smith, 11 December 1895, ABC 12.1, vol. 17, ABCFM Archives.

as its constituent parts and the Rockefeller gift tarnished that constituency. As an anonymous summary on the controversy stated, “The self-sacrificing interest of the members of our churches is the natural fountain-head of gifts. To solicit gifts from men of great wealth whose methods of money-getting are commonly recognized as ‘morally iniquitous and socially destructive’ is to defile this stream at its source.”⁶³ For the Prudential Committee, the continuation and augmentation of the work mattered most of all. Having seen the dangers posed by financial insecurity during the 1890s, they valued receipts more than anything else.

Looking further into the future, it becomes clear that the changes in American Board financing had staying power. By 1920, “denominational loyalty” remained an ideal, but new financing models made it less essential. The Prudential Committee had located a more stable financial footing based, as noted above, on new trust funds, large bequests, and capital investments. Ironically, the Board’s solution for financial security—millions of dollars invested in railroad stocks and bonds—tied the organization more closely to the very institutions that caused the financial turmoil of the 1890s. For the moment, though, the American Board appeared to be heading for great growth. The good times were not to last. Having significantly diminished its reliance on churches in favor of capital investments, the American Board struggled more than other mission boards to recover from the shock of the Great Depression. By 1948, Presbyterians and Episcopalians had returned to pre-Depression receipt levels, while Southern Baptists nearly tripled their pre-Depression receipts. The American Board was still only receiving half as many donations.⁶⁴

⁶³ “The History of the Case,” ABC 41, box 3, ABCFM Archives.

⁶⁴ “Preliminary Report of the Special Committee on Foreign Missions Financing,” MRL 12: Foreign Missions Conference of North America Records, series 1, box 3, and folder 1, The Burke Library Archives, Columbia University Libraries, at Union Theological Seminary, New York.

The changing funding model diluted the financial role of pastors and women's societies and centralized power in Boston. Churches and women's societies had been the two major sources of income for the Board. With the addition of numerous endowments and trust funds, women and pastors lost some of their influence and in 1927, the American Board absorbed the women's boards, further centralizing power.

World Missionary Conference of 1910

The "tainted money" controversy occurred during a period of heightened scrutiny of missionary methods, including those related to financing. Conversations about these topics often took place within the contexts of interdenominational missionary conferences, which occurred with increasing frequency at the start of the twentieth century. Two years after the "tainted money" controversy, for example, Barton attended the Shanghai Centenary Conference. Originally planned for 1900, the Shanghai conference had been twice delayed, first by a scheduling conflict with the much larger Ecumenical Conference in New York in 1900 and then by the Boxer Uprising in 1900-1901. By 1907, over 3,700 Protestant missionaries worked in China. The conference committee expected a large turnout and decided to systematize its program. It chose twelve specific topics and organized individual sub-committees to consider and report on each topic.⁶⁵

Around the same time as Barton's trip to China, various groups in the United Kingdom and United States were discussing plans to hold a much larger gathering in 1910. The original impetus for the conference came from W. H. Grant, secretary of the Foreign Missionary Conference of North America, who sought to build on the success of the London Missionary Conference in 1888 and the Ecumenical Conference of 1900 in New

⁶⁵ China Centenary Missionary Conference, *Records* (Shanghai: Centenary Conference Committee, 1907), ii-iii.

York. Both events aspired to be worldwide, interdenominational gatherings, which Grant hoped to replicate. Grant initially struggled to convince his British counterparts, but with support from multiple agencies, a conference in Edinburgh in 1910 eventually started to take shape. Planning got underway almost immediately. From 1908 onwards, the upcoming conference was a central topic of conversation in the world of foreign missions.⁶⁶

Reflecting Grant's view of Edinburgh as the successor to London and New York, the 1910 gathering originally bore the title, Third Ecumenical Missionary Conference. The 1900 conference had adopted the word "ecumenical," not because it reflected "all portions of the Christian Church, but because it represented mission work in all parts of the inhabited world."⁶⁷ Soon thereafter, "ecumenical" developed into its modern usage, though, and the 1910 conference needed a new title. As in 1900, the organizers had no intention of bringing together the full diversity of Christian believers. The new name, World Missionary Conference (WMC), was only a moderate improvement. It still misled. The decision to identify official delegates and to apportion delegates according to mission boards' annual expenditures resulted in a lopsided Anglo-American representation at the conference. Over 80 percent of delegates were either American or British. Adding delegates from continental Europe (half of whom were German) brought the number above 97 percent. Only nineteen delegates were neither European nor American.⁶⁸

The WMC modeled itself on the Shanghai conference and the South India Missionary Conference, held in 1900 in Madras. Like the Asian conferences, the WMC attempted to be systematic and thorough, identifying best practices in each element of

⁶⁶ Stanley, *World Missionary Conference*, 18-26; see also Robson, "History and Records of the Conference," 5-7.

⁶⁷ ———, "History and Records of the Conference," 5.

⁶⁸ Stanley, *World Missionary Conference*, 12, 36-37; Robson, "History and Records of the Conference," 7.

foreign missions. Like Grant, the WMC organizers understood their work as connected with the earlier London and New York conferences. They hoped, however, to produce a very different event. London and New York “had been chiefly great missionary demonstrations fitted to inform, educate, and impress.”⁶⁹ John Mott, the chairman of the WMC and a future Noble Peace Prize laureate, described the New York conference as a “great popular convention.”⁷⁰ Edinburgh would instead be “a more earnest study of the missionary enterprise, ... a consultive assembly.”⁷¹ Each of eight separate commissions would cover a particular aspect of missions work.

Barton’s attendance at the Shanghai conference, in addition to his general prominence, paved the way for a leadership role in the WMC. The organizers asked Barton and F. Frohnmeyer to devise procedures and constitutions for the commissions. Barton then served on the International Committee and the Business Committee. Finally, the committee gave him the chairmanship of Commission VI, on the home base of missions. It was one of three to be chaired by an American.⁷²

Commission VI and the Brewing Conflict with Women’s Boards

For historians of foreign missions, Commission VI has generally attracted less interest than other aspects of the World Missionary Conference. The topics covered by the other commissions—“The Church in the Mission Field,” “Carrying the Gospel to all the Non-Christian World,” and “Missions and Governments,” for example—directly addressed questions of western imperialism and the evolution of Christianity, which have extensive

⁶⁹ ———, “History and Records of the Conference,” 8.

⁷⁰ Quoted in Stanley, *World Missionary Conference*, 21.

⁷¹ Robson, “History and Records of the Conference,” 8.

⁷² Stanley, *World Missionary Conference*, 27-28, 34. The nationality of the chairman was especially important because the executive committee of each commission consisted of the commission members who lived in the same country as the chairman. Barton’s European committee members formed “an advisory and co-operative council.” While they contributed to the work of Commission VI, it was largely an American product. Robson, “History and Records of the Conference,” 10.

historiographies. Commission VI, on the other hand, focused on the work of missionary societies within their constituencies in Europe and the United States. Those interactions shaped many Americans' experiences with global philanthropy at a time of transition. Charity work based on voluntarism and often performed by women was becoming professionalized and social-scientific, open to both men and women, but often with male leadership.

In an attempt to acknowledge the pivotal role of women in the foreign mission movement, most of the commissions included women. Like the other commissions and the conference more generally, though, Commission VI was overwhelmingly male, with two women and nineteen men. That ratio was below that of the conference as a whole where women accounted for slightly less than 20 percent of the official delegates. No women served on any of the committees that organized the conference.⁷³ The two women on Commission VI underlined the Anglo-American emphasis of the conference, with one from the United States and another from England. Commission VI also included two delegates from the Continent, a German and a Swede.

The role of women at the WMC, as compared to the Ecumenical Conference ten years earlier, reflected some of the broader changes within the organization of foreign mission boards. While the WMC limited women's official roles, it offered different opportunities than the Ecumenical Conference. The 1900 conference had organized a "Women's Day." The highlight of the day had occurred when over four hundred women missionaries were introduced to a packed Carnegie Hall. Women's participation at the

⁷³ *History and Records of the Conference*, 35-71. Of the 1,215 delegates listed in this official publication, 208 were explicitly identified as women. Among these women, 119 were American and 80 were British. While the Americans frequently listed both spouses as delegates, the British rarely did so. The actual attendance of women at the conference, therefore, was likely far higher than 20 percent, but the official delegate count was nevertheless significant.

conference had been mostly disconnected from the primary conference events. Through its programming, the Ecumenical Conference had highlighted the importance of women for foreign missions, but also identified their role as distinct from that of men.⁷⁴

The trend of distinguishing men's and women's work in missions partly continued and partly changed at the WMC. In a sign of continuity, half of the official delegates who were women came explicitly as representatives of women's boards or women's societies. Others likely saw themselves as representatives of women's boards even if general boards provided official recognition. Another continuity was the absence of women from the main conference events. The minutes listed fifteen women who addressed the official conference. Six of these women all spoke at the same session, responding to the question, "Is the present general preparation of various classes of missionaries adequate?"⁷⁵ Concurrent conferences occurred at other locations in Edinburgh and Glasgow. The most extensive one, held at the Synod Hall in Edinburgh, gave ten of eighty-four addresses to women. Still, as in New York, almost all of the talks at the Synod Hall focused exclusively on women's work as distinct from that of men. The session on missionary preparation, however, did not follow that trend. Most of the women discussed their views of training schools for both men and women. This is especially interesting because the conference organizers seemed intent on dividing that conversation. The women responded to the question at a morning session on June 22nd; the topic arose again in the afternoon, this time with only male respondents.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ "Missionary Day," *Boston Globe*, April 27, 1900; Thomas A. Askew, "The New York 1900 Ecumenical Missionary Conference: A Centennial Reflection," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 24, no. 4 (October 2000): 148-49.

⁷⁵ *History and Records of the Conference*, 77-107. Between 250 and 300 speakers addressed the official conference. An exact number is difficult to calculate since so many individuals spoke in various capacities (e.g. formal papers, introductions, prayers). That women were mostly sidelined from the official conference, though, is clear.

⁷⁶ *Report of Commission V: The Preparation of Missionaries* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, [1910]), 312-24

While men played a disproportionately public role, the conference did not segregate itself according to sex. None of the eight commissions addressed issues exclusively about men's or women's issues and there was no "women's day" at the conference as there had been in 1900. Women sat on six of the eight commissions, though not in large numbers. Commission V had the most women, with four of twenty-four. Three sessions of the Synod Hall side conference only allowed women or men to participate and two others were less rigidly oriented around men's work and women's work, but the rest of the conference referenced sex in less formal ways. The price of breaking down the barriers of sex appeared to be a diminished role for women.

This balance between offering women limited official roles and at the same time eliminating rigid distinctions based on sex replicated itself within Commission VI, which dealt most directly with issues of women's boards and women's societies. The fact that the issue fell under "problems of administration" undoubtedly helped pre-determine how the commission would view the relationship between the women's boards and general boards. Like other commissions, Commission VI distributed a survey to form the basis of its research. The commission asked how churches defined "the distinct sphere of work of the Woman's Missionary Society," its features, its results in various aspects of church life, and its past and potential relationship with the Laymen's Missionary Movement. The mailing list reflected the makeup of the commission. Denominational church boards as well as some independent missionary organizations received the full questionnaire. The commission also sent the question to several women's boards, but removed all questions except those that related to women's work. In other cases, the women's boards appear to have received the

questionnaire only because general boards requested assistance in answering questions about women.⁷⁷

The commission's draft report closely reflected the ambivalence of the general boards to the women's movement. That ambivalence stemmed from admiration for their success combined with covetousness toward their finances. James Barton circulated the draft and heard strong protests from several leaders of the women's boards. Elizabeth Baird of the Congregationalist Women's Board of Missions of the Interior (for historical reasons, the Congregationalist women had three boards, based in Boston, Chicago, and San Francisco) described the report as "destructive, not constructive." "The paper seems to us inconsistent with itself. It gives high praise to Woman's Boards and to what they have accomplished ... then by questioning and by showing the difficulties of adjustment to the general boards it discredits their value and leads the mind to the opposite conclusion." Baird went to the heart of the matter in pointing to the section on money. "It says Woman's Boards should not be disbanded (p.7) but their gifts should go through regular channels of Church Benevolence, (p. 6). Why keep a separate organization of separate work, even when assigned to Woman's Boards by the General Church Board, if separate appeals are not wise?" Barton was gracious in his reply, acknowledging that the criticism would improve the final report.⁷⁸

Leaders of the women's board of the Presbyterian Church in Chicago responded less harshly to the commission's draft report than Elizabeth Baird, but arrived at the same conclusion. Mildred Berry accepted the ideal of merging her Presbyterian women's boards with the main board, but foresaw negative practical consequences. While the general board

⁷⁷ Questionnaire, n.d., MRL 12: World Missionary Conference Records, 1883-2010, series 1, box 28, folder 4, The Burke Library Archives at Union Theological Seminary, New York (hereafter WMC Records)

⁷⁸ Elizabeth Baird, "Suggestions on 'Woman's Boards and Church Boards,'" n.d., WMC Records, series 1, box 28, folder 15; James Barton to Elizabeth Baird, Oct. 1, [1909], WMC Records, series 1, box 28, folder 15.

had worked hard to develop interest in foreign missions among the laymen, they had thus far been somewhat unsuccessful. The women, on the other hand, had achieved great success. Therefore dissolving the women's boards would likely diminish interest in missions overall.⁷⁹ Alice Coy also found the idea of closer cooperation appealing, but considered consolidation to be "a most disastrous mistake." Indeed, like Baird, Coy pointed to the report itself as evidence of the success of the women's boards and a strong argument against integration.⁸⁰

No figure loomed larger in the early twentieth century women's missionary movement than Helen Barrett Montgomery. Montgomery served as the only American woman on Commission VI. In the same year as the Edinburgh conference, Montgomery wrote *Western Women in Eastern Lands* (1910), which sold over 100,000 copies, and delivered hundreds of speeches in honor of the jubilee year for women's missions. In 1914, she became president of the Women's American Baptist Foreign Missionary Society.

Montgomery's criticisms of Commission VI's draft report were biting. She worried she could not respond without "offensive dogmatism." First, she lamented the disparity between descriptions of the general boards and the women's boards. The report associated the former with being "regular," "recognized," and "rightfully claiming support," implying the women lacked such attributes. Second, Montgomery pointed to a more overt cause of conflict, namely "sex caste, which still keeps many of the men who are leading our missionary societies from a recognition of the value of women working with men as associates and not subordinates. The women feel, perhaps wrongly, that if the work were merged with that of the general boards, it would be men's boards making use of women as collecting agents." Montgomery used the word "caste" to underline her belief in the

⁷⁹ Mildred Berry to James Barton, 26 September 1909, WMC Records, series 1, box 28, folder 15.

⁸⁰ Alice Coy to James Barton, 9 September 1909, WMC Records, series 1, box 28, folder 15.

hypocrisy of the general boards. For generations, mission boards had associated castes with "heathenism" and identified the breakdown of rigid caste societies as progress toward "civilization." While missionaries fought caste systems abroad, Montgomery accused Barton and the general boards of instituting those same systems at home. Though Montgomery noted women who felt their success depended on their independence, Montgomery herself was open to a merger on the condition that the male leadership embraced a democratic form of governance that included women. She therefore suggested the report "go a step farther" and promote integration "not with a view to absorption but rather federation, representation, and exchange." In a brilliant retort, therefore, Montgomery's arguments undermined the essence of the report by fully embracing its practical suggestions.⁸¹

Allies or Competitors? Fighting for Donations

Commission VI expressed its concerns about women's boards in the language of efficiency. It claimed to be seeking "to unite the forces of the Church in a more concerted effort" by eliminating "the multiplicity of organizations."⁸² As criticisms of the draft report made plain, the fundamental concern was monetary. Both men and women believed the women's boards to be highly successful fundraisers and the general boards to be deficient. Therefore, when denominational boards faced financial shortfalls, they frequently turned to the women's boards for help. The exchange epitomized the gendered understanding of the home base of foreign missions. Most women's boards maintained a substantial degree of independence, but they also existed within particular denominations. The male leadership of general boards perceived the relationship as, at least in part, hierarchical.⁸³ Denominational

⁸¹ Helen B. Montgomery to James Barton, 24 August 1909, WMC Records, series 1, box 28, folder 15.

⁸² *Report of Commission VI: The Home Base of Missions* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1910), 228.

⁸³ Commission VI acknowledged variety in the relationship between the boards. Most often, it spoke of women's boards and general boards, but in discussing the relationship between the two, described the latter as the "parent Society." *Ibid.*, 224.

boards guarded the boundaries between donations attributed to the women's societies and those to their own boards. When denominational boards faced deficits, the men assumed the women would fill the gaps.

Leaders of the American Board frequently policed the boundary between gifts that should be directed toward them and to the Woman's Board of Missions (WBM), the Congregationalist board in Boston. As a general rule, which received at least tacit approval from the WBM, donations went to the WBM if they came from auxiliaries of the WBM or young children in Sunday School. The general board claimed the donations of older children and church collections. While that neat division functioned well in principle, it rarely functioned effectively in practice and was frequently cited as a source of tension between the women's boards and the American Board.⁸⁴

The complicated relationship between the American Board and the women's boards grew especially problematic in relation to the Woman's Board of Missions of the Interior (WBMI), Elizabeth Baird's organization. Writing to LeRoy Stafford in 1914, Brewer Eddy, home secretary of the American Board, expressed his concerns about midwestern states failing to follow the rules. "I need not tell you with what gravity we have been watching the figures of the W.B.M.I. of late in the S.S. [Sunday Schools]. Many instances come to hand where S.S. superintendents and pastors have been definitely told in the middle west that all gifts from the S.S. are to go through the Woman's Board."⁸⁵ A letter Eddy received later in the month epitomized the problem. George Marples noted that his church sent its donation to the American Board "through the W.B.M.I." In reply, Eddy attempted to explain the complicated relationship of the two boards, promoting donations to his own board without

⁸⁴ Report of the Committee on the Home Department, 14 November 1905, ABC 81.1, vol. 9, folder 3, ABCFM Archives.

⁸⁵ Brewer Eddy to LeRoy Stafford, 3 November 1914, ABC 4.2, vol. 11, ABCFM Archives.

undermining the Woman's Board. On a practical level, Eddy informed Marples that the American Board would not send supplies to encourage donations unless the donations went to the American Board and not the Woman's Board. The two boards may have been allies, but they were also in competition. Eddy closed the letter with a note of some ambivalence, wondering about Marples's "own point of view as a superintendent." After struggling to explain the division, Eddy could not help but wonder whether such a division made sense to anyone outside the central offices in Boston.⁸⁶

More systemic problems also prompted conflict between the American Board and the women's boards. In many churches, the women's societies promoted missions far more enthusiastically than the church. If women and the women's societies drove interest in missions, no one could be surprised when donations to the Woman's Board far outstripped those to the American Board. Churches that adopted a missionary might select a missionary from either the women's boards or the American Board. Since the money flowed through one of the Boards before reaching the missionary, the church inevitably became more closely tied to that Board. Both boards promoted the adoption of missionaries, as they had in the 1870s, since it reflected a commitment for the congregation and allowed the missionary to build a relationship with a particular community, which encouraged further giving. However, if greater donations actually materialized, the American Board sought those gifts for itself even if the church might have preferred to direct the money to the women's boards.

More than Brewer Eddy, Cornelius Patton expressed explicit resentment about the role of the women's boards, especially in the Midwest. In a letter to Harry Dascomb, Patton claimed the women "frequently annex the gifts of the men." That the current relationship

⁸⁶ Brewer Eddy to George Marples, 30 November 1914, ABC 4.2, vol. 11, ABCFM Archives.

was causing conflict, Patton openly admitted, acknowledging they had “not [secured] a working basis with the women. We would love to do so, but there are many difficulties in the way. ‘I could a tale unfold,’ etc.”⁸⁷ Elsewhere, writing to the husband of a leader of the WBMI, Patton described “the parent organization ... [as] the chief thing” and that there should be balance between the work done for the Woman’s Board and that of the American Board.⁸⁸ To the American Board’s regional secretary for the Midwest, A. N. Hitchcock, Patton lamented “the large proportion of ... gifts which goes to the W.B.M.I.” from a church in Evanston, Illinois, and encouraged Hitchcock to dissuade the church from supporting a woman missionary and instead support a man and his fiancée.⁸⁹ Later, he wrote to Hitchcock, “I suppose you realize how many of your prominent churches are giving more to the W.B.M.I. than to us. It is a strange situation, and I think in all such churches we should make special efforts to advance our interests, not of course in any wise by way of diminishing the gifts made to the W.B.M.I.”⁹⁰

Conclusion: The Rigid Hierarchy of Mass Philanthropy

The American Board attempted to circumscribe the women’s boards in the name of efficiency. The WMC had anticipated that step several years earlier in identifying the women’s boards as “problems of administration.” The women’s boards and general boards were appealing to the same constituency for funds that would go, broadly speaking, to the same purpose. The male leadership, therefore, believed that it would be more efficient to streamline fundraising for foreign missions and send all the money to the general board,

⁸⁷ Cornelius Patton to Harry N. Dascomb, 13 June 1914, ABC 4.2, vol. 11, ABCFM Archives.

⁸⁸ Cornelius Patton to Albert Marty, 19 June 1914, ABC 4.1, vol. 20, ABCFM Archives.

⁸⁹ Cornelius Patton to A. N. Hitchcock, 25 June 1914, ABC 4.1, vol. 20, ABCFM Archives.

⁹⁰ Cornelius Patton to A. N. Hitchcock, 29 June 1914, ABC 4.1, vol. 20, ABCFM Archives.

according to Barton, Eddy, and Patton. This would eliminate the confusion surrounding who controlled what money.

Members of the women's boards saw the issue differently. Rather than channeling money away from the American Board, as appeared to be the accusation, they believed that they were succeeding at interesting Congregationalists in foreign missions. They interpreted the calls for efficiency as calls to remove women's authority in foreign missions work. Their success should not result in their elimination, women like Elizabeth Baird claimed.

No one at the time, including James Barton, connected the "tainted money" controversy with debates about the role of women's boards. In both instances, though, the American Board sought to centralize the control of resources in its Missionary Rooms in Boston. The Rockefeller donation fit into broad changes in mission movement fundraising that increasingly relied on large gifts. When the Board had an opening for its western district secretary, the primary organizer on the Pacific coast, it sought "a man ... big enough to appeal to big men."⁹¹ Such "big men" would not give through their pastors, the Board claimed, and required the special attention of a leader in the organization.⁹² Barton and his colleagues were slowly rolling back the diffuse power of pastors and women's boards in the name of efficiency.

For American Congregationalists, the increasing centralization of the foreign mission board meant a move away from the democratization of charity. For decades, that

⁹¹ Cornelius Patton to Doremus Scudder, 4 August 1914, ABC. 4.1, vol. 20, ABCFM Archives. Patton conveyed a similar message to F.M. Sheldon, Patton's earlier pick for the San Francisco job. With the development of the Apportionment Plan, Patton suggested the secretary would devote less time to working with churches. Instead, he emphasized the importance of wealthy individuals. "It is increasingly evident that persons of wealth are not inclined to give large sums to the church collection. ... We are realizing increasingly the importance of the officers of the Board having personal touch with such individuals. It is important to know who are the moneyed people in each district, and to form warm friendships with them whereby they may come to have confidence in us as well as in the Board and its work." Cornelius Patton to F. M. Sheldon, 22 June 1914, ABC. 4.1, vol. 20, ABCFM Archives.

⁹² Cornelius Patton to William B. Millar, 5 June 1914, ABC 4.1, vol. 20, ABCFM Archives.

constituency held great power over foreign missions, one of the main ways that non-citizens encountered the United States. Congregationalists interacted directly with missionaries and could voice their satisfaction or dissatisfaction through increasing or decreasing donations. With the start of the twentieth century, those interactions became increasingly distant and circumscribed by officials in Boston.

None of this is to suggest that historians have erred in claiming that many philanthropies became more democratic through the use of mass fundraising campaigns. Rather, it shows the diversity of experiences and the challenges of defining “democracy” in non-governmental contexts. Giving to charity did become more widespread, particularly during World War I. Greater numbers of givers had nothing to do with the governance of mission boards or any other philanthropy, though, unless the donors somehow used their collective leverage to gain authority of the organization. Nor did an expanded donor base promote any sense of social equality among the givers, unless one considers a “culture of giving” to somehow lead to social equality. In fact, among mission boards, the most democratic development, the eventual participation of women in the work of the general boards, occurred circuitously and only after a decades-long process. It only occurred through the curtailment of women’s boards’ power, in itself a quite undemocratic development. And for the Congregationalists who bemoaned their diminished role in the American Board, there were the new, mass campaigns to which they could donate.

Chapter 4: Beginnings and Endings: Systematic Giving, the European War, and the Constant Failures of Mission Movement Financing

J. Campbell White, executive secretary of the Laymen's Missionary Movement, was so thrilled that he had to share the news. It was mid-December 1912 and he had just discovered a way to raise enough money to expand foreign missions like never before. He must have thought that Christmas had come early and straightaway forwarded the plan to "all the City, Home and Foreign Missionary leaders that can be reached."¹ The plan was risible, but White apparently did not notice. It sought to more than double giving to foreign missions and increase the number of donors by ten million (at a time when the entire population of the United States had not yet reached one hundred million and the proposal identified only twenty-million Americans as Protestant). It proposed a five-year joint campaign among all the home and foreign mission boards in every Protestant church in the United States, working together with the Laymen's Missionary Movement groups. The ambition did not stop at increasing donors and donations. It encompassed "every moral and spiritual problem of our times" and, the perennial goal, "the evangelization of the world in this generation."²

The method for achieving these goals was almost as unreasonable as the goals themselves. The plan called for twelve men to serve as general directors and sixty men to run campaigns in each state. These seventy-two men would receive special training, beginning with a series of lectures on "the problem of Immigration, and other great city and country problems, for two or three days." Then they would hire six "leading experts on problems at

¹ J. Campbell White to "Friend," 16 December 1912, United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. Commission on Ecumenical Mission and Relations Records, RG 81, box 25, folder 9, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (hereafter Ecumenical Mission and Relations Records).

² "Proposed Five-Year Campaign," [1912], box 25, folder 9, Ecumenical Mission and Relations Records.

home” to take a seven-month trip around the world, stopping in East Asia, South Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Europe. During this months-long trip, the men would study the Bible and missions. One-hundred-fifty “additional persons,” men and women, would also travel on the world tour. They included journalists, pastors, professors, businessmen, and mission movement leaders. The actual campaign centered on building a network of leaders. The world tour participants were to divide into teams to “bombard” cities across the country with missionary education. A conference each summer would train a further ten-thousand volunteers annually. Apart from those vague details, White provided few indications as to how the network would lead to greater giving.³

White estimated the annual cost of the campaign at \$500,000 and a projected duration of five years. The impossibly brief timeline may have reflected the age of the Mt. Hermon 100, who had set the goal of evangelizing the world in a generation and were then nearing retirement. White did not offer any basis for that estimate or state whether that included the astronomical cost of a world tour for over two hundred. Donations of “\$1,000 and upwards” would provide the necessary \$2.5 million in expenses within six months. Again, no one explained why anyone would fund the campaign or how the solicitation would proceed. Since the campaign would add \$50 million to the annual budgets of mission boards, though, White viewed the expense as worthwhile.⁴

White’s proposal did not go over well. The men to whom he sent the plan (there is no evidence he sent it to any women) met in New York on December 20, 1912. They respected him enough to meet in person, but once there, they made their views known. The criticism was so biting that Robert Speer expressed concerns about White’s emotional status

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

after the meeting. American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM or American Board) President Samuel Capen wished White had sent the plan to a more select audience in order to have avoided such public condemnation. That White had apparently believed that “the plan had been given him as a Divine inspiration” clearly did not help the situation.⁵

Unsurprisingly, Speer found White’s “Divine inspiration” to be “impracticable” and its inevitable “failure” likely to “bring discredit upon ... the work.” Speer argued that the plan “begins at the wrong end.” Adopting a more traditional approach to fundraising, Speer thought the more effective method would begin “with solid foundations and building up from them, instead of projecting the whole enterprise in the air in the faith that it will build itself downward.” Even ignoring the absurd timeline (the proposal planned for the world tour to begin in less than six months) and the “prohibitory ... and unwise ... expenditure of money,” Speer described the plan as impossible. He could not imagine how they could find a sufficient number of individuals with the skills necessary to lead the campaign nor could the training produce the desired effects. The scale of the organization involved, counting tens of thousands of workers in a very hierarchical structure and “mechanistic” approach, “may be in accord with the modern business mind,” but did not work for Speer.⁶

Though Speer and his colleagues found the plan unrealistic in almost every respect, White’s approach reflected numerous trends in mission movement fundraising. In particular, all agreed with “the need of an immense increase” in support for missions and “the desirability of the fullest possible measure of cooperation in the missionary work of the

⁵ Robert Speer to William F. Cochran, 21 December 1912 and Samuel Capen to Robert Speer, 4 January 1913, box 25, folder 9, Ecumenical Mission and Relations Records.

⁶ Speer to Cochran, 21 December 1912.

Church.”⁷ This expansion had been the aspiration of mission movement supporters for decades, but the methods proposed in the 1910s placed greater emphasis on particular elements.

Numerous fundraising schemes, including the Every Member Canvass, various cooperative plans, and the Minneapolis Plan, emphasized large committees of businessmen in soliciting contributions. Businessmen not only had money to increase their contributions, mission board officials claimed, but also professional skills as salesmen. Despite the fact that women’s societies had, for decades, contributed a disproportionately large amount of money, the plans centered on men.⁸ Men designed the new fundraising plans and men ran the local committees. In fact, the men cited women’s societies’ success as a reason for laymen to control the new fundraising methods. Male-dominated mission boards complained that women’s groups controlled too much money and diverted funds away from the denominations. The Every Member Canvass, cooperative plans, the Minneapolis Plan, and other similar endeavors eventually contributed to the demise of women’s foreign mission boards between the 1920s and 1940s.

Not coincidentally, all of these fundraising schemes coincided with similar fundraising methods among philanthropies during and before the start of World War I. No event has figured more prominently in the recent historiography of humanitarianism than the Great War. The war helped multiply giving, expanding the reach of philanthropic

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ For example, between 1881 and 1920, the women’s boards always contributed at least 20 percent of the Congregational Church’s budget for foreign missions and usually closer to 30 percent. From the 1890s on, that amount equaled 40 to 50 percent of total giving from all living donors to the general work of the American Board. In addition, those statistics reflected the reception of donations (i.e. through church collections or at women’s societies), not who donated or why. Women who put money in the church’s collection plate or who encouraged their husbands to give are therefore reflected in the receipts of the American Board, not the women’s boards. It is not possible to quantify women’s contributions to foreign missions fundraising, but it was clearly significant.

organizations, and it promoted discussions about the value of human life independent of nationality or action. Leading up to the war, organizations like the YMCA/YWCA and American Red Cross developed new methods of raising money that greatly expanded their financial power. With added capital, established organizations, and a defined identity, an early humanitarian movement emerged following the war.⁹

For foreign mission boards, World War I presented new opportunities and challenges for financing foreign missions. In the initial months of the war, credit markets froze, preventing mission boards from sending money abroad. Shipping and communication networks frequently closed. As European missionaries returned home to fight or found themselves suddenly in hostile territory, their mission stations shut down and American missionaries attempted to adopt their work. On the other hand, the mission boards raised more money during the war than ever before. By increasing their use of war rhetoric, the boards presented foreign missions as the ultimate alternative to the European War.

Though the war and the new fundraising methods all succeeded in expanding the budgets and influence of missions, that success paradoxically pointed to weaknesses in the funding models. Success was relative. None of the growth matched expectations. Denominationalism tended to restrict the breadth of mission board appeals and the federal government could only offer limited overt support for religious benevolence. While mission movement leaders would never abandon their evangelistic goals, many found new avenues after World War I to expand their work outside their particular denominations. The war, in

⁹ See, for example, Bruno Cabanes, *The Great War and the Origins of Humanitarianism, 1918-1924* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014); William I. Hitchcock, "World War I and the Humanitarian Impulse," *The Tocqueville Review/La revue Tocqueville* 35, no. 2 (2014); Julia Irwin, *Making the World Safe: The American Red Cross and a Nation's Humanitarian Awakening* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); John Branden Little, "Band of Crusaders: American Humanitarians, the Great War, and the Remaking of the World" (PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2009).

other words, did not secularize philanthropy by eliminating religious goals or motivations. Among mission movement leaders, though, it did encourage greater interreligious cooperation, which produced new, nonsectarian organizations.

The Great War: A Turning Point for Philanthropy and Humanitarianism?

In the traditional narrative, World War I began on June 28, 1914, the day Gavrilo Princip assassinated Archduke Franz Ferdinand and Sophie, the Duchess of Hohenberg. It ended in 1918 with the cessation of hostilities or 1919 with the ratification of the Treaty of Versailles. That chronology, however, minimizes global interconnections and violent encounters that bracketed the main period of conflict. The Italian invasion of North Africa in 1911 and the Balkan Wars of 1912 and 1913 foreshadowed the worldwide conflagration. Violence in Egypt, India, Syria, and elsewhere after 1918 fed off dashed hopes of self-determination that the world war had sparked. The traditional narrative also emphasizes the nation-state instead of the multi-ethnic empires that constituted much of the world in the 1910s.¹⁰ For these reasons and others, it makes sense to adopt an expansive periodization of missions in the World War I-era, beginning in the early 1910s with efforts to expand the effectiveness of mission movement financing and ending in the 1920s with nonsectarian philanthropies that employed the resources of foreign missions, such as the American Committee on Armenian and Syrian Relief.

The impact of World War I on humanitarian and philanthropic efforts in the United States is undeniable. Charitable organizations expanded; politicians and the press devoted more attention to the callousness of war; and philanthropy became more secular and scientific. Although the state had played a role in these efforts since before the Civil War,

¹⁰ Robert Gerwarth and Erez Manela, "Introduction," in *Empires at War 1911-1923*, ed. Robert Gerwarth and Erez Manela (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 1-16.

religion had continued to provide the main impetus for humanitarianism and proponents always identified this work as charitable. But the immense scale of World War I, as well as the events that surrounded it, forced a dramatic transformation in the resources devoted to humanitarianism, the role of the state, and the motivations for actions.¹¹

Foreign missions adds a different perspective to the history of humanitarianism. Rather than seeking the “origins” of human rights or looking exclusively at the war or postwar period, the foreign mission movement bridged the war and evolved as a result of it. Both the quest for origins and the confined examination of the war period predispose historians to emphasize change at this particular moment. Scholars acknowledge precursors, but references to these earlier individuals and ideas often seem more like bulwarks against charges of determinism than historical analyses that allow for alternative narratives.¹²

¹¹ The long arc of the narrative of humanitarianism usually begins with reform movements in the late eighteenth century to end slavery or improve conditions of servitude, improve prisons, provide relief from poverty, and find more humane means of execution, among other endeavors. These reforms sought to reduce individual suffering and found motivation in religion, though historians have debated the degree to which that appeal to religion served to mask economic incentives. Foreign missions grew out of these efforts.

For much of the twentieth century, historians largely emphasized the economic self-interest of the new humanitarians. British abolitionism has received particular attention. Eric Williams, for example, claimed the anti-slavery movement arose because slavery was becoming increasingly unprofitable, a thesis that has since been widely refuted. More recent work, such as that of David Brion Davis and Christopher Leslie Brown, have pointed to the influence of the Society of Friends as well as the role of the American Revolution and Napoleonic France in shaping British self-assessment. Eric Williams, *Capitalism & Slavery* (1944; repr., Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994); David Brion Davis, *Inhuman Bondage: The Rise and Fall of Slavery in the New World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), ch. 12; Christopher Leslie Brown, *Moral Capital: Foundations of British Abolitionism* (Chapel Hill: Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Virginia, by the University of North Carolina Press, 2006); see also Paul E. Johnson, *A Shopkeeper's Millennium: Society and Revivals in Rochester, New York, 1815-1837*, 25th anniversary ed. (New York: Hill and Wang, 2004); Thomas L. Haskell, "Capitalism and the Origins of the Humanitarian Sensibility, Part 1," *The American Historical Review* 90, no. 2 (April 1985); ———, "Capitalism and the Origins of the Humanitarian Sensibility, Part 2," *The American Historical Review* 90, no. 3 (June 1985); Lynn Hunt, *Inventing Human Rights: A History* (New York: Norton, 2007).

For a summary of the usual narrative of the rise of humanitarianism, see Michael N. Barnett, *Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011), 1-5.

¹² The history of humanitarianism is distinct from, but closely related to, the history of human rights. Scholarship on human rights has recently become a popular, but contentious subfield, with historians identifying its origins in everything from eighteenth-century sentimentalism to Victorian journalism to the Cold War. Some historians underline the secular roots of human rights while others point to origins in religious ideologies. See Hunt, *Inventing Human Rights*; Samuel Moyn, *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2010); ———, *Human Rights and the Uses of History* (New York: Verso, 2015); ———, *Christian Human Rights* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015); Davide

World War I undoubtedly influenced philanthropies and humanitarian movements in profound ways, particularly through organizations such as the League of Nations, Save the Children, and the American Red Cross. Many leaders in the postwar humanitarian movement nevertheless saw their work as a continuation of and elaboration on what they had been doing before the war. Mission movement leaders had long sought the more stable financial basis that government support provided (if not the practical restrictions that went with it) and for decades had been promoting social science as an ideal form of missions. That they hoped these efforts would eventually result in conversion to Christianity only further connects their prewar efforts with the postwar period's views on the possibilities that European and American domination would promote "civilization."

The Every Member Canvass, Cooperative Plans, and Specials: Balancing Financial Goals with Donor Empowerment

Scott Cutlip's *Fund Raising in the United States* (1965) remains the only monograph to explicitly, exclusively, and extensively examine the history of American fundraising. Histories of particular organizations or more general work on philanthropy or humanitarianism frequently discuss how groups raise money, but Cutlip focused on the development of fundraising itself, particularly its professionalization. Two pivotal events in his account occurred in the years before and during World War I, both through the efforts of Charles Sumner Ward and Lyman Pierce. They raised money together for the YMCA in 1905 and Ward organized campaigns for the American Red Cross in 1917 and 1918 that each raised

Rodogno, *Against Massacre: Humanitarian Interventions in the Ottoman Empire, 1815-1914: The Emergence of a European Concept and International Practice* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012). This chapter is less interested in the origins of human rights or the development of humanitarian and more in the ways that the people involved in philanthropic work utilized organizational developments in their field. Note that the periodization of Gerwarth and Manela, mentioned above and adopted in this and the following chapters, would tend to push against an overemphasis on the conflict itself.

more than \$100 million in one week. Professional fundraisers, according to Cutlip, all descended from these two innovators. Though both Ward and Pierce were deeply religious and though their developments in professional fundraising primarily served a religious organization, Cutlip did not explore the role of religion in fundraising.¹³

Working in the public relations division of the YMCA, Ward and Pierce developed the "whirlwind" method of raising money. Prior to Ward and Pierce's innovations, the Y had launched extended fundraising campaigns that continued until they achieved a desired sum. The Ward and Pierce strategy, in contrast, sought huge sums of money in very brief periods of time after "bombarding the public with surefire appeals." Their 1905 campaign for a Y building in Washington DC emphasized newspaper publicity and employed a campaign clock. Between 1850 and 1905, the Y had raised \$35 million; in the decade after 1905, they raised \$60 million.¹⁴

Pierce had always felt a keen interest in missions and left the YMCA to become co-executive secretary of the Laymen's Missionary Movement in 1908, alongside J. Campbell White. There he developed the Every Member Canvass (EMC, also called the Every Member Plan). The EMC adopted some of the attributes of the whirlwind campaign. Both emphasized preparatory work. Ministers preached about missions while organized groups of parishioners spread information through publications and discussions. Canvassing committees divided up congregations so that small teams could visit each member at home within a short period of time to solicit a pledge to give. The method intentionally encouraged competition, both among the solicitors and the donors. Donors then fulfilled their pledges

¹³ Scott M. Cutlip, *Fund Raising in the United States: Its Role in America's Philanthropy* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1965).

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 38-50, quote on 38; see also Lyman L. Pierce, "Philanthropy--A Major Big Business," *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 2, no. 1 (January 1938): 140-45.

on a weekly basis. Proponents of the EMC hoped the method would increase commitments, broaden the pool of donors, and encourage "nominal givers" (i.e. those who only gave a nickel or dime each year) to give weekly what had been giving annually. For most denominations, the EMC covered both church expenses, including the pastor's salary and building upkeep, as well as benevolences, such as foreign and home missions.¹⁵

Pierce gave the Every Member Canvass a name and added elements of his whirlwind campaigns, but the Laymen's Missionary Movement had already been advocating a similar program at the time of his arrival. J. Campbell White was focusing his efforts on the missionary committee. Composed of laymen, unsurprisingly, the committee served as fundraisers, educators, and spiritual leaders for missions. Presumably because the laymen mainly held business backgrounds, White claimed the committees would think more strategically about financing and could publicize missions work to compete with the many other calls for donations. Though White encouraged "an offering every week, from every member, according to his ability," it was not his main concern. Like the EMC, the initial canvass in White's plan occurred outside of church services, in order to "cover absolutely the whole membership, ... rich [and] poor." In the end, the difference between White's plan and the EMC was more of emphasis than of substance.¹⁶

Nevertheless, the EMC attracted attention in ways White's plan never would. The EMC quickly became the go-to method of fundraising. While mission boards advocated various schemes discussed below, the EMC attracted the most attention by far, and many churches in various denominations adopted it between 1910 and 1915. Within three years,

¹⁵ Herman C. Weber, *The Every Member Canvass: People or Pocket-Books* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1932).

¹⁶ J. Campbell White, *Methods of Enlisting Men in Missions* (New York: Laymen's Missionary Movement, [1909?]), quotes on 7 and 17; "Why a Missionary Committee?" (Athens, Ga: Laymen's Missionary Movement, n.d.).

nearly 80 percent of Presbyterian Churches (U.S.A.) participated in the canvass.¹⁷ Unlike almost every other church fundraising scheme, the EMC has also had staying power. It remained especially popular until the mid-twentieth century and some churches continue to employ it today, particularly in the Episcopal Church.¹⁸

While other fundraising schemes had previously employed elements of the EMC, the EMC distinguished itself in the manner of the canvass. The canvass forced each congregant to make a pledge of support to fellow members of the congregation. As H. C. Weber, EMC director of the Presbyterian Church, USA, later stated, only somewhat disingenuously, “The canvass rightly conceived is a problem in human relations and not a plan for raising money.”¹⁹ Weber sought to improve the image of fundraising by deemphasizing monetary conversations and underlining the role of the canvass in bringing people together and, ultimately, encouraging them to be better neighbors.

Weber emphasized the importance of committees’ selections of canvassers and offered them tips on how to approach their work. He advised the canvassers to distinguish individuals according to types of giving. Large givers could provide publicity for the canvass, while those who pledged but gave nothing were “a rotten spot in the member’s life and should be cured or cut out as part of the church’s evangelistic and redemptive work.”²⁰ “Canvassers, too, are people,” Weber noted, and “should always be selected. They should not be asked to volunteer,” because a well-selected group could force acquaintances to solicit

¹⁷ “Sixth Annual Report,” [1917], box 51, folder 4, Ecumenical and Relations Records.

¹⁸ One journalist estimated that half of all Protestant denominations were employing the EMC in 1957, though it also claimed that only one in twenty did it well. It is also important to note that the EMC incorporated a wide variety of practices by the mid-twentieth century. “Your Church Running a Canvass,” *Changing Times* 2, no. 10 (October 1957): 39; William H. Leach, “Financing the Local Church,” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 332 (November 1960): 76; James David Hudnut-Beumler, *Generous Saints: Congregations Rethinking Ethics and Money* (Bethesda, MD: Alban Institute, 1999), 51-52.

¹⁹ Weber, *The Every Member Canvass*, 11.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 31.

one another.²¹ If the canvasser's arguments could not produce a positive commitment, in other words, guilt likely proved sufficiently persuasive.

On the surface, any scheme that increased the number of donors and the size of their gifts would appear to contrast with earlier trends toward that focused more narrowly on wealthy donors. Historians have adopted this interpretation and cited the EMC as evidence of the democratization of American philanthropy. The goal of getting everyone to participate in giving, according to this perspective, helped create a "culture of giving."²² Ministers and church leaders understood the EMC in the context of decades-long efforts to promote stewardship. Church leaders had thought stewardship would be the panacea for monetary troubles, but it failed to deliver. Seeking novel fundraising schemes and new, more focused interpretations of stewardship, ministers turned to the EMC, which forced the laity to participate in the canvass itself.²³

The EMC undoubtedly promoted greater giving, which could legitimately be considered the only criterion on which to judge it. It is misleading, however, to associate it with the democratization of American philanthropy, since it neither changed the governance structure of philanthropy nor encouraged social equality. Indeed, it promoted greater centralization. For one, the EMC shifted the focus away from disparate women's societies and ministers toward committees composed primarily of elite members of congregations. Granted, in the Presbyterian Church (USA), men and women canvassed together and, after some debate, the General Assembly allowed women to direct their contributions toward the

²¹ Ibid., 34-35.

²² Cutlip, *Fund Raising in the United States*, esp. ch. 2-3; Olivier Zunz, *Philanthropy in America: A History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012), ch. 2, esp. 62-63.

²³ James David Hudnut-Beumler, *In Pursuit of the Almighty's Dollar: A History of Money and American Protestantism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 102-110. It is important to note that Hudnut-Beumler focuses on the 1920s, after the EMC had been developing for a decade.

budget of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society. However, the EMC reduced the self-governance, at least as it applied to financing, of the women's voluntary societies and established a new Joint Executive Committee, consisting of three members from the church leadership and three members representing the benevolences, all men.²⁴

Ministers generally liked the EMC, but that did not mean it increased their control over church finances or promoted a more democratic polity. The EMC envisioned the role of the ministers as promoters, contributing the moral and exegetical justification for participating in the canvass. Most ministers far preferred that intellectual role to the practical work of soliciting and collecting contributions. The EMC gave those practical responsibilities to the canvassing committee and to denominational supervisory groups, thus diluting power over finances on a local level and centralizing it on a denominational level.²⁵

One case from 1913-1914 illustrates the dilemma of whether to interpret the EMC as democratizing or centralizing. The White Plains, New York, congregation of the Westchester Congregational Church was facing a shortfall in giving to foreign missions. Coincidentally, a conference on the EMC was passing through town and so the congregation debated whether to hold a local canvass. The officers of the church unanimously approved, but took no action until all the men of the church voted in favor. As a result of this "democratic" process, "the men naturally felt that this was their own idea." Next, forty men formed a committee to perform the canvass and the church sent letters about the canvass to every church member. In this instance, men did not represent their wives and women received

²⁴ The Presbyterians dissolved the Joint Executive Committee in 1915 and replaced it with a new Every Member Plan Committee. The new committee represented the church better, with one member from each benevolent board, but it remained a centralized organization presiding over the church's finances. "Conference of the Boards," 16 March 1915, box 50, folder 17, Ecumenical Mission and Relations Records.

²⁵ D. M. Clagett, "Report of the Committee of the Presbyterian United Movement," [1916?], box 51, folder 4, Ecumenical Mission and Relations Records.

separate letters, urging their participation in the giving, if not in the soliciting. The men on the canvassing committee were told which families to visit and “were instructed to learn what they could about the families before making the visits.” On the morning of the canvass, the pastor preached about giving and the EMC and then the men made their rounds. “In their eagerness to have some part in the campaign,” the women of the congregation prepared a supper for the canvassers. In the end, local support rose 20 percent and giving to benevolences rose 60 percent.²⁶

The White Plains Congregational Church mixed elements of democracy with centralization. Crescens Hubbard, the church treasurer whose pamphlet forms the basis of the preceding paragraph, took pains to emphasize the collective decision-making that led to 1914 EMC. While that initial decision may have resulted from male suffrage, everything else suggested a hierarchy. Canvassers were appointed and they were told whom to visit. Who made those appointments, Hubbard did not say. The church then sent donations for benevolences to the various boards, including the American Board. Hubbard clearly interpreted the campaign as a success and the church did go from a shortfall to a surplus, but to identify the process as democratic mistakes nominal collective action for actual power.²⁷

It is also a mistake to associate the EMC too strongly with the tradition of “professional” fundraising.²⁸ Ward and Pierce’s decision in 1919 to establish a firm specifically devoted to fundraising remained more than a decade in the future. Pierce’s work on the EMC differed little from the plan that J. Campbell White, an “amateur” fundraiser, was developing. Contemporaries certainly perceived the EMC to be a new method and the

²⁶ Crescens Hubbard, *How One Church Conducted an Every-Member Canvass* (Commission on Missions of the National Council of Congregational Churches, [1914]).

²⁷ The methods that Hubbard described only continued to expand in complexity and systematization. See William H. Leach, *Handbook of Church Management* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ.: Prentice-Hall, 1958), 219-28.

²⁸ This is in reference to the focus of Scott Cutlip in Cutlip, *Fund Raising in the United States*.

term “Every Member Canvass” was an invention of the early twentieth century.²⁹ The idea (or ideal) of seeking donations from every member of a denomination, though, long preceded the EMC. The 1871 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, USA resolved that “every member of our communion contribute to [foreign missions].”³⁰ The American Board’s Judson Smith proposed raising an additional \$50,000 for Armenian relief work in 1896 by asking every member to donate a dime.³¹ Some mission movement officials acknowledged this long history preceding the EMC, even quoting appeals from decades or centuries earlier that sought essentially the same goals as the EMC.³²

In the years preceding widespread adoption of the EMC, the American Board had been advocating the Minneapolis Plan, which had many of the same characteristics as the EMC. Like the EMC, the Minneapolis Plan sought to systematize giving by eliminating the diverse ways individuals gave and to what they gave. Both the EMC and the Minneapolis Plan combatted “the system in vogue in many churches, by which a free rein is given to all solicitors for benevolent funds.” Rather than periodic collections from women’s societies, men’s societies, and the church as a whole for a wide variety of purposes, the Minneapolis Plan advocated weekly collections with a definite goal in mind for all benevolences. Pastors asked for money from the church as a whole, not for any particular purpose, until the specified sum was achieved. It was then divided according to the prearranged distribution and the pastor promised to stop his solicitations until the following year.³³

²⁹ Google Ngram points to a sharp increase in its usage between 1910 and 1920 followed by a sharp decline. Usage peaked twice more, around 1940 and around 1960, both followed by sharp declines. Prior to 1910, Ngram finds virtually no usage of the term.

³⁰ Board of Foreign Missions, *Annual Report* (Philadelphia, 1871), 90.

³¹ C. C. Creagan to Judson Smith, 2 June 1896, ABC 12.1, vol. 17, ABCFM Archives.

³² For example, “Every Man According to their Several Possessions,” *Assembly Herald* 21, no. 3 (March 1915): 137. The minutes of the General Assembly annually referenced the eighteenth-century “Fund for Pious Purposes” as a precursor of the EMC.

³³ Cornelius Patton, “The Minneapolis Plan,” pamphlet, [1904?], ABC 76, vol. 1, ABCFM Archives

The EMC quickly merged with ongoing efforts to coordinate giving among benevolences.³⁴ That way each board did not need to rely on the interest of individual pastors or its own particular attraction to congregants. Anyone could have had a reason not to give to one or more of five or ten different charities: lack of resources or interest in the work, dislike of a particular official, or the pastor failing to promote it. With the EMC and cooperative plans, it became increasingly difficult to give nothing. To do so would have suggested rejection of all the work of the church, which undoubtedly would have led to questions about whether one belonged in the church at all. By removing many excuses for not giving and by adding an element of peer pressure, the EMC succeeded to a far greater degree than earlier fundraising schemes. The brilliance of the tactic should not hide the fact that the method did not promote democracy. It tended to take away the power of individuals, ministers, and congregants, to decide for themselves how much one cause deserved over another.

Robert Speer advocated a more traditional manner of fundraising, not only in response to harebrained ideas like that of J. Campbell White, but also when confronted with more logical methods. Presbyterian polity granted the General Assembly (an annual meeting of church leaders and laity) the power to make all denominational decisions, including budgets. Replicating arguments that the boards made in complaints about women's societies, the General Assembly in 1912 proposed a centralized treasurer to promote the more efficient management of the church finances. The treasurer would have overseen the finances of all Presbyterian boards, including the Board of Foreign Missions (BFM), Woman's Foreign Missionary Society, home mission board, and others. The proposal failed,

³⁴ One major exception, discussed in further detail below, was in the Presbyterian Church. The truism that the exception proves the rule seems to apply here.

partly due to the strong opposition from the BFM. Speer argued that the BFM's treasurer had an extremely complicated job, managing donations, disbursement, investments, and overseas real estate, work that a centralized treasurer could not have handled alone. In more general terms, though, Speer lamented the growing tendency "to separate still further the donors from the actual work which their gifts support. Such a Treasurer ... would have no living touch with the work which the money passing through his hands was doing. The palsy of a purely banking officialism would fall upon the administration of the benevolent accounts."³⁵

While the centralized treasurer scheme never came to fruition, centralized giving did become a reality. By allowing donors to give to benevolences in general, rather than to foreign missions one week, home missions the next, perhaps church erection the following, etc., cooperative plans simplified church collections for both ministers and parishioners. The Congregational Church and Presbyterian Church (USA) adopted cooperative plans in the early 1910s.

The American Board and the Presbyterian BFM had some trepidation from the start. Both boards had encouraged centralization when it had come to their own control over the women's boards and financial resources devoted to foreign missions, but were loath to let an outside body determine what percentage foreign missions deserved among all the donations for benevolences within their respective denominations. Part of this concern was undoubtedly the natural response to the feeling that they were losing some control or power. In addition, though, both the American Board and the BFM felt their work appealed to the public more than, say, relief funds for retired ministers. Their missionaries traveled the wide

³⁵ Robert Speer to David G. Wylie, 23 December 1912, box 50, folder 15, Ecumenical Mission and Relations Records.

world, risked their lives, and brought back stories and foreign goods that congregations consumed with enthusiasm. While the United Movement offered “great possibilities for good, ... it is imperative ... [to] keep our churches informed on Foreign Missions,” A. Woodruff Halsey warned his Presbyterian colleagues.³⁶ The officials’ responses to the cooperative scheme clarified their beliefs about the merits of foreign missions, but also suggested the reasons many of these officials found they could best achieve their goals outside of the church.

The Presbyterians established a “Joint Executive Committee” in 1911 as part of the Presbyterian United Movement to coordinate their cooperative giving plan. In particular, the denomination tasked the committee with implementing the EMC, promoting interest in missions, and trying to prevent debts.³⁷ To clarify the bureaucratic overhaul, the *Assembly Herald* diagramed the movement’s structure (figure 4.1). Problems emerged from the start. First, the committee had little control over many factors related to the boards’ budgets, like the rate of return on their investments. Second, this added hierarchy could quickly interfere with local church structures, producing counterproductive tension. Of particular concern was whether women would be allowed to direct their donations to the allotment of their women’s societies (they could) and whether allotments as such would “evaporate the genuine spirit of scriptural giving, and transform the generous and gladsome giver into a reluctant and unwilling taxpayer.” The scheme also seemed to encourage frugality by reducing allotments to churches that gave less and increasing allotments to the generous.³⁸

³⁶ A. Woodruff Halsey to Members of the Executive Committee, 12 October 1914, box 50, folder 17, Ecumenical Mission and Relations Records.

³⁷ *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America*, New Series, vol. 12 (Philadelphia, 1912): 244.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 251-55.

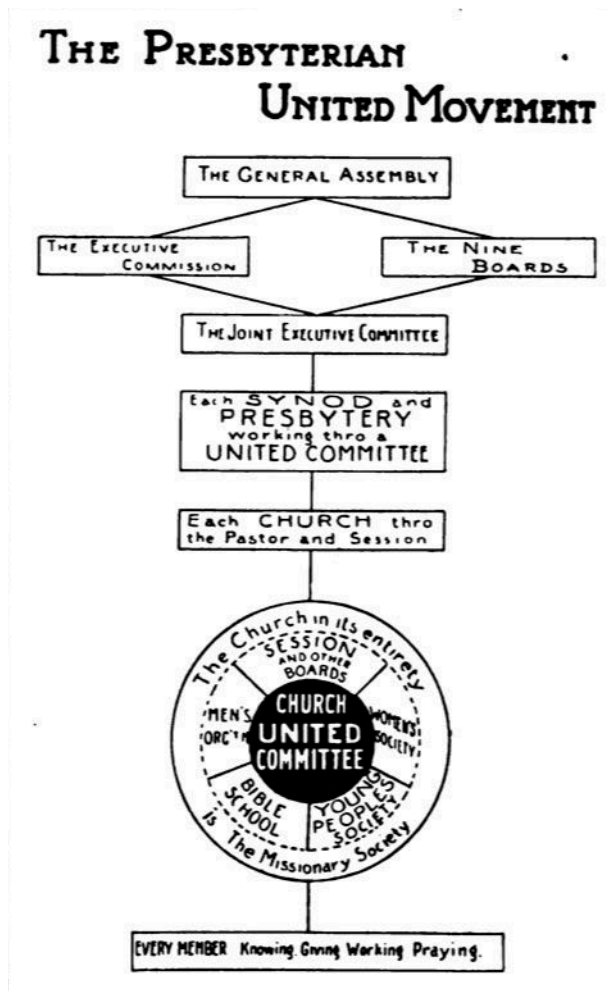


Figure 4.1: Presbyterian United Movement chart. The chart was meant to clarify the relationship between parishioners, benevolences, and the church hierarchy. This structure appealed to the Board of Foreign Mission's desire for every member to give, but the Board expressed concerns that missions would lose its particular appeal to parishioners.

Source: Assembly Herald 20, no. 1 (January 1914): 7

The Presbyterian BFM initially challenged the coordinated giving by asking the General Assembly for more of a share in the giving. When that didn't work, they abandoned the concept of appropriations altogether. By 1915 the EMC had apparently made apportionment unnecessary and, after protests from the various benevolence boards, the Church abolished the Joint Executive Committee. It replaced it with a new committee focused exclusively on the EMC and with a slightly larger makeup, with representation from each of the boards.³⁹ Although the Church began the apportionment scheme with high hopes, by the time it abandoned it, apportionment was being described as “a mechanical and

³⁹ Abolition of the Joint Executive Committee, 1913-1915, box 50, folder 17, Ecumenical Mission and Relations Records.

quite subordinate feature of the Budget Plan which has only served to divert attention from what is really primary, essential and vital, viz.: the application of Scriptural principle of enlisting every member to give as an integral part of the weekly worship.”⁴⁰

Robert Speer led the opposition to the apportionment plan. Speer correctly noted that despite all the praise given to “systematic benevolence,” the concept was hardly new. He specifically referenced the American Systematic Beneficence Society, founded in 1856. Speer, like almost every church official, admonished parishioners for failing to support missions to a sufficient degree, but identified the problem as one of knowledge and a sense of proportion, not of systematization. Those who were giving too little did so because they required “objective information about the definite work to be done and ... presentation of sufficiently distinct and concrete tasks.” Cooperative plans not only did nothing to help educate parishioners, but they also encouraged them to think of benevolences as “undifferentiated.” Speer argued that donors ought to be required to indicate exactly how money should be divided. He feared the “new plans instead of enlarging the giving of the Church are drying it up at its springs.”⁴¹

American Board Home Secretary Cornelius Patton expressed his own concerns about the Congregational Church’s cooperative plan to James Barton in 1915. He asked Barton to write a statement on the subject of “What the American Board stands for” to give to corporate members. For the actual content of the statement, Patton suggested an emphasis on the Board’s ideals, namely promoting the “native church,” cooperation among various mission boards, and “the non-sectarian character of our propaganda.” Those specifics, though, were all meant to serve the larger goal of “fill[ing] the minds of our new

⁴⁰ “The Presbyterian United Movement,” *Assembly Herald* 20, no. 4 (April 1914): 183.

⁴¹ Robert E. Speer, “The Home Base,” *Assembly Herald* 20, no. 6 (June 1914): 302-03. For the Joint Executive Committee’s objections to the apportionment system, see *Minutes of the General Assembly* (1912): 260.

Corporate Members with the idea of the importance and bigness of the Board. We cannot afford to have this work merged in their minds with that of the other denominational agencies, simply one more thing that Congregationalists are doing.”⁴² While the cooperative plan worked to unite donations, the American Board found it essential to differentiate the work.

The American Board needed to balance its desire for donors to be interested in the specific work of the Board (as opposed to other benevolences) with the need for them not to be too interested in a particular aspect of the work. “Specials” epitomized the latter problem and it exasperated American Board officials. A special was simply a gift that a donor asked to serve a particular purpose. Of course, the officials loved to receive gifts with specific intents as long as they were of a sufficient size (e.g. Rockefeller’s “tainted money” donation). The problem arose with small gifts, to pay the tuition of a student in Shansi, China, for example, or to support a “native worker” in Mindanao in the Philippines. Those gifts added endless complications. The donor was expressing a particular interest in foreign missions, which officials wanted to cultivate and not snub, but a special also required them to keep detailed records of what money went where and to make sure the missionary knew that person x gave amount y for purpose z . The Board was “simply act[ing] as a receiving and forwarding agency.”⁴³ Even more problematic, the donor likely viewed the gift as fulfillment of an annual pledge, reducing contributions to the Board’s general budget. If specials became too popular, the Board might not have been able to pay for basic necessities. As it was, by 1914, the Board was receiving five hundred specials per year.⁴⁴

⁴² Cornelius Patton to James Barton, 18 September 1915, ABC 4.1, vol. 23, ABCFM Archives.

⁴³ Cornelius Patton to Hubert C. Herring, 14 December 1914, ABC 4.1, vol. 21, ABCFM Archives.

⁴⁴ Brewer Eddy to David P. Jones, 2 May 1914, ABC 4.2, vol. 10, ABCFM Archives.

From the perspective of the donor, specials made perfect sense. They showed not only that the donor supported the work of foreign missions, but was so deeply interested that he or she knew a specific mission station or even missionary as well as an object that would facilitate the work. In addition, the donor likely saw the gift as an act of generosity, deserving the consideration entailed in following certain stipulations. Finally, the most public donations, such as Rockefeller's, specified their purposes, so clearly the Board allowed donors to make those stipulations.

Home Secretary Cornelius Patton and his assistant, Brewer Eddy, composed hundreds, likely thousands, of letters in the 1910s discouraging specials.⁴⁵ They offered the logical arguments noted above to help persuade donors to remove stipulations on their gifts, but they also had a more practical tool. With the advent of cooperative giving, the denomination asked each church to contribute a specific amount to benevolences, based mainly on the size and wealth of the church. The Board refused to count specials against that apportionment. This arrangement often caused confusion and discrepancies between American Board accounting and local accounting.⁴⁶

Missionaries themselves also interfered with the fundraising process on occasion by encouraging specials. Normally their itinerancy while on furlough added fuel to the mission

⁴⁵ While concerns about specials came to a head in the 1910s, it was a slowly developing process. Even in the early 1890s, officials cautioned donors that giving to "special objects" was more symbolic than actual. In forwarding a circular entitled "Donors to Special Objects" to a Christian Endeavor Society in Topeka, Kansas, E. E. Strong wrote, "What we do do, as you will see by this circular, is send occasional letters, such as are sent us, to donors to a certain class. As for instance, a letter from a missionary or student about schools in Turkey, to all who give for schools." E. E. Strong to Maurice P. Gould, 14 September 1893, ABC 5.1, vol. 11, ABCFM Archives.

Having not yet developed an alternative solution, the problem for the officials was the popularity of specials. M. D. Wingate of the W.B.M.I. made a request in 1897 that typified the challenges facing the Board. "We feel we ought to have a correct list of the items for this year. The pressure being as it is for special objects, it is necessary that we should know more definitely than we do as to whether this and that school, Bible reader, etc. is going on as usual." M. D. Wingate to James Barton, 11 February 1897, ABC 12.1, vol. 16, ABCFM Archives.

⁴⁶ For example, Cornelius Patton to Willard L. Sperry, 23 December 1914, ABC 4.1, vol. 21, ABCFM Archives.

movement fire, but sometimes missionaries used their circuits to promote their own personal endeavors without prior approval from the Prudential Committee. That approval only came on a limited basis, partly to prevent any damage to general collections and partly to regulate the number of appeals delivered to churches.⁴⁷ Cornelius Patton felt compelled to refuse Murray Frame's request for a special donated by a church in Peoria, Illinois, for his mission in Peking. Although the church had apparently agreed to offer the money, it would have been unfair to give more money to foreign missions and nothing to other benevolent societies. "We are a chain-gang in this matter, and in some instances the arrangement works to the detriment of the Board, but so long as this particular church has not yet achieved its apportionment we cannot complain."⁴⁸ Patton warned missionary Wynn C. Fairfield of that circumstance. Noting objections to specials in general, Patton specifically condemned "the securing of a large number of specials on the part of a missionary based purely upon his personal solicitation and connections, whereby he greatly expands the work, so that when the source of these gifts dries up the work comes upon the budget of the Board without the Board ever having taken any action in the matter or authorized the expansion."⁴⁹ When Samuel Smith's People's Church in St. Paul, Minnesota, complied with a missionary's appeal to pay for a "native" pastor, Brewer Eddy stated explicitly that "it was not a help to the Board's treasury."⁵⁰

Occasionally the American Board bent its rules regarding specials, somehow allowing the gift to be acknowledged, but that was not the preferred approach.⁵¹ Instead, its solution

⁴⁷ Cornelius Patton to Fred F. Goodsell, 12 February 1915, ABC 4.1, vol. 22, ABCFM Archives.

⁴⁸ Cornelius Patton to Murray Frame, 1 July 1914, ABC 4.1, vol. 20, ABCFM Archives.

⁴⁹ Cornelius Patton to Wynn C. Fairfield, 12 June 1914, ABC 4.1, vol. 20, ABCFM Archives

⁵⁰ Brewer Eddy to Samuel G. Smith, 30 January 1914 and Brewer Eddy to David P. Jones, 2 May 1914, ABC 4.2, vol. 10, ABCFM Archives.

⁵¹ For example, when churches in New Haven and White Plains wanted credit for their specials, the Prudential Committee decided to accede to those wishes, but to also increase the churches' appropriation by

to the specials problem was a scheme called the “Station Plan.” It allowed churches, Sunday Schools, and women’s societies to direct their money to a particular mission station. For American Board officials, it seemed an ideal compromise. The missions sent quarterly updates specifically to the churches and societies supporting it under the Station Plan. This allowed donors to follow developments of a particular country and mission more easily, establishing the sort of connection that officials thought promoted giving. At the same time, the donors had no say over how the money was used. Since officials in Boston controlled which missions could receive money under the Station Plan, the plan gave donors the illusion of choice while allowing officials to guarantee that their choice would benefit the Board.⁵²

Lyman Pierce and Charles Sumner Ward did not revolutionize mission movement fundraising, but the mission boards were trying to adapt to keep up with new ideas. The new schemes—the EMC, the Minneapolis Plan, cooperative plans, and the Station Plan—had been in the works for many years, but also represented changed tactics. The plans all reflected the mission boards’ desire to streamline giving without diminishing interest in foreign missions in particular. While J. Campbell White’s proposal to raise millions of dollars by taking two-hundred men and women on a world tour might have been the most outlandish, his goals differed little from the goals of all the plans. Even the ever-practical Robert Speer set a goal of quadrupling the number of missionaries and the size of the

the amount of the special so it would have no impact on the overall budget. Minutes of the Executive Subcommittee, 3 February 1914, ABC 81.1, vol. 12, ABCFM Archives.

⁵² See Brewer Eddy to Theodore H. Wilson, 4 May 1914, ABC 4.2, vol. 10, ABCFM Archives. The Presbyterian BFM offered a similar plan, distributing “shares” of a mission for churches and individuals that could not afford to adopt an entire station or missionary. Other than the more market-oriented nomenclature, the scheme was essentially the same as the American Board’s Station Plan. See William P. Schell, “The Vital Relation of the Individual Church to the Board of Foreign Missions,” *Assembly Herald* 20, no. 6 (June 1914): 306.

Presbyterian board's budget.⁵³ Each scheme attempted to bring in enough money to “evangelize the world in this generation.” World War I would present new opportunities and new challenges to achieve that goal.

Vibrating between Hope and Fear: The European War

James Barton of the American Board and the Presbyterian BFM secretaries exchanged a frantic series of communications in August 1914. Although some sort of conflagration appeared inevitable, particularly in eastern Europe, it was the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand and Duchess Sophie on June 28 that precipitated the various invasions and declarations of war at the start the Great War.⁵⁴ Once those dominos fell and the scale of the conflict became increasingly clear, American Protestant mission boards faced a host of unanticipated challenges. For the American Board, the situation was made worse by the fact that Secretary Brewer Eddy was himself in Europe at the time, adding anxiety about his safety to the challenges of covering his workload during a period of heightened activity.

The Ottoman Empire presented the most immediate concern for both the American Board and the BFM, mainly for financial reasons. Banks throughout the empire refused to honor the mission boards' British drafts. The Great War would eventually begin to shift the financial capital of the world from London to New York, but that transformation remained unforeseen in the summer of 1914. The American Board employed the London-based Baring Brothers & Co. to transmit money to its missionaries while the Presbyterians went with Brown Brothers, which had offices in New York, Boston, and London, among other

⁵³ Robert Speer, “The World Task of the Presbyterian Church,” *Assembly Herald* 20, no. 1 (January 1914): 70.

⁵⁴ World War I and the Great War will be used more or less interchangeably to refer to the period between 1914 and 1918 or a portion thereof. Contemporaries obviously did not use “World War I” at all and the Great War only became the predominant moniker as the scale of the conflict took hold. While the United States stayed neutral, the European War was the preferred name, despite the fact that from the very first British shots of the war, in Togoland, the conflict extended far beyond Europe. In my usage below, the European War refers only to the period before the United States declared war on Germany in April 1917.

places. London had entered financial chaos several weeks earlier when Serbia rejected Austria's July 23 ultimatum, making war next to inevitable. As in the financial crisis in 2007-2008, banks and corporations immediately sought to protect themselves. They held on to their cash reserves, particularly gold, and ceased to lend. Markets quickly froze. To avoid further calamity, the London and New York Stock Exchanges closed on July 31. It took a week for banks to reopen in London. The New York Stock Exchange remained closed for a month. The London exchange did not reopen until January 4, 1915. Mission boards mainly faulted banks in Constantinople for not honoring their British or American drafts, but in any event, missionaries still lacked cash.⁵⁵

Similar problems arose around the world. The Presbyterian BFM was forced to ask Standard Oil for help. The Board made payments directly to the company's treasurer in New York who then directed operatives in Asia to distribute gold to the Presbyterian missionaries.⁵⁶ Elsewhere, such as India, the missionaries found no solution but to pay skyrocketing rates of exchange.

Still, the situation in Anatolia, Syria, and Egypt attracted special concern. Within days of the banks closing, Charles A. Dana (unrelated to the nineteenth-century *New York Tribune* journalist) wrote to Russell Carter in desperation. Dana held a critical role for American Presbyterian missions in the Ottoman Empire. As the head of the American Mission Press in Beirut, which employed a large staff, and the treasurer of the Syrian mission, practically every important transaction went through him. In the face of the market closures, Dana was

⁵⁵ On the 1914 financial crisis in London, see Richard Roberts, *Saving the City: The Great Financial Crisis of 1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

⁵⁶ In numerous instances where the global banking structure temporarily halts, Standard Oil provided American transnational nonprofits with a source of money. It was one of the few American corporations whose reach extended almost as far as foreign missions and whose wealth vastly exceeded any charitable society. Arthur Brown to [Presbyterian missionaries], 23 September 1914, box 6, folder 23, Ecumenical Mission and Relations Records.

left powerless. The Presbyterian mission had money and drafts on banks in London and New York as well as the Ottoman Bank and the Deutsche Palestine Bank, but his notes were “not worth the paper they are printed on,” because the banks were failing and no one would honor the drafts.⁵⁷ W. W. Peet, the American Board’s veteran treasurer in Constantinople faced the same problem and wired James Barton. “We are all suffering terribly for gold,” he complained. He wanted Barton to make a direct plea to President Woodrow Wilson for assistance. Barton immediately contacted Arthur Brown of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions. He hoped that presenting a joint appeal with one of the wealthiest mission boards would bolster their case.⁵⁸

On August 26, Barton met with Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan along with A. Woodruff Halsey of the Presbyterian board. Bryan asked them not to say anything except that “the government has this whole matter well in hand.”⁵⁹ He then dispatched the *USS North Carolina*, a cruiser, to Constantinople from Falmouth in southwest England. It carried \$150,000 in gold for the American Board, Board of Foreign Missions, and other missionary enterprises in the region, as well as for American tourists. The various boards reimbursed Washington, making deposits with the Treasury for the gold and for a previous loan of \$17,800 that Ambassador Henry Morgenthau, Sr. had personally offered for immediate assistance.⁶⁰ Washington provided this aid at no expense to the mission boards.⁶¹

⁵⁷ C. A. Dana to Russell Carter, 8 August 1914, box 6, folder 22, Ecumenical Mission and Relations Records.

⁵⁸ James Barton to Arthur Brown, 21 August 1914, box 6, folder 22, Ecumenical Mission and Relations Records.

⁵⁹ A. Woodruff Halsey to D. Stuart Dodge, 27 August 1914, box 6, folder 22, Ecumenical Mission and Relations Records.

⁶⁰ Circular from James Barton, 28 August 1914, ABC 9.5.1, box 8, folder 12, and Cornelius Patton to Brewer Eddy, 27 August 1914, ABC 4.1, vol. 20, ABCFM Archives; Correspondence between Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions and the U.S. State Department, August-September 1914, box 6, folder 22, Ecumenical Mission and Relations Records.

⁶¹ A. Woodruff Halsey to Cleveland Dodge, 2 September 1914, box 6, folder 22, Ecumenical Mission and Relations Records.

The emergency underlined the collaboration between mission boards and the federal government. In an age of nearly instant communication, through telegraph wires deep in the Atlantic, Peet's frantic search for cash found quick resolution. Less than a month after the start of the financial crisis, the federal government was already ordering ships thousands of miles away on a relief mission and within a few months, missionaries in the Ottoman Empire could access sufficient gold without government assistance.

At the same time, the start of the war also highlighted the weakness of mission movement financing. The boards endured the volatility of the markets and the caprice of federal politics. Nothing obligated Bryan to dispatch the *North Carolina*; a different secretary of state might not have taken any action. Also, the mission boards appeared to think that individually they might not have held enough clout to sway even the "godly hero," William Jennings Bryan.⁶² And finally, the government did *not* have "this whole matter well in hand." The Ottoman government prevented the *North Carolina* from entering the Dardanelles (with the excuse that mines made entry too dangerous) and the naval yacht *Scorpion* was forced to retrieve the gold on September 23. The gold remained in Constantinople, though, and would not get to other cities in the Ottoman Empire for some time. In mid-October, Beirut and Jerusalem, in particular, still needed funds. By that point, the bank restrictions had eased and the *North Carolina's* "gold did us no good and was not accepted," according to Katherine Jessup. The advent of rapid communication had done nothing to speed sea travel and two or three months without cash could have caused serious damage to the missions. Nevertheless, Jessup felt relieved by the presence of a US Navy vessel in the eastern Mediterranean (the *North Carolina*, as well as the *Tennessee*, which had been dispatched from the United States,

⁶² Michael Kazin, *A Godly Hero : The Life of William Jennings Bryan* (New York: Knopf, 2006).

both remained in the region). The American moral empire sometimes required a show of force.⁶³

While the cash crunch ended quite quickly, other problems arose as the Great War spread and grew in intensity. The war impacted almost every aspect of missions work, including its fundraising. Foreign missions benefited from a windfall in giving to war-related charities and they capitalized on the added publicity for humanitarianism. As reflected in the case of the gold shortage in Constantinople, the mission boards expanded their cooperation with the federal government. With the growth, before and during the war, of nonsectarian philanthropies that relied on extensive donor networks, the boards began employing new methods of raising money.

Neutral “in Speech and Writing,” Though Perhaps Not in Deed

Unlike coverage of the Armenian massacres in 1894-1896 or the Boxer Uprising in 1900, periodicals did not need to rely on missionary information to shape their interpretations of the European War. By any measure, missionaries played a bit part in the conflict and I am not arguing for a reinterpretation of the war itself.⁶⁴ Missionaries, mission boards, and supporters of missions did not disappear, however, and it is important to recognize the role of Americans in the world leading up to the war and the impact of the war on their work. The evolution of mission boards during and after the war points to the

⁶³ “U.S. Cruisers to Remain in Europe,” *New York Tribune*, September 24, 1914; “Syrian Ports Fear Attack by French,” *New York Tribune*, October 19, 1914; “U.S. Ready to Aid Americans in East,” *New York Tribune*, October 31, 1914; Katherine Jessup to Ralph E. Prime, 20 December 1914, box 6, folder 22, Ecumenical Mission and Relations Records.

⁶⁴ Ian Tyrrell has even argued missionaries and other reformers had so little impact on the war that their powerlessness marked the beginning of the end of the United States’s “moral empire.” To clarify, Tyrrell is claiming that American political and military leaders like Alfred Thayer Mahan, Elihu Root, Theodore Roosevelt, and Woodrow Wilson supported the ideals of the missionaries’ “benevolent empire,” but they resisted their interference in foreign affairs. During the war, therefore, reformers offered assistance, particularly in promoting peace, but could offer little real benefit. Ian R. Tyrrell, *Reforming the World: The Creation of America’s Moral Empire* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010), part 4.

gradual and complicated transformation of American global philanthropy from predominantly, or at least supposedly, religious and missionary in nature to nonsectarian and “humanitarian.” In the end, the bit part played by missionaries did little to influence the war and the missions could hardly be called war victims. They did, however, try to take advantage of the circumstances to raise additional capital. They succeeded to a degree, but never as much as they hoped.

Missionaries operating within the warring nations or their colonies faced certain immediate and pressing dangers, which concerned officials and supporters at home. In the early months of the war, channels of communication closed in parts of the Ottoman Empire, China, and in German colonies in Africa. The African colonies saw fighting particularly early in the war. French and British forces captured Togoland (roughly present-day Togo) within weeks of the declarations of war and on August 15, the countries decided on a coordinated attack against German Kamerun (roughly present-day Cameroon). The fighting in Kamerun, which contained a significant missionary presence of American Presbyterians, lasted far longer and resulted in many more casualties than in Togoland.⁶⁵ In September 1914, the English navy captured the German postal steamer *Germania*, which had been the American Board’s “only means of communication that our missionaries in [Micronesia] have with the outside world. It means that mail and provisions are cut off and they are dependent upon the native foods.”⁶⁶ Only fourteen years after the Boxer Uprising, when mission boards similarly lost contact with their missionaries, the lack of word troubled missionary supporters within the United States.

⁶⁵ For a military history of fighting along the Gulf of Guinea, see Byron Farwell, *The Great War in Africa, 1914-1918* (New York: Norton, 1986), ch. 1-5.

⁶⁶ Mabel E. Emerson to Theodore H. Wilson, 28 September 1914, ABC 4.2, vol. 11, ABCFM Archives. The ship would remain in Sydney harbor for the duration of the war.

In addition to freezing communication, as noted above, the start of the war froze exchange markets, making it virtually impossible for the boards to send money to foreign missionaries. “Letters of credit, bills of exchange, bank checks, nearly everything in that line is held up these days,” American Board Home Secretary Cornelius Patton told his main fundraisers.⁶⁷ The boards felt forced to consider costly alternatives, given the dire financial condition. Brown Brothers, for example, offered to send one thousand Turkish pounds to Constantinople at an exorbitant interest rate.⁶⁸ The American Board also considered taking out insurance at rates as high as 25 percent to protect deliveries. While American Board officials preferred to temporarily halt all shipments, the Board already had \$13,000 worth of goods on English and German ships at the start of the war and seriously considered spending \$3,000 to insure those assets.⁶⁹

Frozen exchange markets proved especially problematic because some of the missions felt they needed to increase their workload at the start of the war. Some 140 British and Irish missionaries (both Protestant and Catholic), representing fourteen denominations, were operating in Ottoman Syria at the start of the war. With the United Kingdom and the Ottoman Empire on opposing sides, all of these British subjects returned home. The remaining missionaries, mostly American Presbyterians, felt they needed to fill the void while at the same time the lack of currency forced them to cease their own publications.⁷⁰

The dangers of missionary work during war went beyond life and property. From the perspective of the denominational boards, the need to appear neutral was paramount.

Mission boards faced a particular complication due the independence of each missionary or,

⁶⁷ Cornelius Patton to Edward Lincoln Smith, 4 August 1914, ABC 4.1, vol. 20, ABCFM Archives.

⁶⁸ Cornelius Patton to Brewer Eddy, 27 August 1914, ABC 4.1, vol. 20, ABCFM Archives.

⁶⁹ Patton to Smith, 4 August 1914.

⁷⁰ “The Syrian Situation,” *Assembly Herald* 20, no. 12 (December 1914): 643-44; “War News from Workers at the Front,” *Assembly Herald* 21, no. 2 (February 1915): 113.

at least, each mission field. The interests of a mission in Kamerun, which had cooperated with the German colonial government and German missionaries for many years, differed greatly from the interests of a mission in British India. Mission boards could only respond tardily to missionaries' comments or publications that seemed to promote one side of the war. Self-preservation frequently conflicted with collective goals.

In the opening months of the war, the Presbyterian BFM sent several circulars to all missionary fields encouraging them to remain neutral "in speech and writing."⁷¹ The need to reiterate the directive and to specify the ways in which missionaries could appear partisan reflected the officials' challenges. By the end of 1914, the press had already received and published extracts of missionary letters, angering Arthur J. Brown. "We beg you," he wrote the missionaries, "to be exceedingly careful when you write to your relatives. Please caution them not to print your letters even in their local papers. ... It would be lamentable if the cause of Foreign Missions were to be identified with this strife."⁷²

To maintain total neutrality and to play the role of humanitarians, the missionaries were told to offer assistance to fellow missionaries from both sides of the conflict. Assistance came in many forms and often appeared to contravene the goal of neutrality. Basel Evangelical Missionary Society Secretary H. Dipper asked the Presbyterian board to send money to China on his behalf. Though Swiss, the Basil Society employed numerous Germans and had offices across the border in German Alsace. Since the Basel Society's treasurer was headquartered in Hong Kong, Dipper feared the British would cut off its flow of money. The most neutral course would have seemed to be to refuse such requests.

⁷¹ Arthur Brown "to the Missions," 27 August 1914, box 6, folder 23, Ecumenical Mission and Relations Records.

⁷² Arthur Brown to [Presbyterian missionaries], 30 December 1914, box 6, folder 23, Ecumenical Mission and Relations Records.

Otherwise, the BFM placed itself in a position of negating a British action clearly designed to harm German interests. While Dipper eventually found an alternative solution, depositing money in the Deutsche-Asiatische Bank in Berlin and Canton, the Presbyterian board also agreed to help in any way it could.⁷³

A similar arrangement arose in the German colony of Kamerun. At the very start of the battle for Kamerun, even before the capture of the coastal city of Douala, Karl Foertsch of the Gossner Missionary Society was requesting that the Presbyterian board transmit its funds to its missionaries in the region. Following the capture of Douala and Allied advances in the region, the BFM agreed to supply the German missionaries with any money they needed and also agreed to forward German correspondence with its own. As the battle in Kamerun raged throughout 1915, A. Woodruff Halsey sent Foertsch numerous updates.⁷⁴

Though willing to offer both information and material support for German missionaries, Halsey refused to partake in any discussion of the war itself. In Foertsch's initial request for assistance, he mentioned the "great successes" of the German army to which "we can thank God" and "the entire German populus [*sic*] glows with intense enthusiasm."⁷⁵ Halsey immediately put an end to the conversation, noting, "We absolutely refuse to take any part even in discussing of matters relating to the war."⁷⁶

⁷³ Correspondence between H. Dipper and the Board of Foreign Missions, 12 November 1914 to 22 January 1915, box 6, folders 22 and 24, Ecumenical Mission and Relations Records. The American Board also loaned money to a German missionary society in Canton, China. Cornelius Patton to Henry Oliver Hanman, 2 February 1915, ABC 4.1, vol. 22, ABCFM Archives.

⁷⁴ Correspondence between A. W. Halsey and K. Foertsch, 1914-1915, box 6, folders 22 and 24, Ecumenical Mission and Relations Records. Both Foertsch's original German letters and their translations are included in the archive. I base my analysis only on the translated text, which I presume Halsey was responding to.

⁷⁵ K. Foertsch to A. Woodruff Halsey, 17 September 1914, box 6, folder 22, Ecumenical Mission and Relations Records.

⁷⁶ A. Woodruff Halsey to K. Foertsch, 21 October 1914, box 6, folder 22, Ecumenical Mission and Relations Records.

In addition to the difficulties in maintaining neutrality and transmitting goods, money, and information between the United States and the mission fields, a more abstract problem existed. Mission boards feared the idea of a conflict among Christian nations would make both evangelism and fundraising more difficult. The Presbyterian BFM told missionaries to emphasize that “this war is not due to Christianity nor to a failure of Christianity, but to a disregard to its precepts and the failure of men to obey its principles.”⁷⁷ Paradoxically, the BFM argued that the war pointed to both the failure of Christianity and the possibility of the same. For believers in the “Gospel of Peace” to be “at each other’s throats” was a “horrible incongruity,” but the only solution to “end such monstrous incongruities” was to see Christianity as a “world opportunity.”⁷⁸ “Christianity will have to become Christian,” wrote a missionary in China.⁷⁹ Cornelius Patton described “this war of horror and shame” as having “embarrassed” the American Board.⁸⁰

These fears that non-Christian peoples would misinterpret Christianity as a belligerent religion belied the colonialist mentality of mission board officials. The BFM expressed particular concern that “the war may leave the Chinese to interpret western civilization in terms of force and violence, rather than in terms of peace and good-will.”⁸¹ It is doubtful that anyone in China would have had trouble thinking of western civilization in terms of force and violence after a century of occupation and intervention by “western civilizations.”

⁷⁷ Stanley White to Robert Speer, 2 October 1914, box 50, folder 11, Ecumenical Mission and Relations Records.

⁷⁸ “Christmas is a World Opportunity,” *Assembly Herald* 20, no. 12 (December 1914): 642.

⁷⁹ “The European War as Seen on the Mission Field,” *Assembly Herald* 21, no. 1 (January 1915): 17.

⁸⁰ Cornelius Patton to H. W. Luce, 27 August 1914, ABC 4.1, vol. 20, ABCFM Archives.

⁸¹ “The Effect of the War upon Mission Work in China,” *Assembly Herald* 21, no. 1 (January 1915): 16.

The challenges that mission boards faced with the outbreak of the war point both to broader American dilemmas regarding the meaning of neutrality and to the particular agendas of foreign missions. Although most Americans supported neutrality in the early years of the war, enacting neutrality posed greater challenges for American organizations operating around the world. The Presbyterian board chose to enact its version of neutrality by confining assistance, whether for the benefit of Allies or Central Powers, to the realm of missions-related activities. They were willing to go to almost any lengths to help any missionaries, regardless of nationality, continue their work, but would not comment on the war itself.

Warlike in Speech and Writing

The Presbyterian board's prohibition on war commentary did not inhibit its use of the war for fundraising purposes. When it came to the quest for money, the war was front and center. Both the American Board and Presbyterian BFM were somewhat surprised to discover that the war actually benefited their finances. Many of the concerns that the war elicited were immediately apparent with the start of hostilities, but how congregants would respond remained unclear for several months. At the same time, mission boards recognized that overseas conflicts had helped bring their work into the public consciousness in the past and, as it turned out, the Great War was no different. Giving to foreign mission societies appeared to be one of the most rapid means of offering support for the victims of the war, facilitating those fundraising efforts.

Both the American Board and Presbyterian board compared the European War with the Civil War. Northern foreign mission boards had survived the Civil War with relatively little change. If such a large domestic conflagration could not stop the mission movement, surely congregants could answer the contemporary crisis with equal vigor. Robert Speer of

the Presbyterian board viewed the war as a test and quoted the General Assembly report of 1862, which called for “onward movement in the missionary work.”⁸² His colleague Arthur Brown expanded the comparison to include examples of mission boards succeeding amid other conflicts, particularly British mission boards founded during the French Revolution and Napoleonic Wars and missionary achievements during the Crimean War and Boer Wars. “Without question, American Christians of to-day can equal the devotion and self-sacrifice of Christians of former days,” he challenged donors.⁸³

After addressing their concerns about frozen markets, the American Board quickly transitioned to a more optimistic attitude regarding the consequences of the war on missions financing. As Cornelius Patton wrote in September 1914, “We do not take war very much into account. The Board has lived through a great many political crises in Turkey, and the work grows apace. We seem to thrive on difficulties in this work. In fact, we try to make difficulties become opportunities.”⁸⁴ By February of 1915, Cornelius Patton was feeling good about the financial position of the American Board. “I find that the Boards are not suffering in their finances in any marked way, and in several instances the gifts are running ahead of last year. This general situation is true of all the leading Boards.” The war, according to Patton, was promoting a spirit of self-sacrifice, “a splendid test of the quality of the faith of our church members.”⁸⁵ The *Missionary Herald* remarked that “it would be strange indeed if every individual was not moved to increase his contribution in times like these.”⁸⁶

⁸² Robert Speer to S. G. Monfort, 28 September 1914, box 50, folder 11, Ecumenical Mission and Relations Records.

⁸³ Arthur Judson Brown, “Why Foreign Missions Cannot Retrench on Account of the War,” 1 December 1914, box 50, folder 12, Ecumenical Mission and Relations Records.

⁸⁴ Cornelius Patton to A. Amelia Wales, 9 September 1914, ABC 4.1, vol. 20, ABCFM Archives.

⁸⁵ Cornelius Patton to Henry Oliver Hanman, 2 February 1915, ABC 4.1, vol. 22, ABCFM Archives.

⁸⁶ “A Worthy Gain,” *Missionary Herald* 112, no. 1 (January 1916): 23.

Initially, the Presbyterians seemed to face very different circumstances. The war could not have arisen at a worse possible moment for the BFM. With the close of fiscal year 1913-1914 on March 31, the Presbyterian board found itself with a deficit of \$292,000. It was one of the largest deficits in the board's history. The war seemed to compound the problem, and the fact that both the home missionary society and publication society faced similar deficits made the situation even worse. In a fortuitous decision, the board had decided months before the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand to name the campaign to close the deficit, the No Retreat Fund.

The debt frayed nerves. The BFM asked the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society to help fill the gap, claiming the general board was paying the salaries of many missionary women and therefore deserved the women's support to close the debt. The women balked at the demand. They had more than exceeded their goals and argued that issuing emergency requests would be counterproductive.⁸⁷ If the women would not participate collectively in the No Retreat Fund, the BFM asked them to assume the support of more missionary women. They also demanded that focus remain on "the emergency that is upon us. ... There can be no question that the primary urgency is that we should meet this budget and avert the disaster of another deficit."⁸⁸ Whatever the interests of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society, whatever success they might have been achieving, the men prioritized the needs of the BFM.

Not helping the situation, the two groups disputed how the BFM calculated giving. Since the BFM issued the official publications of giving, the woman's societies had to

⁸⁷ Margaret Hodge to Robert Speer, 26 May 1914, box 50, folder 11, Ecumenical Mission and Relations Records.

⁸⁸ Circular to Women's Boards's Presidents, 7 October 1914, box 50, folder 10, Ecumenical Mission and Relations Records.

continually battle to get their statistics printed as they desired. In 1914, Mary Wood and Henrietta Hubbard wrote repeatedly to Robert Speer to complain about the BFM's calculations of giving. Among the disagreements, would giving to Christian Endeavor Societies, when submitted through the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society, be included in the receipts? How was the BFM calculating donations of the Young People's Societies? Depending on what was included in annual giving, the disparity totaled between one and two hundred thousand dollars.⁸⁹ The women had little desire to contribute to a No Retreat Fund anyway, but the fact that they might not even receive recognition for their work certainly did not make them more eager to help.

War metaphors had infused missionary rhetoric for decades, so it was not prophecy that led the Presbyterian board to reference "retreat" in their debt-raising scheme.⁹⁰ The cover of the January 1914 edition of *The Assembly Herald* (the Presbyterian monthly covering all benevolent societies, figure 4.2) epitomized these war metaphors. It featured a woman as a Roman soldier with a banner reading, "Presbyterians all together ... in simultaneous effort for all boards and causes." The gray background and the woman's cloak (a Roman *paludamentum*) blowing through the air suggested a mighty storm. Within the gray clouds, though, appeared to be rays of light and the woman's strength and steadiness made clear that no storm would dislodge her. In front of her stood a Roman shield with the word "Presbyterian," implying the protection of the church. She is, one assumes, the personification of the church itself.⁹¹

⁸⁹ Mary Wood to Robert Speer, 18 May 1914, and Henrietta Hubbard to Robert Speer, 22 May 1914, box 50, folder 11, Ecumenical Mission and Relations Records.

⁹⁰ In fact, a controversy arose shortly after the start of the campaign because the Presbyterian General Assembly adopted the same name for its own debt-raising scheme, also before the start of hostilities and apparently, somehow, unaware that the BFM was already using the name. Stanley White to Maitland Alexander, 25 June 1914, box 50, folder 11, Ecumenical Mission and Relations Records.

⁹¹ *The Assembly Herald* 20, no. 1 (January 1914), Cover. Though the cover offers a particularly graphic example of the use of militarism, the rhetoric used within the issue could equally prove the point. Encouraging

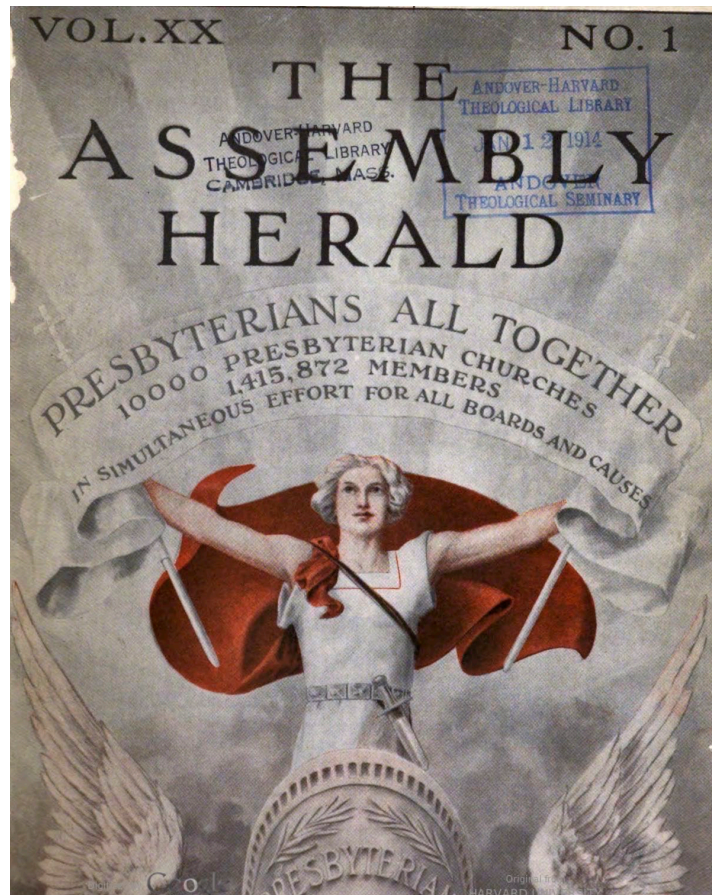


Figure 4.2: Assembly Herald January 1914 cover. The main publication of the Presbyterian benevolent boards opened 1914 with an image of the church militant. Following the outbreak of World War I months later, the use of military imagery and rhetoric would help the Board of Foreign Missions close its debt and raise additional capital.

Source: Assembly Herald 10, no. 1 (January 1914): cover

Once the war actually began, the use of war metaphors increased markedly. For many Americans, the European War seemed both very distant and yet ever-present, presenting a prime opportunity for the mission boards. To capitalize on that sentiment, the Presbyterians launched a campaign for a week of “self-denial” to close their debt. Like the

participation in the EMC, Robert Francis Coyle identified the church as an army with “every member on the firing line.” “Close up the ranks, Presbyterians! Should to shoulder, heart to heart, hand to hand for our great Captain! Be it our glory to be soldiers in that army that will never lower its colors until the whole world swings into the train of Jesus. Forward, the whole company! Forward, with Christ!” Robert Francis Coyle, “Forward with Christ,” *Assembly Herald* 20, no. 1 (January 1914): 5. Militarism was, in fact, so ubiquitous within missionary rhetoric that an exhaustive analysis could fill a book. The point here is to underline how seamlessly the Presbyterian BFM could integrate the European War into its fundraising appeals.

“No Retreat Fund,” the “self-denial” week reminded congregants of the actual suffering resulting from the war. The BFM emphasized the “solemn duty” of everyone to contribute and that this was an “extra emergency fund” that did not count toward the budget generally. Repeated use of the word “emergency” (e.g. “The Boards of Home and Foreign Missions are facing a great emergency,” “The emergency is now accentuated ... by the War,” “Present the emergency on January 3rd”) also reminded congregants of the war, which was regularly described as an “emergency.”⁹² Elsewhere, Robert Speer used a fundraising appeal to ask the Shadyside Presbyterian Church for “courageous and sacrificial loyalty.”⁹³ Although war metaphors were not uncommon, the usage here undoubtedly reminded congregants of the European War and, for those who believed the rhetoric, donations to foreign missions appeared to offer a means of participating in the self-sacrifice of soldiers without abandoning neutrality.

If congregants failed to connect the BFM’s war metaphors with the Great War, the board made its point explicit with direct references to the war in its fundraising appeals. In a list of “examples of self-denial” to be used in potential advertisements, first on the list was the Canadian Pacific Railway, whose employees collectively sacrificed a day’s wages to give to the government for the war effort.⁹⁴ The war had disproven that the imperial powers of “Great Britain and Germany and France were the true representatives of Christianity” and given missionaries, whether American, British, or German “an opportunity of moral advantage.” “This is our opportunity,” A.W. Halsey told pastors in Pittsburgh, and they

⁹² “Sacrificial Emergency Call of the Presbyterian Church,” [December 1914], box 50, folder 10, and Maitland Alexander, “Sacrificial Emergency Call,” 1 December 1914, box 50, folder 12, Ecumenical Mission and Relations Records; —, “Sacrificial Emergency Call of the Presbyterian Church,” *Assembly Herald* 21, no. 1 (January 1915): 14.

⁹³ Robert E. Speer to the Members of the Shadyside Presbyterian Church, 13 February 1915, box 50, folder 12, Ecumenical Mission and Relations Records.

⁹⁴ “Examples of Self Denial,” [1915], box 50, folder 12, Ecumenical Mission and Relations Records.

needed to close the deficit to take advantage.⁹⁵ Noting that the war had added additional costs both to “care for its own missionaries” and “to relieve the suffering and distress of missionaries of Continental Societies who have been entirely cut off from their support,” the BFM asked for increased giving.⁹⁶ In addition to the cost of helping other missionaries, specific causes for the increased expenses included the cost of transportation, rising costs to exchange money, and the cost of drugs and other goods.⁹⁷ Elsewhere the board asked for “sacrificial” giving in response to the war.⁹⁸

The BFM’s rhetoric allowed congregants to imagine themselves as participants in the efforts to alleviate suffering. In launching the “Sacrificial Emergency Call,” Maitland Alexander issued a call to arms, on behalf of God, he seemed to say. The “tremendous sorrows and sufferings of the war” and “the favor enjoyed by our own land through the blessings of Peace” created an opportunity that demanded a response. Thus far, the Church had built a “great machine” for “world-wide influence.” The war demanded humanitarian actions and the fact that Europe stood at the center meant that Americans would need to be the ones to respond. It needed “to meet the splendid opportunity with splendid gifts,” though, to exert its power at this moment of opportunity. Alexander called on “every one of our 10,000 churches [to] resolve that their full resources should be thrown to the help of the armies of the living God.” Preaching, praying, and giving, according to Alexander, were the weapons of God’s army.⁹⁹

⁹⁵ A. Woodruff Halsey to the Pastors of the Pittsburgh Presbytery,” 25 February 1915, box 50, folder 12, Ecumenical Mission and Relations Records.

⁹⁶ Circular to the New York Presbytery, 28 November 1914, box 50, folder 10, Ecumenical Mission and Relations Records.

⁹⁷ “War Emergency,” [October 1914], box 50, folder 10, Ecumenical Mission and Relations Records.

⁹⁸ Unsigned circular letter, [November 1914], box 50, folder 11, Ecumenical Mission and Relations Records.

⁹⁹ Maitland Alexander, “The Sacrificial Emergency Call,” *Assembly Herald* 21, no. 1 (January 1915): 1-2.

The givers themselves were only part of the “army.” Missionaries stood at the front-lines and the BFM made sure supporters knew of the bravery of these “soldiers.” In January 1915, a special edition of the BFM’s regular Bulletin pamphlet announced that “not one of the 1,226 missionaries has asked to come home on account of the war;” that none had suffered bodily harm or lost property, and that the missionaries mainly complained that new missionaries were not being sent to the field. Indeed, missionaries were interpreting the war not “merely as a great EMERGENCY, but a GREAT OPPORTUNITY for setting forth as never before the *‘truth as it is in Jesus.’*” The Bulletin closed by noting, “The WAR EMERGENCY has brought into clear relief the SACRIFICIAL spirit of missionary and native Christian in non-Christian lands. It is a noble CHALLENGE to the home Church,” thus bringing together the war with the fundraising schemes.¹⁰⁰

The excerpted letters in promotional materials emphasized the connections between missions and the war. Missionaries in West Africa reported on the movement of troops and German missionaries. In China, “life in the war zone continues to be full of excitement.” Introducing the letters from Syria, the Bulletin described the situation as a “storm center.” “In no one of the Missions is the condition of the people more pitiful, the work of the missionary more arduous, and the Christian spirit more manifest.” The Bulletin made clear that the war had not in the least diminished the work for missions and indeed, giving to foreign missions directly helped those suffering from the war without being partisan.¹⁰¹

The overall message of both the excerpted letters and the fundraising campaign in general was that missions represented a third alliance in the war, fighting for peace. Arthur Brown went even further, calling “foreign missions ... the antithesis of war, standing for

¹⁰⁰ “Extra War Emergency Bulletin,” January 1915, box 7, folder 1, Ecumenical Mission and Relations Records.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

everything in the relations of different peoples which would make war between them impossible.” God, according to Brown, identified “only one race and that is the human race.” Brown acknowledged the many noble charities that provided immediate relief for Europeans suffering directly from the war, but emphasized that donors needed to help him expand giving to foreign missions if they wanted to put an end to war for good. He even accused donors of dishonesty if they chose to give to war charities instead of missions. “The conjoint exhibit of moral failure, moral need and moral opportunity in the military tragedy to-day convulsing humanity calls Christians to a supreme test of how much they ... will dare and do to make [Christ] King and Peacemaker over this distracted earth.”¹⁰²

Brown’s message reflected a conception of Christianity as peace-loving and mission boards certainly saw their work as promoting spiritual, social, and transnational harmony. In wartime, that message translated into one of bringing together the two sides in conflict. Writing from Bata in Spanish Guinea (modern-day Equatorial Guinea), a missionary referred to English and Germans “get[ting] on well together.” Missionaries in India were taking collections from both English officials and Indians for the preservation of the German missionaries. In China, the story was of a German missionary taking the hands of a British missionary to say, “Brother were our nations bound together in love as you and I are, this terrible slaughter could not occur.” The Bulletin described missionaries in China as one “body, German, English, American.” While German and British armies fought in Europe, Africa, and Asia, the Bulletin suggested, peace reigned over the mission movement.¹⁰³

The Presbyterian board’s “No Retreat Fund” ended up being highly successful and the BFM significantly reduced its deficit by the end of the fiscal year on March 31, 1915.

¹⁰² Arthur Judson Brown, “Why Foreign Missions Cannot Retrench on Account of the War,” 1 December 1914, box 50, folder 12, Ecumenical Mission and Relations Records.

¹⁰³ “Extra War Emergency Bulletin.”

Advertising, which regularly used war metaphors, proved particularly effective. “Many [donors] said frankly, that the only reason they were sending the contributions was because of the advertisements.”¹⁰⁴ The board praised congregants for their “unselfish service” and “self-denial,” especially amid financial unrest and the “titanic war.”¹⁰⁵

The American Red Cross: Nonsectarian, State-Supported Philanthropy as a Better Way?

Mission boards provided one avenue for supporters to participate quickly in this ever-present and yet ever-distant conflagration in Europe, Africa, and Asia. As the war progressed, though, and particularly after the United States joined the conflict on the side of the Allies in 1917, it quickly became clear that foreign missions would only play a bit part. American mission boards found themselves in the same situation their German and British counterparts had faced in 1914 with missionaries eager to play their part in the war effort. Late in the war, James Barton urged the missionaries to remain in place. “The war is a conflict between forces of evil and forces of righteousness and everyone who has consecrated himself to the eternal warfare of humanity must feel the pull of the conflict and long to have a personal share in it.” By framing it as a “conflict between ... evil and ... righteousness,” Barton could claim the missionaries had no need to take up arms; they were already on the side of righteousness right where they were.¹⁰⁶ On the financial side as well, mission boards struggled amid wider concerns. The Presbyterians’ “No Retreat Fund” had tried to close the BFM’s largest debt in its history, \$270,000. The BFM was thrilled that it

¹⁰⁴ William P. Schell and A.W. Halsey to the Executive Council and the Assistant Secretaries, 26 March 1915, box 50, folder 12, Ecumenical Mission and Relations Records.

¹⁰⁵ A. Woodruff Halsey and Russell Carter, Circular “To the Members of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.,” 15 May 1915, box 50, folder 12, Ecumenical Mission and Relations Records.

¹⁰⁶ James Barton “to the Missionaries of the American Board at Home and on the Field,” 4 October 1918, ABC 11.4, box 2, folder 5, ABCFM Archives.

was able to quickly close that debt and increase donations over the following years. By 1917, living donors were giving over \$2 million to the Presbyterian missions.¹⁰⁷ That same year, shortly after American entry into the war, the ARC raised \$100 million in one week.

The ARC had access to resources unlike other American humanitarian organizations, in particular support from the federal government. After assisting in the aftermath of the Charleston, SC earthquake of 1886, the Johnstown, PA floods of 1889, and other domestic disasters, Clara Barton had taken the organization abroad in early 1896 to aid Armenian Christians. Though the campaign had not been entirely successful, the government soon had granted the organization official status to assist Cubans following the American invasion of that island in 1898. Barton had been ousted from the organization soon thereafter and the ARC had become more scientifically oriented and more closely aligned with the federal government, developments that would continue until the start of World War I.¹⁰⁸

Many mission movement leaders had long admired the ARC. In 1895, it was officials from the American Board that had encouraged Clara Barton to take her organization to the Ottoman Empire to help provide relief during the massacres of Armenian Christians.¹⁰⁹ Twenty years later, missionaries again collaborated with the ARC to deliver aid during the European War. The ARC had access to financial resources, but mission boards had Americans in place at points of need. Thus, in Beirut in 1915, the ARC chapter consisted almost entirely of missionaries. While the Red Cross organization provided the funds, the missionaries made bread and distributed it where needed.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ Charles H. Fahs, *Trends in Protestant Giving: A Study of Church Finance in the United States* (New York: Institute of Social and Religious Research, 1929), 40.

¹⁰⁸ Irwin, *Making the World Safe*, esp. ch. 1-2.

¹⁰⁹ Clara Barton to Louis Klopsch, 22 December 1895, ABC 10, vol. 82, ABCFM Archives; Merle Curti, *American Philanthropy Abroad: A History* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1963; repr., New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1988), 119-33.

¹¹⁰ "Echoes from the War Zone," *Assembly Herald* 21, no. 7 (July 1915): 500-01; "War and Missions," *Assembly Herald* 21, no. 8 (August 1915): 550.

The Presbyterian BFM and the ARC also coordinated efforts to serve as banking agents for Syrians living within the United States. When the war broke out, the immigrants sought ways to send money to their relatives in Syria. Syrian Societies of the United States, the ARC, and the BFM jointly provided that service. By the end of 1915, the BFM alone had helped transmit close to \$500,000 to individuals in Syria.¹¹¹



Figure 4.3: Photograph of Red Cross hospital workers in Constantinople, [1915 or 1916]. The American Red Cross and American Board collaborated during World War I. While the Red Cross had far more funds and political access than the American Board, it paled in comparison to the American Board's on-the-ground overseas resources in the Ottoman Empire.

Source: Missionary Herald 112, no. 3 (March 1916): 104

The American Board and the ARC shared resources as well. In Constantinople, American Board medical missionary Alden R. Hoover served as the director of ARC work (Ambassador Henry Morgenthau held the title of president, reflecting the official support of the federal government). Hoover oversaw seven hundred beds in various hospitals across the city during the winter of 1915-1916. Hoover performed his ARC work alongside another American Board medical missionary, Frederick D. Shepard, who had been stationed in Aintab (present-day Gaziantep, near the Turkish border with Syria). Shepard worked for several months in Constantinople, but died in early 1916. Hoover and Shepard are pictured in figure 4.3, a photo of the Red Cross hospital, alongside many American Board missionaries (Shepard is directly behind the seated woman at center and Hoover is the

¹¹¹ "War Relief Work," *Assembly Herald* 21, no. 11 (November 1915): 691-92.

mustachioed man to his left). Yet another American Board medical missionary took over Red Cross relief work in the city of Adana (west of Gaziantep).

With its public-private partnership, the ARC should have been well positioned to respond to the outbreak of the war in Europe. In fact, though, they had only \$200,000 in working funds in 1917 and a disorganized structure. Knowing they would need far more money, Woodrow Wilson created the Red Cross War Council, which hired Charles Sumner Ward and famed Rockefeller publicist Ivy Lee to build the organizations coffers. Ward essentially created another whirlwind campaign, but with presidential assistance, the leading publicist in the country, and the nation's rapt attention, the drive succeeded like nothing before. The 1917 drive achieved its seemingly impossible goal of \$100 million only to repeat the feat again the next year.¹¹²

Conclusion: Wartime Advances, but No Miracles

The years leading up to World War I and the early years of the war itself made clear both the potential of nonprofit organizations and the weakness of foreign missions to live up to that potential. The mission boards took advantage of advances in fundraising strategy and the attention attracted to the war itself. Each yielded gains in the boards' budgets. Giving to fifteen of the largest Protestant mission boards more than tripled in the 1910s, growing from a cumulative \$9.6 million in 1910 to \$29.7 million in 1920. Much of that advance occurred during the war itself, with growth jumping from an average of 5.6 percent in the first five years of the decade to almost 20 percent in the last five years.¹¹³

Tripled growth still did not reach even the cautious Robert Speer's goal of quadrupling the number of missionaries and amount of giving to missions. The 1920s,

¹¹² Cutlip, *Fund Raising in the United States*, 110-35.

¹¹³ Fahs, *Trends in Protestant Giving*, 46.

which saw stagnant giving, would not help.¹¹⁴ Part of the cause was that mission movement leaders found they could achieve certain non-evangelistic goals through larger, nonsectarian organizations that had state support. The pre-eminent example of that type of organization was the American Red Cross, which had been collaborating with missionaries throughout the war. The Red Cross, though, had a pre-existing organizational structure that mission movement leaders would not have been able to sway if they had wanted to. Instead, James Barton, William E. Dodge, Arthur J. Brown, and others focused their efforts on an organization that emerged in the United States to respond to the genocide in Armenia: Near East Relief.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

Chapter 5: Not Letting Go! Lifting “Non-religious” Philanthropy: Near East Relief and the Foreign Mission Movement, 1915-1930

Despite turning 70 in 1925, James Barton (1855-1936) showed few signs of slowing. He did not retire from the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM or American Board) until 1927 and he attended the Lausanne Conference, which decided the fate of the former Ottoman Empire, in 1922-1923. Not unlike other men and women in their latter years, though, Barton also began to reflect upon his life's work. The *Missionary Herald* serialized one autobiography in its 1927 issues; Barton composed another, book-length version that he never published several years later; and he wrote a history of Near East Relief (NER), published by Macmillan in 1930, that presented what was likely his most lasting and significant effort.¹ While the American Board had raised \$46 million between the start of Barton's career as a foreign secretary in 1894 and 1930, NER had already raised over \$116 million in less than half that time.²

Barton's life reflected and reinforced the transformation of American philanthropy in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. A Vermont-born Quaker who became a Congregationalist minister and missionary, Barton had spent seven years in the Ottoman Empire before becoming a foreign secretary for the American Board. Like most mission board officers, he faced continual frustrations at financial shortfalls, general apathy among parishioners, and a lack of political support. Throughout the first decade of the twentieth

¹ James L. Barton, *Story of Near East Relief* (New York: Macmillan, 1930). Near East Relief (now Near East Foundation) changed its name many times since its founding in 1915. This chapter primarily uses two of those names, the American Committee on Armenian and Syrian Relief and Near East Relief (with brief references to the Armenian Relief Committee and the American Committee on Relief in the Near East). This decision to use only two names, even anachronistically at times, is partly to limit confusion and partly to underline a central moment in the organization's history, which occurred in 1919, when Near East Relief was incorporated by Congress.

² American Board of Commissions for Foreign Missions, *Annual Report* (Boston, 1930), 254; Near East Relief, *Near East Relief Consummated. Near East Foundation Carries On. A Supplement to "Story of Near East Relief" by James L. Barton* (1944), 5.

century, Barton assisted with numerous endeavors to promote interdenominational cooperation and build greater giving for missions. The genocide of Armenians that began in 1915, though, sparked more decisive and permanent action through the formation of what became the NER organization. During the last two decades of Barton's life, NER dominated his attention and his obituaries typically began with those accomplishments.³

Barton's increasing involvement in a self-described "non-religious" organization devoted, especially, to Armenian and Assyrian orphans did not mean he had experienced any dramatic personal transformation.⁴ He remained committed to worldwide missions. The change was largely tactical. NER possessed more practical capabilities than the American Board. Those capabilities paled in comparison with the Armenians' needs, but they were great improvements over any individual mission board.

The murder of over one million Armenians during World War I was hardly inevitable, but neither did it lack context. The Young Turk Revolution of 1908 had brought new hope to Armenians. The reinstated constitution offered the possibility of seats in Parliament and the Young Turks supported reforms that seemed to allow for a multiethnic society. In the ensuing years, the challenges of and resistance to creating a modern, European state combined with military defeats in the opening battles of World War I and led Turks and Kurds to seek out a scapegoat, which, in the Ottoman Empire, was perennially the lot of the Armenians.⁵

³ "Dr. J. L. Barton Dead, Churchman was 81," *Boston Globe*, July 22, 1936; "Rev. Dr. J. L. Barton Dies at the Age of 80," *New York Times*, July 22, 1936.

⁴ "Purpose of the Committee," n.d., MRL 2: Near East Relief Committee Records, series 1, box 3, folder 4, The Burke Library Archives at Union Theological Seminary, New York (hereafter NER Records).

⁵ Ronald Grigor Suny, *"They Can Live in the Desert but Nowhere Else": A History of the Armenian Genocide* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015), esp. ch. 5-7.

The deportations began in Zeitun, in the Taurus Mountains of southern Anatolia, in April 1915. Armenians with positions in the Ottoman government lost their jobs. On April 19, Djevdet Bey (the governor-general in Van, near the border with Persia) ordered the extermination of all Armenians and the murder of any Muslims who protected them. In the months to follow, deportations and mass murder increased. Although American Ambassador Henry Morgenthau regularly protested to Talaat Pasha and Enver Pasha (two of the three leaders of the Ottoman Empire), he was told he had “no right to interfere with their internal affairs” and neither he nor the State Department believed any further response possible. “Nothing short of actual force which obviously United States are not in a position to exert would adequately meet the situation,” Morgenthau cabled on July 16.⁶ He grew increasingly agitated over the next few weeks and lamented that he felt obliged to take no action, but suggested the State Department might make certain demands to ameliorate the situation. The one he viewed “most acceptable under the circumstances” involved sending “pecuniary and other assistance.”⁷ By September, he had finally received a moderate concession, that certain Armenians could immigrate to the United States. He immediately cabled to ask Woodrow Wilson's old friend Cleveland H. Dodge and others to assemble a committee to raise funds for that purpose. Dodge quickly sought Barton's help.⁸

⁶ Ara Sarafian, ed. *United States Official Records on the Armenian Genocide, 1915-1917* (Princeton: Gomidas Institute, 2004), 51-53, 54, quotes on 53 and 55.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 78.

⁸ Rouben Paul Adalian, "American Diplomatic Correspondence in the Age of Mass Murder: The Armenian Genocide Int He Us Archives," in *America and the Armenian Genocide of 1915*, ed. Jay Winter (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 150; Henry Morgenthau, *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Page, 1918), 328-29; Merrill D. Peterson, *"Starving Armenians": America and the Armenian Genocide, 1915-1930 and After* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2004), ch. 2; Sarafian, ed. *United States Official Records*, 147-49.

Barton had already initiated contact weeks earlier with many of the people who would form the ACASR. He had not yet succeeded in forming a committee, though, when Morgenthau's cable arrived. In his memory, even after the cable arrived (which, again, did not mention him), he was the one who provided the main impetus for forming the ACASR. James L. Barton, "Autobiographical Notes," [1934?], 250, American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions Archives, 1810-1961 (ABC 11.4, box 12, folder 2) Houghton Library, Harvard University (hereafter ABCFM Archives).

Barton and several other interested parties met in Dodge's offices in New York on September 16, 1915. By the end of the day, they had formed the Armenian Relief Committee, which became the American Committee on Armenian and Syrian Relief (ACASR), then the American Committee on Relief in the Near East, then Near East Relief, and finally the Near East Foundation. As it formed to respond to Morgenthau's plea, it initially had few goals beyond fundraising and information sharing. It immediately rejected the idea of working toward the "wholesale emigration of Armenians," instead focusing on Morgenthau's original plan of offering pecuniary assistance.⁹ As the depths of the crisis became more clear, the scope of relief work expanded and the organization set up relief centers around the region to provide food, clothing, shelter, and basic medical care to displaced persons. By the end of World War I, the work focused on orphans, with a goal of providing industrial training. Congress incorporated the organization as Near East Relief in October 1919 "to provide relief and to assist in the repatriation, rehabilitation, and reestablishment" particularly of "orphans and widows." In the first year of its incorporation, NER employed over 500 relief workers.¹⁰

Nearly all of the founding ACASR members had some association with missions. Barton, who became chairman of the new organization, retained his title of American Board foreign secretary. His American Board colleague, E. L. Smith, was also a founding member. The Dodge family, whose co-ownership of the Phelps Dodge mining company made it among the wealthiest in the United States at the time, had long supported American foreign missions, particularly the American Board and the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions. Both Cleveland Dodge and his nephew, D. Stuart Dodge, joined the original committee, as

⁹ ———, ed. *United States Official Records*, 149.

¹⁰ Near East Relief, *Hand Book*, 1920, series 2, box 8, folder 4, NER Records.

did Arthur Curtiss James, whose wealth also derived from the Phelps Dodge corporation and who had also supported missions. Other participants included Stanley White and Edwin M. Bulkley of the Presbyterian board; Charles Crane, Samuel Dutton, and George Plimpton, all active in the Constantinople College for Women (which had strong ties to the missionary community); William Chamberlain of the Reformed Church in America Board of Foreign Missions; William Haven of the American Bible Society; and John Mott, a leader of the YMCA and the Student Volunteer Movement. More mission movement leaders would soon join and Charles Vickrey, of the Young People's Missionary Movement, would become the organization's secretary in May 1916.¹¹

NER achieved numerous goals that mission boards could never accomplish. While the Ecumenical Conference in 1900 and the World Missionary Conference in 1910 had brought together an interdenominational group of, primarily, white, male, Anglo-Americans, neither produced organizations that actually performed evangelical or humanitarian work. NER achieved that goal quickly. Mission boards had long sought public support for their work. NER received explicit approval from American presidents year after year and various privileges from the federal government and American military. Mission boards constantly struggled to raise enough money. NER similarly hoped for greater sums than actually came in, but it nevertheless collected between \$35 million and \$40 million in its first five years, approximately double that of the wealthiest mission boards.¹²

¹¹ Barton, *Story of Near East Relief*, 5-7; Near East Relief, *Near East Relief Consummated*, 4.

¹² The combined giving to the Methodist Episcopal Church's Board of Foreign Missions and Woman's Foreign Missionary Society came closest, totaling just over \$20 million between 1915 and 1919. During the same period, the American Board raised \$4 million and the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions raised \$10.4 million from living donors. One must also keep in mind the mission boards had existed for many decades, had an established donor base, and worked around the world. Near East Relief, on the other hand, was a new organization, focusing on a particular region. Also, the comparison overemphasizes the receipts of the mission boards, since Near East Relief began late in 1915. *The Acorn*, 31 January 1920, series 2, box 7, folder 1, NER Records; Charles H. Fahs, *Trends in Protestant Giving: A Study of Church Finance in the United States* (New York: Institute of Social and Religious Research, 1929), 38, 40.

American Protestant mission boards vacillated between hope and fear during the Great War. On the one hand, the war occupied the attention of everyone. Many missionaries left the field to join the war effort, and missions in the war zone were damaged or destroyed. The breakdown of political order left other mission stations in limbo. The war also shifted moral and religious power away from the church and synagogue and toward the state, through chaplaincy and an increasingly active American foreign policy.¹³ On the other hand, the untold suffering offered countless “opportunities” for humanitarian relief that allowed missionaries to play the hero. American missionaries expanded their presence by absorbing mission stations abandoned by German or English missionaries at the start of the war. American donors responded to the global cataclysm with large donations to philanthropies and mission boards received a windfall of that giving.

Between this hope and fear, mission board officials became more aware of the extraordinary possibility of humanitarian action and the limitations of their denominational boards. Most would not abandon their roles on the mission boards, but they would seek to coordinate missions and nonsectarian work. Many of their parishioners and even their own children would take this trend further, working closely with the larger, nonsectarian groups.¹⁴ The story of the growth of “secular” philanthropy is complimentary, not distinct, from its “religious” counterparts. To understand the slow and incomplete transformation of the American philanthropic landscape from largely religious to largely secular clarifies why

¹³ Ian Tyrrell has argued the war marked the end of American efforts to create a moral empire as political leaders, who had earlier begun to resist the reformers’ interference in foreign affairs, focused on state rather than moral power. Ronit Stahl has recently shown how the state began taking control of religious practices in the army, through a more regulated chaplaincy program, to promote order and prevent the excessive influence of denominational missionaries. Ronit Y. Stahl, *Enlisting Faith: Military Chaplains the American State* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, forthcoming), ch. 1; Ian R. Tyrrell, *Reforming the World: The Creation of America’s Moral Empire* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010), 192-96.

¹⁴ David A. Hollinger, “The Protestant Boomerang: How the Foreign Missionary Experience Liberalized the Home Culture” (lecture, John C. Danforth Center on Religion and Politics, Washington University in St. Louis, November 18, 2013).

American foreign aid today focuses on previous mission fields and why moral undertones remain prevalent in American philanthropy.

Learning from Failure: The American Constantinople Relief Committee

The Armenian Relief Committee achieved some degree of success, because its organizers learned from the mistakes of earlier religious and non-religious organizations. Foreign mission boards had failed to raise sufficient funds because of denominational conflict; perceptions that missionaries exclusively evangelized or, conversely, never evangelized; and lack of state sponsorship. Nonreligious organizations with similar structures to the Armenian Relief Committee failed in other ways, providing additional cautions. The American Constantinople Relief Committee (ACRC), for example, was founded shortly before the Armenian Relief Committee, with many of the same members and working in the same part of the world. It disbanded within eighteen months amid embarrassment and having raised only a limited amount of money. These failings would provide lessons for the Armenian Relief Committee and NER.

William Willard Howard ran day-to-day operations of the ACRC. Two decades earlier, Howard had been the *Christian Herald's* representative in Armenia. The magazine had sent Howard to oversee the distribution of relief funds. Lacking previous experience in such work and with a knowledge of the Ottoman Empire amounting to a few days of journalism, Howard had failed miserably in that work. In fact, he had failed to even enter Ottoman Armenia, having been stuck in Persia in the face of death threats. Over the following decades, Howard would repeatedly mismanage relief organizations, including the ACRC.¹⁵

¹⁵ Oscar S. Straus to H. O. Dwight, 15 October 1913 and reply of 17 October 1913, MRL 2: American Constantinople Relief Committee Records, folder 4, The Burke Library Archives at Union Theological Seminary, New York (hereafter ACRC Records). See also "Says He Will Continue Work," *New York Times*, 6 May 1927.

The ACRC, on the surface, appeared entirely legitimate. It originated in November 1912 to respond to the devastation, particularly in Thrace and Albania, that followed the First Balkan War in 1912. With the Second Balkan War the following year, the need for aid increased. Oscar Straus, former minister to the Ottoman Empire and Theodore Roosevelt's Secretary of Commerce and Labor, served as chairman of the committee and was its initial organizer, much as Henry Morgenthau would help launch the Armenian Relief Committee a few years later. Famed missionary Henry O. Dwight was vice-chairman and Ameen F. Haddad, an Armenian physician who had immigrated to the United States in 1888, was treasurer. That Straus and Morgenthau were both Jewish, wealthy, and held the same diplomatic post pointed to some of the changes in philanthropy.¹⁶ The organizations needed at least the appearance of support from the state and cooperation from several religious communities. To the great detriment of the ACRC, though, W. W. Howard received the title of secretary, in charge of quotidian operations, in February 1913.¹⁷

Howard may have joined the ACRC in part to help eastern Europeans, but he also sought personal financial gain. His reasons were not avaricious. Howard had lost a substantial sum during the Panic of 1907 and depended on his income from the ACRC to support his household.¹⁸ Even if philanthropy was transitioning away from its nineteenth-century basis in voluntarism toward professionalism in the twentieth century, demanding large compensation remained distasteful. Howard asked for and received a 25 percent commission on all donations, an astronomical sum that would prove one of many

¹⁶ Morgenthau lamented that the Ottoman ambassadorship seemed "the only diplomatic post to which a Jew can aspire." Henry Morgenthau, *All in a Life-Time* (New York: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1922), 160.

¹⁷ The organization has attracted little scholarly attention. For a brief summary of the founding of the organization, see H. O. Dwight to George W. Toms, Jr., 19 August 1913, folder 6, ACRC Records.

¹⁸ Lillie C. Wall to H. O. Dwight, 1 February 1914, folder 3, ACRC Records.

embarrassments. No one publicized Howard's commission, presumably because all knew the damage it would have had on fundraising.¹⁹ When Metropolitan Museum of Art President Robert W. de Forest found out about it in December 1913, he immediately tendered his resignation as an ACRC member.²⁰

To make matters worse, Howard also mismanaged the limited funds available. Apparently unbeknownst to Straus, Dwight, and the other officers, he hired a secretary and typist, offering her sixteen dollars per week. After she had worked for seven weeks without compensation, Howard demanded she be paid. Illogically, he appealed to the officers' frugality, arguing she was worth at least twice her salary and that she "worked an average of nineteen (19) hours a day, seven days a week." How she managed to eat, sleep, and satisfy other human needs during her remaining thirty-five hours per week, Howard left unsaid.²¹

¹⁹ By November 1913, Dwight was regretting the decision to grant such a large compensation. In writing to Straus, he noted the objections of "our missionary friends ... [to] the collection of funds on the basis of paying one fourth to the man who does the work, and I should not be willing to enter into such an arrangement again." He expressly desired that his organization would *not* solicit funds in the hopes that the American Board might receive the donations and make better use of them. H. O. Dwight to Oscar S. Straus, 15 November 1913, folder 4, ACRC Records.

²⁰ In the end, de Forest did not resign, but only because he learned that the Committee would soon disband and the resignation would embarrass Straus. De Forest did not oppose employing professional fundraisers, but rejected any remuneration system based on commissions. Correspondence between Robert W. de Forest, H. O. Dwight, and Oscar S. Straus, December 1913, folder 6, ACRC Records.

²¹ By the time the matter was settled in April 1914, months after Lillie Wall, the typist, asked Dwight for the money, the relationship between Howard and the ACRC had significantly deteriorated. Finally, Dwight lost all patience with Howard. "I have your letter of April 4th and regret exceedingly that you have not found time to come down here and settle up matters at one of your visits to the city. I feel rather inclined to suggest that it is better to be over with the old love before you are in with the new. Of course I cannot settle up accounts with you until I have the papers in hand, and in the meanwhile the people for whom the money was collected have to wait. Perhaps you have not thought of this view of the case, but I hope that you will take it into consideration and send or bring the list of contributors to the fund, and any other papers, as well as the letter-heads belonging to the Relief Committee, to this office 'one day ahead of time' as the Turks say. I am sorry if Miss Wall has to wait for her money, but it is not my fault." H. O. Dwight to Oscar S. Straus, 15 November 1913, folder 4, ACRC Records; Wall to Dwight, 1 February 1914; Correspondence between William W. Howard and H. O. Dwight, March and April 1914, folder 3, ACRC Records.

Dwight's reference to an old and new love concerned a new philanthropy that Howard where Howard had already begun to work, the Albanian Relief Fund. The organization suited Howard better. Its treasurer, Frederick Lynch, was editor of *The Christian Work* and like the *Christian Herald*, used Howard's pictures and articles to both sell more issues and raise money. In what must have been exceptionally awkward, Howard and Lynch worked in the same building, 70 Fifth Avenue, as the American Committee for Armenian and Syrian Relief, which was closely associated with the ACRC. See William Willard Howard, "Hunger's Cry Unto Hunger" and "The Christian Work Relief Ship," *The Christian Work* (1916): 665-68.

In September 1913, Howard traveled to the Balkans to gain a first-hand appreciation of the situation. While he was gone, members of the ACRC criticized “the tone of his appeals for funds,” decided to stop soliciting contributions, and urged Howard’s termination or, at least, the non-renewal of his employment.²² One of Howard’s circulars, sent to about 75,000 recipients, had attracted attention because it provided no information about how the money would be used. It prompted numerous complaints. James Barton described it as “suspiciously sensational and conspicuously devoid of information.” He particularly deplored the absence of specific plans, “which seems to me to be a very great defect in an appeal these days.”²³ One recipient forwarded the appeal to the inspector for the United States Postal Service, claiming fraud. The inspector, Nathan Noile, asked Dwight to verify the circular and to provide the ACRC’s financial information. Though Dwight affirmed the authenticity of the organization and the appeal and thus closed Noile’s inquiry, his reply would not have eased anyone’s disquiet. Having received \$22,000 from the appeal, the ACRC expected only half, at most, to be sent to Constantinople. After deducting Howard’s exorbitant commission, the organization also had to deduct \$6,000 (or 27 percent of the total receipts), which it had already spent on printing, postage, and secretarial work.²⁴ Worse, at least for Howard, this was neither the first nor the second, but the third time he had been accused of fraudulently promoting a humanitarian cause. He claimed to have explanations for the other accusations, but nevertheless refused to postpone his trip to air them. Instead,

²² H. O. Dwight to W. W. Peet, 7 November 1913, folder 1, ACRC Records.

²³ James L. Barton to H. O. Dwight and reply, 30 July 1913 and 1 August 1913, folder 6, ACRC Records. In Dwight’s reply, he noted that the information Barton did not find in the recent appeal had been in another circular from several months earlier. Nevertheless, common practice dictated that every appeal specify the purpose for which moneys would be used.

²⁴ Nathan Noile to H. O. Dwight and reply, 29 September 1913 and 1 October 1913, folder 6, ACRC Records.

he sailed for Europe in early October. Dwight was left with, as he said himself, “what the Turks would call a ‘big headache.’”²⁵

As one might expect given his general ineptitude, Howard’s trip to the Balkans could not have been called a success. Given its very limited resources, the ACRC neither authorized nor agreed to support Howard’s “private expedition.” Dwight sympathized with Howard’s desire to “shake the world with his story” of Balkan suffering, but he also knew that supporters would be “puzzled” about why trip went forward without official authorization.²⁶ Upon his return, Howard hoped to display the photographs from his trip to encourage donations, reflecting the methods of the *Christian Herald* in the 1890s.²⁷ He intended to use the receipts they had already received in order to exhibit the photos and, he hoped, multiply the gifts. In other words, he was attempting to tie together spectatorship and fundraising. This approach had born fruit in the days before widespread availability of slides, photos, and movies, but that time was long past and Howard could not persuade the other members of the ACRC to support his endeavor. In fact, those who saw the photographs claimed the images were counterproductive in the extreme. Many pictures depicted little more than a series of hills, the destroyed houses nowhere visible. Seeing “Dr. Howard’s pictures of fat and prosperous European officers holding festivities,” ACRC supporters concluded that Albanian relief work rested on Italian shoulders, not “distant America.” Even Henry Dwight, who had spent decades as a missionary in Constantinople,

²⁵ Oscar S. Straus to H. O. Dwight, 15 October 1913 and reply of 17 October 1913, folder 4, ACRC Records.

²⁶ H. O. Dwight to W. W. Peet, 20 September 1913 and 7 November 1913, folder 1, ACRC Records.

²⁷ Earlier in the year, Howard had searched for slides in the U.S. that illustrated the distress in the Balkans and had found none. This likely encouraged his decision to travel there himself. H. O. Dwight to J. De Hart Bruen, 14 May 1913, folder 6, ACRC Records.

sympathized with this view. Lacking an effective secretary, substantial receipts, and a leadership team that believed in the organization, the ACRC soon disbanded.²⁸

The failings of the ACRC served as a negative example for later organizations to avoid replicating. Aside from Howard, correspondents praised the composition of the organization's leadership. Missionaries like Dwight knew the region better than anyone while Straus offered connections with the federal government and Jewish community. The organizational structure, though, gave too much authority to a single person, which became especially problematic as a result of Howard's incompetence. Finally, the methods of raising money reflected the history rather than the future of fundraising. Consequently, the ACRC never achieved the wealth it would have needed to make an impact in the Balkans.

American Committee on Armenian and Syrian Relief: A Shifting Faith in Money

The Armenian Relief Committee consciously avoided both the mistakes of the ACRC and the limitations of mission boards. Soon after its founding in September 1915, it associated itself with the American Committee on Armenian Atrocities, an umbrella society that included other groups working in the region. These associations provided some added stability and pointed toward future collaboration, but many questions remained as to the size, scope, nature, and even name of the various organizations. Early on, Rockefeller Foundation Secretary (and son of missionaries) Jerome Greene encouraged the Committee on Armenian Atrocities to change its name. To provide relief required the cooperation of Ottoman authorities, Greene noted, but the name itself denigrated the morality of those same officials. Less than two months after the meeting in Dodge's office, the Committee on Armenian Atrocities voted to change its name to the American Committee on Armenian and

²⁸ H. O. Dwight to W. W. Peet, 27 February 1914, 16 March 1914, and 25 June 1914, folder 2, ACRC Records; H. O. Dwight to W. W. Howard, 24 December 1913, folder 3, ACRC Records; H. O. Dwight to Edward Lincoln Smith, 24 February 1914, folder 7, ACRC Records.

Syrian Relief (ACASR) and to absorb the work of the Armenian Relief Committee and other organizations under its umbrella.²⁹

The ACASR set its initial fundraising goal at \$100,000, roughly one-tenth the size of the American Board. It was a strangely low figure, even considering the executive committee's lack of substantial information about the ongoing genocide and their expectation that the organization to be temporary. Before the end of the meeting, those present had already, by themselves, pledged more than half the amount. Within a month, the full \$100,000 had been dispatched.³⁰

As more information flowed in, it quickly became clear that the organization would need to continue far longer than anticipated and be much larger. The organizations under the original Armenian Atrocities organization soon merged, reflecting this realization. One of the groups to merge, the Palestine-Syria Committee, grew out of an earlier organization that had sought to aid Jews in Palestine. It had hoped to receive funding from the Rockefeller Foundation, but the latter refused, demanding greater cooperation among the parties working in the region. The Palestine-Syria Committee formed to address that criticism and to provide relief to a more diverse populace. Talcott Williams, Oscar Straus, Stephen Wise, and Stanley White became officers.³¹ The desired \$500,000 from the

²⁹ Although the American Committee on Armenian Atrocities (also known as the Armenian Atrocities Committee) was initially distinct from the Armenian Relief Committee, there was substantial overlap and the latter also used the term "atrocities." Greene's advice, therefore, reflected the immaturity of both the actual American Committee on Armenian Atrocities as well as the Armenian Relief Committee. Samuel T. Dutton to William W. Rockwell, 3 November 1915, series 1, box 1, folder 1, NER Records; "Armenian Atrocities," ca. 1 December 1915, series 1, box 4, folder 1, NER Records.

As is already clear, nonprofits in this era frequently identified themselves as "committees" or "relief committees." Wherever "the Committee" appears in this chapter, it refers to the American Committee on Armenian and Syrian Relief.

³⁰ Barton, *Story of Near East Relief*, 8-9, 17.

³¹ Stanley White to the Syria Mission, 18 February 1915, United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. Commission on Ecumenical Mission and Relations Records, RG 81, box 1, folder 11, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (hereafter Ecumenical Mission and Relations Records); Robert L. Daniel, *American Philanthropy in the Near East, 1820-1960* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1970), 150.

Rockefeller Foundation for wheat, sugar, rice, and flour would never materialize and the organization largely functioned as a money transfer agency, a sort of Western Union. It allowed Palestinian and Syrian immigrants and well-wishers in the United States (including the American Red Cross and, to a much smaller degree than desired, the Rockefeller Foundation) to transmit funds to friends, relatives, or refugees in the Middle East.³²

Presbyterian Treasurer for the region and Secretary of the American Mission Press in Beirut, Charles A. Dana, received and distributed the funds, which totaled \$800,000 by the end of 1915.³³

On May 20, 1915, four months before the founding of the ACASR, Ambassador Morgenthau had asked James Barton to send money for relief. Barton had forwarded the request to Stanley White, but the Palestine-Syria Relief Committee could only send what it had, \$500 in total.³⁴ Granted, White's organization was still young when it joined the ACASR, but the merger likely saved it from a slow demise. Days before the formation of the ACASR, the Palestine-Syria Relief Committee was issuing desperate national appeals, with repeated references to American generosity toward the Belgians and the great need in the

³² Stanley White to Jerome D. Greene, 5 January 1915, box 1, folder 11, Ecumenical Mission and Relations Records; Stanley White to Stephen S. Wise, 15 February 1915, box 1, folder 11, Ecumenical Mission and Relations Records; Correspondence between Stanley White and Jerome D. Greene, January-April 1915, box 1, folder 11, Ecumenical Mission and Relations Records. It should be noted that the Rockefeller Foundation did give a total of \$70,000 at various times in 1915 for relief work in Persia and the Ottoman Empire. Rockefeller Foundation, *Annual Report* (New York, 1915), 306-10.

³³ Stanley White to A. W. Halsey, 15 January 1916, box 1, folder 11, Ecumenical Mission and Relations Records. In 1920, Margaret McGilvary claimed the amount that Dana distributed was greater than \$2 million. Margaret McGilvary, *The Dawn of a New Era in Syria* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1920), 104-05.

³⁴ Stanley White to Stephen S. Wise, 2 June 1915, box 1, folder 11, Ecumenical Mission and Relations Records.

Ottoman Empire.³⁵ By the time of the merger, the Palestine-Syria Relief Committee held only about \$5,000.³⁶

Within weeks of the merger, it became clear that the \$100,000 ACASR budget would not nearly fund the relief work that would be necessary. “Races were in danger of annihilation,” James Barton recalled.³⁷ The committee initially responded to the unfolding tragedy by providing incoming telegrams and correspondence to the American press, hoping to increase awareness and sway public opinion. As reflected in the small budget, fundraising was not an early priority. Rather than launching a large-scale campaign, the ACASR cooperated with the Committee of Mercy to raise money. The Committee of Mercy had been founded in 1914 by Norman Hapgood, Daisy Harriman, and Katherine B. Davis with support from reformist New York City Mayor John Purroy Mitchell. It raised money to provide relief for women and children victimized by the European War.³⁸

Outsourcing its fundraising inevitably limited the ACASR’s budgets, but the Committee of Mercy also offered several advantages and pointed toward future objectives. Specifically, it reflected a goal of gaining explicit endorsement from the state and direct participation by business, social, and political leaders. The federation of giving to relief organizations had become popular in the early twentieth century, with reformers associating

³⁵ “Appeal to the American People by the Palestine-Syria Relief Committee,” ca. September 1915, box 1, folder 11, Ecumenical Mission and Relations Records.

³⁶ Stanley White to the Members of the Syria-Palestine Relief Committee, 6 November 1915, and Stanley White to Brown Brothers & Company, 3 January 1916, box 1, folder 11, Ecumenical Mission and Relations Records.

³⁷ Barton, *Story of Near East Relief*, 12.

³⁸ The Committee of Mercy maintained separate accounts for each of the countries in the war and allowed donors to direct contributions to particular causes. Samuel T. Dutton to William W. Rockwell, 1 October 1915, series 1, box 1 folder 1, NER Records; Committee of Mercy, “An Appeal for the Children’s Home,” n.d., series 1, box 4, folder 6, NER Records; “More than \$400,000 in N.Y. Relief Funds,” *New York Times*, September 20, 1914; Katharine Buell, “Helping France,” *The Journal of American History* 11, no. 4 (October-December 1917): 646-47; Merle Curti, *American Philanthropy Abroad: A History* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1963; repr., New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1988), 240.

them with philanthropic efficiency.³⁹ While it clearly simplified fundraising and giving, it also centralized control over charitable donations, and the largest organizations, like the American Red Cross, either remained independent of such federations or provided oversight of them.

The ACASR depended upon the Committee of Mercy for much of its early funding, but the relationship was not always amicable. By February 1916, journalist William T. Ellis was already complaining about the Committee of Mercy's publicity work.⁴⁰ The association also limited the ways the ACASR could use its money, since the Committee of Mercy specifically invested in food and clothing.⁴¹ Within a year, the ACASR would disassociate itself from the Committee of Mercy and raise funds on its own, but it would seek to retain the objectives initially sought in its partnership with the Committee of Mercy.

Around the end of 1915, the Committee decided to disallow any Armenian members, claiming it needed to be “non-political and absolutely neutral.”⁴² The exclusion of Armenians from Armenian relief organizations had a long history. Armenian immigrants to the United States and the leaders of philanthropic organizations working in the eastern Mediterranean had frequently clashed over the issue of Armenian nationalism, with the former largely in favor and the latter vocally opposed to any form of revolution (for the sake of appearance, if nothing else, since Ottoman officials had no interest in working with nationalist sympathizers). Armenians could send money, but further involvement was seen as more of a burden than necessary. Paradoxically, the exclusion of Armenians made it

³⁹ Scott M. Cutlip, *Fund Raising in the United States: Its Role in America's Philanthropy* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1965), 65-81; Olivier Zunz, *Philanthropy in America: A History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012), 51-56.

⁴⁰ “Memorandum of the Telephone Message from W.T. Ellis,” 7 February 1916, series 1, box 1, folder 1, NER Records.

⁴¹ Committee of Mercy, “An Appeal for the Children’s Home.”

⁴² Barton, *Story of Near East Relief*, 14n2.

possible for the Committee to promote the political objectives of those same Armenians. For example, after the United States entered the war in 1917 (allowing it to play a more decisive role in postwar geopolitics), Barton and Dodge urged President Wilson to accept a mandate over Armenian regions of Anatolia to prevent continued Ottoman rule.⁴³

The ACASR created, in the words of James Barton, a joint “ministry of helpfulness.”⁴⁴ Barton’s phrasing pointed to two essential qualities of the organization: its vague religiosity (“ministry”) and its emphasis on outsider aid (“helpfulness”). The distribution teams, like the fundraisers in the United States, included only Americans, almost exclusively missionaries or individuals with ties to missions. Even when a region contained only one American missionary, that one person became responsible for distributing relief in the whole region. In part, necessity dictated this scenario since the Ottoman government, preoccupied by war, refused to admit new relief workers. Even after the war ended, though, and the ACASR began sending hundreds of new workers, a large number of whom had ties to missions. Those ties, which almost always meant language and vocational training, allowed the ACASR to identify the workers as “technically trained.” The training derived from missions, but the rhetoric underlined the worker’s professional, rather than religious, backgrounds. At the same time, the ACASR was not attempting to hide their workers connections with missions, so “ministry of helpfulness” ably described the character of the organization.⁴⁵

The Committee initially set up three distribution committees (in Constantinople, Beirut, and Tabriz—they soon added Jerusalem, Cairo, and Tiflis) to receive American funds

⁴³ Joseph L. Grabill, "Cleveland H. Dodge, Woodrow Wilson, and the Near East," *Journal of Presbyterian History* 48, no. 4 (Winter 1970): 256-57; Ussama Samir Makdisi, *Faith Misplaced: The Broken Promise of U.S.-Arab Relations: 1820-2003* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2010), 120-22.

⁴⁴ Barton, *Story of Near East Relief*, 14.

⁴⁵ “Another Life Boat,” *ACASR News Bulletin* 24 (May 1919): 1-2.

and four relief areas (Turkey, Syria, the Caucasus, and Persia). Missionaries and relief workers provided shelter and aid, eventually focusing their attention on orphans. The distributing committee in Constantinople included Caleb Frank Gates of Robert College; W. W. Peet and Luther Fowle of the American Board; and Elizabeth Dodge (soon Huntington, after she married George Huntington, professor at Robert College, in 1916), daughter of Cleveland and Grace Dodge. The Persian committee in Tabriz, as well as Tehran, similarly reflected the presence of Congregationalist missionaries. In Beirut, the Syrian Protestant College and Presbyterian missionaries made up the distributing committee.⁴⁶

In Persia and Turkey, the distribution committees included representatives of the American diplomatic missions. Oscar Gunkle, a director with the Standard Oil Company, also served on the Constantinople committee. These additions reflected the goal of integrating the state and corporate America into the redistribution of American wealth. “No relief organization,” according to Barton, “ever had a more experienced body of distributors at the crucial points of need and ready to function as soon as funds were available.”⁴⁷

The ACASR integrated, from the first, a wider variety of experts and supporters than foreign mission boards, but the missionary community remained the core constituency. In fundraising, they coordinated with national Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish organizations. For advice on publicity, the Committee questioned Melville Stone. Stone had founded the *Chicago Daily News* and was general manager of the Associated Press at the time. At his

⁴⁶ American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, “Relief Operations,” *Annual Report* 1916, 84; Barton, *Story of Near East Relief*, 17-19, 56, 61-62.

The distribution centers changed over time. In early 1916, they were in Tabriz, Tiflis, and Port Said, with numerous other “centers of relief work.” The point is less about the specific location of the centers and more about the dominance of missionaries in a “non-religious” organization. For various discussions of early distribution centers, see “Latest News Concerning the Armenian and Syrian Sufferers,” 25 January 1916 and 5 April 1916, series 1, box 4, folders 7 and 9, NER Records; “Armenia: Her Heartrending Cry,” n.d., series 1, box 4, folder 7, NER Records.

⁴⁷ ———, *Story of Near East Relief*, 18, 61-62.

suggestion, the Committee decided not to invest in publicity, based on the assumption that media outlets would grant free publicity. They needed only to transmit information and it would immediately appear in newspapers and journals around the country. The help of the Associated Press obviously facilitated that effort.⁴⁸

The publicity committee pointed to the balance of missionary supporters and secular experts. Though Melville Stone provided expert advice, William Walker Rockwell led the committee. A professor of church history at Union Theological Seminary, Rockwell held little professional experience that qualified him to chair the publicity committee of a major nonprofit organization. He was not the organization's first choice. George T. Scott, whose work focused more directly on contemporary Persia, had previously refused the position owing to his pressing responsibilities as a secretary of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions. Notwithstanding his refusal of the chairmanship, Scott remained active on the committee throughout the early years of the ACASR.⁴⁹

Despite being the ACASR's second choice for publicity chair, W. W. Rockwell nevertheless had numerous skills that benefited the organization. He had recently served as the seminary's acting librarian and was therefore a useful source for reference material. Union also had ties to numerous denominations, facilitating Rockwell's access to many church leaders. It was primarily his expertise in church history, though, that served the ACASR. Much like the fundraisers responding to the Hamidian Massacres in the 1890s, publicity for the ACASR initially focused on the history of the Armenians as an ancient Christian people. Rockwell was uniquely qualified to convey that information. Stone, Scott, and Rockwell thus each held a particular expertise sought by the ACASR: Stone in

⁴⁸ Ibid., 14-15, 19.

⁴⁹ "Notes on Meeting of the American Committee for Armenian and Syrian Relief," 14 January 1916, series 1, box 1, folder 1, NER Records.

journalism, Scott in the region, and Rockwell in the broader religious context.

Philanthropies, including the ACASR, increasingly favored the expertise in journalism, but Rockwell's initial appointment reflected the process of organizational development.

Beyond cooperation with experts and other national organizations, the ACASR emphasized its association with the federal government. Coming into existence as a result of a State Department request, the ACASR continued to rely on that connection, especially during the war. The relationship with State was symbiotic. Official State Department dispatches provided the ACASR with information about the deportations and mass killings, but the department felt constrained to release its information to the public in light of American neutrality. The Committee needed that information to be made public in order to arouse American sympathy and encourage greater giving. Allowing the ACASR to use State Department dispatches thus served both parties.⁵⁰

When Henry Morgenthau resigned the ambassadorship in early 1916, he assisted the Committee and encouraged the organization to set an ambitious fundraising goal, \$5 million. Morgenthau's suggested fundraising goal reflected both the needs and limitations that were arising during World War I. Having begun work after the deportations and massacres had been occurring for months, the Committee needed money quickly.⁵¹ Food could be purchased locally, so money was needed above all else. In addition, since Ottoman policies had forbidden new relief workers from entering the country, the ACASR could do little but send money to Americans already on the ground, mostly missionaries. The initial \$100,000

⁵⁰ Barton, *Story of Near East Relief*, ch. 3; John Milton Cooper, Jr., "A Friend in Power? Woodrow Wilson and Armenia," in *America and the Armenian Genocide of 1915*, ed. Jay Winter (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 104.

⁵¹ "Armenia," 21 February 1916, series 1, box 4, folder 9, NER Records.

budget greatly underestimated needs and even the \$5 million goal, despite the difficulties the Committee had in reaching it, soon became a \$30 million goal.⁵²

As 1916 progressed, therefore, the need to build interest beyond Protestant churches became clear to both Washington officials and the ACASR. That summer, Congress and President Wilson announced Armenian-Syrian Relief Days for October 21-22, 1916. The ACASR took the opportunity to make a moderately greater effort to involve non-Protestants. Cardinal James Gibbons addressed numerous Roman Catholic churches on Sunday, the 22nd, while synagogues observed the relief day on the 21st. More than two-hundred local Red Cross chapters provided additional support; Boy Scouts volunteered in Washington, DC; and Philander Claxton, the federal Commissioner of Education, mobilized the entire American public school system. The committee sought the support of local political and business leaders as well. Religious and secular presses published notices and trolleys in Brooklyn, Toledo, and other cities provided free advertising for the day.⁵³

The ACASR clearly valued the endorsement of Woodrow Wilson and other political leaders. Those endorsements found their way into nearly every circular or piece of publicity.⁵⁴ The Committee recommended that cities establish local auxiliaries in order to produce the most effective giving. The central committee in New York expected the impetus for these auxiliaries to come from a small group of interested individuals. As one of their first tasks, the New York offices told these organizers to seek out local officials to back the endeavor and add their names to a circular calling for an organizational meeting. Though any

⁵² "Protests [against the prohibition on more relief workers] were futile," according to Barton, *Story of Near East Relief*, 58, 62-63.

⁵³ "MEMORANDA of all-day Conference of workers," 21 September 1916, and Charles V. Vickrey to W. W. Rockwell, 23 October 1916, series 1, box 2, folder 1, NER Records. See also "Cooperation of Organizations in Near East Relief," n.d., series 2, box 7, folder 14, NER Records.

⁵⁴ For example, Frederick Lynch, circular, 20 November 1916, series 1, box 4, folder 6, NER Records.

“neutral place” would serve for the meeting, the Committee suggested city hall or the state house as two options. The auxiliary’s executive committee consisted of a chairman, treasurer, secretary, and two other members. For chairman, the Committee again suggested a “recognized public leader.”⁵⁵ The Committee advised speakers on the Relief Days to reference the Wilson proclamation and support from local officials.⁵⁶ For the leaders of the ACASR, most of whom were concurrently working for foreign mission boards or in the service of missions, this type of public support from political authorities had been something long sought after and seldom received.

For all of these reasons, the ACASR appreciated Congress and President Wilson’s establishment of October 21-22 as Armenian-Syrian Relief Days. That said, the timing was rather unfortunate. Congressional action had begun in July, but the ACASR nevertheless did not adequately prepare for a \$5 million campaign, an amount far in excess of the annual fundraising goals of any mission board. In late September, only a month before the Relief Days, Executive Secretary Charles Vickrey wrote to W. W. Rockwell, asking him to compose an article “to use in church papers or possibly in other leading weeklies.”⁵⁷ Rockwell wrote a piece for *Current History* a few weeks later, just days before the Relief Days. In it, he estimated the number of Armenians killed or deported and sought to make the numbers comprehensible to readers. He closed with a comparison to a recent Preparedness parade on Fifth Avenue in New York, claiming it would have taken the estimated one-million victims of the “great holocaust” four days and eight hours to cross the viewing stand. Though

⁵⁵ “Suggestions to Guide in the Organization of an Auxiliary Committee for Armenian and Syrian Relief,” n.d., series 1, box 3, folder 4, NER Records; “MEMORANDA of all-day Conference of workers,” 21 September 1916, series 1, box 2, folder 1, NER Records.

⁵⁶ Charles V. Vickrey, “Important Memoranda for Armenia-Syria Relief Workers,” [October 1916], series 1, box 2, folder 1, NER Records.

⁵⁷ Charles V. Vickrey to W. W. Rockwell, 22 September 1916, series 1, box 2, folder 1, NER Records.

rushed, the Relief Days offered the opportunity for more extensive exposure and public support than any mission board could have hoped for.

Politics undoubtedly figured into President Wilson's selection of October 21-22 as Armenian-Syrian Relief Days. The 1916 election occurred just two weeks later. The Armenian Genocide was hardly a deciding factor in the race, but the Relief Days offered Wilson and the Democratic Congress a means of displaying their conceptions of American patriotism at a time when the Democrats ran on a platform that advocated both international engagement and military neutrality.⁵⁸ If the Relief Days helped Wilson win the election, the election certainly did not help the Relief Days. Despite the modest efforts of the publicity committee, the ACASR struggled to attract attention amid constant coverage of the election and war.

As October 21st approached, Charles Vickrey acknowledged the likelihood of disappointing results. "In many places it has been utterly impossible to secure the literature and prepare the public for an adequate response," he wrote to fellow Committee members. "Systematic follow-up is imperative if adequate returns are to be secured."⁵⁹ In particular, the ACASR worried that wealthy donors would only give during this follow-up period. By early November, it was already clear that the Armenian-Syrian Relief Days would not reach its \$5 million goal. Approximately \$300,000 had arrived in the New York offices between October 22 and November 3 and only \$200,000 more in the days to follow.⁶⁰ Having failed to reach its goals in October, the ACASR looked to late November as a chance to compensate for

⁵⁸ W. W. Rockwell, "How Many Armenians and Syrian Non-combatants Have died of Disease, Hardship or Violence During the Past Two Years," 12 October 1916, series 1, box 3, folder 5, NER Records. Rockwell stole the imagery of the Preparedness march from Charles Vickrey, who wrote a very similar story (though more morbid, imagining all of the marchers getting shot) several months earlier. Charles V. Vickrey, "The March of the Martyrs," 13 May 1916, series 1, box 4, folder 7, NER Records.

⁵⁹ Charles V. Vickrey to "co-worker," 21 October 1916, series 1, box 2, folder 1, NER Records.

⁶⁰ "Workers Bulletin No. 2," 2 November 1916, series 1, box 2, folder 1, NER Records; Frederick Lynch circular, 20 November 1916, series 1, box 4, folder 6, NER Records.

those failures. Even before the Relief Days, in fact, the ACASR encouraged supporters to follow “the spirit, if not the letter, of the President’s proclamation” by holding the drive later if October 21-22 was in any way problematic.⁶¹

With the election over, the ACASR hoped Thanksgiving would hold more promise to reach the \$5 million goal. Thanksgiving offered numerous advantages and an opportunity for a continued campaign. It proved an apt moment to solicit contributions for several reasons. The holiday encouraged families to recall all the ways in which they had been blessed, providing the ideal context to ask that they share their blessings. The ACASR could also use the food-based holiday to appeal to Americans’ sense of guilt by using images of gluttony and contrasting them with images of Armenian starvation.⁶² On a less abstract level, Thanksgiving in 1916 preceded by a day the departure of a ship bound for Beirut and laden with foodstuffs, oil, and clothing. Extending the fundraising efforts helped the ACASR continue to advertise this relief ship.⁶³ In the future, Thanksgiving would become an annual period of fundraising for the ACASR and NER.⁶⁴

With further delays, the Thanksgiving ship soon became a Christmas ship. The ACASR would continue the theme of employing holidays and religious rhetoric to appeal for support. Despite the fact that the organization claimed to be non-religious, the ACASR advertised this portion of the fund drive as “a Christian ministry.” It circulated “Christmas

⁶¹ “Notice,” [October 1916], series 1, box 4, folder 6, NER Records.

⁶² The War Relief Committee of Milwaukee (which jointly supported relief in Belgium, Poland, and Armenia and Syria), for example, asked supporters to “remember, while we eat our Thanksgiving dinner ... in Armenia, a race will be exterminated unless America helps. What will you do? Talk it over at dinner today.” War Relief Committee of Milwaukee, circular, [1916?], series 1, box 4, folder 14, NER Records.

Two years later, the ACASR was even more direct. At the top of its official periodical, sent out just before Thanksgiving, in bold red type, it printed “four million starve while we feast.” *New Bulletin* 2, no. 7 (December 1918): cover.

⁶³ “Workers Bulletin No. 2.”

⁶⁴ Wilson’s own interests again interfered with the ACASR. Following the Armenian-Syrian Relief Days in October, Wilson announced that Thanksgiving would be devoted to those suffering from war in general. Those victims obviously included, but was not limited to, Armenians. “President Asks All to Aid War Sufferers,” *New York Times*, November 18, 1916.

checks” to support the ship (figure 5.1). Though the “checks” contained clearly recognizable Christian imagery, the “non-religious” ACASR encouraged supporters to distribute them in both religious and secular contexts, including church pews, Sunday Schools, theatre programs, banks, hotels, labor organizations, and department stores. The center of both the front and the back of the check depicted a large red Greek cross with equidistant arms, remarkably similar to the symbol of the American Red Cross. The overlap was unlikely to have been happenstance. In addition to the widespread recognition of the Red Cross symbol, the ACASR was soon mimicking the Red Cross uniform.⁶⁵ The two organizations were cooperating, but they remained entirely separate and the cross undoubtedly misled some donors.⁶⁶

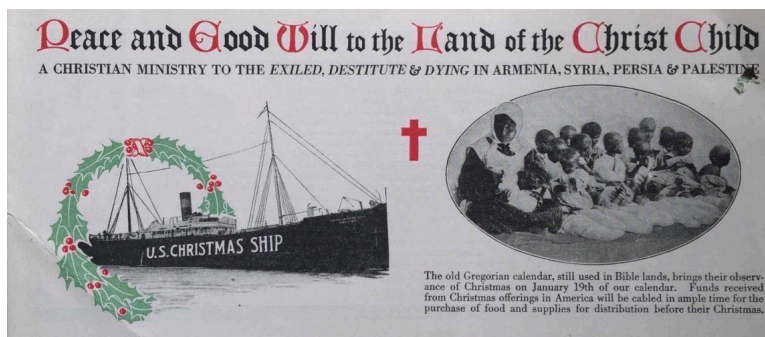
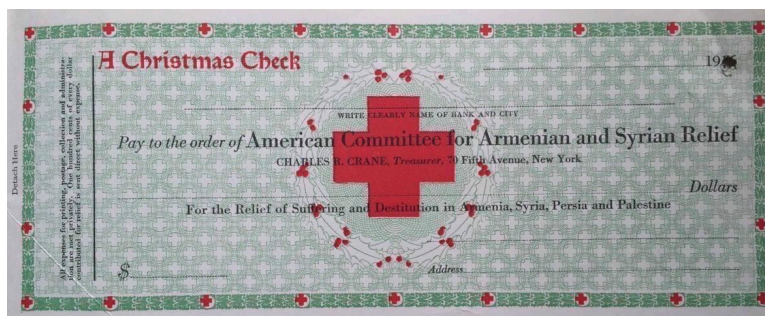


Figure 5.1: American Committee for Armenian and Syrian Relief Christmas “checks,” [1916]. Despite claims of being “non-religious,” the ACASR identified its work as a “Christian ministry” and used Christian imagery to raise money. It also employed a Greek cross that could have easily been confused for a Red Cross logo.



Source: MRL 2: Near East Relief Committee Records, series 1, box 4, folder 6, The Burke Library Archives at Union Theological Seminary, New York

⁶⁵ “Wherever you go in New York City today, you are likely to see an efficient looking young woman in a uniform of blue or gray very similar to that of the Red Cross nurse, but on the front of her blue beaver hat as well as on her sleeve, you notice a silver star. . . . The message of the silver star is much the same as that of the great Red Cross, and their mission is closely allied. What the American Red Cross means to us in America and Europe, the silver star means to the Orient.” “The Star of Hope in the East,” *ACASR News Bulletin* 3, no. 9 (February 1919): 1-2.

⁶⁶ “Peace and Good Will to the Land of the Christ Child,” ca. December 1916, series 1, box 4, folder 6, NER Records.

Money sent to support the Armenians and Syrians influenced American foreign policy during and immediately after World War I. Congress declared war on two separate occasions, against Germany on April 6, 1917, and against Austria-Hungary on December 7, 1917. It never declared war against the Ottoman Empire, although Theodore Roosevelt and Henry Cabot Lodge urged the opposite course. The ACASR and Cleveland H. Dodge in particular successfully dissuaded President Wilson from asking for such a declaration. In December 1917, Dodge wrote to Wilson, concerned that war with the Ottomans would “end the work we are doing in saving the lives of hundreds of thousands of natives.”⁶⁷ A year later, with the war at an end, Barton and Dodge would prove unsuccessful in convincing American political leaders to accept a mandate over the region.⁶⁸

Wartime fundraising campaigns emphasized the efficiency of the ACASR, its role in the war, and what the organization considered unique about its operations. Cleveland H. Dodge continued to pay for all administrative expenses after the United States entered the war, something he had secretly been doing since the founding of the ACASR, meaning 100 percent of donations went to relief work. Soon after Congress declared war on Germany in April 1917, it elected to send \$7.5 million a month in food aid directly to Belgium. Herbert Hoover, who had organized the highly successful private relief efforts up until that point, consequently urged Americans to redirect their donations to other war relief organizations like the ACASR.⁶⁹ Unlike Belgium, Ottoman Armenia could not hope for a similar loan and thus had to rely solely on contributions.⁷⁰ Still, government did play a role in ACASR

⁶⁷ Quoted in Grabill, "Cleveland H. Dodge, Woodrow Wilson, and the Near East," 256.

⁶⁸ For a detailed account of Wilsonian foreign policy regarding Armenia, see Lloyd E. Ambrosius, "Wilsonian Diplomacy and Armenia: The Limits of Power and Ideology," in *America and the Armenian Genocide of 1915*, ed. Jay Winter (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

⁶⁹ Frederick Lynch, circular, 23 May 1917, series 1, box 2, folder 5, NER Records.

⁷⁰ Belgium differed from Armenia, in the eyes of government officials. While the officials perceived the European nation to be a responsible borrower, they had their doubts about the Ottoman government. Part of this view was undoubtedly racist, though it is equally clear that Ottoman officials were not likely to use

philanthropy. ACASR disbursements went through the War Trade Board, in cooperation with the State Department, “thus giving assurance that the enemy ... [does] not derive benefit from the funds given for relief.”⁷¹ The ACASR participated in the War Chest plan, which was similar to a community chest program. Hundreds of cities and counties across the country created war chest committees to raise and distribute funds to war relief organizations. Proponents claimed war chests promoted greater efficiency in fundraising and encouraged more “democratic” giving, while opponents denigrated the system of quotas that may have limited the funds raised. The ACASR applied for and received a percentage of those funds.⁷² In addition, the ACASR worked with the American Red Cross, which had a presidential mandate to raise money for all war-related charities and was increasingly becoming the face of American philanthropy. ACASR founder Cleveland H. Dodge became chairman of the War Finance Committee and the Red Cross allocated funds for the ACASR throughout the war.⁷³

Entering the winter of 1917-1918, having assisted the American Red Cross in raising \$100 million in a single week, the ACASR set a goal of \$30 million. The organization calculated the \$30 million figure by claiming to need five dollars per month to care for 2.14

loaned funds to help the victims of a genocide of their own making. See “More Material for your Sermon,” 1918, 17-18, series 1, box 4, folder 11, NER Records; “Now or Never!” [1918], series 1, box 4, folder 10, NER Records; ACASR, circular, 5 June 1917, series 1, box 3, folder 9, NER Records; Charles Vickrey, circular, 16 May 1917, series 1, box 3, folder 9, NER Records.

⁷¹ “Speaking Points for Armenian Relief,” [1918], series 1, box 5, folder 1, NER Records. See also “Worker’s Bulletin #7,” 1917, series 1, box 3, folder 10, NER Records.

⁷² In describing the war chest system as a “democratization of giving,” financier Horatio G. Lloyd meant simply that more people gave than otherwise would have. Donations did not mean any additional political power and, though donors could specify where to direct their gifts, control over the distribution of a community’s resources rested with a group of appointed community leaders, like Lloyd. Horatio G. Lloyd, “The War Chest Plan,” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 79 (1918): 289-96, quote on 291. See also “Endicott Opposed to ‘War Chest’ Plan,” *Boston Globe*, May 7, 1918; “War Chests,” *ACASR News Bulletin* no. 14 (June 25, 1918); “War Chests,” *ACASR News Bulletin* no. 17 (October 1918).

⁷³ Julia Irwin, *Making the World Safe: The American Red Cross and a Nation’s Humanitarian Awakening* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), ch. 3, esp. 72-74; “Armenia,” [1919], 21-22, series 1, box 5, folder 2, NER Records.

million refugees (i.e. \$10.7 million per month). Obviously three months of funding hardly satisfied the need, but opponents nevertheless considered the low figure “all out of proportion” when Belgians and Poles still needed aid.⁷⁴ It was certainly out of proportion with prior receipts, which totaled slightly more than \$12 million since the founding of the organization in 1915.⁷⁵

The ACASR devoted much of 1918 to prepare for the \$30 million campaign. Having failed to reach their \$5 million goal less than two years earlier, partly due to poor preparation, the planning was clearly justified. William Millar was elected to manage the campaign. Millar led the Layman’s Missionary Movement, which encouraged men, especially businessmen, to give their time and money to promote missions. As in 1916 and 1917, the drive was to occur just before Thanksgiving Day in November, but a conflict with various army welfare organizations led the ACASR to select the week of January 12. The organizers understood the totem pole of fundraising. They stood near the top and so could ask for large sums, but anything army-related was higher still.⁷⁶

Unlike the \$5 million campaign, the \$30 million campaign bore the hallmarks of a professional, national drive. The organizational apparatus reached across the country. Like the Red Cross campaign, each district had a quota, and like the Every Member Plan, the ACASR prioritized a door-to-door canvass to encourage everyone to give. Within New York City, where the ACASR hoped to raise 20 percent of the \$30 million, each trade received a separate quota. Sundays Schools had their own quota, a hefty \$2 million, double what they

⁷⁴ “Over the Top to Save Lives: A Thousand Lives Saved,” [February 1918], series 1, box 4, folder 11, NER Records; Theodore F. Collier to W. W. Rockwell, 1 December 1917, series 1, box 3, folder 11, NER Records.

⁷⁵ “The American Committee for Armenian and Syrian Relief Holds Four Day Conference,” ACASR *News Bulletin* 17 (October 1918).

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*; “Nation-wide Campaign for \$30,000,000,” ACASR *News Bulletin* 17 (October 1918).

had given over the previous two years.⁷⁷ As before, the campaign aligned itself with common conceptions of American patriotism. Donors could purchase Victory Loan bonds and exchange them for ACASR bonds, which the ACASR would use to guarantee drafts. The American military provided the organization with hospitals, trucks, and ships and all three living presidents (Wilson, Taft, and Roosevelt) endorsed the effort. The ACASR never missed an opportunity to publicize that support.⁷⁸ Even when the campaign hit roadblocks, it pushed through them. Of particular note, the influenza pandemic reached peak mortality in October and November 1918, forcing the postponement of the drive in some areas, including New York. By May 1919, \$22 million had already been subscribed.⁷⁹

Most strikingly, the organization prepared a national visual campaign unlike anything the mission movement had seen before. Indeed, the imagery connected more closely with wartime propaganda than mission movement publicity. Like war posters, the ACASR appealed for support using an established medium that was displayed in traditional public spaces, but at the same time, it employed modern reprography to reach millions of people and to help establish a national identity based on philanthropic aid. The war posters depicted women as both traditional maternal figures and as workers, employed in the war effort. They used both folk art and modern advertising techniques.⁸⁰ The ACASR's \$30 million posters fit into a subcategory of war posters that blurred distinctions between official public notices

⁷⁷ "Sunday School Leaders Pledge Support," *ACASR News Bulletin* 15 (August 1, 1918); "What the Sunday Schools are Doing," *ACASR News Bulletin* 17 (October 1918); "Wanted—Volunteer Life Savers," *ACASR News Bulletin* 23 (April 1919): 6; "Lining up the Trades in the Drive for Armenian and Syrian Relief," *ACASR News Bulletin* 25 (June 1919): 5.

⁷⁸ "Mr. Theodore Roosevelt to Aid Campaign," 17 (October 1918); "A Proclamation" and "American Government Equips Relief Expedition," *ACASR News Bulletin* 19 (December 1918); "United State [sic] Government Aiding Campaign to the Utmost" and "Former President of the United States Makes Strong Appeal for Armenian and Syrian Relief," *ACASR News Bulletin* 20 (January 1919): 2, 13-14; "Wanted—Volunteer Life Savers," 6-8.

⁷⁹ "What Have You Done Today?" *ACASR News Bulletin* 22 (March 1919): 3-5; "Nearing the Goal," *ACASR News Bulletin* 24 (May 1919): 3-4.

⁸⁰ Pearl James, "Introduction: Reading World War I Posters," in *Picture This: World War I Posters and Visual Culture*, ed. Pearl James (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009), 1-3.

and private interests. The ACASR remained a private philanthropy, but it depended heavily on the perception of a patriotic obligation to give to charity, as well as on its increasingly close ties to the federal government.⁸¹

During the Balkan Wars in 1912 and 1913, W. W. Howard had unsuccessfully tried to use photographs to appeal for donations. As noted above, his efforts backfired. Although the ACASR used photographs in newsletters and other publications, posters had numerous advantages over photographs. For one, Ottoman authorities were censoring much of the information about the ongoing genocide and consequently, very few photographs reached the United States. While even the clearest photograph could only be enlarged so much, the \$30 million posters were printed in a range of sizes to be displayed in house windows, on subway cars, or life-size as a street-front sign. Photographs tended to require close inspection, but illustrators could design posters for immediate consumption and with explicit messaging.⁸²

Prominent artists like Ethel Betts, W. T. Benda, and Douglas Volk designed the posters for the \$30 million campaign. Betts began her career by creating artwork for popular magazines, including *McClure's* and *Collier's*. She briefly studied with Howard Pyle and gained further fame for her illustrations in *Mother Goose*, *Grimm's Fairy Tales*, *Humpty Dumpty*, and other children's books. Benda also published his artwork, especially scenes of travel, in popular magazines, but became most famous for creating masks used in stage and screen. Volk was likely the best-known of the lot. He trained at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, presented

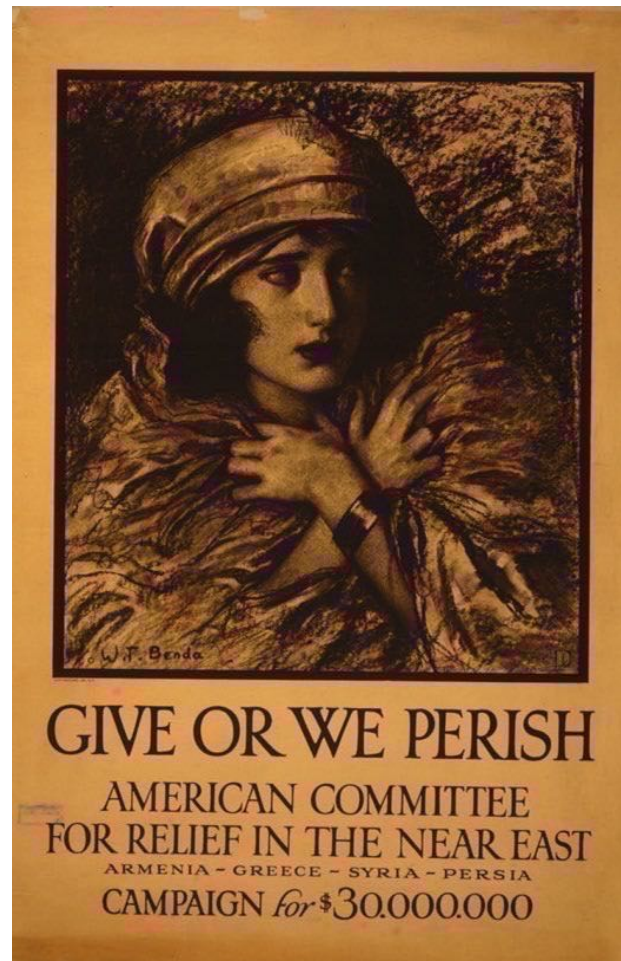
⁸¹ Ibid., 6; Irwin, *Making the World Safe*, 69; Christopher Capozzola, *Uncle Sam Wants You: World War I and the Making of the Modern American Citizen* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 6-8.

⁸² James, "Introduction," 20-21; ACASR News Bulletin 19 (December 1918).

work at the Paris Salon, and, upon his death, the *Boston Globe* described him as the “dean of American portraitists.”⁸³

Figure 5.2: W. T. Benda, “Give or We Perish,” [1917]. Benda’s sketch of an Armenian woman underlined the ambiguity about whether Armenians were like “us.” Wearing jewelry and makeup, as well as indistinct clothing, the woman could have been anyone. The caption, “give or we perish,” similarly suggested a collective identity.

Source: Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, accessed 10 December 2016, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2002708878/>



The artists’ posters emphasized the moment of crisis, repeatedly using the word “perish,” as in “Lest We Perish” or “They Shall Not Perish.” These subtle differences, particularly the back and forth between “they” and “we” which appeared in numerous examples, played with the dichotomy of Armenians as both “western” and “oriental.”⁸⁴

Benda’s “Give or We Perish” (figure 5.2) featured a sketch of a woman who appears very

⁸³ “Dean of American Portraitists Dead,” *Boston Globe*, February 8, 1935.

⁸⁴ “We” (as in “lest we perish”) refers to Armenians, but that ambiguity is precisely the point. Jo Laycock, *Imagining Armenia: Orientalism, Ambiguity and Intervention* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2009), esp. ch. 1.

out-of-place. On the one hand, she has paid close attention to her appearance. Her hairstyle, though obscure, suggests a bob and she seems to be wearing makeup and has a bracelet on her left wrist. On the other hand, she clutches her outerwear (which may be a shawl or a blanket) as one would when faced with desperate cold and the text underscores that desperation. Benda seemed to be placing a generic woman, who might have been found on any city street in the United States, into the context of war and starvation. The imperative mood of the text reflected propaganda from the era, but unlike the ambiguous “We Want You,” which allowed for a variety of service options, the American Committee’s demand was explicit, “Give.”

William Gunning King’s “Lest They Perish” (figure 5.3), unlike Benda’s poster, clearly identified the aid recipients as “foreign.” The woman wears a yellow and white scarf that tightly covers her head. On her back, she carries a baby with a piece of cloth. Middle-class Americans, for whom these posters were made, greatly preferred to display their children in bassinets and perambulators.⁸⁵ The woman clasps her hands together and looks down, possibly with her eyes closed. King may have painted her that way to suggest prayer, referring to the Christian heritage of Armenians, but the hands and eyes also seem determined and fierce. King likely meant to leave it ambiguous. The background features a scene of desolation, with no building left intact. Smoke or a cloud makes a diagonal line across the center of the image, which serves several purposes. It draws attention to the woman’s face, both because it crosses behind her and because it is angled in the same direction as her eyes. It also creates a separate quadrant for the text, “lest they perish.” King

⁸⁵ Susan J. Pearson, “‘Infantile Specimens’: Showing Babies in Nineteenth-Century America,” *Journal of Social History* 42, no. 2 (Winter 2008): 345.

again left the significance ambiguous, clearly intentionally, not saying whether the “they” referred to the specific woman and her baby or the entire Armenian population.



Figure 5.3: W. G. King, “Lest They Perish,” [1917]. Unlike the Benda sketch (figure 5.2), King’s drawing seems to have emphasized the “foreignness” of the Near East. The clothing, method of carrying the child, and background scenery all support the caption’s use of “they” rather than “we.” Instead of appealing to a common identity, the poster used the woman’s determination and maternal strength to help the viewer understand the potential loss to humanity if the mother and child were to perish.

Source: Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, accessed 10 December 2016, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2002711981/>

In 1918, the ACASR pursued its most ambitious publicity project for the \$30 million campaign, the production of the film *Ravished Armenia*, which premiered on January 15, 1919. The film, and book of the same name, told the story of a sixteen-year-old girl named Aurora Mardiganian. The ACASR “rescued” Aurora and brought her to the United States alone. She then searched desperately for her brother (i.e. male “protector”). Rather than hire professional actors, producer William Selig (who give a portion of the profits to the ACASR, but did not otherwise involve it) hired Aurora herself to retell her traumatic story and then brought her around the country for the film debuts. The film title, promotional posters, and

film itself all identified Turks as sexual predators. All tacitly or explicitly also emphasized the victims as Christians. The movie opened on Easter Sunday in 1915 and one scene depicted a row of naked, crucified women. In fact, Selig had initially planned for even more scenes of sexual violence, more fitting with Aurora's memory of actual events, but the film's screenwriter balked.⁸⁶

Though *Ravished Armenia* and the Benda and King posters differed greatly from each other, all fit within two rubrics of wartime propaganda. First, as noted above, they collectively and individually reflected the idea of Armenia as both "western" and "foreign." The Committee used the posters simultaneously, along with others, like Herman Pfeifer's "The Child at Your Door," that reinforced both the proximity and distance of those in need. The production of the movie points to this interplay, with an Armenian actress who came to the United States and became something of a film star, albeit unintentionally. Each piece depicted a woman on her own, King's with a child, Benda's totally alone, and then Aurora.

Almost all of the publicity for the ACASR and NER, and especially the visual imagery, focused on the plight of women and children. The exception, in this case, proves the rule. M. Leone Bracker's "The Appeal" (figure 5.4) depicted an elderly man along with two women and a child who seems to have died of starvation. It is not the man, however, who attracts immediate attention, but a pleading woman with arms outstretched and standing above all the other figures. Clouds in the sky point toward her and her head is the only object in the upper third of the illustration. To better capture the misery on the

⁸⁶ Anthony Slide, "Introduction: A History Lesson," in *"Ravished Armenia" and the Story of Aurora Mardiganian*, ed. Anthony Slide (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2014), 10-17; Benedetta Guerzoni, "A Christian Harem: *Ravished Armenia* and the Representation of the Armenian Woman in the International Press," in *Mass Media and the Genocide of the Armenians: One Hundred Years of Uncertain Representation*, ed. Joceline Chabot, et al. (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 59-66.

woman's face, Bracker solicited the aid of the actress Bertha Kalich.⁸⁷ The motif of the defenseless female victim, depicted here, long preceded the genocide and was associated with western portrayals of Turks as both lustful and heartless.⁸⁸



Figure 5.4: M. Leone Bracker, "The Appeal," [1917 or 1918]. The ACASR walked a fine line between being "non-religious" and overtly Christian, as indicated in this sketch by Bracker. Though he asked a Jewish actress to pose for him, Bracker depicted her in a pietà position, with a Christian cross in the background, and a Bible verse below.

Source: *The Poster* 10, no. 1 (January 1919): 28

Like *Ravished Armenia*, "The Appeal" highlighted Christianity in a variety of ways. Most overtly, a Christian cross stands out in the background. The woman's pose recalls the pietà (somewhat ironically, since Kalich was a famous Jewish actress). Although she does not cradle her dead child, her arms are stretched out in a manner similar to numerous depictions of the pietà. The text beneath Bracker's image varied between "The Appeal" and a quote from Lamentations 1:12, "Is it Nothing to You all Ye that Pass By." As one might expect, considering Bracker produced the image for an organization led by numerous missionaries and ministers, the verse was not a haphazard selection. Lamentations mourns the destruction

⁸⁷ J. Thomson Willing, "Posters Used for New East Relief," *The Poster* 10, no. 1 (January 1919): 29.

⁸⁸ ———, "A Christian Harem," 55-56; See also James, "Images of Femininity," 283-88.

of Jerusalem in a series of poems. After the book opens with a dirge for the destroyed city, the speaker shifts precisely at the twelfth verse and it is Zion who calls out to the reader. The city demands attention, just as the ACASR demanded attention through Bracker's sketch. Through the text and Christian imagery, Bracker seemed to be saying that God was demanding that the viewers contribute to the campaign.

“Non-sectarian, but truly Christian”: Religion and the ACASR and NER

Religion was both omnipresent in the ACASR and NER and explicitly minimized. George L. Richards described the organization as “non-political, non-sectarian, but truly Christian.”⁸⁹ An undated summary of the “purpose of the committee” (likely from late 1916), deemphasized both religion and politics. “[The Committee] is not merely supra-denominational, it is non-religious.” It instead identified itself as “American.” “It welcomes the cooperation of all men of any faith or of none; for its aim is to relieve a portion of suffering humanity.” The document went on to describe the ACASR as “non-political,” taking no opinion on any of the “so called solutions of the Armenian problem. . . . Speakers should not appeal to racial or religious prejudices.” In particular, the statement warned against antagonizing Turkey, since “the period in which criticism might have had its effect is past.”⁹⁰

To underline the non-religious character of the ACASR, the document cited above referenced the participation of “a Roman Catholic Cardinal [James Gibbons], various distinguished Jewish Rabbis and Protestant divines.”⁹¹ Jews participated in the formation and governance of the ACASR from the very start. Ambassador Henry Morgenthau impelled the organization forward and Reform Rabbi Stephen S. Wise attended the original meeting in

⁸⁹ George L. Richards, “The Near East,” [1923?], series 2, box 7, folder 7, NER Records.

⁹⁰ “Purpose of the Committee,” n.d., series 1, box 3, folder 4, NER Records.

⁹¹ “Purpose of the Committee,” n.d., series 1, box 3, folder 4, NER Records.

Cleveland Dodge's office in September 1915 that established the organization. Within two months, the banker Isaac Seligman and former Secretary of Commerce and Labor Oscar Straus also joined. Straus and Wise had played important roles in precursor organizations as well, and had been shaping American philanthropy for many years. In 1905, Straus had argued against focusing the American Jewish philanthropic response to Russian pogroms solely on Jewish victims. He and Jacob H. Schiff had instead hoped to align with American Christians to form a broad, legitimately nonsectarian version of American humanitarianism.⁹²

Despite this association with Jews and Catholics, the Protestant element dominated the ACASR and initial efforts to promote popular support among non-Protestants were haphazard at best. While the Board of Trustees included numerous non-Christian or non-religious leaders, mission movement officials and supporters outnumbered them several times over. Attendees of an informal publicity committee meeting on May 10, 1916, referenced their ties with Protestant mission boards repeatedly. The American Board would provide lantern slides; Protestant periodicals would circulate advertisements; the Federal Council of Churches would assist with a Sunday School campaign; and members made a point of attending the various annual meetings of as many denominations as possible. Regarding Catholics, the committee merely noted the need to increase awareness of the fact that some prominent Catholics had indicated approval of the ACASR and others had sent contributions. Jews received even less attention, noting only that "the facts about Jewish Relief Work in Turkey should also be made accessible."⁹³

⁹² For German-American Jews, combatting Christian stereotypes of Jewish exclusivism impelled, in part, this more comprehensive vision of philanthropy. Naomi Wiener Cohen, *Encounter with Emancipation: The German Jews in the United States, 1830-1914* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1984), ch. 3, esp. 115-17.

⁹³ Publicity Committee meeting notes, 10 May 1916, series 1, box 2, folder 1, NER Records.

One moment in the history of the ACASR stands out as the time when the organization could or should have become fully non-religious. Congress incorporated the ACASR under the name Near East Relief on August 6, 1919. The charter granted semi-official status to NER. In return for congressional oversight, the organization received closer cooperation with the Department of State, War Department, and other divisions of government and was allowed to receive surplus war supplies. The act of incorporation defined the responsibilities of NER as the “repatriation, rehabilitation, and reestablishment of suffering and dependent people of the Near East and adjacent areas; to provide for the care of orphans and widows and to promote the social, economic, and industrial welfare of those who have been rendered destitute, or dependent directly or indirectly, by the vicissitudes of war, the cruelties of men, or other causes beyond their control.” Neither the act of incorporation nor the first charter referenced religion at all and though the named trustees included a large number of men associated with the mission movement, they also included political leaders of various faiths, Cardinal Gibbons, and Stephen Wise. It would have been an ideal moment to move away from religion entirely, but that was not the path of NER.⁹⁴

In keeping with its emphasis on religion, the Christian heritage of aid recipients figured prominently in NER literature. Circulars emphasized the forced conversions of Christians to “Mohammedanism” and the “large number of women ... forced into Moslem harems.”⁹⁵ While Armenians, “remnants of the oldest Christian nation in the world,” received the largest portion of the relief funds, the orphans included Assyrians, Greeks, and

⁹⁴ Barton, *Story of Near East Relief*, 431-36, quote on 432.

⁹⁵ “Armenian Atrocities,” ca. 1 December 1915, series 1, box 4, folder 1, NER Records; see also “Armenia,” [1919], 26-28; see also “Committee Accepts Additional Responsibilities in Syria,” *ACASR News Bulletin* 23 (April 1919), 1-2. The film *Ravished Armenia* (1919) also repeatedly made similar claims.

Syrians as well. A 1923 handbook detailed the history of each group, specifically when and how they converted to Christianity. Each case emphasized the antiquity of the conversions, e.g. the Assyrians through the apostle Thomas and the Greeks through Paul. The handbook devoted less attention to the Syrians, but nevertheless identified them as Christian. Receiving the least attention, NER noted that “Jews and others ... are likewise the victims of forces over which they had no control.”⁹⁶

NER publications frequently made passing references to Jews while focusing on Christianity. To encourage businessmen to give to NER, future Nobel Peace Prize laureate John Mott related a story of his encounter with Sir Herbert Samuel, the first High Commissioner of Palestine during the British mandate and a Jew. Samuel supposedly affirmed, “Mr. Mott, what this world needs right now is to follow and obey Jesus Christ.” Mott interpreted Samuel’s comment as an emphasis on the social demands of morality. “We cannot be Christians alone,” Mott told the businessmen. NER would “preserve the best traditions of America” by aiding “a few scores of thousands of orphans, ... train[ing] every one of them to be true to his mother’s faith, whatever that is.” As the 1923 handbook underlined, that faith was mostly Christian. Mott attenuated the message he would have delivered to mission movement supporters, but he nevertheless portrayed NER as a product of the special relationship between the United States and God, as a “ministry of unselfishness.” American philanthropy, to Mott, was essentially an extension of American foreign missions.⁹⁷

⁹⁶ “Suggestions and Meditations for Golden Rule Sunday,” Golden Rule Docket, May 1924, 12-13, series 2, box 7, folder 7, NER Records.

⁹⁷ John R. Mott, Address at the National Golden Rule Committee Luncheon, 20 May 1924, series 2, box 7, folder 7, NER Records.

In his introduction to James Barton's reflections on the history of NER, President Calvin Coolidge identified the organization as a demonstration of "practical Christianity without sectarianism. . . . Its creed was the Golden Rule and its ritual the devotion of life and treasure to the healing of wounds caused by war."⁹⁸ As Coolidge's letter suggested, no individual denomination dominated the leadership of NER, though it did reflect the white, male, wealthy, northeast elite. Indeed, the organization was even anti-denominational, identifying earlier efforts to help Armenians as hampered by sectarianism, and its own nonsectarianism and apoliticism as reasons for success. The organization sought endorsements from both wealthy industrialists like John D. Rockefeller, Sr., and unions, including the American Federation of Labor, International Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners, International Typographical Union, Barbers' International Union, and Knights of Columbus. Anheuser-Busch, safely producing soft drinks and ice cream amid prohibition, donated signage in major cities. The Elks and Woodmen of the World also supported NER's fundraising efforts, as did the Boy Scouts.⁹⁹

In keeping with the religious orientation of the committee members in the United States (if not the Committee itself), the relief work in the Near East had a nondenominational Christian focus. Most relief went to Christians and promotional material emphasized the recipients' religion and NER's role in "character building."¹⁰⁰ In its report to Congress for 1920, NER noted four "beneficiary races." The report underlined the ancient connection between each "race," or at least the subset of the "race" with which NER was working, and historical Christianity. Regarding non-Christians (identified as "other races"),

⁹⁸ Barton, *Story of Near East Relief*, ix.

⁹⁹ *Report of International Golden Rule Sunday Observance, 1926* (New York: Near East Relief, [1927]), 9-14.

¹⁰⁰ For example, "Making History Where Three Continents Meet," n.d., series 2, box 8, folder 11, NER Records.

“help is given on the basis of greatest need, regardless of race or creed.”¹⁰¹ Reports on religious education in the 1920s examined only Christian education.¹⁰² A chairman of the Constantinople committee understood that “the United States government gave its sanction to the continuance of . . . relief work for the Christian minority races in the Ottoman Empire.”¹⁰³

While the actual work of relief focused on Christians, NER frequently claimed not to prefer one religion over another. James Barton maintained that NER collected funds to aid “all suffering peoples on the basis of need and not creed.” NER frequently referenced the aid it provided for numerous ethnic groups that consisted largely of Muslims, including Turks, Kurds, Tatars, Arabs, and Persians. These groups comprised a small minority of the aid, though, and were more often identified with the persecutors than the victims.¹⁰⁴

One would logically hope and expect that aid be sent to the victims of violence. In the case of the Armenian genocide, Christian victims greatly outnumbered Muslims, so the imbalance in providing relief did not inherently surprise anyone or reflect religious prejudice. The emphasis on relief for Muslims, in fact, reflected a continuation of earlier relief work. When the American Red Cross had adopted a similar approach during the Hamidian massacres (in order to placate Ottoman officials who were concerned about Clara Barton’s bias toward Christians), it had received criticism from many donors who had claimed their money was being misdirected to Muslims. The ACASR/NER adopted its approach for the same reasons as the Red Cross, to win the favor of various foreign governments. “While

¹⁰¹ “Report of Near East Relief to the Congress of the United States of America,” 1920, series 2, box 8, folder 1, NER Records.

¹⁰² See, for example, James I. Vance, “Religious Education in the Overseas Orphanage of the Near East Relief,” [September] 1924, series 2, box 7, folder 9, NER Records; John R. Voris, “Report on Religious Education of Children Under Care of Near East Relief,” 1925, series 2, box 7, folder 11, NER Records.

¹⁰³ Barton, *Story of Near East Relief*, 66.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, quote on 54.

individual members of the organization did all in their power by persuasion and personal effort to alleviate the situation by appealing to the authorities in the name of humanity, the organization and its workers consistently refused to take any action that could be interpreted in terms of political interference.”¹⁰⁵

Perhaps the best example of the implicitly Christian character of NER came in its fundraising, which merged moralism with Christian rhetoric. The largest annual fundraising drive in the 1920s was Golden Rule Sunday. Each year, the fundraiser occurred on the Sunday following Thanksgiving. “It is hoped that many will use it as a day for reviewing the year’s receipts and expenditures, measuring each item of the year’s budget by the Golden Rule to ascertain whether we are practising the Golden Rule in our stewardship of funds.”¹⁰⁶ NER asked participants to serve meals that Sunday night that purportedly reflected the meals of Armenian orphans. One of the major meal options contained bread and stew on tin plates, with cocoa in tin cups. NER also published weekly menus of the orphans, consisting largely of grains and legumes, to provide options for participants. “Realizing that American mothers may not feel satisfied to give their children the exact and limited amount of food provided for the orphans,” NER commissioned recipes in 1923 for alternative meals, including rice pilaf and stewed beans. In fact, NER rarely served meat stew to the orphans, though bread and cocoa were indeed part of the daily meal. In some cities, attendees paid for admission while food and facilities were donated through the work of local committees. Other participants, including John D. Rockefeller, held Golden Rule Sunday dinners at

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 55.

¹⁰⁶ “Suggestions and Meditations for Golden Rule Sunday,” Golden Rule Docket, May 1924, 10, series 2, box 7, folder 7, NER Records.

home, donating the money saved from their traditional Sunday suppers by instead eating meagerly.¹⁰⁷

NER identified Golden Rule Sunday as a financial lifeline. Prior to the first International Golden Rule Sunday on December 2, 1923, the organization faced a deficit of \$1.5 million and “a marked downward trend throughout the preceding three years” following the windfall that all philanthropic organizations received during the Great War.¹⁰⁸ By early 1927, NER held a surplus of around \$300,000. The organization only attributed about one-third of its total receipts of \$11 million during that period directly to Golden Rule Sunday, but it also acclaimed the campaign’s wider influence. As NER’s most public fundraising effort, one that received the attention of politicians and the media, and as a communal event, Golden Rule Sunday attracted many new donors.

Golden Rule Sunday emphasized an implicit, nonsectarian version of Christianity. In responding to the question “what is International Golden Rule Sunday,” Charles Vickrey wrote, “It is a test of our religion. Whatsoever else may be included in or omitted from our creeds, we all believe in the Golden Rule.”¹⁰⁹ As one might expect, Jews did not participate in Golden Rule Sunday to the same degree as they did other aspects of the organization. In 1926, only Henry Morgenthau sat on any of the organizing committees. At the same time, NER claimed they promoted Golden Rule Sunday precisely because of its universal religious appeal. The Golden Rule was “a common denominator of all religions” and a “universally accepted standard of conduct for all people,” NER claimed.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ Golden Rule Docket, May 1924, series 2, box 7, folder 7, NER Records.

¹⁰⁸ *Report of International Golden Rule Sunday Observance, 1926*, 5.

¹⁰⁹ Charles V. Vickrey, “International Golden Rule Sunday,” Golden Rule Docket, 8, NER Records.

¹¹⁰ “Cooperation of Organizations in Near East Relief,” 46.

NER focused attention on media coverage of their annual event. Newspapers printed stories and images, sometimes on the front-page, while NER inserted broadsides into Sunday editions. “Welcome donations of cartoons appeared in many papers.”¹¹¹ Popular magazines, including *Good Housekeeping* and *The Literary Digest*, as well as radio programs also publicized the event.

One of the more common advertisements was an illustration depicting children climbing a steep slope with the words, “Don’t Let Go! LIFT” in the upper left (figure 5.5). All of the children are light skinned. The central figure is a male dressed in shorts, a long-sleeved shirt, with a neckerchief, reminiscent of a Boy Scout uniform. Below him are numerous children, mostly girls. Above him, the hand of Uncle Sam reaches down to help him up.



Figure 5.5: “Don’t Let Go! LIFT,” 1926. This promotional image depicted Uncle Sam helping an Armenian boy in a Boy Scout uniform climb a steep mountain. Like other advertisements, this one underlined the supposed similarities between white, middle-class Americans and the Armenian children they were being called upon to help.

Source: *The New Near East* 10, no. 10 (December 1926): cover

¹¹¹ *Report of International Golden Rule Sunday Observance, 1926*, 7.

The symbolism of the advertisement was heavy-handed, but also to-the-point. Of course, American wealth would help the young children scale the mountain in front of them, the image conveyed to viewers. The children could easily have been those of the targeted white, middle-class donors, the image seemed to suggest. They were authentic Caucasians, with a long Christian history. The Boy Scout uniform underlined the acceptability of the aid recipients, especially since the Boy Scouts of America actively participated in the planning and promotion of the event and NER associated its work among orphan boys with scouting. In addition, the Boy Scouts operated in the Near East and urged American boys to donate their uniforms to Armenians.¹¹²

The symbolism went further, though, with allusions to the Bible. The mountain recalled that most famous of Armenian mountains, Ararat, the supposed final resting place of Noah's ark. On Ararat, God presented Noah with the possibility of rebuilding after the devastating flood that nearly obliterated humanity. Americans would have understood the reference. According to Herbert Hoover, "Probably Armenia was known to the American school child in 1919 only a little less than England. The association of Mount Ararat and Noah, the staunch Christians who were massacred periodically by the Mohammedan Turks, and the Sunday School collections over fifty years for alleviating their miseries—all cumulate to impress the name Armenia on the front of the American mind."¹¹³ Only Uncle Sam's arm extends into the frame of the NER publication. Like the Christian God, he is a faceless being on high, offering salvation.¹¹⁴

¹¹² "Boy Scouts, Here and There," *The New Near East* 9, no. 2 (February 1924): 12-13; Barton, *Story of Near East Relief*, 390.

¹¹³ Quoted in Karine V. Walther, *Sacred Interests: The United States and the Islamic World, 1821-1921* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015), 292.

¹¹⁴ "Suggestions and Meditations for Golden Rule Sunday," Golden Rule Docket, May 1924, 30, series 2, box 7, folder 7, NER Records.

Unlike the Christian story, though, the road to salvation, the way to turn Uncle Sam into a divine figure, was wealth. The message of the image matched other publications. For example, a poem entitled “Keep their Star of Hope Shining” (the star of hope referred to the star worn by NER relief workers), described “tortured Armenia, pillaged, war-worn” given hope by the “Star of Hope . . . put in the sky by America’s pity. . . . Give, oh America, give of your riches, that Armenia’s Star of Hope fade not from her heaven forever!” Without American gifts, Armenian children “will struggle and grope in the blackness of night, homeless, despairing of life.”¹¹⁵ “Don’t Let Go . . . LIFT” inflated the value of American givers even further. At the end of the brochure, just before an ersatz check that donors were to use as a symbol of their pledge (with the phrase “this is a negotiable check” at the top), the association with God turned explicit. “If YOU could be God,” the brochure asked the reader to contemplate, what would be done to help the orphans? “No—you can never be God, but made in His image you may be like Him.” Lifting or giving, in other words, sanctified the giver.¹¹⁶

Conclusion: Nurturing Religion through Secular Philanthropy

As James Barton entered retirement in the late 1920s, he looked back on his years with the American Board and NER. He saw a transformation in philanthropy, an opportunity and not a radical shift. Indeed, looking back on the formation of the ACASR with two decades of hindsight, Barton only became more enthusiastic about the mutually beneficial value of religious and secular philanthropy. He ascribed to himself the lion’s share of responsibility for forming the ACASR and, even all those years later, sounded giddy about

¹¹⁵ “Keep their Star of Hope Shining,” [1922?], series 2, box 8, folder 4, NER Records.

¹¹⁶ “Suggestions and Meditations for Golden Rule Sunday,” Golden Rule Docket, May 1924, 30, series 2, box 7, folder 7, NER Records.

having been able to read encoded State Department correspondence from Ambassador Morgenthau, even if he was horrified by the content.¹¹⁷

The founders of the American Board had selected its name in 1810 with the hope it would serve as a philanthropy of all Americans. A century later, Barton instilled that hope in NER. After a trip to the Near East in 1919, Barton wrote, “I have come back with the conviction that unless America, great benevolent America, is ready to respond to the cry of Armenia . . . there will be no other relief for them.”¹¹⁸ Five years later, he seemed satisfied with the results. The orphans in the care of NER had become “living, breathing, trusting children of American philanthropy. . . . The Near East Relief received its commission from the generous heart of America to save these children for themselves and for the land of their sorrow. But if they are to be fed and clothed and taught and saved, our old friends must continue their support and new friends must cooperate.”¹¹⁹

In 1924, the same year Barton expressed this optimistic message, NER commissioned a report on religious education. It considered religious life both among current orphans and among the young adults who had passed through its orphanages. The orphanages would eventually close, so NER was considering its future role in the region. James I. Vance submitted the report, basing his analysis on a trip to the Near East during the summer of 1924 and conversations with NER workers, religious leaders in the United States and Near East, political leaders, and missionaries. Vance was a Southern Presbyterian pastor from Nashville, Tennessee, and a former moderator of the Presbyterian Church in the United States. He concluded that NER had entered “a great missionary opportunity, for only

¹¹⁷ Barton, “Autobiographical Notes,” ABCFM Archives, 250-52.

¹¹⁸ “East and West—At Last the Twain Have Met,” ACASR *News Bulletin* 29 (September 1919): 5.

¹¹⁹ James Barton, “Living, Breathing, Trusting Children,” *The New Near East* 9, no. 4 (April 1924): 2.

religion can give the training and grow the character that is needed.” Missions would produce leaders to bring about positive change in the region, Vance claimed.¹²⁰

Vance’s advice for future NER work differed little from what missionaries were already doing and his report included an extended quotation from missionaries in Syria who had voiced their support of his ideas. He cautioned against open proselytization or disparaging of Armenian Christianity, both for strategic reasons and because “the Protestant Churches of the West and the Greek Orthodox and Gregorian Churches of the East are in nearer agreement on the great fundamentals of evangelical Christianity than is commonly believed.” At the same time, he claimed Armenians “need ... a clearer understanding of the message of the living Christ.” His specific suggestions included closer relations with mission boards and churches in the region, developing new educational institutions and working more with existing ones, and “an inter-church international advisory committee.”¹²¹

Vance was not offering wildly undesirable suggestions. To the contrary, it precisely matched the views of NER leaders. Officially, NER was “sympathetically related to the general missionary program.”¹²² Charles Vickrey, in announcing the decision to enlist Vance, claimed “religious nurture” would “exert an epoch making influence upon the Near East.”¹²³ Another report called the children “the spiritual seed corn of the Near East.”¹²⁴ NER sought to strengthen ties with churches on multiple fronts in the mid-1920s. NER leaders met with religious leaders in Bronxville, New York, in September 1924 to discuss such coordination. This move did not signify a turn away from cooperation with the state and President

¹²⁰ Vance, “Religious Education.”

¹²¹ Vance, “Religious Education.”

¹²² “Cooperation of Organizations in Near East Relief.”

¹²³ Charles V. Vickrey to Talcott Williams, 8 July 1924, series 2, box 7, folder 9, NER Records.

¹²⁴ George Stewart, “Section II of Report to Survey Committee of the Near East Relief,” 1925, series 2, box 7, folder 11, NER Records.

Coolidge was invited to attend a Golden Rule dinner at the gathering.¹²⁵ John Voris, the director of church relations for NER, produced another report on religious education the following year. It differed from Vance's report insofar as it focused more on the contemporary status of religion in NER orphanages, but the reports agreed on the importance of religious education and the need to work more closely with missionaries. Voris noted the great assistance of missionaries, but lamented they were not doing more out of fear that "a close connection [between the missionaries and NER] ... be interpreted as too great an emphasis on Western Protestantism."¹²⁶

Instead of becoming more enmeshed in the mission movement, NER would go another way, forming the Near East Foundation in 1930 and becoming increasingly disassociated from religious organizations over the following decades. The numerous reports that advocated the opposite course, though, show the degree of historical contingency in that process of secularization. In other words, despite some significant movement toward secularization, religious influence over American philanthropy continued well past World War I.

¹²⁵ "Conference of Religious Leaders re Near East Relief," 24-25 September 1924, series 2, box 7, folder 9, NER Records.

¹²⁶ Voris, "Report on Religious Education."

Epilogue: The End of “Faith in Money”

The story of the American response to the Armenian Genocide might seem an inappropriate place to conclude a history of American foreign missions fundraising and philanthropy in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Americans responded weakly and tardily to the decimation of the Armenian people. Only around 10 percent of the pre-war Armenian population survived in Anatolia.

With the end of World War I, Americans began giving less. In 1925, H. L. Mencken, the icon of American journalism in the Roaring Twenties, claimed “doing good is in bad taste.” Even the esteemed American Red Cross struggled after the war.¹ An influential article from 1960 noted the waning of the mission movement by the mid-1920s.² Near East Relief received its largest contributions in 1919, reaching nearly \$20 million, with gifts for the next four years averaging half that.³

Three Reports: *Re-Thinking Missions* and Revising Its Financing

Giving to foreign missions also stagnated after the war. This prompted the Foreign Missionary Conference of North America in 1928 to ask the Institute of Social and Religious Research to investigate the causes of the slowdown. The task fell to Charles H. Fahs. No one was more prepared for a longitudinal study of foreign missions than Fahs. After graduating from college thirty years earlier, Fahs had joined the YMCA as an army secretary during the Spanish-American War. Then, while pursuing a divinity degree, he edited *The Intercollegian*, a Y publication jointly issued with the Student Volunteer Movement. The Methodist Church

¹ H. L. Mencken, *A Mencken Chrestomathy* (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1949), 131; Julia Irwin, *Making the World Safe: The American Red Cross and a Nation's Humanitarian Awakening* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 143-44.

² Robert T. Handy, "The American Religious Depression, 1925-1935," *Church History* 29, no. 1 (March 1960): 4.

³ James L. Barton, *Story of Near East Relief* (New York: Macmillan, 1930), 409.

next hired him to work for its foreign mission board. He also coedited statistical missionary atlases in 1910 and 1911 and served as a research assistant for John Mott. In 1914, Fahs became the director of the Rockefeller-funded Missionary Research Library. The World Missionary Conference in 1910 had tasked Mott with the creation of a library to collect all available publications about foreign missions. In his capacity as director, Fahs regularly corresponded with mission boards around the world, whether seeking publications from them or responding to requests for information.⁴

Fahs's *Trends in Protestant Giving* (1929) asked three questions related to church giving between 1900 and 1927. First, were the increases in church expenditures outpacing inflation? Second, how had the ratio of outlays for benevolence versus local needs changed? And finally, were churches changing the percentage of gifts going to foreign missions? The Missionary Research Library, specifically its missionary almanacs and yearbooks, provided Fahs with all the answers he had time to collect.⁵ In other words, the available data limited Fahs's ability to respond to his questions. Nevertheless, he found that giving to foreign missions matched trends in philanthropy in general, with donations flatlining or declining after a peak shortly after the end of World War I. Some religious leaders hypothesized that religious conflict, particularly over fundamentalism and modernism, caused the slowdown. Fahs concluded, however, that the fault lay not with theological divisions. Indeed, per capita giving to churches continued to advance throughout the whole period. Missions giving

⁴ Cynthia Frame, "Missionary Research Library Collection," *Union News* (Summer 1998), accessed November 4, 2016, http://library.columbia.edu/content/dam/libraryweb/locations/burke/burke_mission.pdf.

⁵ Charles H. Fahs, *Trends in Protestant Giving: A Study of Church Finance in the United States* (New York: Institute of Social and Religious Research, 1929), 5.

declined, Fahs showed, because churches were using receipts for local needs like church-building or ministers' salaries.⁶

The challenges of the 1920s and the onset of the Great Depression prompted another report, reexamining the “presuppositions of the entire [American missionary] enterprise.”⁷ The Laymen’s Report (1932) questioned both the organizational models and the methods of missions, asking whether missions ought to continue to exist and, if so, in what form. The Rockefeller family provided the funding for this report as well. Also like the Fahs report, the Institute for Social and Religious Research received the commission to perform the inquiry. Fahs, however, had produced his sixty-seven-page report in less than a year with resources from the Missionary Research Library. The fifteen-person commission that produced the Laymen’s Report sent groups of researchers to numerous mission fields in Asia, then traveled to the fields themselves, and emerged two years later with a seven-volume report. The commission included five university administrators, two professors of philosophy, three women with specializations in different aspects of “woman’s work,” three businessmen, an economist, and a clergyman. Harvard philosophy professor William E. Hocking chaired the committee and summarized its findings in *Re-Thinking Missions* (1932).⁸

The Laymen’s Report, like that of Fahs a few years earlier, used giving as a point of departure. The foreword opened by noting, “It is doubtful whether any enterprise dependent entirely on continuous giving has so long sustained the interest of so many people as has the foreign mission.” Though the report immediately clarified its definition of giving, referring

⁶ The ratio of local expenses to benevolences went from four to one at the start of World War I to two to one shortly after the war, but returned to four to one by 1927. Ibid., 27-31; see also James David Hudnut-Beumler, *In Pursuit of the Almighty's Dollar: A History of Money and American Protestantism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 97-99.

⁷ William Ernest Hocking and the Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry, *Re-Thinking Missions: A Laymen's Inquiry after One Hundred Years* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1932), x.

⁸ Ibid., ix-xv.

to “perennially renewed sacrifice” rather than merely “invested funds,” the authors undoubtedly intended readers to consider the dual meaning of “giving.” To identify waning interest in missions, Hocking cited “subscriptions . . . falling off” as his initial piece of evidence.⁹ The committee had no doubt that some missions ought to be abandoned, but it also noted the constant demands for more money from worthy mission stations “[were] enough to bankrupt Christendom.”¹⁰

The committee concluded that missions should continue to exist, but should no longer seek to supplant world religions and instead “promot[e] world understanding on the spiritual level.”¹¹ As William Hutchison later summarized it, “The new missionary . . . should be an ambassador more than either a soldier or a high-pressure salesman.”¹² This approach encouraged the growth of non-evangelical (or less overtly evangelical) work above that of proselytization. As an ambassador, the new missionary needed to understand local social and economic concerns and be able to conform missions to those issues. A superior missions field, according to Hocking, looked much smaller, but far better trained.¹³

Mission boards reacted ambivalently to the Laymen’s Report. Each board responded in its own way, but as the report challenged the historical basis of missions as a whole and specifically the idea of a unique Christian god, it is not surprising that they unified in their criticism of Hocking’s theology. The degree to which the boards ignored or focused on that perceived deficiency determined how much they accepted Hocking’s findings. The American

⁹ Ibid., ix.

¹⁰ Ibid., 5.

¹¹ Ibid., 25.

¹² The use of the term “ambassador” derived directly from the report. William R. Hutchison, *Errand to the World: American Protestant Thought and Foreign Missions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 162.

¹³ Ibid., 158-64; Hocking and the Laymen’s Foreign Missions Inquiry, *Re-Thinking Missions*, 23-27.

Board, for example, largely favored the push toward social awareness and practical philanthropy.

The Presbyterian board's Robert Speer responded far more harshly. Speer had always approached missions from a conservative, modernist perspective. As noted in chapter four, he had resisted earlier efforts to overhaul fundraising methods that had clung to the quixotic hope of evangelizing the world in short order. With the publication of the Laymen's Report, he stood between fundamentalists like J. Gresham Machen, who railed against the report, and liberals like Pearl Buck, who praised it. The report had promoted many perspectives that mission boards had been encouraging for years, like self-supporting churches and better-trained missionaries, so Speer could agree with Buck's praise on several levels. On the other hand, he had always favored a variety of missionary methods to suit particular missionaries and in particular fields, a position the report seemed to reject. Most profoundly, though, Speer lamented the divisions that the report created within his own denomination and American Protestantism generally.¹⁴

Both reports, that of the Laymen and that of Fahs, addressed contemporary concerns about the state of foreign missions. Both also reflected the fact that the mission movement had recently passed a peak. At the heart of that decline was a central fact: churches were no longer willing to increase their contributions. While many philanthropies faced challenges during the 1920s and 1930s, those challenges rarely prompted the type of existential angst that led to the Laymen's Report. The moral empire had already shifted toward nonsectarian organizations. It was an issue that neither report ignored. The Laymen's Report advocated precisely that type of work that deemphasized evangelism and promoted social programs. Fahs considered the question of whether donors had shifted their giving

¹⁴ Hutchison, *Errand to the World*, 164-71.

from foreign missions to “agencies other than church boards,” especially Near East Relief (NER). Although he concluded that “it would be difficult ... to prove ... that the drives for Near East Relief had markedly hurt or helped” foreign missions fundraising, he also found it “reasonable to suppose ... that very considerable sums received by Near East Relief must have been in place of, rather than in addition to, sums that otherwise would have gone into board treasuries.”¹⁵ The irony of the existential crisis was that it was the mission movement itself that had promoted the shift in the moral empire in order to address immediate concerns stemming from World War I, such as the Armenian Genocide.

When Congress incorporated NER in 1919, it set an expiration date of twenty-five years. So in 1944, amid another world war, the renamed Near East Foundation (NEF) took a moment to look back on its history. Several trustees put together a pamphlet that they described as a “supplement” to James Barton’s *Story of Near East Relief* (1930). They titled it *Near East Relief Consummated; Near East Foundation Carries On*. NER had accomplished all of its goals and the foundation was breathing new life into the mission, the report claimed.

With three decades of hindsight, how did the trustees remember the history of their organization? Given the pamphlet’s title, it should come as no surprise they viewed NER favorably, describing it as “the most extensive private philanthropic venture of all time.”¹⁶ The nuances of their positive vision are, nevertheless, worth considering. The trustees divided the organization’s history into three periods: 1915-1916, 1917-1930, and 1930-1944. While the 1930 division tied directly to the transformation of NER into NEF, the trustees did not identify NER’s incorporation in 1919 as a similarly transformative moment.¹⁷

¹⁵ Fahs, *Trends in Protestant Giving*, 54-55.

¹⁶ Near East Relief, *Near East Relief Consummated. Near East Foundation Carries On. A Supplement to "Story of Near East Relief" by James L. Barton* (1944), 19.

¹⁷ Technically, NER established NEF as an independent organization and NER continued until the expiration of the charter. However, NER only continued insofar as it maintained a board of trustees while

Instead, they labeled the first sixteen months, “beginnings,” and focused on the mergers between various relief committees, misleadingly suggesting they unified under the name Near East Relief sometime during this period. They apparently selected the arbitrary transition date of January 1, 1917, because of the national Armenian-Syrian Relief Days, which President Wilson and Congress had promulgated for October 21-22, 1916. They closed the “beginnings” section on that subject, noting, “The response was magnificent. And from that time there was a rising tide of interest and response.”¹⁸

Identifying January 1, 1917, as a transition date was a bizarre, but telling choice. Aside from the fact that the Armenian-Syrian Relief Days had occurred months before the selected division date, the Relief Days had failed on many levels. The organization had insufficiently organized, had not met its fundraising goal, and had suggested Wilson’s selection of the days had more to do with the 1916 presidential election than with the best interests of the Armenians or Syrians. Nevertheless, it did mark a certain transition. For years, the missionaries and missionary supporters who constituted much of NER and its precursors had sought government support of their work. With the Armenian-Syrian Relief Days, they had finally achieved a nationwide fundraiser with the explicit support of the state. This was no longer the “moral empire” where missionaries attempted to influence the nature of political imperialism. By transforming evangelism into “religious education” and coordinating with Catholic and Jewish leaders, the new “moral empire” had become something the federal government could itself support.

NEF was explicitly the “successor and heir of Near East Relief.” In other words, Near East Relief continued in order to satisfy its national charter, but the real philanthropic work passed to NEF. One might also note that the contemporary NEF identifies the 1930 transition as a “name change.” “History,” Near East Foundation, accessed October 29, 2016, <http://www.near-east.org/who-we-are/>; *ibid.*, 11.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 4.

Following the “beginnings” period of 1915-1916, the NER trustees identified 1917 through 1930 as the “period of great achievements.” Within the United States, these achievements included incorporation, raising over \$100 million, cooperating with the federal government and national organizations like the Red Cross, and raising awareness through “a national expression of compassion.” They conceived of the latter in decidedly religious terms, noting the “spiritual power” of the appeals that “[lifted] the geographical and spiritual horizons of the nation” and prompted “higher standards of stewardship.” Overseas, the organization cared for orphans, “[saved] more than a million people . . . from starvation,” built schools “with special emphasis on practical training,” and “religious instruction was carried on in all institutions.” The trustees especially appreciated the approval of President Coolidge, who identified the impact of Near East Relief as “a new conception of religion in action.”¹⁹

Although the trustees could point to numerous accomplishments during this period, they also recognized the challenges of a maturing philanthropy. Founded to address a specific need, NER had faced an identity crisis in the 1920s as the young survivors of the Armenian Genocide reached adulthood and orphanages and schools closed. The organization had commissioned numerous reports (including that of James I. Vance referenced at the end of chapter five) in order to find a new mission. The reports had encouraged the organization to continue, but in a new form, as Near East Foundation. Many workers stayed through the transition, but others left to join new philanthropies, teach, or join the government.

Near East Foundation was a smaller organization than NER, with a much smaller budget. It focused on coordinated “education, health, agriculture, recreation, social welfare,

¹⁹ Ibid., 6-7, 9.

and leadership training” projects or “demonstrations,” emphasizing that it had no intention of setting up permanent institutions. It required local and state support before agreeing to pursue any demonstration and sought to “work *with* the people not *for* the people.” Because of the demand for state support, the organization operated in countries with large Christian populations, specifically the Balkans, Cyprus, and Syria.²⁰

Neither NER nor NEF can fit into the facile religious/secular binary. Unlike mission boards, they did not represent a religion or denomination and they actively sought the participation of Jewish, Catholic, and non-religious leaders. At the same time, no one could ignore the numerous connections with missionaries, the use of “religion in action” in advertisements, and the fact that the work occurred among Orthodox Christian populations that American missionaries had been trying to convert to Protestantism for generations. The label “nonsectarian” might best describe this pseudo-religious work. In any case, the work of NER and NEF followed practices that the Laymen’s Report in 1932 was advocating and it benefited mission boards that worked in the eastern Mediterranean. As Fahs suggested in his 1929 report, some people were probably giving to NER instead of missions, but it was unclear whether that was something to be lamented.

In 1886, nearly a half-century before the founding of Near East Foundation, Charles H. Fahs’s *Trends in Protestant Giving*, and the Laymen’s Report, the Student Volunteer Movement had organized and began popularizing the mission movement watchword, “the evangelization of the world in this generation.” NEF and the two reports essentially acknowledged the impossibility of that goal. The Laymen’s Report stated the point explicitly.²¹

²⁰ Ibid., 13-17. Italics in original.

²¹ Hocking and the Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry, *Re-Thinking Missions*, 24.

Much had changed over the course of the three generations of missionaries between the Civil War and Great Depression. What had remained constant for most mission movement supporters until the 1920s was the faith that, with enough money, the evangelization of the world was possible and desirable. Although theology divided those who continued to see evangelism as desirable from those who did not, the proponents of missions who spent decades trying to radically increase giving clearly had not achieved their lofty goals. They were finally coming to realize that Charles A. Crane had been right, to a certain extent, decades earlier. “Faith in money” could not “[solve] all ills.”²² The moral empire would continue, but in increasingly secular and more strategic forms.

²² “Philanthropy that is the Church’s Curse,” *Boston Globe*, March 27, 1905.

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